Pacific Crossings: Travel, Writing, and Literary Transition in the Sino-American Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

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Abstract

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Comparative Literature

Animated by the goal of drawing substantial comparisons between the transitions to literary modernity in China and the United States, *Pacific Crossings* explores the beginnings of Sino-American transpacific travel in the early nineteenth century and the subsequent rise in production of cultural knowledge about the transpacific other for the home audience. While the impact of travel on the development of modernism has been widely observed in many contexts, this study attempts to address a general lack of scholarly attention to this particular field of transnational production—the zone centered on the Pacific—in the literary histories of both national contexts. Through a bi-partite analysis that juxtaposes Chinese and American traditions of travel and writing, historical trajectories and geographics, interrelationships, and depictions of the Chinese or American other, it shows that travel comes to have a negative effect on the possibility of writing "domestic" literature in both national contexts. Whereas travel renders the foreign present in national space (whether embodied or as text or object), depictions of locality as domesticated, enclosed, and totalized evaporate in the modern era, and are supplanted by "local" fiction that by its very nature shows interfluence with what is outside. The traits

associated with global modernism, such as shifts in perception of selfhood and the fragmentation of epistemological coherence, are prefigured in nineteenth-century travel accounts, which, by their essential engagement of unassimilable foreignness within, always unsettle universalisms and foreground the lien of the transpacific imaginary on the production of literature. The process of comparison reveals several parallel discourses in the contexts of China and the American west—including "failure" narratives, preoccupations with essentiality and authenticity, and discourses of utility and benevolence—which propose further frameworks for fruitful Sino-American comparison.

Part One traces the shifts in Chinese fictional space-time from the transitional nineteenth century, as exemplified by Li Ruzhen's travel novel *Jing hua yuan*, to the early twentieth-century Chinese local fictional representations by Liu E, Li Boyuan, Xiao Hong, and Qian Zhongshu that employ the American and foreign as trope. It explores the impact the generic changes in international travel writing had on these shifts, through the lens of the early eyewitness accounts of America by Zhang Deyi and Lin Zhen. Part Two follows a similar methodological and historical trajectory. It draws connections between the shape early American travel writing in China took (as exemplified by eyewitness accounts by missionary Samuel Wells Williams and journalist Bayard Taylor) and the traditions of American westerly travel writing (including the nonfictional accounts of Lewis and Clark and Edgar Allan Poe's fictional "hoax," *The Journal of Julius Rodman*). It connects those traditions to the development of modernism in the American west and the configuration of fictional images of Chinese in America by Bret Harte, Ambrose Bierce, and John Steinbeck.

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Chapter 1:

The Golden Thread: An Introduction to Travel, Writing, Fluidity, and Nation

> *Lao Can… inclined his head and looked carefully…. "Perhaps there are two springs beneath, striving against each other, so we see a line of light between them." "This fountain has been mentioned in books for several hundred years," said the scholar, "could it be that these two springs remained so long with their strength evenly matched?" "You see how that line of light wavers to the right and to the left," said Lao Can, "that shows that there must be some discrepancy in the strength of the two springs."*
>
> – Liu E, *Lao Can youji*

> *The roots of vegetables… attach them fatally to the ground, and they are condemned like leeches to suck up whatever sustenance may flow to them at the particular spot where they happen to be stuck…. The shift from the vegetable to the animal is the most complete of revolutions…. for the creature is now in perpetual motion…. Yet their unrest is a new incentive to travel, perhaps the most powerful and persistent of all: it lends a great beauty to strangers, and fills remote places and time with an ineffable charm…. It is the possibility of travel that lends a meaning to the images of the eye and the mind, which otherwise would be mere feelings and a dull state of oneself.*
>
> -- George Santayana, "The Philosophy of Travel"[1]

Lao Can youji (*The Travels of Lao Can*) by Liu E, written 1903-1904, is one of the best-known novels from China's late Qing period (1644-1911). It narrates the experiences of a fictional protagonist, Lao Can ("Old Derelict"), a doctor and intellectual, who travels across China's Shandong Province, hearing the stories of abuses in the various localities through which he passes and offering advice to well-minded officials who seek his help. This iconic novel of the early decades of modern literary production in China, while it does not deal directly with the increasingly frequent Chinese foreign travel or the accelerating Western encroachment on China, enlists the literary topos of travel in ways that articulate the essentiality of travel (both physical and metaphorical) to the modern condition of globalized locality.

[1] 7-8.

Lao Can youji uses travel as both a narrative structuring tool (progressive literal bodily movement through space drives progression in the plot) and as a metaphor for potential. Lao Can, in his travels, amasses knowledge and redistributes it in various locales, which assembles layers of meaning in the text while also creating in the figure of Lao Can a traveling discourse that opens up apertures in the contained localities he visits. His outsider impact on the local comes primarily in the form of healing the sick and assisting local officials with their current problems by proposing solutions that are to be found "elsewhere," in alternative times (the past) or spaces. By linking what is outside, and movement in time and in space, to the condition of "presence," the figure and story of Lao Can foreground the innate quality of travel as both literal movement and as aperture or interface in the local introduced by the intrusion or pressing-against of the outside. The *result* of travel, therefore, is always conscription of the self into the anxiety-producing task of becoming the foreign while attempting to assimilate the encountered foreign, all while retaining subjective autonomy. Further, the *impulse* to travel is always a contentious yet seductive admixture of desire for the exotic and the necessary disavowal of its threats to subjectivity.

The moment from *Lao Can youji* quoted above is a metaphor for these tensions. Lao Can, while touring some local sites as he travels, stops to visit a famous spring known as the Gold Thread Fountain. He looks for the mythical "golden thread" that he has heard about, but does not see it. Finally, a local scholar shows him that it is not an actual thread, but a reflection at the top of the water created by light and movement, and by the contention of two sources of energy pressing against each other under the surface (*Travels* 36-37). It is an enigmatic moment of exchange between two men of learning, one that becomes a "travelling discourse" as Lao Can carries it with him. The moment becomes allegorical in the novel for the pressing of wills

against one another, a troublesome human condition that resonates with contemporary power struggles. Lao Can, who comes to the Gold Thread Fountain with a reader's expectations, informed by the iconified cultural image of the touristic site and his desire to perform the action of seeking out and seeing the exotic object, finds behind the icon of the "golden thread" an organic and particular expression of a universal truth: that the interface between discrete entities is wavering, contested, and fluid. The novel, in this way, links travel to both fulfillment of pleasure and instigation of anxiety, and shows the connection between destabilization of subjecthood and ensuing conflicts between epistemic knowledge and material experience.

Certainly, *Lao Can youji* is a product of its time: the limits and opportunites of human movement changed drastically for Chinese nationals during the nineteenth century, especially in terms of international travel, and the impacts of this travel on the development of literature is undeniable. The threat of foreign encroachment was also definitive in this era, since it created a context of resistance to infringement and anxiety about articulating authentic Chineseness. The paradoxically expanding (globalizing) and contracting (semicolonized) borders of the Chinese nation-state opened up inexorable apertures at China's interfaces with the outside world, and the increase in actual travel of diplomats, intellectuals, and other travelers came in conjunction with a new imperative to reform China and, in the early twentieth century, its literature. After the turn of the century, fiction began to increasingly express projections of the (national) self into the international sphere, and also to express penetrations of the foreign exotic into the domestic local.

The resulting condition of "traveledness" is pervasive in modern literature. Travel not only creates potential for the interface between the local or self and the other to exist at all, but it also reforms space, time, and subjectivity as traveled: governed by continuity, disrespectful of

borders between the self and the phenomenal/foreign, and capable of unfixing and de-isolating locality. Human mobility across national borders, the migration of national borders themselves, and the residue left behind by these travels (including textual production and migration) all initiate a saturation of textual practice with "the traveled." Strangers make familiar places seem uncanny; odd objects from elsewhere are domesticated; individuals find themselves in unknown places where they feel decontextualized and confused; texts and ideas are translated and delivered to new audiences; individuals find their homes subject to new authorities; racial mixing, cross-dressing, and other body confusions cause unrecognition: all create lacunae and defamiliarization. Travel implies the essentiality of the remote, and the proximity of the strange creates unsettledness by defying the self's expectation that strangeness will remain at a distance. Travel becomes a metaphor for the indwelling of the unassimilable.

Interpretation along these lines looks for "what travels," seeking out the discourses that move across space, in the interest not of establishing a reading of the "globalized locality" or a specific set of causes and effects, but rather in the interest of understanding the resulting sense of place or self as inhabited by tensions at the margins, tensions accumulated by the testing of the strength of one self against another. I call this the "local perspective" in order to distinguish it both from the national and the domestic, to emphasize the transmigratory permeations that infest it, and to underline the individuality of selves as convergence points of multiple (and often competing) discourses.

These observations are the basis for one of the most evocative parallels uncovered by this study, a study that was animated by the goal of drawing substantial comparisons between the transitions to literary modernity in China and the United States. Travel became the nexus point for talking about these parallels because of the historical context and effects of worldwide

globalization during the period, but also because it allows for articulation of constructs that characterize the modern in ways that can accommodate major ideological narratives without being bound to seeing the local only in those terms. The major narrative, of course, is the teleological ideation that guided Euro-American historical thought about the modern, and which gained global hegemony during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries under the conditions of colonialism and decolonization. Since travel implies confusion of abstractions, through its introduction of the eccentric, yet always sees the referentiality in epistemic knowledge to abstracted ideologies, it can unabashedly present textual iterations as particularities informed by interplay between the universal and the contextual or particular.

A correspondingly watery metaphor for travel and human habituation appears around the same time in the American context in Frederick Jackson Turner's "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." This seminal and well-known thesis was written in 1893 in response to the 1890 Census' report that, because of the infiltration of Euro-American settlements into all parts of the country, the frontier line had disappeared in the United States. Turner responds:

> This brief official statement marks the closing of a great historic movement. Up to our own day American history has been in a large degree the history of the colonization of the Great West. The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development. (1)

He goes on to say:

> Limiting our attention to the Atlantic coast, we have the familiar phenomenon of the evolution of institutions in a limited area, such as the rise of representative government; the differentiation of simple colonial governments into complex organs; the progress

> from primitive industrial society, without division of labor, up to manufacturing civilization. But we have in addition to this a recurrence of the process of evolution in each western area reached in the process of expansion. Thus American development has exhibited not merely advance along a single line, but a return to primitive conditions on a continually advancing frontier line, and a new development for that area. *American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier.* This perennial rebirth, this *fluidity of American life*, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its *continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character*. The true point of view in the history of this nation is not the Atlantic coast, it is the Great West. (2-3; my emphasis)

In Turner's estimation, what singularly defines American character is incessant renaissance resulting from constant "touch" with and infusion by primitivity—something that can only take place on "the hither edge of free land" in a direction "away from the influence of Europe." This is the part of American history that is "really American" (Turner 3-4). The attitude, one in a long line of literary manifestations of Manifest Destiny, privileges the permeable interface on the outer edge as the center for identity formation, in a way not dissimilar to the conclusion we can draw from Lao Can's wavering interface. And likewise, although it doesn't engage travel or American foreign relations directly, and certainly overwrites any sense of "Americanness" as foreign invasion, Turner's thesis exemplifies the topological nature of travel as structuring element for American cultural identity and textual production.

The similarity is further reinforced by Turner's use of the "wave" metaphor for western movement, one that he borrows from John Mason Peck's 1836 *A New Guide for Emigrants to the West*. Peck suggests that three "waves" of emigrants come to the West: first the pioneer, next

those who purchase the land and settle on it, and finally "the men of capital and enterprise" (114-116). Peck uses the metaphor primarily to imply successive movement of groups, but Turner elaborates by proposing that "in this advance, the frontier is the outer edge of the wave—the meeting point between savagery and civilization" (3). This revision is significant for its attribution to the wave, like Lao Can's fountain, a capability to perform human identity and power dynamics.

The interesting discrepancies between the metaphors on the issue of power clearly have some material basis: Chinese semi-colonialism in the early twentieth century does not match Euro-American imperialism during the building of a transcontinental nation. This may have something to do with the representation of Lao Can's fountain as containing the tranquil beauty of two contesting but relatively "evenly matched" springs, whereas Turner's wave, which respects no boundaries, being a relatively violent subsumption and mixing in of the "savage" with the advancing "civilized" force of nature. What is striking, though, is that both, through images of water, allegorize identity on a national scale using the trope of travel coded by interface. The imagery of water allows for a discussion of nation, identity, and power that terrorizes the binaries (us and them, powerful and weak) by marking their boundaries as fluid, uncovering a logic that goes beyond simplified opposition to include comparison and analogy. They also both draw attention to water as the space of unstable boundaries, opening the door to a discussion of water crossing as passing through liminal, variable space and being subjected to infusion by otherness.

The history of Sino-American relations, which begins during the nineteenth century, has been described, most frequently, as a face-off between "mighty opposites,"[2] who eye one another

[2] I borrow this term from the title of L. Zhang's book, *Mighty Opposites.*

in non-recognition from across the Pacific, and who imaginatively use one another to exemplify everything that is contrary to the self and its proper way.[3] Cynics will insist that my own examples suggest this: that while the "Chinese way," as evidenced by Lao Can's metaphor, is one of isolation, internal pacification, and centralization, the "American way," as clearly evidenced by Turner's account, is one of conquest, expansion, and assimilation. While the examples do reflect the cultural particularities of expression and the imagination out of which they arise, they also reveal the extent to which some comparative connection might be made. By the early twentieth century, intercourse between the two nations had been thoroughly established. Significant numbers of Americans and Chinese had made the Pacific crossing, marked their visited territory with their presence, internalized the significance of that cross-Pacific other to the self, and textualized that experience with an audience in mind. And yet, the perception of insurmountable foreignness of one to the other, and of the relative irrelevance of one to the other (even under the circumstances that centralized crossings as nationally or personally imperative), continues to characterize Sino-American relations up to the contemporary moment.

These watery metaphors are chronologically positioned at a turning point not just corresponding to the end of a century, but corresponding also to the beginning of cultural modernity in both national contexts. The rise of cultural modernity, and its associated shifts in perception of selfhood, space-time, and epistemological coherence are linked in this study to the nineteenth-century rise of travel. The study looks to uncover the impact that travel in general had in effecting a transitional period in both Chinese and American cultural contexts from prior epistemological conditions to so-called modern ones, while also suggesting that these shifts can

[3] There are a number of studies that explore this binary construction of Sino-American relations, including Shambaugh's *Beautiful Imperialist*, Iriye's *Across the Pacific*, and the sections on "Mutual Perceptions" by Warren I. Cohen and Tu Wei-Ming in Oksenberg and Oxnam's *Dragon and Eagle*. The literature on occidentalism as a usable theoretical construct also explores this dichotomous positioning: see Conceison's *Significant Others* and Chen's *Occidentalism.*

be linked in tangible ways to places across the Pacific and the inroads made by the cross-Pacific foreign into domestic space. Put simply, it has the ostensibly modest goal of suggesting that there are significant bases on which comparison can be made of the development of literary modernism in these two traditions, which are most frequently represented as mutually inaccessible, unintelligible opposites. This is not to say that the Sino-American transpacific zone of production in particular was any more formative than any other zone for either national context; rather it attempts to address a general oversight of the relevance of the Sino-American exchange in particular to broader conversations about transnationality and literary development in both contexts, and propose ways in which this zone of interchange might be productively examined.

Recentering on the Pacific, a watery liminal zone that contains geo-cultural meaning in both national contexts yet rests at the edge of perception from the national viewpoint, is a deliberate effort to de-center from nineteenth- and early twentieth-century national nodes of power over literary production, consumption, and interpretation: for the United States, the east coast; for China, the historical national interior. Seeing literary activity swirling centripetally around an alternate hub may provide a fresh vision of domestic national literature as it connects to other zones of production. And by emphasizing the activity of crossing, the study foregrounds the destabilization that occurs during these passages from habituated environment to decontextualized one, and looks for effects on the form or content of the text that are often transitory or go unrecognized. It explores the ways images of the nationalized, racialized, sexualized, spatialized, temporalized other were constructed for home audiences and activated by texts, as a means of articulating national and personal anxieties.

While the impact of travel on the development of modernism is not a new topic in either

Chinese or American literary discussions, the novelty of this study's exploration of nineteenth-century travel literature as the essential precursor to modern form, because of its destructive effect on universalism, is multiple. For one, it links fictional development to non-fictional and non-"literary" writing in ways that reveal the indebtedness of fiction's development to the culture of travel[4] itself. The characteristics we associate with global modernism (such as shifts in perception of selfhood, and the fragmentation of epistemological coherence) directly resemble the precedents set by travel writing in the nineteenth century. Travel comes to have an effect, during the course of the nineteenth century in both national contexts, on the (im)possibility of writing "domestic" literature, and introduces a gothic quality to modern literature in both national contexts since places and people are represented as being inhabited, mediated, or haunted by otherness or strangeness within. Further, by the innate quality of travel to undo universalism, the juxtaposition shows interesting overlaps in terms of Chinese and American modern anxieties about unsettledness, narratives of failure, and preoccupations with authenticity or essentiality. Narratives such as utility and benevolence crop up in indigenous ways in both contexts, as do obsessions with domestication and unification in the context of failure to achieve these goals (both locally and on the level of national sovereignty).

The sense of the modern condition as one of permanent unfulfillability of totalization connects with the narratives of failure that operate in each national context. Juxtaposition of these provides, perhaps, one of the most interesting parallels of the study: in China, the twentieth century narrative of nineteenth-century neo-conservative intellectual failure to modernize quickly enough to save China from a fate of semicolonialsim and humiliation on the world stage; in the United States, the failure of the "belated" modernization of the rural west even as it was

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[4] This term is borrowed from H. Zhang.

enlisted to signify the national progressiveness and authenticity of the nation. Both narratives evince a colonization of mind in which the local internalizes its failure to deliver on the teleological vision of progression toward the universal modern condition; this study attempts to at least decolonize the theorization of this era in both contexts.

This is partly achieved by the introduction of alternate geographics to the dysfunctional East/West binary. The geographic parameters of the dissertation are bounded on the west by eastern China and on the east by the western United States; the Pacific crossing confounds notions of traveling to the Far East when it is actually the far west; or vice versa. The study, too, recognizes the strong material connection that the U.S. west has historically had with China, even if that connection has been punctuated by violent interchange. As such, it explores American literature of the west rather than the east. Re-centering on the Pacific void allows for a historical outlook that recognizes the lasting impact that national historicizing narratives had on rhetorical configurations while showing the ways that they are deconstructed in the texts themselves. Reading this way does not disallow the evident, which is that these configurations become axes of national self-definition, activated repeatedly even into the present. In China, they appear both in acquiescent economic narratives of "catching up" and "passing," and also in reverse, in narratives of resistance to foreign imperialism and foreign involvement in Chinese affairs. In the United States, these configurations play out in narratives of racialized historical destiny in continental and international space, and in narratives of border control and legitimate exclusion, assimilation, or extermination.

The national does not lose its effect on the local space or the individual text—quite the contrary. Conversations about the collapse of grand narratives over the past half century have prefigured a conclusion in which the major structures underlying our interrelation with the world

fall to pieces and become irrelevant, and yet what actually occurs during periods of major epistemic upset, as evidenced in the texts that will be analyzed in the following chapters, is not a disappearance of the epistemic superstructure, but revision and re-activation of it, albeit often in unfamiliar or unprecedented ways. Revisions of national (or religious, ideological, or cultural) symbolism and idiomography develop because they continue to circulate in the collective and personal consciousness, both complicating and incohering the sense of self as bound to the nation through assumed relations (as was observed some time ago by Lauren Berlant, 4-5), but also tethering the self in comforting ways to that which appears solid. While theory may have proposed the postmodern abandonment of grand narratives, history shows only continual transformations of them—people remain attached to their stories, even through those stories' vicissitudes and variations, and despite the anxiety that results from the discontinuities between what is known collectively and what is experienced individually. Further, once mobilized through travel, both communal and individual paradigms, complete with all their contradictions, escape the local and become "implicated in global movements and forces" (Lowe 34). Travel writing, as such, expresses the personal at the same time as rectifies experience to the universal; it breaks down previous or second hand impressions while rebuilding new iconographies and imagined horizons that speak to those previously established images.

What is essential about travel, therefore, to this conversation, is that it goes beyond simply addressing representation of alterity or intersubjectivity, as if these representations were functioning in an epistemically sealed universe, such as the one endemic to traditional China. In modern writing, both early and late, travel turns the domestic or the national into the transnational.[5] As such, travel literature, in the broadest sense of writing that incorporates

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[5] See Rowe's discussion in "Nineteenth-Century United States Literary Culture and Transnationality."

travel's locomotion and transposition as trope, bears an inherent critique of universalisms because it, by nature, contains dissonance between the local particularity and the broader frameworks and narratives of which it is expected to be assimilated part. Writing that employs the travel trope can be investigated in ways advocated by historian Dipesh Chakrabarty:

> I ask for a history that deliberately makes visible, within the very structure of its narrative forms, its own repressive strategies and practices, the part it plays in collusion with the narratives of citizenships in assimilating to the projects of the modern state all other possibilities of human solidarity…. This is a history that will attempt the impossible: to look toward its own death by tracing that which resists and escapes the best human effort at translation across cultural and other semiotic systems, so that the world may once again be imagined as radically heterogeneous…. [It] is to see the modern as inevitably contested, to write over the given and privileged narratives of citizenship other narratives of human connections that draw sustenance from dreamed-up pasts and futures where collectivities are defined neither by the rituals of citizenship nor by the nightmare of 'tradition' that 'modernity' creates. There are of course no (infra)structural sites where such dreams could lodge themselves. Yet they will recur so long as the themes of citizenship and the nation-state dominate our narratives of historical transition, for these dreams are what the modern represses in order to be. (46)

This is the history of the beginnings of Sino-American literary relationships that I am attempting to write in this dissertation: one told in mutually contradictory fragments by an amorphous set of "travel" texts, in which far-flung dreams of places that appear equally magnetic as hostile are rendered visible despite their usual marginalization by "the knowledge protocols of academic history" (Chakrabarty 46) and by their problematic transversals across interiors and exteriors that

do not resonate with the abstracted national narratives and literary categorizations. This history of texts that truly are radically heterogenous hopefully amplifies their emphasis on movement, going in and going out, which disavows concrete inside/outside splits and "unassailable identities,"[6] to show that the inside/outside distinction is always felt, but is never accurate. The "revolution" of locomotion (to borrow Santayana's term) guarantees the integrality of the heterogenous to the perceived totality of the home.

PARTICULARITIES OF THE SINO-AMERICAN COMPARISON

Writing the amorphous history of the beginnings of Sino-American literary relationships is a task fraught with peril for a variety of legitimate reasons, including the divergent historical and cultural conditions in China and the United States. There are two comparisons, in particular, that deserve some discussion, since they provide the basis for understanding the overall comparison that is presented in this dissertation: the divergences in trajectories of opening and closing in each national context, and the distinctions of national tradition and conceptualization of travel and the modes of travel writing.

The First Comparison: Trajectories of Opening and Closing. Since the initiation of Sino-American contact and interchange in the period leading up to and following the first Opium War (1839-1842), as Lee Haiyan recently pointed out, the "foreigner" has been an active presence in the Chinese imagination, in both positive and negative ways, and has been regarded as a stranger whose presence in China has had a significant impact on representations of the Chinese social fabric (*Stranger*). However, the historic territorial isolation of China the nation and enforcement

[6] This term is borrowed from Seligman (*Ritual and Its Consequences*, 10).

of epistemic centralization of "the civilized" in the national centers mean that traditional forms of representation deliver, frequently, either a spatio-temporal conception that is totally domestic, enclosed by the national or the home and untouched by foreign influence, or an entirely foreign space and time, one essentially irrelevant to China, as in travel writing. In travel writing, the absurdities and barbarities of the exotic are mediated by the mobile Chinese self, who translates them, tames them, and authoritatively represents them as oppositional to the Chinese or central (*zhong* 中), geographically epitomized as the national (*zhongguo* 中国, central nation).

The American situation is obviously vastly different—the place "America" came into being much more recently for both European arrivals and native residents at the moment of European disembarkation on a formerly isolated continent inhabited by other nations. It initiated a context of contact so prevailing that a "new world" with a new name began to exist. American literature has always, as a result of the material conditions of its geosocial condition, been a literature of movement and of contact and conflict between peoples, traditions, cultures, histories, and literatures. The experience of heterogeneity and mobility, the perpetual struggle to define "Americanness," and the cultural and physical violence associated with territory and with race, class, gender, religious, political, and ethnic differences all endlessly manifest themselves in American literature, as they are the common threads that distinguish and define American experience. The trajectory of American national history has been one not of opening up, as in the Chinese context, but one of gathering in and enclosing. The national literature developed in confluence with this trajectory, by examining the successes and failures of the national projects of domesticating the continent in the nineteenth century, and by continuing to register the failure of that dream of totalization even in the Great American Novels of the early twentieth century.

The important motif of closing and opening doors (national borders) to "outsiders" has

been prominent in Chinese history in relation to European and American foreigners since the early European visitors, the Jesuits, were expelled in 1724. Since then, China has undergone several cycles of opening and closing up to the present, including the momentous opening following the first Opium War, the energetic closing after 1949 by the new People's Republic, and the cautious re-opening of the post-Mao period. American border histories are less methodically cyclical, although U.S. policy has also had its shifts in attitude toward various "outsider" groups, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882-1943) and the current revisitation of that nativism in the form of anti-Mexican and anti-Muslim feeling. Policies of exclusion in the United States only became possible after the founding of the nation, which made territorial circumscription possible; it promoted these attitudes and augmented them, by legitimating expansionism as a national goal and encouraging the enclosure of all available "free land" as domestic.

American domesticity has always been haunted, though, by its inability to consummately settle and by its paradoxical declarations of openness from behind barriers to entry. National feeling will forever suffer from divides in attitude toward non-American others that arise from the absence of trust, which binds society together through displays of shared intent, such as cultural ritual.[7] Lee Haiyan also shows that Chinese national unity has always been haunted by the Confucian system of kinship solidarity and the "ties of blood and soil," which problematizes both trust in civil society and functioning in the modern world of a society composed of strangers (7). The result is that although the predominant motif and ideological framework in both national contexts is a binarism of domesticity and foreignness, in which the nation is cast as a domestic interior whose walls are solid and whose door is able to be opened or shut to outsiders,

[7] Seligman describes these dynamics of "stranger society" in his "Introduction" to *Ritual and Its Consequences*.

the material and historical reality is that national spaces and experiences, particularly in the globalized world of international movement and what Adam B. Seligman calls "stranger society,"[8] space is much more adequately apprehendable only as local (situated but fluid) rather than domestic.

The Second Comparison: Travel Writing Traditions and Genre. The ubiquitous popularity of travel accounts has made them integral producers of culture. Traditions of travel and travel writing influenced, in Joshua A. Fogel's words, "ways in which men and women actually travelled (how they moved from place to place, what itineraries they followed, even what emotions they were called upon to experience at given sights) and the genres of travel writings that they produced (prose, poetry and combinations of the two)" (vii). Travel writing produces effects on the landscape: while not always as visibly as in Chinese landscape inscription, in which the text itself becomes one with the landscape, affixed to it permanently,[9] all travel writing participates in the cultural production of geographical space. Travel accounts erect iconographic imagery of the elsewhere, communicative signs to which readers are habituated and thus which promise the clarity of transparent, rectified meaning. Iconography is self-perpetuating: subsequent travelers and writers tend to respond to and reproduce previous images and impressions, negotiating these pre-existing figurations, which mobilize collective consciousness about a place and translates it in terms of the "known."

Beyond these general qualities, though, a contradistinction is often made between the Chinese and American traditions of travel practice and writing. Richard Strassberg offers the following explanatory juxtaposition, albeit brief and simplified. To start with:

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[8] Seligman's "Introduction" to *Ritual and Its Consequences.*
[9] Strassberg provides an excellent overview of Chinese literary practices of landscape inscription, which serve to assimilate the place as Chinese space.

> [T]he mainstream of travel writing in the West developed as a means of facilitating the desires of writers and readers for a more liberated, autonomous existence. By defining altered selves in nontraditional accounts of other worlds, it played a role in critical phases of social and political emancipation at home.

Critical attention to travel writing in the West has centered on the loci of desire and otherness, perhaps largely due to the European history of exploration, and imperialism's functions and its critics. The tendency to read Western travel writing "as an unconscious projection of native values onto other cultures, an exporting of repressed anxieties, or as a fantasy of the exotic…. [or] mirrors of the writer's own desires and illusions,"[10] is predominant.

By contrast, Strassberg writes, the travel writing tradition in China is largely intertwined with the official-literati culture of the bureaucracy and their domestic travels from post to post; their writings generally reflect the limited national interest in the foreign. While there are some accounts of pilgrimages to India and other western countries, and chronicles of political missions to the margins of empire, this does not comprise the mainstream of Chinese travel writing. Also, because Confucian morality is one of centralization and filiality, the one who leaves home is assumed to do it for selfish (or even treasonous) reasons. The moral aim of many travel narratives, therefore, is to restore centrality of the home or emperor, and thus emphasize the filiality of the traveler and his status as impersonal function of the rituals of statecraft, religion, or other institution (Introduction). The associated practices of landscape inscription, in which travelers leave material imprints of texts written about places on those very places during their sojourn there, had both aesthetic and practical function. He writes that landscape inscription "was one way a place became significant and was mapped onto an itinerary for other travelers.

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[10] Strassberg 1-3. Strassberg is summarizing ideas from Dennis Porter's *Haunted Journeys.*

By applying the patterns of the classical language, writers symbolically claimed unknown or marginal places, transforming their 'otherness' and bringing them within the Chinese world order" (6).

Although the desire for liberation and autonomy is rarely expressed in Chinese travel writing, and there is an overwhelming expectation that travel be lamented for forcing individuals to separate from their families, to be exiled from cultural centers, or to experience hardship and suffering, there are some shifts in the late Qing toward expressing passion for travel. Emma Jinhua Teng's exploration of Chinese accounts of travel to Taiwan, for example, found that travelers on this frontier expressed sentiments linking the value and authenticity of travel to its danger, exoticism, distance, and undermining of convention (*Taiwan's* 20). The dramatic widening of China's frontiers to include Tibet, Mongolia, Manchuria, Xinjiang, and Taiwan during the era of Qing colonial expansion in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a widening equally dramatic to the one in the nineteenth-century United States, redefined the spatial and ethnic composition of the Chinese state and reiterated the demands on traveling bureaucrats to, through their representations of those places, assimilate them as part of the Chinese world order.

The instigation of what Hongbing Zhang has called the "culture of travel" during the period of Chinese transformation from imperial state to modern nation-state comprised a significant cultural phenomenon. The culture of travel can be defined by the pervasive importance of travel to the era on multiple fronts, including the rise of international travel and the massive migrations of people within China due to political upheavals, the seepage from the ports into the interior of foreign people and objects, and the production of travel writing and its incorporation into other forms, such as geography and literature. These provided "materials,

experiences, writers and readers" and made travel, and the associated loss of essential meaning, "a narrative act already working inside the production of Chinese modernity from the very beginning" (10-15). The touristic experience was repressed in Chinese international travel during the nineteenth century not just because of historic precedent but also because the primary concern was national defense: the Chinese literati began to promote international travel only as a response to threats to national sovereignty and to the increasing fragmentation of Chinese cultural totality. Even that utilitarian promotion met with rigid opposition from both the government and the populace. Zhang argues that while Europeans regarded travel as a kind of "universal catalyst" and guarantor of authenticity and originality, Chinese discourse on travel primarily permitted travel when it might contribute "to the restoration, renewing and rebuilding of the Chinese nation and civilization and ultimately to [regaining] lost historical totality." Touristic experience posed only "an obstacle to the realization of that imperial and heroic goal (279-280).

For Americans, the primary transition in the nineteenth century was the opposite trajectory, of moving from openness to enclosure, and so there, too, there is distinctness in the types of travel writing that became central texts in the canon. Despite the fundamentality of travel experience to American experience, travel writing generally failed to achieve centrality in the American canon, which gives the somewhat misleading impression that it has not had a powerful (if often covert) impact on the national literature. Terry Caesar addresses this issue by drawing a line of distinction between emigration and travel in American literature:

> Emigration is a crucial element in the discourse of American difference. Travel is not. Could this be because travel abroad is aligned to back migration and therefore similarly runs counter to the national mythology? The experience of emigration... has a history,

> and, as part of "the narrative by which the country has come to define itself," emigration functions as "part of that discourse which moved people to go there in the first place." Travel abroad, or the narrative of what moved Americans to depart from America, is, on the other hand, most emphatically not part of American discourse (any more than travel writing is prominent in its literature). (10)

Movement toward, establishment of, and orientation toward the home take a central role, therefore, in deciding what is nationally significant, emphasizing again the post-Revolutionary motivation toward boundedness. But, this outlook, which is essentially imperialist at heart, does not reflect the extent to which the canonized takes its lead from the influences of the margins, or the extent to which those writing on the margins build the national through their embodiment of national subjectivity and anxieties on the frontier and abroad. Geographically, Caesar is also not accounting for westerly travel: he assumes that travel abroad is travel back (to Europe), whereas much westerly international travel in the nineteenth century actually comprised the progressive movement of emigration across the multinational continent. Travel west, into non-national territory, is not back-migration, not repatriation, not tourism, and yet accounts of travel to the west that have been centralized in American literary discourse are primarily those that portray travel to and within nationally acquired spaces for purposes of settlement, not those that portray travel outside the national space, although there are exceptions.

Westerly discourse, or discourse that is geographically oriented toward movement west, is infatuated with the dream of American *tabula rasa* and presence at the communion of historical promises (which takes place at the American table), and therefore denies "back-migration." This conception of space-time functions as an ideal; it is the empty, homogenous

time that Walter Benjamin connected to the concept of human historical progress.[11] On the other hand, westerly discourse is haunted by the whispers against those dreams. Especially in frontier-era writing, the antagonism and anxieties come out of the intrusion of the easterly: that which does back-migrate, or that which pulls the infinite and novel toward its detractors and reminds it of its cultural liens. This is one of the major sources of Anglo-Chinese antagonism in the west—as progress moves westward, the incomprehensible Chinese move "backwards" across the Pacific toward the east, bringing with them what is perceived as a menace to fulfillment of Anglo-American dream.

To the extent to which travel, its practices and its writing practices, is integrally linked to culture and the nation across the board, travel and travel writing can be theorized in generally transportable ways despite these divergences in national particularity. Writing, including the writing of travel, becomes a kind of ritual exercise, in Adam B. Seligman's sense of ritual as an act that draws on the imaginative capacity to cross between imagined worlds and to empathize, not because it sees unity or wholeness between those worlds but because it gestures to the other in spite of heterogeneity. In contrast to the extreme viewpoint, which demands "constitutive selves" and sees "incoherence and fragmentation as… signs of insincerity" or inauthenticity (*Ritual* 181), representations that employ the travel trope—even if their evaluation is ultimately negative toward otherness—acquiesce to the unbinding of the home because of this activity. "Home" in the context of travel implies not just a geographical source but also an aggregate produced by constituent people, practices, epistemologies, culture, politics, history, and other factors that create environment and habituate the individual. Habitus, then, the "habituated

[11] See the *Theses on the Philosophy of History.*

embodied and mental schemata, implied in social communication, in personal attitudes, in social identity, in cultural experience and in the production of cultural meaning," arises out of "a tendency or disposition, induced by our habits, to have feelings and to act," and becomes "a stance on oneself and on the environment."[12] Habitus is a form of cognition and judgment, even if it is not conscious reasoning: it is central to human experience, behavior, emotion, representation, intersubjectivity, and feeling about being oneself in the world. Travel provides the ultimate challenge to habitus, yet also activates it and creates hyperawareness of embodiment: habituation is spatially and temporally located, as being-in-place means embodying heritage and carrying the burden of perpetuating the past. It also has an emotional dimension, as the body becomes the interface for interaction with others. As Thomas Fuchs points out, one sees people's bodies, not their minds; recognition or understanding of others is really only knowledge of how to interact with them, based on interpretation of their bodily actions (59-60).

Iconic figurations, such as those produced and perpetuated by travel writing, are essential producers and transmitters of cultural and subjective knowledge, linking the *motion* of bodies in space to *emotional* experience. The *mise-en-scene* of the represented body becomes the site at which articulations are "coined" (Flach, "Introduction" 16) and through which individuals become emotionally bound to the home, even as they recognize the distance between themselves and the represented other. Habitus relies on the expectation, simultaneously, of difference and similarity to make subjectivity a possibility, and binds and unbinds the subject via emotions such as nostalgia, which becomes a threshold between centric (collective) and eccentric (personal) positions. Home, for the traveler, is the source of his or her interpretation of and experience in alternate environments; yet the traveler reshapes the home by his or her own physical or textual

[12] Flach, "Introduction" 8-9. Flach draws on discussions of habitus by Bourdieu and Aristotle.

return.

What this implies for a critical methodology is attention to the productive force of travel within the "home," whether this implies familial residence, locality, or nation. Texts register the impact of travel both in thematic content and in form, as writers adjust inherited configurations and methods of articulation to novelty of experience. The experience of non-understanding or non-recognition, whether for travelers attempting to convey foreignness to home audiences or for people at home to come to terms with strangeness amongst them, creates conditions hostile to domesticity (which can also be read as totalization, boundedness, settledness, or constitution). The trope of travel always turns texts into what James Clifford calls "ex-centric narratives": ones that focus on "any culture's farthest range of travel while also looking at its centers, its villages." Travel texts consider "how… groups negotiate themselves in external relationships, and how… culture [is] also a site of travel for others" (25). This sense of the "travel text" can accommodate both the text of the exotic or fantastic and the authentically eyewitnessed one, as well as regional writing that registers the perforation of home space with the foreign, since all these function as imaginariums for a home audience, allowing readers to imagine de-contextualization and confusions of habituation and learning responses to those confusions from the text.

Figurations of outsider alterity play a central role in local narratives since they contribute to the dialectical construction of the subjective beyond the questions of what to do with eccentrics from the in-group. The specific sense in which I employ the term "figuration" responds to the inherent problem in all acts of textual representation: the inevitable abysses separating the experience, the thought, and the inscription. In this sense, the early international travelers, who most evidently struggled to translate for readers the astonishing foreignness of what they encountered, only faced an exacerbated form of the problem facing all writers: how to

adequately record a thought or experience in ways that are recognizable to audiences. Figuring the other, and in the process iconifying it as cultural sign, often happens at the structural level, where a figure is generated by the simultaneous deviation from common linguistic usage and referentiality to the *literal*; as such, it is stylistic, "the figurative style." Gérard Genette describes these rhetorical "images" or "figures" as poetic visions, commonplace expressions transformed through literary flourish (Ch. 3, "Figures").

However, I think of this figuration happening in a related but slightly different way, one somewhat more connected to the literal. Since representation of travel implies a relationship between narrative discourse and actual time, space, and movement (the experienced, the historical, not only the rhetorical, though often experienced in terms of the rhetorical), Roland Barthes' discursive sense of the "figure" seems more germane. These texts are so deeply underpinned by their situatedness between cultural environments that the poetic impulse of the writer to describe is also a practical impulse to describe presence in the real. Barthes likens a writer, toiling to adequately represent, to a lover confronting the silent other within himself (the "loved object") by struggling with the image repertoire at his disposal. Barthes describes "figures" in terms of the writer's relation to discourse or utterance thus:

> *Dis-cursus*—originally the action of running here and there, comings and goings, measures taken, "plots and plans": the lover, in fact, cannot keep his mind from racing, taking new measures and plotting against himself. His discourse exists only in outbursts of language, which occur at the whim of trivial, of aleatory circumstances.
>
> These fragments of discourse can be called *figures*. The word is to be understood, not in its rhetorical sense, but rather in its gymnastic or choreographic acceptation;… the body's gesture caught in action and not contemplated in repose: the body of athletes,

> orators, statues: what in the straining body can be immobilized. So it is with the lover at grips with his figures…. Figures take shape insofar as we can recognize, in passing discourse, something that has been read, heard, felt. The figure is outlined (like a sign) and memorable (like an image or tale). A figure is established if at least someone can say: *"That's so true! I recognize that scene of language.*" (*Lover's* 3-4)

The fragments of language that are the explosive product of the writer's racing mind are not to be considered schematic (rhetorical) but more photographic: a still moment, captured, that bursts out impulsively from the totality of activity and potential. Figures become "what in the straining body can be immobilized"—taken out of the cache of memory and arranged, arbitrarily or with intent, according to the work of the traveler-writer's mind. Barthes' metaphor for discourse returns to the figure is its relation to its architect, the writer, and emphasizes the activity of language itself, which shuttles between the recognizable image and the mental activity of the writer.

His figuration of the figure lends itself to discussions of travel because of its emphasis on activity: the active qualities of language and thought, and the capacity of literature to describe that motion. As it turns out, that capacity is limited; while human life is a state of motion and change, writing demands a stilling of that motion into language. What is frustrating to the writer about the figure is its reductiveness, and that it can only establish recognition in the audience if it appears authentic, "so true." While "the power of locomotion" lends to humans "a life of passion" (Santayana 8), the stilling of that motion into text, while retaining the aura of the passionate original, finds that actual experience is non-transferable and therefore deals by nature in reductions that become meaningful again only as text, circulating as part of the cultural habitat. Figures allow us to understand something of the production of knowledge about other

people and places, even the generation or perpetuation of stereotype: the figure becomes a topic or site, reduced enough to be recognizable and also to be refilled at the discretion of individual readers according to their own habituation.

The importance of the figure resides in its dual sense when it comes to travel/writing: it can refer to both the linguistic, discursive, or rhetorical construct, but also to the images or silhouettes of individuals around whom the narrative is structured, and by extension, who embody or focalize the tensions present in the text. The body and its capacity for movement is incontestably essential to travel, just as the problematics of capturing and rendering visible the shifting body is central to travel writing. The readability of the human figures of the text, undergoing travail and experiencing displacement as they exit their habituated environment, or arriving in localities in which they are unreadably foreign, communicates meaningful information primarily because it instigates an unresealable aperture in the traveled space, undermining its settledness.

Methods and Parameters

To trace a topos of travel in the 1800s in a way that puts the extraordinarily distinct and separate traditions of China and the United States into conversation with one another, while making sense of the unprecedented novelty of nineteenth-century writerly situations and affinities, the chapters have been organized according to chronology, national or linguistic association, and generic particularity, with the intent of presenting more or less parallel trajectories for comparison. The chapters are organized into two parts, the first on Chinese literature and the second on that of the United States. Each part contains three chapters: the first on traditions and precedents of nineteenth-century travel—its ideologies and (inter-)textual practices—that informed the

development of transpacific travel literature; the second on some of the earliest eyewitness reports, from the mid-nineteenth-century, of travelers from one of these nations to the other; and the third on the impacts of international travel and cross-Pacific exchange on the development of modern literary forms.

Parts One and Two are not perfectly analogous to one another, for the rather obvious reason that the historical situations and literary traditions of China and the United States are quite different from one another. This also arises out of the complexities of the transnational flows between the two countries, the kinds of travels, travelers, and travel texts that may be found in the given historical period, and the irreducibility of author and text to the national especially in an age of long-term sojourn or immigration and of language acquisition. The complexities of individual affinities and textual afterlives, pervasive transnationalism, and the dynamics of travel itself, in which the traveler-writers are de-centered with varying degrees of permanence from their home lands and audiences, complicate our notions of nationality. A number of decisions about categorization had to be made, although I've tried to underscore the ways in which these categorizations might mask the important ways in which generic, categorical, or national boundaries degenerate precisely because of the activity of crossing.

In order to organize on the basis of nationality, authors were classified by their primary national identification or citizenship, and not by the place where they geographically spent the majority of their lives. This has to do with audience and language of the texts they produced: since I am concerned with the production of cultural images of the cross-Pacific other in the home context and their importance to the development of national literature, I looked primarily at intended audiences and dissemination, and not, for example, the nation in which the text was penned. Although the analysis opens up a path for discussion of the importance of immigrant

writing to national literatures, since the focus is on the productivity and effect of travel on national literatures and the home audience, those texts are generally left out in favor of sojourner writing (writing that returns). Faced with the necessity of limitation, the book limits its scope by audience, looking only at exchanges and texts referential to mainstream literary culture in China and the United States. This means linguistic limitation to texts written in English and Mandarin, and assumes that the primary audiences for these languages were the United States and China, respectively. (For example, Chinese-language missionary publications in China are discussed in Part One, and English-language missionary publications find their home in Part Two.) By extension, the linguistic limitation implies exclusion of a rich body of work that would be of interest, for example, to Asian American or hemispheric studies. Within this framework, however, there is still a great deal of room for exploring the relevance of marginalized writing to the mainstream.

The analysis juxtaposes texts that are often unexpectedly diverse, and necessarily ameliorates many of the distinctions between them (generic, philosophical, literary, historical, or other) that would normally segregate them from one another in scholarly discussions. For example, Part One examines a nineteenth-century novel with Taoist bent alongside bureaucratic documents on statecraft, traditional belletristic travel accounts (*youji*), and "factual" accounts in the empirical (*kaozheng*) tradition. Using this methodology of constructing "zones of intertextuality" around key texts allows those texts to emerge in their localized standpoints rather than be awkwardly shoehorned into a more generalized or categorical zone of abstraction. The goal is to show the responsiveness of fictional literary forms to the nineteenth-century context of international travel, and to suggest that there are deep connections between nonfictional documentation of real journeys and fictional imagination and structure.

I also split my discussion chronologically, into an early twentieth-century period of literature traditionally classified as "modern," and a preceding nineteenth-century period in which the roots of modernity began to take shape and which therefore takes on characteristics of a transitional period between what came before and the modern period that followed. In the Chinese context, the divide between these two periods has either been set around 1919, when the May Fourth and New Culture movements pushed literature toward exhibiting characteristics recognizable as modern according to international standards, or in recent decades more often around 1895, after which point novels with modern characteristics and clear distinction from earlier writing began to be written. 1895 was the year of the humiliating Treaty of Shimonoseki that ended the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), which initiated a decisive attitudinal turn toward facing the foreign or Western challenge. Qing officialdom was forced to acknowledge the crisis facing the country—collapse of civil order and sovereign control—and a new determination arose to study the foundation of western success, although the attempts like the Hundred Days Reform (1898) were abortive, and imperial unwillingness to rapidly and decisively reform became part of its downfall by 1912.

On the literary front, Patrick Hanan points out that 1895 was the year in which *Xichao kuaishi* (Delightful history of a glorious age), which he regards as the earliest extant modern novel, was published. This novel is written in the style called for in John Fryer's fiction contest of the same year: "new fiction" that "would attack the three great evils of Chinese society—opium, the examination essay, and foot-binding" (Hanan 21). As Benjamin Elman notes, after 1895, "Yan Fu declared that accommodation between Chinese ways and Western institutions had failed," and that it had become obvious that Chinese science, politics, military strategies, and economics had failed under the pressure of superior foreign strength in those areas. This was the

beginning of the “failure narrative” for the late Qing, since in all areas (including literature) it had failed to be modern at a moment when that innovation was crucial (55, 61). For China, this is an era of transition from tradition to modernity and from isolation to global connection; it is an era of change from hierarchical imperial organization and sovereignty to a condition of structural disintegration and semi-colonialism, in which the elite and literati declined, and the democratic and proletarian arose. In hindsight, though, the era has been characterized as deficient and lagging according to the teleology of the modern, and the responses to epistemological fragmentation have been characterized as borrowed from the West or Japan, copied from the imperial oppressors in order to compete with them. That narrative emphasizes the production of modernity in the Chinese context as a “response” to the stimulation of the foreign.

In the context of the United States, there is usually considered to be a shift to realism after the Civil War (1861-1865), and a further shift toward modernism at the *fin de siècle* that solidified with the advent of the First World War (1914-1918). On the broader level of American national literature, the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are considered an age of progression and triumph for American literature: the rise of national literature after the Revolution and War of 1812, the development of native literary theme and form, and the eventual ascendancy of American literature internationally in the modern era. Malcolm Bradbury’s veteran history of modernism, *The Modern American Novel*, finds the roots of modernism in the naturalism that preceded World War I, but says that even “in the 1890s American fiction was still regarded as an offshoot of British fiction” (v) and that the spirit of revolt that instigated the experimentation of high modernism came only in the wake of the fragmentation brought on by that war. Ostensibly, this would seem to be an inverse narrative to the Chinese one, but there is within this narrative a dissonance brought on by its centralization on

the eastern seaboard and transatlantic relations with Europe. If we shift the point of reference to the vast “western” areas of the continent, those undergoing colonization by the United States during the nineteenth-century era, we see a strikingly different narrative emerge.

Historically, the literature of the American west has been seen as complementary but secondary to the national literature, which remained centered in the East until at least the 1850s, when the far western territories were annexed to the Union. Realistically, the literature of the west was always and continues to be “regional,” even when it has achieved canonical status. This study focuses on the literature of the U.S. west not only because it comprises the zone between the U.S. east and China, to where large numbers of individuals from both poles emigrated and in which turbid contact between Anglos and Chinese was centered. It also focuses on western literature because the conditions of its development bear some striking resemblances to the development of Chinese literature during this time period. Both geographical contexts were disturbed by internal unrest and transnational violence during the nineteenth century, and both experienced some form of colonization that led to historical narratives characterizing those spaces as temporally behind or backwards. This kind of historicizing, which takes place under the conditions of subjectification, leads to narrative representation in which tropes of abjection and haunting are foundational, and quite frequently linked to a sensation of local place as perforated by otherness and unfulfilled dreams and projects. These similarities, along with other interesting overlaps, such as the engagement with discourses of utilitarianism or benevolence in the discourse of transpacific travel, make for a number of serendipitous comparisons along the way.

What I hope to avoid, even while engaging in chronological progression in the organization of these chapters, is overemphasizing linear progression or historical cause-and-

effect relationships between modern and early modern eras. Periodization is useful for the sake of organization, differentiation, and comparison, but the analysis frequently undermines these historical markers even as it employs them. My goal is not to present unified visions of historical development, but rather to gather literary fragments that contribute to the imagination of cross-Pacific others, and show the intimate connection of those texts to broader literary movements. And additionally, to critically address the narratives of failure or tardiness in relation to the modern that have characterized attitudes toward nineteenth century literature in both contexts, and show how they might be one basis on which fruitful Sino-American comparison might be made.

Hopefully, by looking in literature for "what travels" and how this potential for movement of people and ideas can create wavering or discrepancy at the "line of light between," I can find a basis for future comparative study of the transpacific literature of travel, not in the interest of identifying "globalized localities," but in the interest of understanding the effect of people and discourses in motion on the sense of localized self and one's affinity to larger structures (such as nation or religion). The book will, I hope, uncover practical and philosophical intersections at which unexpected vistas can be found.

The Chapters

Part One of the dissertation proposes that there was a shift in Chinese literature during the transitional nineteenth century from the domestic novel, which presents space according to a China-universal chronotope and shows little to no concern with the extra-territorial, to the local novel, in which locality is no longer imagined as purely domestic. The shift is brought about under the conditions of a culture of travel, but is not purely a response to the stimulus of the

foreign. As Natascha Vittinghoff suggests:

> China's intellectual entry into the "family of nations" with its hierarchical structures brought about fundamental changes in the self-positioning within these hierarchies. However, it neither resulted in a forced surrender to the hierarchical Eurocentric world system as suggested by the imperialist paradigm, nor in a sublime ignorance of realities as proposed by narratives of a failed modernity. Instead, modern Western sciences entered China in a complex process of reciprocal exchanges of meaning, ideas and interpretations taking place in various institutions which opened up spaces for hitherto largely unexplored hybrid discourses.

Further, western knowledge was nativized by "institutional frameworks, structures of classifying knowledge, ideological interests and indigenous exigencies" but this variety and alternative ways of "perceiving and actualizing the new and foreign" in the local familiar contexts have been obliterated by the early twentieth century intellectual homogenization ("Introduction" 4).

I develop this idea in Chapter Two by looking at the intellectual adaptations of the nineteenth century that came to bear on the development of international travel and travel writing, including the rise of "failed" trends in ideation such as evidential scholarship (*kaozheng xue*), the self-strengthening movement (*ziqiang yundong*), and essence-use (*ti-yong*) dichotomy, which refigured traditional conceptualizations according to the increasing globalization of China. I posit these trends less as historical failures to reform China quickly enough to save it from imperial collapse, but rather as unique intellectual positionings which Denise Gimpel, borrowing from Mark Elvin, has called "creative conservatism": an "awareness that new patterns of behavior were required", an "optimism without the sense of a breakdown within the fundamental Chinese world order", and a "trust and confidence in the abilities of people to reorganize" (25-

26). As such, the appearance of "modern" literature around the turn of the century might be seen less as a historical break and more as continuous development of earlier movements toward modernity. Li Ruzhen's novel *Jing hua yuan* provides an example of these distinctly nineteenth century epistemological constructs that are in transition from representing the frontiers of empire and what lay beyond as sub-human and barbaric (oppositional and irrelevant to China) toward seeing the outside as holding up a mirror in which China might more clearly see itself.

Chapter Three moves toward exploring the impact these precedents had on the development of international travel writing. It looks specifically at some of the earliest accounts of travel to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. As contact with the rest of the world increased in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the conventions of Chinese travel writing came up against the limitations of their own insularity. For a genre based largely on intertextuality and precedent, for a codified literary language often unused to accommodating alien terminology, and for travel practices themselves which were also bound up in textual practice, travels to "new" spaces and writing to report on them were destabilizing experiences. Hu Ying notes that there was a deep connection in people's minds at the turn of the twentieth century between travel writing and new learning (新學 *xinxue*, or 西學 *xixue* Western learning), and one reason for this was the destabilizing experience of the new opportunities of international travel.[13] Hu asks:

> If travel in the traditional literati mode is almost always a peregrination through the past, and travel writing a way of writing oneself into the tradition accumulated at a given site, and if the general cultural predilection of East Asian travel writers and artists has been to visit the same 'known' spaces as an intellectual-cultural exercise in poetic and discursive

[13] See also Huters *Bringing the World Home*, Pollard *Translation and Creation.*

filiation, what happens, then, when one visits a place without such textual accumulation? (151)

The answer comes as a variety of hybrid texts and travel/writing practices between the mid-1800s and the early twentieth century that contributed to modern era revolutions in literature. These texts reveal some of the links that connect the domestic insularity of the "traditional literati mode" to the culture of literary experimentation and global familiarity increasingly evident after 1895.

Chapter Four offers a brief "conclusion" to the cycle, as it explores the impact that travel and travel writing had on the fiction of the early twentieth century and the development of popular images of America and the Pacific. Continuing the line of reasoning proposed in Chapter Two, it shows the completion of the shift from domestic to local fiction. It showcases the effects of travel by looking at texts set within the national boundaries, that depict local space, but that offer depictions of the foreign (and especially the American) within that space. Because a distinct sense of "the American" as categorically unique from "the foreign" or "the Western" in general was still developing in the early 1900s, texts depicting specifically the American do not start to appear until a few decades into the century. The earliest twentieth-century fictional representations explored in this chapter, thus, deal more generally with the Pacific or Western tropes. It first examines the conceptualization of the liminal Pacific Ocean in Liu E's *Lao Can youji* (*Travels of Lao Can*) as metaphor for the influence of what is on the edge of perception on the experience of the domestic subject. It moves to analysis of the foreign missionaries in Li Boyuan's *Wenming xiaoshi* (*Brief History of Enlightenment*), who are integral to the structure of cyclical disintegration in the novel, to expose their participation in opening axiological voids in Chinese systems of value. Finally, the chapter examines the American as a spatial aperture in

"*Shou*" (Hands) by Xiao Hong and "*Linggan*" (Inspiration) by Qian Zhongshu: in both cases, the American (and images or dreams of America) becomes a hole in Chinese space into which one slips and falls. These texts each offer a sense of the way foreign others had become imagined as "strangers within." The chapter argues that the Pacific and the American are utilized in modern fiction as ciphers for inscrutability and liminality, things outside of familiar perception yet active in local space, which create effects of diminishment or sinking on Chinese subjects.

While acknowledging that categorizing according to nationality is a methodology of abstraction that minimizes the actual problematics of nationality—including permeable borders, sojourners and emigrants, race and identity politics—Part Two of the dissertation shifts its perspective from that of China to that of the United States. It begins with a discussion in Chapter Five of the traditions of westerly travel and writing by Euro-Americans, since it takes the stance that writing about China and the Chinese, both those in China and in America, is primarily a form of westerly writing. Westerly writing is defined according to a chronotope of western advance, referential to the politics of exploration, mythologies of wildness and civilization, and the essentiality of transnational racial violence to that advance. Being in and writing the West for nineteenth-century Euro-Americans was always bound up with feeling elsewhere from and "looking backward" to the east: to hegemonic trans-Atlantic "civilized" culture, to eastern seaboard metropoles and the literary culture centered there, and to American visions of rejuvenating the old world. The chapter explores this dynamic and its associated constructs, such as the cult of authenticity and cultural inscription on landscapes, in works of western travel writing: the western sketches of James Hall, the Corps of Discovery journals by Lewis and Clark, and the parodic fiction of Edgar Allen Poe. Shifting to a more polygeographic perspective of American culture means attending to the liminally American spaces such as those of the

nineteenth-century west. Making this shift is important for understanding the significant impact that “the Chinese” had on the development of modernism in western U.S. literature, a discussion that is furthered in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Six follows the American expansionist gaze as it lifts its eyes over the Pacific to China in the early nineteenth century, by exploring the idiomography of the American foreign mission. This group of idioms, outgrowths of historical and contemporary national and religious concepts, became the narrative tools used for constructing the Euro-American self in relation to China. They also proscribe the difference of American relation to China at this point in history from other historical eras: physical access to China turned China from a benign and distant exotic dreamland into a concrete nation with specific challenges from American points of view. The unique idiomography and teleology of Protestant missions intertwined in various configurations with national ideologies, particularly Manifest Destiny. As such, it continues the concern with the historicized geographics essential to the dissertation as a whole, as well as the role played by the traveling individual in focalizing the profound heterogeneity of the world within the narrative.

The chapter proposes the concept of pragmatic romanticism to describe the sensibility of many early nineteenth-century travelers toward China, and explores the unique configurations of concepts like benevolence, utilitarianism, and authenticity that are subjects of interest in Part One as well. That these texts, which were integral to the production of American narratives about China and widely read during their time, are generally marginalized by literary history is unfortunate given the tremendous impact they had on developing narrative modes for writing about China and the Chinese that surface in American fiction soon after the instigation of regular Sino-American relations. As elsewhere in the dissertation, this chapter takes the stance that

understanding transnational influences is essential to understanding ostensibly domestic texts. And even more specifically, it takes the stance that the extreme marginalization of missionaries from contemporary histories comes out of a sense of distaste for the part they played in American history, and critiques that avoidance which is not extended to secular travelers of the same era, many of whom professed equally problematic attitudes toward China, from the contemporary perspective.

Chapter Seven builds on the discussion in the previous two chapters by examining ways in which the development of the United States' western literature was impacted by the increase in Sino-American exchange. It argues that the advent of real Chinese presence in the west, combined with the perception that Chinese presence constituted a threat to the fulfillment of Anglo-American westerly ideals, created "the Chinese" as a gothic literary trope essential to representing the continued unsettlement of the West. Chinese abjection, in the fiction of Bret Harte, Ambrose Bierce, and John Steinbeck, lays waste to psychic and spatial settlement, even as "the Chinese" comes to represent alternative future trajectories than the teleological one of Manifest Destiny.

PART ONE

Chapter Two:

Nineteenth-Century Chinese Travel Narrative: Precedents, Influences, and Discourses

> *The Country of Feathered Folk lies to the southeast…. Its people have long heads and feathers grow on their bodies…. Bawlhead Country lies to the south of it. Its people have a human face, with wings and a bird's beak…. Satefire Country lies to the south of Bawlhead. There they have an animal's body and they are born black. Fire comes out of their mouth…. The Neverdie Folk are to its east. Its people are black and they live to a great age. They never die…. Darkthigh Country lies to its north. Its people wear clothes made from fish and they eat seagulls. They control two birds, one on each side of them.*
> -- *Shan hai jing*, "The Classic of Regions Beyond the Seas"[14]

> *After a few days, the junk arrived at the Country of Restless People. The people here had black faces, and were so restless that they moved about all the time. Even when they sat down or stopped walking, they could not keep their arms and legs still. 'They look like epileptics,' said Lin…. 'Do they live to an old age for all their ceaseless activity?' Tang Ao inquired. 'Yes, they do," said Old [D]uo. They all live to a ripe old age, because they exercise their muscles so much.'*
> -- Li Ruzhen, *Jing hua yuan* (Destinies of Flowers in the Mirror)[15]

TRANSNATIONALISM AND THE BIRTH OF THE MODERN: AN INTRODUCTION TO PART ONE

China's relationship with the United States was, like a number of other international relationships, luckless enough to be born during an era of overzealous Euro-American imperialism and expansion. The timing can seem doubly bad, considering that the rise of inter-hemispheric global relationships involving imbalances of power came in conjunction with the appearance of Chinese discourses of modernity, nationalism, and internationalism. These discourses were born already permeated by obsessions[16] with essence, passivity, desire, and resistance that tenaciously sprouted and clung to other discourses, including those related to the

[14] Translated by Birrell, 109-110, 128.
[15] From Lin's translation, 69-70.
[16] As in C. T. Hsia's famous claim in 1961 that Chinese modern writers suffer from an "obsession with China": so occupied are they, by their national crises, that they are unable to move beyond provinciality toward the cosmopolitanism required for achievement of true modernist expression. That Hsia proposed this viewpoint from a position of extraterritorialization speaks to the complexities of identity logic and the geographically unbounded reach of embedded literary history frameworks.

modern era transitions in literature. Histories of Chinese modern literature since the early twentieth century[17] have tended to evince this logic, framing the appearance of modernity in Chinese literature (whether overtly or by induction) as intimately related to intrusion of the foreign and rupture with a traditional and epistemologically enclosed past, although more recent efforts have invested this history with more nuance.[18]

Recent scholarship has proposed that theoretical frameworks grounded in these obsessions and the dichotomies they rely on have a limited or limiting potential. The "enlightened" literati of the early twentieth century were quick to point out the limitations and failures of their forebears' approaches,[19] setting off a century of critical approaches based in denigrating and discrediting "tradition" and the outlooks of the previous generation. The theoretical maneuverings introduced by poststructuralism and embraced by post-Maoist scholars, while clearly valuable, did little to ameliorate this attitude of critical patricide. Critical thought in the twenty-first century, however, seems to be quite interested in diminishing the tyranny of the twentieth-century obsessions.

Alexander Des Forges, for example, claimed that the fetishization of "modernity" has dominated the field of modern Chinese literature, reinforcing a historicized and progressive understanding of modernity and emphasizing Chinese "lack." Like others, he has called for new investigations that put pressure on the foundational conception that Chinese modernity is above all belated or semicolonial because its timing is off, since it inopportunely appears under conditions of underdevelopment.[20] The "semicolonialism" of Chinese thought about its own

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[17] For an overview of the main literary histories of the twentieth century, see Y. Zhang's "The Institutionalization of Modern Literary History in China, 1922-1980."
[18] See David Wang's assessment in Chapter One of *Fin-de-Siècle Splendor,* "Repressed Modernities."
[19] Including Lu Xun's influential "bad writing" assessment of the Late Qing novels of exposure and castigation: "there was a great deal of criticism of society but little genuine literature" (*Brief History* 388.)
[20] In "The Rhetorics of Modernity." Chakrabarty has called this the "first Europe then elsewhere" structure of global historical time (7-8).

literary history has been evident since the May Fourth Movement of 1919, or perhaps since the appearance of the Late Qing castigatory novel around 1895, in the internalization of Euro-American imperialist-modern teleology. David Wang, among others, has suggested that this internalization may have changed the course of development of Chinese modern literature, but did not invent modernity in China.[21]

What troubles us now seems to be not the "right or wrong" shape that modernity took but the mental colonization itself. That Chinese literature and its intellectual tradition could be thought of as obsessed with itself and unable to participate in the global cosmopolitan project of envisioning the human condition tells us that there must be a viable distinction between the provincial and the cosmopolitan, or that the categories of "universal" and "particular" must exist in some dichotomous form. The only way Chinese modernity can be considered provincial and self-obsessed (or behind and incomplete) is if we give credence to the more forcible claims to universality made by Euro-American history and thought during the time period. Also, we would be suggesting that abstracted universality might somewhere actually exist in material form, un-alienated from itself by its own embarrassing particularities. Instead, I follow Dipesh Chakrabarty in recognizing the powerful effects of the universal vision on the provincial or local, both at any given historical moment in any particular place and in the effects of universalized visions of history on retrospective analyses of specific eras.

Part One of this book seeks to situate the nascent nineteenth-century literary relationship

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[21] The assessment that literary modernity began with the May Fourth Movement of 1919, which dominated literary historiography for much of the twentieth century, now is generally qualified by acknowledgment that late Qing literature from the turn of the twentieth century was the important early stage of this literary revolution. See Huters' "Introduction" to *Bringing the World Home.* David Der-Wei Wang, in *Fin-de-Siècle Splendor*, pushes back further to the earlier nineteenth century to find alternate forms of modernity whose influence over the transformation of literature during the early twentieth century was frequently denied. His assessment is that "late Qing fiction is not a mere prelude to 'modern' Chinese literature, but a most active stage that precedes its rise. Late Qing fiction would have led to a very different version of the Chinese modern had it not been rejected by high-minded 'modern' Chinese writers as so obviously 'premodern'" (16). Other historians have argued for the beginning of Chinese modernity centuries earlier, such as Porter in "Sinicizing Early Modernity."

of the United States and China within this broader set of issues in order to explore the importance that relationship held for the development of Chinese literature. As one of the many international relationships China forged during that century that was marked by an imbalance of power, it is relatively easy to look at the relationship as one-sided, in which China plays a receptive role, but that would be reductive. I would rather promote a different kind of literary history that de-emphasizes mental colonization and survivalist intellectualism and instead highlights literary relationships, innovations, and continuities across time and space. It contributes to the theoretical turn toward reevaluating the ruptures of 1895 and 1919 by resurrecting some continuities between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and exploring the historical "breaks" of the early twentieth century less as splits from the past and more as redefinitions of already occurring transformations. Rather than considering this in the teleological terms of projecting the timeline of the modern further into the past, or of allocating progressiveness and stagnation, I propose that the literary changes of the nineteenth century, viewed through the lens of the era's geopolitical changes and culture of travel, constitute an important yet unnamed literary phase in their own right.

Let me be more specific. Prior to the 1890s, Qing-era fiction tends to fall into two categories in terms of its relation to the foreign: the "domestic novel" and the "novel of travel." The first type is fiction that is by-and-large unconcerned with the extra-territorial, including the West and foreign affairs. This type presents China in domestic terms—often literally, depicting the inner chambers of courtesans or the household affairs of a set of characters, in the tradition of *Hongloumeng* (Dream of the Red Chamber, by Cao Xueqin, mid-eighteenth century)—and thus has little to no comment on or relationship to the foreign. Even until the mid-nineteenth century, novels such as *Ernü yingxiong zhuan* (Tales of Moral Heroes and Heroines, by Wen Kang, circa

1850-1870), follow native narrative forms that do not reflect a sense of foreign rupture,[22] and they construct literary space according to Confucian ideals of harmony and unity. As such, they draw little attention to contemporary affairs and instead present space-time as "China-universal."

Despite the historical circumstances under which the novel was written, Keith McMahon describes *Ernü yingxiong zhuan* as "oblivious to the issues of the Opium War and the growing foreign incursions into China." He suggests that, "outside of a few references to opium... *Ernü yingxiong zhuan* registers little evidence of Western influence or disturbance." And further, "Wen Kang… constructs a harmonious Confucian China beset with only temporary, completely solvable problems…. The West is rendered entirely extraneous" (*Misers* 268). "Domestic" novels like this one faced extinction by the end of the nineteenth century, largely because the overwhelming cultural influence of travel transformed domestic fiction after 1895 into what will be called "local" fiction, in which locality is no longer imagined or experienced as purely domestic. Part One of this book examines the specific conditions of travel and nonfictional travel writing in the nineteenth century that influenced the Late Qing transformation of fictional space-time, and shows that the rise of the culture of travel disassembled the clear demarcation between the domestic novel and the second type of pre-1890s novel, the novel of travel, resulting in a shift from the domestic novel to the local one. Examining nonfiction in conjunction with fiction allows us to see that the foreign rupture in domestic space registered much earlier in nonfiction. Also, it highlights the sources of the inheritance passed on to "modern" fiction by various cultural precedents associated with nineteenth-century travel culture, precedents that this chapter will examine.

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[22] Hanan describes the relations between nineteenth century novels and those preceding and following in *Chinese Fiction of the Nineteenth & Early Twentieth Centuries*. His comparison is specifically in terms of the narrator; he discusses *Ernü yingxiong zhuan* in Chapter 1, "The Narrator's Voice Before the 'Fiction Revolution'." See also McMahon's comments on the relationship of *Ernü yingxiong zhuan* to earlier works of Chinese fiction in Chapter 13 "*Ernü yingxiong zhuan* as Antidote to *Honglou Meng*" of *Misers, Shrews, and Polygamists.*

In contrast to a common narrative of the Chinese nineteenth century that emphasizes its *lack* of global engagement and *failure* to evolve (I am thinking here of the narrative of the "sleeping giant" and the image of immobility that projects, as well as the early twentieth-century Chinese accounts of nineteenth-century literature and politics[23]), I aim to suggest that since travel was in fact continuously and increasingly happening, both in domestic and foreign spaces, even if it was denigrated or suppressed it constitutes the underlying prerequisite to Chinese literary modernity. The transition from domestic to local space-time that takes place in Chinese fiction unravels the image of Chinese immobility because it is contingent on the actual reality of movement and engagement out of which it emerges. Mikhail Bakhtin terms space-time the "chronotope," a literary work's artistic expression of the inseparability of space and time. For Bakhtin, artistic perception allows no separation of time and space from the emotions and values attached to them, and as such the chronotope expresses a "historical poetics" and defines the relationship of the artistic work to actual reality. As such:

> In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope. (*Dialogic Imagination* 84)

The chronotope has genre significance because it allows for certain types of narratives to unfold. First, it is the organizing center for the fundamental elements and meaning of a narrative; second it is the grounds for the narrative visibility of time, which holds the possibility of communicating an event as information. The chronotope collects all the abstract elements of the literary work

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[23] Joseph Levenson is among those who have been credited with prolonging the "failure" narrative in American sinology (see Huters, p. 4). Y. Zhang's list of accounts includes the formative Chinese literary histories by Lu Xun (*Zhongguo xiaoshuo shi lüe*, 1923-1924) and Ah Ying (*Wan Qing xiaoshuo shi*, 1937).

and gives them flesh, subjecting the primary (experience) to the secondary process of thought, and creating the grounds for the representability of events (243-258).

Bakhtin conceived the chronotope in relation to novelistic representation specifically, but since even “nonfictional” travel writing involves the narration of experience, it follows the same process of re-presenting, of assigning meaning and thus value to events, and can also be discussed in terms of the chronotope. Discussing travel literature in terms of narrative space-time makes a variety of objectives possible: productively elucidating and connecting the disparate praxes of various eras (the premodern, transitional, and modern); showing integral relationships between travel, travel writing, and changes in Chinese fiction from the nineteenth to twentieth centuries; critiquing narratives of Chinese literary modernity; and, ultimately, grounding a connection between Chinese and American literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Let’s pause for a minute on the third objective and the problems of hindsight. Twentieth-century narratives of Chinese literary modernity emphasized engagement with world literature and expression of “modern” literary qualities (according to the Euro-American universalized standard) as identifying markers of Chinese modern literature. One inaccuracy of this outlook is that it privileges an outcome without recognizing the durable national context out of which elements of the modern were endlessly emerging. And further, it fetishizes modernity, attaching it to a specific iteration of the “non-traditional” and giving it a totemic quality (Wang, *Fin-de-Siècle* 16) or aura (Benjamin, “Work of Art” 221) that prioritizes that which is missing over that which is present. This is not unlike other global modernisms. Certainly, the “modern” narrative practices and topics that gain a hegemonic foothold in literature after 1895 do to some degree represent a shift following an encounter with the West and Western thought. However, the

West-as-source narrative has been disproportionately dominant in producing and characterizing Chinese literary modernity, often burying modern literature's native precedents and influences, and undermining any interpretation of encounter that would align Chinese shifts toward globality with authoritative intentionality or with the transnational characteristic that we increasingly identify in the development of modern literatures worldwide.

The by-product of this outlook is an overemphasis on evolutionary progress and on the passivity associated with foreign "influence," and an under-emphasis on the activity of Chinese global engagement and on the transformations in literature and thought that were always already occurring prior to the "birth" of modern literature. Categorizing fiction in terms of its engagement with the foreign (instead of, perhaps, in terms of the rise of subjectivism, birth of national consciousness, shift toward popularization, or rejection of tradition,[24] although all these processes were interrelated) reframes the relationship between "modern" literature and its antecedents, emphasizing the *essential* position of travel in relation to the transformation of literature and the broader cultural shifts from the mid-nineteenth century until the end of the Qing.

The idea "essence" in the previous sentence must be taken in two senses in order to understand the depth of influence that travel had on both the era itself and on the shift toward modernity in literature: travel was both *necessary or indispensable*, and it was, in the Chinese sense of *ti* (體 essence), the *substantive quality* of the era. Hongbing Zhang calls this phenomenon the instigation of a "culture of travel," a term that is useful for thinking about the *zeitgeist* of that time period and the significance of travel because it emphasizes the mutual productivity of travel, travel writing, historical circumstance, and a new sense of Chinese

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[24] The "Introduction" to Doleželová-Velingerová and Wang's *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital* offers a helpful overview of variations in scholarly narratives of Chinese literary modernity.

globality. Zhang's "culture of travel" starts with the production of travel writing and its incorporation into other forms, such as geography and literature, and with the massive domestic migrations of people as a result of political turmoil during the nineteenth century, which provided "materials, experiences, writers and readers" as fuel. He describes travel as "a narrative act already working inside the production of Chinese modernity from the very beginning" (10-11). In contrast to accounts that emphasize the reactionary origins of Chinese modernity (as a consequence to global travel and encounter with non-Chinese forms of knowledge, international politics, and imperialist force), this kind of historical outlook recognizes in Chinese literature the transnational quality that is perhaps universally part of movements toward literary modernism.

It may seem like there is a contradiction in this outlook. If the goal is to discuss transitional and modern Chinese literature without over-emphasizing semi-coloniality as a source of modernity, and without falling into the historicist trap of viewing Chinese modernity as a "result" of Western incursion or as a progressive evolution toward a universal end, can that goal possibly be attained by taking travel as the essential transformative force, or by using foreign rupture as a means of literary categorization? In short, can one de-emphasize the foreign catalyst by theorizing according to a relation to the foreign? The answer is clearly yes. For one, the latter scenario, in which we emphasize travel and transnationalism, retains the logic of the Chinese nineteenth century in theorization of it, rather than transplanting onto that century the logic of the post-colonial twentieth century, which tended to acknowledge foreign imperialism and gloss Chinese imperialism. Secondly, looking internationally we see similar processes happen in a variety of national literatures in their transformations to modern forms: increasing interaction with foreign influences and the rise of travel (as both movement and aperture) in

culture.

The presence of influence does not necessitate a loss of sovereignty over cultural production. If we are talking about some amorphous thing called national culture, the presence of influence indicates a state of transnationalism, which manifests its individual character according to the logic of the local. Transnationalism can be defined in this way: as a perspective or state of being arising out of the commingling of the home and the away, to the point that the local takes the place of the domestic but not to the point that the local is subsumed. The seeming contradiction in theorizing nineteenth-century Chinese transnationalism can be resolved by the shift in critical perspective to incorporate a broader set of precedents or influences beyond the foreign ones, to acknowledge the nineteenth-century attitude of sovereign authority over cultural production and the particular character that transnationality took, and to accommodate an understanding of identity that presupposes ideation of the other as integral to self-formation. This theoretical shift is a shift toward the local perspective.

My method for adopting the local perspective is to make use of a broad spectrum of resources that can be associated with the development of travel literature and of Sino-American relations, thus positioning texts in relation to various precedents, influences, and outgrowths. The transformation of movement in the nineteenth century—the changing and increasing flows of ideas, individuals, and objects; its revolutions in transportation and communication technology—is integral to Chinese literary modernity in more ways than can be described in one chapter. The focus in Chapter Two is to contribute something to the excavation of the buried logic of the nineteenth century itself. By briefly constructing a sense of the historical conditions for the development of modern Chinese international travel and thinking about travel, I hope to contextualize nineteenth-century travel writing in ways that can lend shape to other discussions:

the shift from early modern to modern fiction, the roots of Sino-American literary relations, and the potential for transnational comparison of Chinese and American literature.

The chapter assembles a set of precedents for thinking and writing about travel that contributed to shaping the culture of travel and the nineteenth-century movement toward literary modernity. These influences and precedents emphasize the importance of the nineteenth century period both as an early modern literary interval in its own right and as an ancestor to the twentieth century. They include Qing trends in scientific thought, generic conventions for travel writing, established attitudes about travel, and rhetorical modes associated with statecraft and philosophy.

Further, the chapter also identifies literary trends that can be associated with the rise of the culture of travel to suggest that travel is a significant, if not *the* significant, source of impact on Chinese narrative discourse since 1895. The domestic novel's expression of Confucian worldview provides a departure point for examining the transitional era through comparison of it to nineteenth century travel-related texts: travel novels such as *Jinghua yuan* (*The Destiny of Flowers in the Mirror*) written in 1818[25] by Li Ruzhen; accounts of travel to the United States by Zhang Deyi and Lin Zhen; geographical and anthropological documents by Wei Yuan and Xu Jiyu; official records documenting shifting positions on international relations; and turn of the century or early twentieth century novels of travel and local fiction. Chapter Four will extend the discussion to the impact of travel on the literature of the post-1895 era.

Finally, this chapter provides a prologue to Chapter Three, which identifies the particular impact the rise of the culture of travel had on the simultaneous construction of American myths in China and the birth of Sino-American literary relations. Prior to the mid-nineteenth century,

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[25] The earliest edition of the novel has usually been considered the 1828 *Jiezi yuan* edition, but Epstein and others have noted that the novel was originally published in 1818. See Epstein "Engendering Order" (103).

the United States did not exist in China; that chapter will explore the relationship that century and its historical peculiarities had on the ways the domestic audience came to imagine the space and people of the United States. Not only does this open up possibilities for comparing Chinese transitional-era travel narrative and literary representations of the United States to their counterparts in American literature, it also illuminates the very nature of literature in the transitional era itself. Both travel and narration of travel are reflective processes in which the encounter of self with its others results in the reshaping of both. Chinese expansion across the Pacific, along with increased domestic encounters with foreignness, is as intimately related with formation of the American icon as it is with the restructuring of Chinese writing practice.

The local perspective is particularly appropriate to the transitional period since it is the period in which we can register an actual shift from the domestic-as-universal perspective to the local-as-transnational one in cultural products. Nineteenth-century writing associated with travel presses up to the surface modern literature's primary issues (David Der-Wei Wang has suggested that these are "desire, justice, value and knowledge")[26] before they become prominent in fiction, at a time when thought was still guarded as "essentially" sinic, and before those issues were reformed and reframed in Western terms. The only reason this perspective might be novel is that under the logic of the twentieth century revolutionary, anti-imperialist modern, the connection of the "new" to the past was, at times, repressed. By exploring the outlooks and concerns of early international travelers, this chapter works to draw connections between modern issues and their traditional counterparts—using the transitional period as the key to uncovering obscured links between traditional epistemology and twentieth century paradigms.

[26] Wang describes "four discursive axes" of modern poetics in late Qing fiction ("enlightenment and decadence, revolution and involution, rationality and emotive excess, mimesis and mimicry") that foretell the four primary issues concerning modern Chinese literature: "*desire*, *justice*, *value*, and *knowledge*" (*Fin-de-Siècle Splendor,* 10, 52, emphasis in original).

THE NOVEL OF TRAVEL AND DIALECTICAL EVALUATION: *JING HUA YUAN*

In contrast to the domestic novel, the second type of nineteenth-century novel in terms of fictional foreign relations, the novel of travel, does recognize "other" types of people and move through spaces outside of China's borders, but it represents what is outside as subject to the same space-time, "China-universal," as the domestic novel. As such, it recognizes the existence of the foreign but does not yet register it as opening an unassimilable aperture in the domestic space. Li Ruzhen's *Jing Hua Yuan* is an example of this second type of novel, which shares the re-centering urge of the domestic novel while expressing a relationship between Chinese domestic space-time and that of the world beyond the frontiers. It depicts multiplicity (in the form of strange governments, people, and landscapes, or in the form of dispersed Chinese and Chinese deities), yet brings that diversity together through unity of narrative form (each new locale and its inhabitants is introduced in succession and in a similar manner) and through the reiterative recognition by the foreign of the imperial center.

The organization of *Jinghua yuan* is cyclical (returning to an origin) in that its motivation is to re-center. It begins with a variety of dispersals that upset the heavenly and earthly order, then utilizes the journey motif as a way of re-collecting the dispersed back to the centers (either the kingdom on earth,[27] or the immortal mountains). All of heaven and earth suffers from an excess of feminine *yin* 陰 and its associated destabilization of order.[28] The earthly order is destabilized by dynastic changes (from Sui to Tang, and then by empress Wu Zetian's usurpation

[27] In the novel, China is called *tianchao*, the Celestial Empire or Celestial Land, although Lin Tai-yi chose to translate *tianchao* as "The Kingdom on Earth" "in order to distinguish it from the celestial world of the fairies and spirits" and to reflect its uniqueness, according to ancient cosmology, as the only country on earth, surrounded by uncivilized and remote borderlands and outlying islands. This eliminates the intended double meaning of Tang Ao's task to restore the overseas Flowers to the "Celestial Land" (Li Ju-chen, *Flowers in the Mirror* 296).
[28] For a full analysis of the gendered structure of *Jinghua yuan*, see Epstein "Engendering Order."

and establishment of the Zhou Dynasty) as well as by the imbalance of *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽 that having a female ruler entails. Feminine disorder is exemplified during the foreign travel in the novel by the overseas "Kingdom of Women," in which gender roles are completely reversed and women dress and function as men, to the extent of threatening to turn one of the male travelers into the "King's" concubine. The heavenly order is upset by the scheming of the goddess Chang'e to foment chaos, leading to the hundred flowers blooming out of season at the command of Wu Zetian. As punishment, the spirits of the hundred flowers are born into the human world to do penance before being reunited in the celestial realm. Most are born in the ten provinces of China, but twelve are born in the "islands overseas," primarily to families of exiled Tang supporters. The protagonist Tang Ao, who aspires to immortality, sets out on a quest to perform the charitable deed of helping the particularly unfortunate twelve transmogrified spirits who have been dispersed beyond the bounds of China.

The scenario allows Tang Ao and his fellow travelers to journey to a variety of foreign places and encounter the strange while still valuing above all ultimate reunification, return, and reinstatement (of the Tang Dynasty). Aside from other affinities to traditional cosmology,[29] the promise of the subjugation of the strange and its incorporation into the China-universal links this novel chronotopically to established narrative practices for travel literature, particularly texts in which the travel takes place in borderlands or extraterritorial areas.[30] Precedents are set as far back as the earliest surviving travel text of any length, *Mu tianzi zhuan* (Chronicle of Mu, Son of

[29] Dikötter offers a spatial and racial explanation of sinocentric traditional cosmology, in which the Chinese imperial center lay at the center of the world. Increased distance from the center indicated increased barbarity. Integration into that center promised humanization, and yet there remained a degree to which the non-Han could never fully lose its "other" qualities. The temporal structure of traditional Chinese cosmology, based on the system of "horary stems," is a cycle through 60 possible combinations, after which the cycle begins again. Strassberg notes that this system is used pervasively in Chinese narrative, in the enclosure of "linear sequences within recurring cycles" (17). For an overview of Chinese cosmology, see Henderson's *Development and Decline of Chinese Cosmology*.

[30] Zeitlin, following Charlotte Furth, writes that the Chinese view of "cosmological pattern... sought to incorporate anomaly rather than reject the irregular as inconsistent with the harmony of natural pattern" (7). Zeitlin calls this correlative thinking: "anomalies were taken as omens manifesting Heaven's will" (22).

Heaven, anonymous, dated around 400 B.C.),[31] and the other major surviving travel text from antiquity, *Shan hai jing* (Classic of Mountains and Seas, anonymous, ca. 320 B.C. - A.D. 200).[32]

Mu tianzi zhuan is considered the earliest extant text of Chinese travel writing. Although its emphasis on the supernatural and its commingling of terrestrial journey with metaphoric movement through imagined space makes it difficult to categorize as nonfiction, it provides a precedent for the literary positioning of the traveler (and his "home") in relation to the traveled space and encountered people. First, it establishes the chronotope of the travelogue as China-universal through its allegory of the traveler—in this case an emperor, the ritual center—demonstrating control over totality despite, or perhaps via, his displacement from the geographical center. The text is essentially an itinerary of an imperial tour, in which the presiding god or political authority of each visited area reaffirms the power of Mu in their ritualized encounters, which often involve gifts of tribute to Mu. Richard Strassberg describes *Mu tianzi zhuan* as projecting a "'politics of centrality,' in which power is believed to emanate from a fixed center and threatens to become dissipated when the center is destabilized and loses its ritualized authority" (15). However, because of Mu's characterization as a man who completely dominates his environment, Mu maintains the proper order of the world despite his morally questionable removal of imperial self from the capital. This primary travel text projects what continues to be projected in later Chinese travel writing: it affirms the ritual authority of Chinese geographical, cultural, and human centers, and does this by presenting the moral dilemma caused by temporarily destabilizing those centers in order to reaffirm them. There is, therefore, a further element to the generic chronotopic marker China-universal in the pre-1890s

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[31] A translation of *Mu tianzi zhuan* is included in Mirsky's anthology *The Great Chinese Travelers*.
[32] Birrell has translated *Shan hai jing* as *The Classic of Mountains and Seas.*

travel narrative: it follows a cyclical pattern of destabilization and reaffirmation of the China-universal.

The second way in which early travel texts provide a precedent for the traveler's literary positioning is in their treatment of dialectical others. They establish a hierarchical mode of representation based on metaphysical geography and anthropology: they associate the moral and cultural authority of the people at the geo-cosmological center with the moral and cultural authority to map extraterritorial spaces and represent extraterritorial beings, and they show the progressive dissipation of humanity based on degree of displacement from the center. Both *Mu tianzi zhuan* and *Shan hai jing* do this by establishing the self, and then placing the traveling self into dialectical contrast with extraterritorial others, who differ from and respond to the self in significant ways. In *Mu tianzi zhuan*, the self is "represented as an impersonal function of the rituals of statecraft" (Strassberg 15). As the highest human figure in the hierarchical organization of beings in the world, he is taken to represent a totality—all that and those integrated into the universal. Appropriately, the anonymous historian only records the traveler's expression of personal views in ways that affirm his authority: as brief moments of self-doubt about moral correctness, particularly the self-indulgence of traveling away from home; moments overwritten by the success of his encounters in affirming his hegemony.

Shan hai jing establishes the dialectical self differently, since it reads more like a guidebook than a record of individual travels. Yet despite its lack of a personified traveler, it establishes an imagined collective self in opposition to a fragmented and strange collection of extraterritorial others. The first five books of the text describe the sacred environment of China, imagining a harmonious cosmology, whereas the remainder of the text offers fragmented descriptions of strange environments beyond Chinese borders and denizens with dysfunctional

physiques.[33] People have hairy bodies, strange skin colors, backwards feet, two heads, and so on; the contrast to the self is highlighted in juxtaposition to the first five books, which contain descriptions of strange animals, deities, and cures for maladies, but no descriptions of humans. Whereas the universal self needs no description, the differences of others from the self are featured. The emphasis on corporeality divested of mental or emotive capacity relegates foreign beings to the continuum of "nature" or environment and implies the inconceivability of intersubjective relationships.[34] By its interpretation of the foreign as fantastical, sub-human, and dialectically opposed to the domestic, the foreign in *Shan hai jing* is appropriated by the self as the manifestation of alterity. In both ancient texts, foreign phenomena are framed in terms of a dialectical evaluative model: as differences charged with significance for the universal self. Alterity, as opposition, plays the role of reaffirming identity.

Jing hua yuan clearly inherits a great deal from these established traditions of travel writing. The travelers journey to the "Country of Black-toothed People," "Country of Restless People," "Country of Long-eared People," "Country of Intestineless People," and so on, and they stress the natives' differences from themselves, often because those differences cause them trouble. In contrast, though, to older travel texts, the differences are not always perceived by the travelers as negative (both in the prejudicial and the photographic senses), but rather reflective and relevant: the juxtapositions of selves and others often showcase problems with Chinese civilization, and the sympathetic representations of exiled Chinese allow for the self to be territorially externalized. Proto-modern dialectical evaluation shifts toward approaching alterity not just as opposition but also as analogy, and offering images of cognitive, emotive others with

[33] Birrell's introduction to her translation of the text provides a helpful overview of the text's organization.
[34] Fuchs suggests that intersubjectivity is based on immanent interactions between embodied agents, in which one sees another emotive body (which blushes or smiles, for example), assumes he or she understands what that sight implies, and knows a way of dealing with or interacting with that other.

whom intersubjectivity is possible.

These positionings of selves and others is one way in which *Jing hua yuan* shows its age: as a text arising out of the nineteenth century period of transition from historic literary modes and modes of thought to modern ones. Territorial externalization of the self is one of these transitional qualities. Politically, Qing-era expatriated Chinese were often Ming loyalists, and historically the suspicion of treason extended to any extraterritorialized Chinese. Prasenjit Duara suggests an association current until the 1880s between *huaqiao* (华侨 Chinese sojourner) and *hanjian* (汉奸 traitor to the Han); both indicated a betrayal and abandonment of civilization.[35] It is only during the nineteenth century that proto-national interest in expatriated Chinese people grows, slowly, among those in the homeland. The shift toward racial (as contrasted to geographical) discourses of Chineseness and understandings of global space has been most often located at the turn of the century, around the time of Liang Qichao's expatriation following the failed reforms of 1898.[36] Rebecca Karl cites the rise of the concept *tongzhong* (同種 same race), for example, as influential in developing modern discourses of race and power, linking crises in China to those in other countries and fostering a new nationalist understanding of *guo* (國) as people or nation over state. She notes that at the time of King Kalakaua of Hawaii's 1881 visit to Qing China, during which he promoted "same race" political unity and issued a warning about colonization and global changes in geopolitics, there was not yet a widespread nationalist concept of China's place in the globe and no sense of *tongzhong* with Hawaiians and their

[35] By the 1880s, the Chinese government had reversed its policy on overseas Chinese because of "growing awareness of the world system of modern nation-states and the discursive seachange accompanying it" ("Nationalists" 43); new policies tried to oversee the "coolie trade" and established consulates as a nation-state. Duara suggests that the interest in China in *huaqiao* was based in their potential contribution to national strength (both economic and political), and driven by the self-strengthening ideals of building the military and maintaining Confucian values.

[36] For more on the impact of discovering global space on turn of the century intellectuals, particularly Liang Qichao, see Tang's *Global Space and the Nationalist Discourse of Modernity* and Karl's *Staging the World.*

national plight of potential *wangguo* (亡國 loss of state). This changed by the end of the century, as Chinese intellectuals including Liang Qichao placed increasing importance on recognizing Chineseness in other areas of the world and on the role of overseas Chinese in national projects, and projected the sense that China might lay claim to the Pacific as space of opportunity (Karl; ch. 3).

The decline of the Qing enabled Liang's message about the significance of the Hawaiian Chinese to China to circulate and influence the tide of thought, though there were earlier travel texts that suggested a similar racial connectivity. The idea appears, for example, in Zhang Yinhuan's 1886 travelogue *Sanzhou riji* (Diary from three continents), in which he records the achievements and travails of Chinese in America with the ministerial goal of negotiating a new Sino-American treaty and seeking reparations for mob violence against Chinese workers:

> In view of [immigration restrictions and white mob violence against Chinese in America], what plan should the Chinese remaining overseas adopt? They should figure out how to maintain ties with each other and all engage in proper occupations so as not to be looked down on. Especially because the Chinese have come from tens of thousands of miles away they should collectively carry out the practice of people from the same community respecting each other and not divide up according to prefecture and county. Seeking their livelihood away from home they should be as one family…. We must let the other race know that we Chinese look after each other so that to some extent we can avoid being taken advantage of. (Arkush and Lee 73)

We cannot suppose that Zhang's ideas about *tongzhong* had caught on in the 1880s Chinese national space—Zhang was executed by anti-foreign Chinese conservatives during the Boxer movement of 1900-1901—but texts like this highlight the currents of thought that were already

challenging the traditional worldview in the transitional era. His message has a number of crucial elements. One is that Chinese space has begun to spread across the Pacific. Likewise, overseas Chinese are, to the foreign mind, simply Chinese, and if the rest of the world views them as connected to the homeland, it is important for Chinese in China also to view them as such. Otherwise, the practice of maltreatment may extend to Chinese in China itself in the political threats to territorial sovereignty. The Pacific and beyond, and the associated specter of statelessness, began to shape the Chinese sense of self in a new world of global violence and opportunity before it gained currency in the twentieth century.

Jing hua yuan likewise shows that affinity for the expatriated as self, as well as the sense of oceanic zone as *propre* zone of liminality, presents itself before the turn of the twentieth century, and thus cannot be tied solely to the twentieth-century rise of nationalism. Conventional thought made integration into "self-ness" conceptually dependent on geographic proximity to the center; expatriated Chinese were both irrelevant and dangerous for their voluntary displacement from totality. Part of the novel's social commentary arises out of the suggestion that there are numerous worthy and educated Chinese, exiled for supporting the reinstatement of the past dynasty, who want to return to the Celestial Kingdom but cannot. Considering the novel's historical context, it is suggestive of the numerous Chinese who would have been exiled as traitors under the Qing, but also increasingly the global sojourners seeking wealth and opportunity not available to them in China. Proposing that the imagined universal "self" can exist in other *places* opens up spatial apertures in the Central Kingdom and makes an early case for race as the essence of Chineseness.

Beyond proposing racial affinity over geographic affinity for Chineseness, the novel also proposes that there is both good and bad among non-Chinese people. Although in many of the

visited countries the people's diametric qualities are repugnant, there are frequently appealing cultural or physical aspects whose difference from "human" biology and Chinese ways of doing things point out the flaws of the Kingdom on Earth. In the Country of Gentlemen, for example, other people's desires always matter more than one's own, and so in the marketplace buyers and sellers bargain for the "worst" rather than the best deal. Tang Ao remarks, "Really... customer and shopkeeper have changed places. Each is saying what the other would say in other countries."[37] The Country of Gentlemen is still defined, in the old travel-writing mode, by its alterity to the Celestial Empire, but it offers a newer sense that the alternative may not be subhuman. In fact, alternative modes of civilization may exist, and it may be possible to learn something from them.

The Country of Sexless People, whose denizens do not sexually reproduce, is another example of figuration of alterity through comparison rather than simple opposition. Rather than procreating to ensure racial survival, all individuals who die merely sleep for a hundred and twenty years before coming back to life. Tang Ao's fellow travelers point out that this means the people don't crave ephemeral earthly gains, such as fame, power, and wealth, which are impermanent and would have to be struggled for again in the next life. They discuss how they must seem "foolish" to these people, and Tang Ao reflects:

> Lust for fame and fortune are like an intoxication. While a man is intoxicated he doesn't realize it. It's only after it is all over that he realizes that everything is like an illusion. If men could realize this all the time, there would be much less trouble on earth, and there would be much happier people, too. (74-75)

Tang Ao's reference to material life as an illusion adds to our understanding of the novel's title, which refers in a primary sense to the exile of flower deities to the illusory world of the Celestial

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[37] Translations are all by Lin Tai-yi from Li Ju-chen, *Flowers in the Mirror* (59).

Empire and its borderlands: the Flowers live a "dream" or "mirror" life of separation from Heaven in which they are unaware of their true spiritual manifestations.[38] There is philosophical resonance with both Daoism and Buddhism, in which phenomenal life is commonly considered illusory or subjectively imagined, with little substantial nature, whereas the mind can be purified to offer a true or objective reflection of the totality of Heaven and Earth. What is suggested is that the story is about being caught between appearance and reality, and is about the effort toward the eventual meeting of the inward and the outward, the real and the reflection, through mental realization. The novel acknowledges the problems of appearance and reality in a number of ways, and it also presses, as part of its re-centering urge, toward meetings at interfaces and resulting clarifications of mind. The journey story of international exchange and encounter combines with the story of mental cultivation (Tang Ao's Daoist quest for immortality and the Hundred Flowers' quests to pass the imperial examinations) to propose a variety of ways in which one can, for one, become aware of the subjectivity of "produced" phenomenal life and imagine beyond those constructions, and secondly, imagine an "other" self that is seen but only as a reflection, a mediated reality.

In the first chapter, the Fairy of a Hundred Flowers remarks from the celestial realm that watching what happens to men in the earthly realm is like admiring a "flower in the mirror or moon in the water" (鏡花水月 *jinghua shuiyue*) (Li, *Jinghua Yuan* 3). If we follow Ying Wang in regarding the supernatural beings in the novel as disseminators of omniscient authorial perspective, the Fairy's metaphoric mirrored flower or water-moon can be understood as encapsulating Li's intention for the novel. The comment is intended to function on a number of

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[38] Mirroring as a concept and technique has been identified as embedded in nearly all aspects of the novel. Epstein has shown that "mirroring" is utilized in the structure of the novel, through the pairing of inversely symmetrical chapters (105). Ying Wang argues that the proliferation of reversals and inversions in roles and plot (the common rhetorical technique of *fan'an* (翻案) is connected to both the word games and gender games in the novel (156-7).

levels, one of which being to foreshadow the gender role reversals that will upset orthodox order in the novel; another being to foreshadow the forthcoming exile of the flower deities to earth, in ignorance of their true celestial identities. On all levels it indicates an inability to see the real when one can only regard the mirrored, distorted, mediated image; it indicates the ungraspability of the dream (or alternately, of the real). It reveals the limitations of the human capacity for intimacy, either with others or with oneself: mortal perspective offers only a clouded vision of totality (a mirrored flower or moon), whereas mental cultivation can restore or turn one's vision toward the thing itself. The implications permeate all aspects of the novel. In terms of travel and foreign relations, the novel treats these encounters and travails as necessary steps in stripping away the layers of film clouding the individual's perspective. Encountering alterity, and the resulting connection of alterity to self—a form of collecting the scattered and disparate—is what results in happiness and cosmic understanding. As Tang Ao's daughter remarks, during her search for her father who has gone missing on his quest for immortality, "Can it be that after one has 'seen all,' he 'turns back' and finds happiness?" (177-178).

The suggestion that clarity about self can come from encountering other realities abroad is the major *epistemological* marker of this text as transitional. The journeys abroad (Chapters 9-53) are *the necessary prerequisite* for the return of the flowers and the re-centering of the Central Kingdom in the final overthrow of Wu Zetian; travel provides both the real and allegorical means of plot resolution and self-realization in the novel. In terms of following a cyclical pattern of destabilization and reaffirmation of the China-universal, the novel resonates with the chronotope of the traditional travel text. By its conclusion, all forms of chaotic upset in heaven and earth have been rectified. The novel also repeatedly subjects what is outside China to the China-universal chronotope through assimilative practice. What is different from previous travel

writing modes and representational practices is the registration, if slight, of the effect of travel on the collective self, and by extension the alteration of the way in which the travel text chronotope and the text's dialectical evaluative mode of representation are epistemologically intertwined.

The Chinese travel text's established mode of representation, dialectical evaluation, establishes the self and then reflects it onto others who echo back significant alterities to reaffirm the self, thus substantiating a hierarchy associated with geography. Like all modes of representation, it is an ideological tool that serves to reinforce ways of knowing: its connection to the chronotope, China-universal with a cyclical return, was taken as natural or obvious. Introducing the foreign aperture, which in this case is the recognition of potentiality for alternate manifestations of the *Dao* than the "Central" one, deconstructs the transparency of the connection by hypothesizing the subversion of civilizational hierarchy. Proposing the necessity of travel and mirroring to self-realization, a theme appropriate to Daoism but problematic for Confucianism, also complicates the distinction between *nei* (内inner) and *wai* (外 outer). The significance of identifying these issues, which become central in the latter part of the century as the ruling structure faces collapse, in a text that predates the Opium Wars is precisely that: discovering their native quality that was only amplified by political problems later in the century.

Maram Epstein's analysis of the novel and its structure finds that the novel's premises of the imbalance of the feminine and masculine is "a metaphorical projection of [Li's] ambivalence toward the literati's place in society as moral and political leaders." By structuring the novel around masculine (*yang*) disempowerment, due to a variety of male characters' failures to master their desires along with the deconstructive and "scattering" qualities of feminine (*yin*) excess, Li projects anxieties about the diminished position of the scholar bureaucrat in late imperial society, the fluidity of social change, and the "exile" of being posted to distant provinces. In addition,

"the displacement of neo-Confucian practices of self-cultivation (*zixiu* 自修) by evidential studies (*kaozheng xue* 考證學) as the central intellectual discourse during the Qing" meant a loss of the core of scholarly identity (Epstein 102-103). This reading of *Jinghua yuan* is very helpful in working against feminist readings of the text (which attempt to characterize the novel as subversive according to a postmodern logic) to emphasize its core values of reaffirmation of orthodoxy and masculine order, and in identifying the novel as an expression of anxiety. The transitional era quality of the text only becomes visible, though, if we take the analysis one step further.

The novel has alternatively been interpreted as satire: indulgence of creative whim or "playful writing" on the part of a scholar writing for other literati, an intention highlighted by the saturation of the text with literary and cultural allusion and by the "game" motif that reappears throughout the novel to challenge literati ideals and reveal them as illusion (Y. Wang 140). Further, it has been read as utopian fiction in its construction of an idealized, unofficial historical moment through which to transmit allegorical meaning (Dun Wang 46-47). Both readings emphasize Li's own attachment to his illusions even as he critiques them. As allegory and satire, the novel can be read as both an expression of serious anxieties and as one of playful idealization without contradiction. Despite the novel's cyclical return to harmonized society in which roles are restabilized, individuals are geographically resituated, and women are gathered back in to domestic space, the anxieties it projects about competition, fragmentation of political and moral authority, and marginalization or deterritorialization, as well as the connection of those anxieties to the narrative project of writing a pleasurable or playful utopian history, reflects the same dichotomy of desire and disavowal that regulates the later nineteenth-century response to alterity.

Travel is the singular narrative trope capable of expressing the dichotomy, not only for its

generic familiarity to both Daoist lore and traditional fiction, but also for its intrinsic qualities. One of these is its relationship to desire, which as I will discuss in further detail later, is a relationship repressed by the official discourse on the foreign in the nineteenth century. Drawing on the concept of "'extreme repose giving rise to movement' (*jing zhong si dong* 靜中思動), an expression used for the Stone's awakened sense of agency in *Honglou meng*" (Y. Wang 147), Ying Wang notes that the prerequisite for travel in *Jinghua yuan* is desire. The Fairy of a Hundred Flowers neglects her duty as overseer of flowers because of her enthusiasm for playing chess, and as a result the flowers can't resist Wu Zetian's command and are humbled to earthly form. The Fairy's desire to witness and participate in the cultural splendor of the human world is also foreshadowed in the first chapter and might be taken as expressive of the author's own longings (Y. Wang 147-151). The trope of "games" allows the journey motif to permeate even the second half of the novel, which takes place primarily at a literary gathering of transmogrified flower spirits inside a garden inside China—the consummate *inner* space—, at which they play word games. The interpretive task of the poetic word games that Daughter of Tang, who is the human form of the Fairy of a Hundred Flowers, encounters while searching for her father in Little Penglai, the mythological abode of immortals, are reminiscent of the traveler's task of interpretation undergone in earlier chapters, and the task of interpretation or translation becomes part of the way the journey motif is utilized in the novel. The journey motif is extended beyond the tale of overseas travels into the rest of the novel by this connection. Finally, the utopian format allows those travels to take characters beyond present-day historical conditions including the decline of the Qing and changing world geopolitics, to hold a mirror up to contemporary issues like scholarly anxiety and the position of deterritorialized Chinese in a pleasurable format. Exploring contemporary issues and the scenarios of mental cultivation through the trope of

travel, which allows face-to-face comparison of self with others and offers the broader view of home gained by distance, is Li's method for dealing with his dichotomous sense of self.

The transitional quality of the text does not arise out of narrative innovation but out of the confluence of traditional literary tropes in a way that allows them to introduce an aperture into universality: by proposing the potential for positive alterity and introducing liminal identities like "extraterritorialized Chinese." Introduction of the "other" quality into the universal self—or acknowledging aspects of alterity that may be superior to proper (*propre*, appropriative) identity—decenters the self, problematizes the self and other categories, and unmasks the avowed universality of the self. Noting difference through dialectical evaluation, thus, does not imply simple inversion, opposition, or negation in transitional texts the way it did in classic texts. Instead, there are deconstructive tendencies emerging out of both the content of the novel (the utopian vision for re-centering to an ideal that never quite existed) and its form (the slightly altered travel text formula). Although the Daoist formula for travel writing as journey of enlightenment is largely absent in post-Opium War travelogues of the nineteenth century, which emphasize empiricism, pragmatism, and home-orientation, its interjection of the dichotomy of desire and disavowal into the dialectical evaluative model is significant for all transitional era texts.

Since the introduction of Edward Said's concept of orientalism, we have understood the identity/alterity nexus in a specific way—in simplest terms, as a confrontational production of self-understanding through othering of difference, influenced always by structures of power. The concept of "orientalism" has provided us with the post-modern/post-structuralist paradigm for theorizing what literature has long told us: that holding up a mirror to the other returns an image of the self. The similarities between Chinese imperial practices of representation and

subjugation and those of Western imperial programs, as well as a postcolonial desire to retrieve Chinese sovereignty over identity perceived as lost over the course of the last 150 years, have led to conversations on the potential for a counterpart term, occidentalism, to function in the theorization of Chinese literature. Emma Jinhua Teng has even proposed the narrowed term Late-Qing Occidentalism to categorize "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'China' and 'the West'," that emerges out of a similar fascination with the exotic (particularly as exemplified by the foreign woman) as happens in orientalist discourse (Teng, "Women" 103). As with orientalism, this attitude toward the absolute Other seems marked—increasingly, toward the turn of the century—by the paradox of desire and disavowal that is connected to Chinese anxiety about the foreign and its inversions of the normative.

It is important to acknowledge that persistent transitional-era attitudes toward travel (as, particularly, utilitarian) and toward "others" (as barbaric and strange), although they have often been rhetorically framed in the twentieth century as resistance to western imperialism, are in equally important ways vestiges of an older Chinese imperialism. However, while I share the impulse toward affirmation of Chinese authority over self-production and the need to recognize sinic imperialism as of utmost importance in shaping the way sino-western relations developed, I question the potential for a paradigm called occidentalism to lead in that direction. Politics aside, the term isn't a neat fit—partly because its association to the body of theory on orientalism forces the direct comparison of the two when such comparison is not always even. For one, the Chinese attitude toward the West is essentially an extension, particularly during the nineteenth century, of the general attitude toward all peripherality organized on a historical cosmological logic, informed by Confucian gender ideology, historical modes of other-representation, writing

traditions (including travel writing, tales of the strange, geographical texts, and exotica), and even imported ideas such as missionary discourse about Chinese oppression of women. Although exceptions like Wang Tao (1828-1897) emphasized desire and the Chinese individual imaginary in his mid-nineteenth century travelogue and short stories featuring western female protagonists,[39] much of nineteenth-century travel literature envisioned a universal collective self participating in the imperial cosmology. That cosmology fairly openly affirmed the relationships between imperial hegemony and practices of dialectical self-invention—consider, for example, the tribute system[40] or texts like *Mu tianzi zhuan*—, whereas Said's program in the 1970's involved unmasking what he perceived as being a veiled western imperial practice of subjugation through a religious-economic-political program disguised under rhetorics of enlightenment and humanism. As with western orientalism, Chinese occidentalism would figure the self in the native terms of its own cultural tradition and in opposition to the *imagined* other—and yet in the Chinese case, particularly as the nineteenth century draws to a close, negative western ideas about Chineseness and positive western self-representations began to be internalized and reproduced in the sinic context. This has been taken to be the unique factor of Chinese occidentalism: in addition to the simultaneous disavowal of the barbarian and the desire for its exotic elements, as happens in orientalist thought, there is also the awareness of and internalization of the other's negative discourse about the self.[41] Theorizing in this way emphasizes the subaltern and reactionary aspects of the mirroring relationship, which can distort the degree to which Chinese epistemology actually took a western turn, especially before the

[39] Teng suggests that the feminization of the West, rather than making it seem barbaric and ignorant, as it did for many others, for Wang Tao made it seem glamorous and alluring, a vague and fantastical realm of sexual adventure ("Women and Occidentalism" 110-117).
[40] See Tarling "China, Its Tributaries, and the West" for an explanation.
[41] See Chen's "Introduction" to *Occidentalism.* Additionally, Teng points out that eastern self-representations seem to have played much less of a role in informing European orientalisms than western self-representations did in informing Chinese occidentalism (118).

twentieth century.

Rather than attempting to transplant a western theory to the Chinese context, it seems more productive to seek an alternative to both pure universalism (subsuming the encounter of two particular worlds under a universal discourse) and pure contextualism (escaping the material conditions of encounter by imagining an essential native perspective free from or prior to influence), both of which seek transcendence over particularity and overwrite the idiosyncrasies that result from encounter. This alternative would be to look at Chinese identity production from a local standpoint, by creating a "zone of intertextuality" between transitional-to-modern travel texts and their antecedents, precedents, contexts, and influences, whether historical, rhetorical, or discursive, in order to examine that present on the basis of "itself and its past."[42] The approach resonates with those taken by other scholars recently. Natascha Vittinghoff, for example, writes that the encounter between Chinese and western scholars:

> foremost evolved as a *transcultural* process which neither implied a one way process of transmission and reception nor resulted in a fundamental break with an indigenous past. This perspective does not set out to undermine the significance of the Western impact on developments in China, but chooses a focus on the interplay of global relevance and local exigency which allows the abandonment of strict entitetical separations of the 'foreign' and the local and on questions of how putatively global or universal knowledge was put to its local uses."[43]

Taking historic Chinese texts alongside Late Qing contemporary contexts and travelling

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[42] The idea of a "zone of intertextuality" is adapted from Connolly *Identity\Difference* (42). Connolly suggests that Tzvetan Todorov employed such a strategy in *La Conquête de l'Amérique* (*The Conquest of America*) in examining the precarious and ambiguous postures born of the initial encounters between conquistadors and Aztecs whose universalities were confronted with unassimilable difference.
[43] Vittinghoff "Introduction" (3). Duara's *Rescuing History from the Nation* and Karl's *Staging the World* (12-23) also propose this kind of theoretical positioning.

discourses as starting points for understanding transitional and modern Chinese travel literature eliminates the need to endlessly footnote to western theory while still opening up an often strikingly similar set of issues and observations. For example, the frequent envisaging of the West by Chinese travelers both ancient and modern as a "mirror world," a primitive place "beyond" that is reflective of Chinese desires and characterized by reversals of the civilized ways of China. The endless functionality of the myth of the "Kingdom of Women," (女人國 *nüren guo* or 女兒國 *nü'er guo*) which first appeared in *Shanhai jing* and played an important iconic role in many later texts such as *Jinghua yuan*, comes out of this and reflects its associated worldview and anxieties.[44]

Ancient Chinese travel writing and the nineteenth-century novel of travel comprise only a small segment of the intertextual zone we would need to construct in order to understand transitional-era travel writing, the shift from domestic to local fiction, and the genesis of Sino-American literary relations in China. Reconstructing the logic of the nineteenth century means, for the remainder of this chapter, gathering into the conversation Qing-era evidential scholarship, the conflict between Confucian and Daoist notions of travel, nineteenth-century official discourses of utility and self-strengthening, the insurgent discourses of desire, pleasure and the body, political shifts toward nationalism, and nineteenth-century travel writing.

THE INTERTEXTUAL ZONE

Let's add a few more layers to this zone of intertextuality. I have mentioned that Qing-era Chinese imperial practices resembled, in many ways, European ones, and that strategic

[44] Teng writes that the mythical Kingdom of Women "became a staple of Chinese imaginative geography" and a "favorite subject of fiction" including the episode in *Jinghua yuan*. The Kingdom of Women is represented either as a site of gender inversion or male sexual adventure, or both ("Women and Occidentalism" 102).

domination over the power of representation was a key imperial practice that resonated in travel literature. Until the end of the nineteenth century and the disintegration of imperial hegemony, there remained a historic confidence in the Chinese authority to import, appropriate, and sinicize without posing danger to what was essentially Chinese—in fact those appropriations (which, literally, made the foreign "appropriate" and tailored it to "proper" sensibilities) served to materially and ideologically strengthen that essence. We can characterize this self-conception as confidence in the universal self.

This self-conception is related to two major trends in late Qing ideation: the *ziqiang yundong* (self-strengthening movement, 1864-1895) and the *ti-yong* (essence-use) paradigm. Both are indispensable in the nineteenth century for imagining the national and international; both are deeply rooted historically but distinctly conceptualized in the transitional nineteenth century as thinking mobilized toward the transnational; both present "solutions" for the increasing problem of the foreign that was threatening imperial confidence; both introduce clusters of connected texts and sets of knowledge that are intertwined with the development of the culture of travel and shifts in narrative practice. I will return to these two trends momentarily.

In representation, expression of this self-conception was informed not only by travel writing conventions set in place as far back as *Mu tianzi zhuan* and *Shan hai jing* but also by more recent intellectual shifts toward empirical study that began to develop in the early Qing with the *kaozhengxue* (evidential scholarship) movement. This shift toward observation, verification, and reliance on experiential data was interrelated with changes in representational practices in geography, ethnography, and eventually travel literature.

Kaozhengxue: Empiricism and Shifting Global Visions

Evidential scholarship was largely focused on the philological project of systematically researching historic texts to propose solutions to contemporary problems, and Benjamin Elman notes that it did not lead to any major developments in science. It did, however, raise interest in the sciences, particularly in the search for native origins of mathematic and scientific principles (*li* 理), and it attempted to incorporate them into the classical learning framework, which was more focused on Confucian moral and historical knowledge. The perception was that many scientific principles had their origins in ancient China, but while Chinese scholars had neglected to cultivate them, the West had taken up the ideas and developed them. At a time when western civilization was, like all “barbarian” cultures, disregarded as subhuman or uncultivated, finding the Chinese origins of scientific principles legitimated the study of “new” western learning, fulfilled the desire to restore native traditions in the sciences, and set a precedent for further efforts in the nineteenth century to incorporate increasing amounts of “new” learning from the West into Chinese learning paradigms.

Despite the ban on such topics in the civil service exams, there was scholarly interest in proto-scientific methods for empirical observation. Elman writes that:

> In contrast to their *Daoxue* [neo-Confucian] predecessors, Qing “evidential research” (*kaozheng* 考证) scholars stressed exacting research, rigorous analysis, and the collection of impartial evidence drawn from ancient artifacts and historical documents and texts. Evidential scholars made verification a central concern for the emerging empirical theory of knowledge they advocated, namely “to search truth from facts” (*shishi qiushi* 实事求是). This program involved the placing of proof and verification at the center of the organization and analysis of the classical tradition in its complete, multidimensional

> proportions, which now included aspects of natural studies and mathematics. ("Pre-modern" 43)

The major aspect of evidential scholarship that influenced textual production was its emphasis on empiricism (retrieving evidence via objective and direct observation), and its major relationship to travel literature was in the role it played in informing the development of an empirical dialectical evaluative model that framed observed foreign phenomena in terms of difference from and relationship to the universal self.[45] Changes in data collection (from reliance on hearsay to on-site observation) and in representations of identity/alterity became pervasive in a number of areas of learning (including the nascent disciplines of geography and ethnography) during an era of major imperialist expansion in which a variety of borderlands (including Tibet, Xinjiang, Mongolia, Manchuria, and Taiwan) came under Chinese control for the first time in history. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, imperial interest in unifying the expanding empire and scholarly interest in evidential studies merged in textual enterprises based on direct observation and collection of evidence that had the "project of bringing together diversity within a uniform format" which "reflected the emperor's vision of the Qing" (Hostetler 49). The rulers of the Qing, non-Han Manchus who had themselves conquered the Ming from a peripheral border region, sought self-legitimation as China's rulers and control over vast and diverse areas.

The redefinition of a China that now included a broader spatial and ethnic makeup was an important project of dialectic self-invention as a center of power. The authority to dominate peripheral groups, as was the case for many European imperial powers, came from monopolizing "the production and dissemination of knowledge" about those groups (Hostetler 96). The pursuit of more accurate cartography and ethnographic writing provided a means of collecting

[45] Laughlin has cited evidential scholarship as a major influence on the development of twentieth-century travel writing and reportage in *Chinese Reportage*. Hostetler in *Qing Colonial Enterprise* and Teng in *Taiwan's Imagined Geography* have shown that it has a relationship to Qing-era geographic and anthropological writing.

information for the purposes of more effective governance, but there was a broader effect on representation and an association with the growth of "modern" national consciousness. Previous depictions (based primarily in mythos and hearsay rather than direct observation) of others as fantastical or sub-human had alienated those groups as "barbarian" opposites of self/humanity, and often more closely resembled fiction of the strange than ostensibly nonfictional travel writing. Changes in representation of minority, frontier, and foreign populations (including development of elaborate classificatory schemes for understanding and incorporating difference) served to appropriate and domesticate borderlands and peripheral groups, holding them together with what Laura Hostetler calls an "ideological glue."[46]

These new depictions were participant in restructuring Qing global knowledge, and we can see the transition from premodern to modern sense of self in them. Earlier Qing documents displayed diversity but brought uniformity to that diversity through textual organization and unification of the peripheries in their recognition of the Qing imperial center, the "universal monarch."[47] The Kangxi emperor (reigned 1662-1722) commissioned several important geographical works completed through collaborative efforts between Jesuit cartographers and Chinese officials. Somewhat paradoxically, *Huangyu quanlan tu* (Map of a Complete View of the Imperial Territory, completed 1718) and *Huang Qing zhigong tu* (Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributaries, finished 1759-65) simultaneously show a universalist sense of self and an internationalization of the study of geography, signalled by both the move away from culturally specific information (such as including drawings of inhabitants and explanations of text on

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[46] Hostetler 4-6, 49, 84. See also Perdue's *China Marches West*. For fiction of the strange, see Zeitlin and H. Zhang's chapter "Naturalizing Industrial Wonders."

[47] Hostetler 43-49. Her significant argument about Qing advancements in accurate, to-scale cartography and ethnography, roughly contemporaneously with similar developments in early modern Europe, presents evidence of indigenous, pre-western roots of modernity, including seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Qing appropriation of advanced mapmaking techniques through employment of foreign cartographers to map the Chinese empire. Hostetler argues that, also similarly to European processes, these developments "paralleled the growth of national consciousness and an era of exploration abroad" (4).

maps) toward more scientifically principled representation[48] as well as by new transnational interactions and collaborations. The new mode of ethnography and geography meant that the *Map* was, for the first time, to scale, and the *Illustrations*, for the first time, were compiled through the onsite collection of information by local officials. Both texts deal with directly observed phenomena by uniting it all under the cultural and geographical authority of the unified self (represented by the Son of Heaven), showing that although the process of dialectic self-invention was changing, it remained uniformly self-supportive.

Nineteenth century geographic texts share the emphasis on empirical observation but exhibit a change: from the earlier Qing texts' imperial expansion attitudes toward Opium War era defensive global visions. Wei Yuan's *Haiguo tuzhi* (*Illustrated treatise on the maritime countries*, 1842), for example, discusses geography in terms of defensive strategies, and Xu Jiyu's *Yinghuan zhilue* (*A brief account of the maritime circuit*, 1848), projects an image of the West as a legitimate object of scholarly study.[49] Both texts compile information about western lands and societies, emphasizing the authentic origins of the information collected: from western or eyewitness sources, rather than from speculative historical sources.[50] Confidence in the universal self persisted, in the nineteenth century, as the Chinese cosmological universe expanded to assimilate the broader globe beyond its borderlands. Nineteenth century geographical texts produced knowledge that connected China in meaningful ways to the global space as conceived through traditional cosmology, with China at the center of a peripheral set of other marginal places (seas and lands in those seas) encircling that center (H. Zhang 6-10).

We can see the legacy of seventeenth and eighteenth century shifts in textual depictions

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[48] Hostetler 22 -23. More on the Kangxi texts can be found in X. Zhang, starting page 77.
[49] Teng and Fairbank 41. See also Drake and Eggert.
[50] H. Zhang 3-5. Also see Teng and Fairbank's *China's Response to the West*, which gives historical information on Wei Yuan's methods for gathering materials.

of others in the representational practices of nineteenth century travel literature, which tend to reflect the early modern objectivity-impulse (toward observation and classification) in addition to or over the premodern impulse toward representing others as fantastical or sub-human. Fictional texts like *Jing hua yuan* show that by the early nineteenth century there had already been a broader literary movement toward depictions "based on direct observation and independent verification" (Hostetler 84). Additionally, *Jing hua yuan* exhibits the kind of ethnographic classificatory schemata described by Hostetler: it represents a hierarchy of peoples (while some foreign others are fantastical, sub-human, or grotesque, some are different in positive ways). Finally, the authority of the travelers to observe, interpret, and appropriate on behalf of China, while showing that the relevant also exists in other lands, above all offers an ultimate promise that otherness can be integrated into divine order. It provides a framework of domination, pacification, and assimilation under which the strange and barbaric can be encountered by the travelers. The emphasis on individual subjective positioning of experience that we associate with modern literature and the fragmentation of modern experience is not here in play; the emphasis on empirical experience and objective observation limits the potential for personal interpretation and expression of subjective experience. If what might seem "strange" can actually be observed by anyone who goes there, then what is "strange" is universally positioned rather than based on an individual sense of normality. The strange directly observed lends transitional-era travel writing verisimilitude, which is normally associated with realism and which would present the strange as "dream," but only a tense verisimilitude, since the factual presents as unbelievable.

We see these Qing-era transitional qualities in Li's travelers' responses to the peculiar characteristic of the inhabitants of the Country of Giants:

> When they found the city... everyone was walking on clouds of different colours. A beggar went past walking on a rainbow-coloured cloud.
>
> "Isn't that odd," said Tang Ao, "since the rainbow-coloured cloud is supposed to be best, and the black cloud the worst."
>
> "When I came here before, I was told that the colour of one's cloud depends not on whether he is rich or poor, but on the way he conducts himself," said Old [D]uo.... "This country is called the Country of Giants. People who don't know think that the people are really giants. Actually, it refers to the largeness of their hearts."
>
> "But I have often heard that there is a country abroad somewhere where the people are very tall," said Tang Ao. "Can I be mistaken?"
>
> "Oh, you must mean the Country of Tall People," said Old [D]uo, "which is different from this one."...
>
> "If everyone in the world had to carry a self-advertisement like this, how wonderful people would be!"
>
> "We may not have clouds under our feet, but when we do something wrong.... old Father Heaven always knows," said Old [D]uo....
>
> "I suppose heaven is not unjust after all," said Lin. (68-69)

For Tang Ao, visiting the place and seeing for himself dispels his speculative expectations, and his observance of others turns the mirror back onto the universal self. As with the Country of Sexless People, the objectively observed characteristics present a positive reflection of alternatives—ones ultimately not viable for China (it would take some biological or physical alteration to become sexless or to have a personal cloud) but ones translatable to the Chinese worldview. The travelers' eyewitness account naturalizes and appropriates the other by

discrediting hearsay, emphasizing immediacy or presence, and authoritatively interpreting difference in terms of its reflection on Chinese self. Whereas modern literature, especially in the 1920s, will conceive of objectivism in terms of seeking a distanced, candid perspective on the self (in order to reform subjectivity in a world in which hegemonic cultural values are no longer perceived as universally shared) (M. Anderson 82), transitional literature seeks the close objective view of the other in order to reaffirm subjectivity, projecting authoritative curiosity devoid of cynicism or emotional emphasis. The objectivity impulse in nineteenth-century literature provides a precedent that undermines the potentially narrow viewpoint that realism in Chinese modern literature developed primarily in response to and in imitation of Western literary practice.

ZIQIANG YUNDONG AND THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF TRAVEL AND WRITING

When international travel commenced as a regular activity in the mid-nineteenth century, empirical observation and representational practices, that we have already observed as having entered into early nineteenth-century fictional narrative discourse, were picked up by travel writers of nonfiction and were a major influence on the way the nonfictional travel writing genre took shape after this time. Travel and travel writing, particularly in the Confucian tradition, had been a function of participation in cultural mapping: naming, describing, and symbolically assimilating a natural place into Chinese world order. (And as with western imperial practice, since natives of a foreign place were perceived as lacking culture, they were at times regarded as natural elements.) Travel and the inscription of the landscape meant accumulation of literary tradition associated with place which later travelers could access (Strassberg 6, 21).

Visiting a domestic landscape already inscribed with familiar history and language

implied a different writerly experience (of both travel and writing) than visiting "uncharted" territory. When travel internationalized in the mid-nineteenth century, the new type of travelers (international bureaucrats) faced the complex task of negotiating the alien experience with only the tools of precedent. Empiricism provided one framework for translating traditional travel writing modes and practices and retrofitting them to unprecedented forms of experience. This included the difficult task of naming or mapping where foreign names and maps already existed, and filtering through cultures and systems unrectifiable to Chinese world order for a translatable essence or core. This task of translation was completed under the Opium War era threat that universality may not be universal, but it was fortified by belief in the importance of the task for preserving that universality. The result is a body of writing that projects Confucian imperialist ideology and practice haunted by a specter of transition toward globality, in which anxiety about the efficacy and totality of those ideologies and practices meant re-evaluating them while struggling to maintain their basic principles.

Chinese travel writing about the Pacific and the United States was dominated in the mid-nineteenth century by ostensibly objective and impersonal accounts by governmental figures on missions to establish diplomatic relations or to amass information about Western statecraft, science, and technology; aside from these official diaries there are also a few private accounts of non-bureaucratic ventures. Travel for pleasure was not a concept in circulation at the time, travel for private reasons was rare, and travel for business produced little in the way of literary texts—texts emerging from these types of experiences project a somewhat different sense of engagement with the West than the diplomatic travelogues do.[51] The early international

[51] Wang Tao is the most notable of the literary private travelers of the era; few other non-bureaucratic international travelers produced writing which has been preserved or which reached the geographically Chinese audience on any broad level. The diplomats were constrained by official genre expectations; the private travelers, while also introducing new ideas and information about the West to the Chinese public, did so in a variety of formats and

diplomatic missions produced travel writing of a very specific nature: literary but realistic (that is, reflective rather than ostensibly imaginative), aimed at documentation of objective material phenomena, focused narratively by an individual-as-universal, and reflective of the state goals of evaluating unexpected sources of power outside Chinese borders. In a majority of cases, nineteenth-century travel accounts follow a dialectical evaluative model that frames observed phenomena in terms of difference from China, and then analyzes those observations as charged with significance for the universal self.

The writing produced on these missions cannot be understood outside that material condition; Charles Laughlin has suggested the following about the sense of national significance in the travel experience and the process of its inscription:

> Travel writers' persistent interest in cultural comparison encourages them to view every detail of their journeys, from events the writer may consider to be of great historical importance down to their most minute observations, as symbolic of cultural difference. These observations are frequently expressed in an evaluative context, and the writer takes on the responsibility of accepting or rejecting the phenomena he or she observes on behalf of China. In this sense, the allegorical dimension of late Qing travel literature consists in offering the individual's actual journey as a surrogate for China's journey into the modern world, observing other cultures and accepting or rejecting them in a piecemeal fashion. (43)

Diplomatic travel writing performs as the generator of the new sense of the universal self in relation to the presence of new others, who manifest both as ruptures within the domestic space

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through more varied points of view. Wang Tao, for example, mixed journalism and entertainment, tales of the strange and travelogue, fact and fiction (see Teng "Women and Occidentalism," Cohen, McAleavy). Eggert's study of Lin Qian's 1849 travelogue points out that without the pressure to produce a documentary record, other Chinese around to influence his opinions, or a particular mission to accomplish, he was able to be relatively upfront about the advantages and disadvantages of the alternate social and technological order in the United States (71).

and then as previously unexplored alternate realities across the seas.

The first diplomatic missions were, ostensibly, undertaken under duress: there seemed to be nothing ideal about having to send Chinese officials overseas, but the historical condition necessitated it. Barbarians (*yi* 夷)[52] from beyond the borderlands were making significant inroads into sovereign territory and, taking cues from ancient statecraft methods, the best method of defense seemed to be controlling the barbarians through the barbarians' own methods. Wei Yuan's *Haiguo tuzhi* (1844) famously began with the question, "What is the purpose of this book?," and the answer "To attack *yi* by *yi* methods; to treat *yi* with *yi* methods, and to overwhelm *yi* by *yi* technology and *yi* strength."[53] Despite steady disappearance in all types of texts of the use of *yi* to refer to western foreigners following the Tianjin Treaty (1858, which effected a ban on the term *yi* in diplomatic negotiations to refer to England),[54] the mentality persisted until closer to the end of the century, in the approaches taken toward engagement with the West.

The nineteenth-century *ziqiang yundong*, associated as it was with reform, was essentially a pragmatic defensive strategy based in traditional Confucian ideology: another paradox of the era. The movement was a modernizing effort on the part of a group of reform-minded individuals, primarily Zeng Guofan, Li Hongzhang, Zuo Zongtang, and Zhang Zhidong, who proposed "using barbarians to control barbarians" (*yi yi zhi yi* 以夷治夷) (Teng and Fairbank 29): to selectively learn and use foreign methods to defeat foreigners and maintain

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[52] *Yi* was a term of contrast to 夏 *xia* or 華 *hua* (inhabitants of the Middle Kingdom), a distinction Fang Weigui tells us was primarily a function of morality (*liyi* 禮義, level of ethics and ritual attained) in the classical canon rather than race or geography (111-112). This imperial conception of the universal self could indicate how transnational projects of the early Qing could be conceived not as such: the Jesuits functioning under Kangxi's direction had attained propriety in their acknowledgment of the ritual center and thus functioned as *hua* rather than *yi.*
[53] 是書何以作？ 曰： 為以夷攻夷而作， 為以夷款夷而作，為師夷長技以制 夷而作 (7).
[54] The new terms of preference following the year 1860, carrying more positive meaning, were generally *xi* 西 (western)*, yang* 洋 (foreign), or *xiyang* 西洋 (a combination of western and foreign) (Fang 102-104).

Chinese sovereignty and fundamental nature.[55] The limited acceptance of activities and writings of individuals associated with this movement arises out of this incongruity: despite the long-term influence *ziqiang* (self-strengthening) had on culture, international politics, literature, and other areas, only a very few individuals at court openly associated with this group (among them Prince Gong), and the institutions they established and diplomatic documents they produced were viewed with suspicion by the public as toadying to foreigners.

Ziqiang efforts were concentrated in a variety of movements that shifted in focus as historical condition shifted. The Tongcheng School, whose advocates (including Zeng Guofan) were concerned with the revival of Chinese statecraft based in "self-cultivation, family and public ethics, and the ultimate principles behind human nature" (Fairbank and Feuerwerker 282) was instrumental in the defeat of the Taipings and the resulting temporary restoration of stability to the Qing Dynasty. The victory over the Taipings and the end of the Second Opium War (1860) created the conditions for the Tongzhi Restoration (*Tongzhi zhongxing*, 1860-1874), an attempt to halt the decline of the Qing Dynasty by restoring traditional order while establishing new institutions to deal with the Western world. During this period, there were changes in foreign policy and establishment of factories, arsenals, shipyards, and other such industries, as well as new institutions like the *Zongli Yamen* (the foreign affairs office, est. 1861) and the *Tongwenguan* (est. 1863), an official institution for the academic teaching of foreign knowledge, languages, and science which specialized in preparing Chinese for interactions with the West. The reform efforts of the risk-taking individuals involved were not met with excitement on the part of the elite, and the Tongzhi Restoration, although influential in the long-term development of intellectual and political thought, did not amount to much in terms of dynasty restoration. This

[55] An 1841 memorial to the emperor by I-li-pu, for example, suggests that "utilizing the American barbarians" to help resist English obstinacy about trading rights in Canton, by granting rights to the more "peaceable" Americans, would be better than the alternative of "conciliating the English barbarians (Swisher 56-57).

transitional period was relatively short-lived, since by the turn of the century the epistemological structure crumbled along with the state structure, and self-strengthening no longer seemed a viable strategy for international relations.

From the modern perspective, the *ziqiang yundong*'s paradoxical stance has been viewed as a source of "failure": although by this point the unequal global position of China had become a reality and the elite recognized a need for some sort of change in strategy, the allegiance to traditional mentalities has been taken as a limitation on the potential for the *ziqiang yundong* to promote radical reforms or introduce western "practical knowledge" on a widespread scale.[56]

The twentieth-century retrospective on this era tended to be reductive, overwriting the era's fertile transitional qualities; it is slowly beginning to be acknowledged in the twenty-first century as a zone in which disparate elements of past and future are gathered together. The familiar story of the nineteenth century begins with the heightening of international contact between China and "the West" of Europe and the United States; it emphasizes clashes between the Confucian world order and international law, Christianity, and global economics; it tells about the Opium Wars and a series of inequitable treaties; it even mentions the domestic unrest that arose against the Manchu government, such as the *Taiping tianguo* (Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, 1850-1864), and later, organized resistance to western imperialism such as the *Yihetuan yundong* (Boxer Uprising, 1899-1901). In this story, the nineteenth century saw a revival of intellectual interest in statecraft because of these upheavals, interest that persisted throughout that century despite resistance from the conservative government until the beginning

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[56] The *Ziqiang yundong* has been stigmatized as a failure for numerous reasons since 1895, including overemphasizing superficial technological knowledge without gaining any deeper scientific knowledge, as well as for failing to technologically advance enough to benefit the nation and its government by protecting it. (see Shen "Murky Waters"). Elman criticizes the latter perception on the basis of the example of the military defeats in 1895, showing that Chinese naval technology was actually superior to that of the Japanese at the time, and suggesting that the failures were more likely due to political mishandling ("Naval Warfare").

of the twentieth century when the educated elite's outdated ruling class structure collapsed along with the fall of the dynastic state structure in 1911. As the story goes, the nineteenth century punched irreparable holes in Chinese epistemology, and the fin-de-siècle rubble made way for the truly productive energies of reformers and revolutionaries in the twentieth century.

This story places emphasis on the disruptive and transformative power of the foreign in dramatically reshaping China, when in fact there were equally transformative native influences. The combination of forces from within and without made the introduction of apertures into universalism the defining cultural context of the period in question. This condition, however, has often been framed narrowly as semi-colonialism and historicized in kind. In one prominent example, modern literature has been described as at its most modern when it begins to have genuine interactions with Western and Japanese literature and thought; when it begins to act like modern Western or Japanese literature (after 1895, and especially after 1911, in conjunction with the achievement of modern nationhood). There are merits to this kind of literary periodization, as I have discussed in Chapter One, but there is a partial-ness to any explanation that blankets the legitimacy and influence of alternate ways and means with the logic of the universal modern; there are also rhetorical drawbacks to historicist thinking.

The *ziqiang yundong* is an important example of this. Rather than emphasizing the active role of movements like "self-strengthening" both in bringing about Chinese cultural modernity and in shaping twentieth-century modes of resistance, a historicist outlook reduces it to a traditionalist "reaction," a blip in the overall Qing refusal to reform, or a narrow and backward-looking defensive approach at a time when innovation and offensive strategy was needed. The result of historicism has been that China's nineteenth century has been relegated to what Dipesh Chakrabarty has called the "imaginary waiting room of history": in the teleology of universal

historical movement toward modernity (as demonstrated and defined by "developed" western nations), China was not yet modern. It may have been, at times, progressing, inevitably, toward modernity as standardized by the advanced European model, but more slowly than other nations and always behind in attempting, accepting, or successfully adopting and implementing real modernity (8). In this kind of thinking, since modernity comes from elsewhere, "being" modern in the waiting room always is merely performing as modern (i.e., attempting, accepting, adopting, implementing).

If, rather than seeking the *progressive* account of history we look instead at *change or dynamism* and the constellation of influences that appear in a given historical zone, we can move beyond theorizing the nineteenth century as either reactionary or goal-oriented toward universal modernity. The fact that it can be viewed as both those things simultaneously indicates the need for a more nuanced perspective. The *dynamic* aspect of the *ziqiang yundong* can not be found in an orientation toward the universal modern, nor in reactive blindness to the new globality or dogmatic adherence to the old (both of which were oppositional to the movement's goals), but in its *innovation toward the timeless*, using a kind of bricolage to gather in the fragments of contemporary experience to universality.

How we view the nineteenth century has repercussions for the way we understand modernity as well. Since I contend that modernity in Chinese literature comes out of a local Chinese experience (which contains within it the proximity of the foreign) rather than being emergent primarily from its encounter with a western catalyst, I have emphasized Chinese literary, scholarly, and historical precedents and nineteenth-century literary dynamism as contributing to the shift toward modern literature. Changes in Chinese literature from the nineteenth century on were undoubtedly, at some level, responses to incursions on Chinese soil

by various European nations, but this doesn't alter the domesticity of the ruptures and shifts. My project is not unique in attempting to de-emphasize European hegemony over global movements toward modernity:[57] studies of the emergence of modernity increasingly stress that there is a more or less global shift in the early modern period toward exploration and assimilation of alternate forms of knowledge and conceptions of space that emerge out of increased transnational travel and the multi-directional mobility of stimulations.

In terms of attitudes toward travel, the major domestic rupture is in the hegemony of traditional morality: the confrontation of the limits of filiality in fulfilling the needs of the country. The Chinese did not share the European (and later, American) enthusiasm for exploration and international travel, or for travel in general. The *Daodejing* (Classic of the Way and its Power) famously suggests that one can know the whole world without setting foot outside the door, and that in fact the further one goes the less one knows (because travel alienates the individual from the universal mind).[58] Likewise, a cornerstone of Confucian filial piety is staying at home to perform duties to family, especially caring for elders.[59] The motivations for travel or leaving home were always suspect (as anything from petty desire for financial gain to treasonous loyalty to a previous dynasty), because they connoted a failure to subject oneself to ritual and moral hierarchies for duty to authority.

State and official travel documents of the nineteenth century make it amply evident that travel to the United States and elsewhere commenced only under the pressures of new

[57] See, for example, Svarverud's *International Law*, which explores the importation of European frameworks of International Law. He shows that while these ideas reshaped native Chinese worldviews, there was no linear evolution from Chinese worldview to Western one, but that rather the new ideas were sinicized and utilized as adaptive tools.
[58] 47.1-2: Without going outside his door, one understands (all that takes place) under the sky; without looking out from his window, one sees the Dao of Heaven. The farther that one goes out (from himself), the less he knows. Therefore the sages got their knowledge without travelling; gave their (right) names to things without seeing them; and accomplished their ends without any purpose of doing so. Translation from Legge.
[59] Confucius *Lunyu* 4:19: "子曰：「父母在，不遠遊。遊必有方。」(The Master said, "While his parents are alive, the son may not go abroad to a distance. If he does go abroad, he must have a fixed place to which he goes.")

international relations between states, the perceived need for self-defense, faith in tested strategies of knowing and controlling barbarian invaders, and the hesitant desire for competitive technology. Both those who traveled abroad and those who endorsed international travel did so with grave awareness of the political awkwardness of their positions: until it began slowly to change starting in the 1870s (H. Zhang; ch. 2), the attitude toward serving in a foreign country was that it was both dishonorable and immoral, and even proponents of national self-strengthening endorsed technological learning as the only valuable form of western knowledge. The careers of many officials were ruined by their foreign travels and resulting travelogues, which faced public criticism for the attitudes they presented on the West.[60]

An oft cited example is Guo Songtao, the first Chinese ambassador, whose diary was suppressed because it openly discussed the fundamentals of western civilization to the point of suggesting that western governments and civilizations may equal China's (H. Zhang 84-92). He makes comments such as these: "Nowadays, England, France, Russia, America, and Germany, all of them great nations…, have evolved a high culture on a firm material basis. They surpass by a long way the states of our Spring and Autumn period," and "[we must realize that] the nations of Europe do have insight into what is essential and what is not and possess a Way of their own which assists them in the acquisition of wealth and power. In this manner, a state may well last for 1,000 years."[61] Despite his empirical praxis and perceptiveness about international political order, he was accused of "abandoning his native land,"[62] and his career was subsequently ruined. The goals of reform and self-education, not to mention the joy of discovery, were unwelcome in textual presentations of diplomatic travel experiences and

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[60] Fang writes that in spite of some voices promoting open-mindedness, conservative attitudes most often were strongest (117-118).
[61] From his journal *Shixi jicheng* (*Record of an Envoy's Journey to the West*), translated in Frodsham's *The First Chinese Embassy to the West* (72-73).
[62] In an anonymous poem, cited in Frodsham (xxxvii).

suppressed as treasonous or self-serving.

Travel writers in official capacities had to address the material benefit that Western expertise provided while avoiding criticism of the Chinese way. Zhigang, for example, writing in 1866 while on the Burlingame mission, treats the subject of the benefit of railways with tact. While he agrees with a Western conversant that railways are a "convenience of boundless benefit for public and private life," he questions their compatibility with the Chinese nature:

> If trains are to run in China, where is she to put the railways? Towns and houses can all be moved, but when it comes to graves, each family selects its own burial ground.... New graves can be moved, but not those which go back hundreds of years.... Even if the power of the court were invoked to suppress the innate Chinese qualities of filial respect on the grounds that this would bring future profit, I am afraid the Chinese nature would not be so easily eradicated.... Perhaps we ought to postpone discussions on this matter until the proper opportunity arises.[63]

Self-strengthening, until the end of the century, did not imply a trajectory toward change even though it did result in change. The process of epistemological transition from orthodox Confucian imperialist ideology toward uneasy global consciousness is hardly a process that can be said to have actually taken place and been completed; what did change in the Late Qing was the introduction of a new cyclical element, endless recentering toward each of these poles of identity, which resulted less in a transition effected and more in a new state of endless transition. As the forum for public discourse on selfhood, literature during the time period took part in both reflecting and generating the new spirit of anxiety and tension associated with the paradox of innovating toward the timeless. Although existence did not yet seem dismembered the way it would a half century later, the crisis of morality and sovereignty over totality provoked the

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[63] From his travelogue *Chushi taixi ji* (Record of the first diplomatic mission to the West) (61).

tensions that would shape modern literature.

TI-YONG: LATE QING UTILITARIANISM

Travelers' anxieties offer among the most straightforward address of these issues, since travelers deal directly with the changing global condition framed in terms of the experience of the self. Travel discourse is the first site at which the modern condition is represented in terms of the practical philosophy of utility. If, in the Late Qing, the re-figuring other presented a dialectical challenge to the self and its representational practices, utility discourse offered one solution. The connection between the dialectical challenge of the other to the self and the solution of utility discourse to that dialectical challenge in representation is relatively simple to draw, but it is an important one in establishing the connection between statecraft practices and the way those translated into representational practices. The process of iconification of "the West" and particularly "the American" in Chinese literature cannot be separated from the ideological phenomenon of Late Qing utilitarianism, and discourse of utility is a major site of visibility for the process of negotiation between Confucian imperialist ideology and global consciousness in the transitional early modern period.

The idea that the West could be "useful" to the self was one that was slow to grow, for reasons associated with the imperial sense of self described earlier in the chapter. The promotion of the West-as-useful (and its associated challenge to the legitimacy of conventional knowledge) came initially and most forcefully from the western economic-religious complex. Disparate Euro-American interests of trade and proselytizing converged at a nexus that was desire for open inroads into the Chinese interior, and as a result this convergence begat collaborations in industries like education, publishing, and hybrid institutions like the Arsenals. Organizations

such as the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in China (SDUKC), established in 1834 by a group of prominent missionaries and merchants with the goal of impressing the Chinese with the history and importance of western achievements, smoothing the path for increased intercourse, and creating, in effect, a market for western thought, published a Chinese language periodical called the *Dongxi yangkao meiyue tongjizhuan* (East-West Examiner and Monthly Recorder). It disseminated information on western science, technology, trade, politics, literature, philosophy, religion, and other topics. Although exact circulation numbers are unavailable, there is evidence that many Chinese read it at a time when information about the West was generally unavailable but increasing in currency. Its contents were influential in the compilation of Wei Yuan's *Haiguo tuzhi* and Xu Jiyu's *Yinghuan zhilue*, works that were in turn enormously influential on the Chinese view of the rest of the world in the latter nineteenth century.[64]

Utility discourse didn't become a predominant mode of thought about the West for Chinese intellectuals until the 1860s, when modernization for practical ends introduced the need for "modern" intellectuals who could travel to foreign countries, learn about advances in military technology, the sciences, and other practical fields of knowledge, and return to China to apply that knowledge to a Chinese context. In terms of imperial statecraft and border control strategies, utility discourse essentially was a good replacement for the outlawed "controlling barbarians" discourse. Zeng Guofan, along with Li Hongzhang, proposed in a letter submitted in 1871 that young intellectuals be sent abroad to study "military administration, shipping administration, infantry tactics, mathematics, manufacturing, and other subjects" in service of long-term state self-strengthening:

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[64] See Lazich "The Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in China." See also Vittinghoff's "Social Actors in the Field of New Learning in Nineteenth Century China" for further examples of the collaborative ventures that introduced "new learning" to China in the 1800s.

> Military administration and shipping are considered as important as the learning that deals with the mind and body, and nature and destiny of man. Now that the eyes of the people have been opened, if China wishes to adopt Western ideas and excel in Western methods, we should immediately select intelligent young men and send them to study in foreign countries…. We have heard that youths of Fujian, Guangdong, and Ningbo also occasionally have gone abroad to study, but they merely attempted to gain a superficial knowledge of foreign written and spoken languages in order to do business with the foreigners for the purpose of making a living. In our plan, we must be doubly careful at the beginning of selection. The students who are to be taken to foreign countries will all be under the control of the commissioners…. so that they will learn the great principles for the establishment of character, in the hope of becoming men with abilities of use to us.[65]

There is no suggestion in this letter that the young men selected to study abroad pursue studies of "the mind and body, and nature and destiny of man," since these were fields of knowledge still generally considered healthy and complete within China itself until the turn of the century. Rather, the West is a place one might travel to for economic (superficial) or political (useful) reasons. Clearly Zeng, Li and others like them walked a tenuous line of promoting Chinese modernity and nationhood without appearing to encourage either superficiality or loss of character; their paradoxical positioning as agents of change against change (or agents of othering against othering) must have at times felt dangerously close to the bizarre. Incorporating this paradox into traditional epistemology seems to have been a necessary antidote to the alarming absurdity of the possibility of becoming "other."

The initial official response to western incursions was to control and contain the new

[65] From "Zeng Wenzhong gong quanji, Yishu hangao" 1:19b-21b, as quoted in de Bary and Lufrano (241).

barbarian nuisance (a most traditional tactic), but as more information on the West and its achievements became available, in conjunction with the related and simultaneous rise of western challenges to Chinese sovereignty, the viewpoint changed. Although Europeans and Americans had been for years using the strategy of promoting the usefulness of western knowledge to gain inroads in China, as evidenced by the SDUKC example, around the mid-century this attitude also became current among Chinese officials. Although foreigners may have been responsible for cultivating the western-as-useful discourse in the nineteenth-century historical context, that discourse was cautiously taken up by Chinese officials because it resonated with a variety of sinic contexts: longstanding Chinese statecraft practices for controlling barbarians, Qing-era *kaozheng* studies, and philosophical discourses of *dao* 道 (Way) and *li* 利 (benefit) dating back to Confucius and the Mohist response. The resulting Qing-era ideology was the now-famous motto "Chinese learning as substance, Western learning as function" (中學為體，西學為用 *zhongxue wei ti, xixue wei yong*), coined by Zhang Zhidong, that in the last decades of the Qing proposed a strategy for borrowing practical knowledge to improve economic development and industrialization, resist internal unrest, and defend sovereign territorial integrity, all the while allowing China to remain "essentially" Chinese.

The outlook drew upon the conventional metaphysical pairing of *ti* (體 essence, substance, foundation) and *yong* (用 use, function, techniques), a pairing that was re-envisioned for the contemporary context to suggest that China might maintain essential cultural qualities even if (and perhaps actually *by*) putting to use the knowledge cultivated by the epistemologically, culturally, and sometimes physiologically substandard barbarians[66] to strengthen the country and its defenses. As Feng Guifen put it, in "*Cai Xixue yi*" (On the

[66] See Dikötter for a study of Chinese racial configurations in the late Qing.

Adoption of Western Learning), circa 1860:

> Today the world is 90,000 li around. There is no place boats and vehicles do not travel or human power does not reach.... According to Westerners' maps, there are at least one hundred countries in the world. Of the books of these hundred countries, only those from Italy from the time of the end of the Ming and from present-day England, numbering in all several tens, have been translated.... There are many intelligent people in China. Surely there are some who, having learned from the barbarians, can surpass them.... What could be better than to take Chinese ethical principles of human relations and Confucian teachings as the foundation (*ti*), and supplement them with the techniques (*yong*) of wealth and power of the various nations?[67]

Ti-yong theory could be taken as a nascently transnational afterlife of *yiyi zhiyi* (using barbarians to control barbarians), since clearly it maintains that the use-value of the foreign lies in its ability to be managed by China as a technique for controlling or "surpassing" the foreign.

The *ti-yong* paradigm was not a "new" invention of the nineteenth-century China-West concussion in other ways as well. The concept is actually an outgrowth of a much older philosophical concept. Historically, the two were metaphysically paired, *ti* implying physical quality, substance, or embodiment and *yong* indicating function; together they signify "the organic and inseparable link between an object's hidden potentialities (*ti*) and its manifest capabilities (*yong*)."[68] In the earliest philosophical linkings of these concepts, Non-Being (*wu* 無) gives things their function (*yong* 用) which is contrasted not to substance (*ti* 體) but to advantage, benefit, or utility (*li* 利), which derives from presence or Being (*you* 有). In this earliest sense, *ti* can be understood more as a verb, "to embody" or "become one with," and

[67] Translation from Gentzler (70-71).
[68] Hon 354-355. Hon draws on Levenson's *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*.

implies ways of inhabiting the *Dao*; Brook Ziporyn explains that "the *manifest* usefulness or function of Non-Being... is *derived* from the... embodiment of Non-Being." *Ti* and *yong* are not contrasts but comparable to roots and branches (two parts of a whole, one the outgrowth of the other), the goal being to make use of the function (*yong*) to turn attention to the manifestation (*ti*).[69] There is some distance between this and the socio-national interpretation of the Late Qing, which eventually distilled the concept of embodiment or essence into a cultural concept (*being* essentially Chinese) and diminished "function" to the functioning of the state and society. This Late Qing utilitarianism, an afterlife or sur-vival[70] of an older concept denoting the state of being, hinges on the phantom interjection of *li* as justification or impetus, linking the ephemeral aspects of Non-Being (essence, function; *ti, yong*) to the immediate (material condition; *you*).

The Late Qing *ti*, with its emphasis on the essentiality of cultural qualities (ritual, language, knowledge, morality) seems divorced from its functionality (since functionality is displaced to foreign technology and statecraft, and eventually culture and economics). Especially toward the turn of the century and the disintegration of traditional epistemology, the *ti-yong* pairing came to signify the state of learning and the division into essential, fundamental forms of knowledge (Chinese learning about history, government and geography; moral learning; "old" learning) and functional knowledge that could be put to practical use (Western government, crafts, culture, and history; "new" learning) (Weston). The Late Qing phantom reliance on *li* (usefulness, application, advantage) to relink Chinese *ti* to a traveling *yong* is something that contributed to the twentieth-century denigration of the *ziqiang* movement as a failure. Republican-era intellectuals, with their emphasis on gaining pure scientific

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[69] The text frequently cited as the origin of this pairing is Wang Bi's (226-249) commentary on *Laozi* 38 (Ziporyn 149-153).

[70] In the sense described by Walter Benjamin in "The Task of the Translator." He describes translations as afterlives of texts, which undergo change from the original in the course of their creation. While they owe their existence to the original, they neither alter nor are bound to the original.

understanding rather than simply importing technology, memorialized the Late Qing utilitarian overemphasis on application or benefit (rather than method) as shortsighted and unsophisticated (Shen 594). Although clearly the narrative of "usefulness" and benefit for the total group continued to be applied to justify pursuits in the twentieth century (and it continued to be associated with elite duty), utilitarianism was stigmatized by modern-era intellectuals as only seeking material benefits and neglecting to develop science or art for "pure" reasons. This hindsight though, valid or not, is not necessarily very helpful in decoding the logic of the nineteenth century.

Here is the Late Qing logic. What would become a very influential afterlife (the Late Qing *ti-yong* conceptualization) was born through a process of valuing the universal/stable but dealing with motion and change; the concept was so functional during this time period precisely for its capacity to incorporate change while preserving immutability.[71] In 1879, Xue Fucheng submitted "*Chouyang chuyi*" (Suggestions on Foreign Affairs) to Li Hongzhang to be sent to the Zongli Yamen. He writes:

> There has been a change from a world in which the Chinese and barbarians were isolated from each other to a world in which China and foreign countries are in close contact…. Now there is rapid change in the world. It is my opinion that with regard to the immutable Way we should change the present so as to restore the past;… but with regard to changeable laws, we should change the past system to meet present needs…. Some may ask: "If such a great nation as China imitates the Westerners, would it not be using barbarian ways to change China?" Not so. For while in clothing, language, and customs China is different from foreign countries, the utilization of the forces of nature for the

[71] Weston says that, as a model, *ti-yong* offered intellectual possibility precisely because it permitted motion and change and, as such, protected its proponents from charges of disloyalty while allowing them room for initiative (105).

benefit of the people is the same in China as in foreign countries. (Xue 242-243)

Xue's comments offer a glimpse into shifting space and time configurations that entail broad-scale shifts in cultural conceptions of "self." For Xue, the physical qualities of the world itself have not changed and do not change; the natural order of the universe（*tiandao* 天道）is immutable and timeless. Global geopolitics is changing, however: the movements and productive forces of humanity, including their systems, rituals, knowledge, and sense of space (no longer isolation, but now "close contact"). Xue suggests that all places on earth equally strive to use the physical or substantive aspects of the natural world (their *ti* and *yong*) to benefit (*li*) people: this is a basic utilitarian concept. His comment aims to show that the development of nature (technology, science) for the benefit of public welfare is not a tendency that has been unique to Western countries, but rather that China has done the same in a way suitable to the Chinese habit.[72] Utility (*li*) in fact becomes the link between *ti* and *yong*, as it defines the human motivation (for benefit) toward the natural order.

This essentially sinic attitude reverberates with the Daoist mentality that humans appeal to the objectivism of nature when forming their values (even if that objectivism becomes corrupted on entering the human sphere of social and governmental ritualized relations) (Hansen 121-146). What does not resonate is the splitting of the subjective from the objective, in which the moral outgrowths of the first principle no longer lead to successful ritual in the material world. If a great nation ordered by nature succumbs to change, the anxiety is that it would no longer follow the natural Way, but instead follow some other crude, baseless system. Clearly, there are deep ethical implications of adopting Western science and technology. Until the epistemological crisis, associated with the collapse of the ruling structure and the fragmentation

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[72] Supposedly Xue Fucheng said that the West took "Humanity as the standard" when developing science and technology, in other words, that they were developed to promote public welfare.

of its paradigms, occurs at the turn of the century, the scales tip in favor of desire for self-preservation and the fear that use might overpower essence.

An even earlier text by Lin Zexu, an open letter of moral advice to Queen Victoria published in 1839, exemplifies the Late Qing utilitarian logic that precedes the epistemological crisis of the turn of the century. The letter criticizes the morality of the British state for allowing its subjects to cultivate opium and smuggle it into China, and it juxtaposes the harmful exports of Britain (opium) to the universally benevolent exports of China (tea, porcelain, spices, silk), all of which are used for good in all parts of the world. At a moment in history prior to the establishment of modern international relations, it expresses international relations in terms of Confucian morality and the paternalistic state structure:[73]

> A communication: magnificently our great Emperor soothes and pacifies China and the foreign countries, regarding all with the same kindness. If there is profit, then he shares it with the peoples of the world; if there is harm, then he removes it on behalf of the world. This is because he takes the mind of heaven and earth as his mind….
>
> He who sells opium shall receive the death penalty and he who smokes it also the death penalty…. He who takes the life of even one person still has to atone for it with his own life; yet is the harm done by opium limited to the taking of one life only? Therefore in the new regulations, in regard to those barbarians who bring opium to China, the penalty is fixed at decapitation or strangulation. This is what is called getting rid of a harmful thing on behalf of mankind. (Teng and Fairbank 24, 27)

This kind of utilitarianism is uniquely Late-Qing Chinese. Like all utilitarian discourses, it promotes the greatest good for the greatest number, recognizing that an action is useful insofar as it benefits the overall group and emphasizing an ethical compulsion to improve quality of life for

[73] For more on the establishment of international relations, see Svarverud.

the collective population. However, whereas in western discourses on utility, the benefit of a thing is based in its ability to promote *happiness* specifically (rather than benefit generically, which separates western utilitarianism from doctrines of pragmatism), Chinese utilitarianism does not have a philosophical component of pleasure. Both versions of utilitarianism appeal to the objectivism of nature as the root of the formation of human values, and thus seek what John Stuart Mill calls a "first principle." For Mill, the first principle "is that happiness is desirable, and the only thing desirable, as an end; all other things being only desirable as means to that end" (177). For Mill, human nature is in the pursuit of individual happiness; happiness is the motivational link between what is "natural" in the human and what is cultivated or habituated. For Confucian philosophy, the natural principle is the pursuit of inhabitance of the *dao* (embodying essential qualities and manifesting them according to their function), while the pursuit of benefit is secondary. The ruler must balance the pursuit of the ideal and the management of the material world, which necessitates some attendance to utility and shapes the social-ethical habituation of the benevolent man.[74]

Utility (*li*), according to Chad Hansen, is a "non-Confucian standard" in that "benevolence is the virtue counterpart of utilitarian duty" and that Confucian *ren* and training in ritual was often contrasted to "utilitarian (military, diplomatic, or agricultural) expertise" (93, 155, 159). Although utility is a key concept in Confucianism, utilitarianism is more often, historically, considered a reform-minded concept promoting universal benefit to the point of self-abnegation popularized by Mozi; a philosophy too extreme for Confucian thinkers who felt it was better to promote moral motivations and let them lead naturally to benefit, rather than

[74] This contrasts significantly to a different strain in Chinese philosophy: the utilitarianism of Mozi, who promoted a pleasure principle (see Hansen). In terms of Confucian statecraft, of which I am speaking here, this philosophy was suppressed and disavowed, but it was nonetheless an influential alternative in the development of the culture of private travel.

running the risk of promoting material desire. The sovereign and his representatives are the guarantor of benefit; it is the moral responsibility of the elite to judge for the collective the utility of a thing (and in the premodern cosmological paradigm, this collective included the entire known world). The judgment and values of the individual must be modified by the interests of the universal self in order to act on behalf of the universal self.

The duty to guarantee benefit and the confidence in the universal self contributed to the rise in the nineteenth century of a debate on Chinese education and learning, and the role that western knowledge should play. Feng Guifen's comments on education, noted above, resonate with these from Li Gui in 1876 on the role of Chinese students who have studied abroad in the United States:

> These children went abroad to learn how to do things. They already possess what they were born with: the morals of our Sage and the principles of prescribed relationship between people. Their morals and principles are not diminished in the slightest by studying the ways of westerners. Besides, one must not draw up boundaries when taking advantage of others' strengths to compensate for one's shortcomings. Similarly, when planning the great future of our country, we ought not to ignore the Western way of doing things. In other words, our morals and principles are the essence of the nation, while Western ways are tools of operation. It is only when we can command both the essence and the tools that the nation will be adequately served by useful talents. This is what we *must* realize today.[75]

Not only should removing students to the United States not be considered a waste of talent, but also it should be considered, in some way, a logical extension of the history of Chinese learning. The idea that the west had, relatively recently, developed materially on the basis of ancient

[75] Li Gui (73). See a similar sentiment expressed in Zhang Yinhuan's 1886 travelogue (Arkush and Lee 74-75).

Chinese principles and knowledge was current in the nineteenth century (especially during the 1880s until 1895, but also as far back as the earlier *kaozheng* scholars) among intellectuals who sought to legitimize interest in western learning by suggesting it had roots in China (Huters; ch. 1-2). China's millennia of ethical cultivation offered some protection, it seemed, against being sucked into the barbarian moral vacuum, and meanwhile China should take advantage of appropriating western scientific learning in order to restore past glory and even reform other parts of the world into the Chinese way (as in the attitude expressed in Lin Zexu's letter to Queen Victoria).

Nineteenth-century Chinese utilitarian thinkers, whether they intended to or not, emphasized the mobility of knowledge and translation of the foreign as a method of "re-territorializing" (Vittinghoff, "Introduction" 6) and nativizing that which still stood to be conquered. While the intention was to retrofit traditional ways of controlling the "four seas" to contemporary geopolitical conditions, it constitutes the start of a shift toward an alternate, transnational Chinese global relationship. What becomes paradoxical in the epistemological struggles of besieged nineteenth-century China revolves around this fundamental separation of ideas into two oppositional clusters that become, progressively, more and more difficult to keep separate: on the one pole West, barbaric, youthful, materialistic, use; on the other pole China, cultivated, continuous, moral, fundamental. Associating use with Western values, for example, may have been temporarily convenient for dealing with the difference in the developments of China and other countries (and faithful to the Confucian valuation of *yong* over *li*), and for containing the transformative potential of imported technologies, goods, and ideas, but it was an untenable association. In the end, it was "faithful" nineteenth-century paradigms like the origins theory and utilitarianism that opened the door for others later to question more deeply the totality

of the Chinese system.

It is, again, familiar the way in which the *ti-yong* paradigm eventually lost its functionality with the disintegration of the universal self and the movement toward revolutionary thought at the turn of the century. By the time of the publication of Liang Qichao's two seminal works, "Foreward to the Publication of Political Novels in Translation" (1898) and "On the Relationship Between Fiction and the Government of the People" (1902) the "use/essence" paradigm had fallen out of fashion, and the new intellectuals proposed directly that the foreign be imported to strengthen all aspects of Chinese culture, economy, and politics. By then, intellectuals such as Yan Fu were denouncing the claims that China was the origin of Western technology and ideas, exhibiting the new anti-traditional attitude that grew out of a tension between the desire to restore the glory of antiquity and the realization that a crisis point had been passed making that impossible. Theodore Huters describes the new turn-of-the-century attitude toward nineteenth century logic as being that it "foster[ed] a dangerous intellectual complacency that was a serious impediment to the sweeping rethinking that China needed for developing practical solutions" (45). Huters describes this epistemological crisis in terms of a series of problems centered around, essentially, the new sense of self as semi-colonial: If you discredit the China-as-origin theories, what is the new relationship between Chinese and western knowledge? Are there common elements or scientific prerequisites to build on? Is Chinese learning irrelevant? What sort of moral redefinition results from balancing national loyalty with national survival, and can there be a value system in which the necessity of importing from the enemy conforms to moral convictions and leads to national renewal? What should China look like as a "nation"? Can or must the past be discarded entirely? (44-46). The new national orientation extended the old cosmological orientation into the modern era, retaining the impulse to totalize

Chineseness and produce a universal self, even if the universal self could no longer imagine the rest of the world in tributary relationship to itself as imperial.

Chapter Three:

The Disassembling Passage: Articulation, Bodies, and Dissonance in Nineteenth-Century China's U.S. and Pacific Travels

> *Of all western barbarians, the English are the most crafty, the French next; the Russians are stronger than either the English or the French and are always struggling with the English barbarians, who are afraid of them. The Americans are of pure-minded and honest disposition and long recognized as respectful and compliant toward China.*
>
> – Zeng Guofan (1861)[76]

TRAVEL, DESIRE, NARRATIVE, AND THE BODY: LIN ZHEN'S *XIHAI JIYOU CAO*

The previous chapter ended with the observation that the growing sense of China in the nineteenth century as a modern nation retained the epistemological inclination toward perceiving cosmological, ideological, and national totality, based in the ideation of a universal self. Travel, though, lends itself toward undoing and refiguring totality. Utility and self-strengthening, as the dominant paradigms shaping imaginative mappings of the foreign in the late nineteenth century, seem to constitute an ideal projected from the homeland outwards. The official memorials cited in the previous section fall into this strata: written within China as part of a larger bureaucratic effort to proscribe the shape new international relations should take. When the ideal moves, though, and the individual carries it abroad, actual travel tends to modify it, and we see alternative paradigms for narrating the foreign combine with the ideals and complicate them. This has something to do with the rocky reception many travelogues met upon their introduction to the home audience. There are a variety of alternative Chinese discourses of the United States other than the official, domestic one of utility and self-strengthening. A Shanghainese called Wu Hongyu (Woo Hoong Niok, 1834-1919), for example, having been educated at an Episcopal

[76] Iriye 35.

missionary school in Shanghai, sailed to the United States in 1854 and spent nine years mostly in Pennsylvania, became a naturalized citizen, a printer, and a soldier in the Northern army during the Civil War before returning to China. His autobiography, dated 1915, is narrated as factual record, is concerned with personal experience, and is largely unconcerned with China, filial duty, or the universal self. For example:

> My life in Lancaster was uneventful on the whole. In 1856 I heard of the death of my mother in China. In 1860 I was naturalized as a citizen of the United States of America. The years 1861-1865 were those of the Civil War. In a small way I became involved in it…. I had felt that the North was in the right in opposing slavery. My friends thought I should not join the militia and risk my life in war, for my own people and family were in China, and I had neither property nor family in America whose defence might serve as excuse for my volunteering. (230)

This record, however, was written down in English and archived by the Episcopal Church, and its "unfilial" transnationalism would not have circulated among the Chinese audience. Like this text, there is a sizeable body of writing by Chinese in the United States that would not have been repatriated; Chinese-American texts include sinophone and, as English literacy increased, English-language texts. This body of writing deconstructs the ideal of Chinese universality even further, but it is outside the parameters of this chapter, which is concerned with imaginative construction of the United States, the Pacific, and the general "West" in Chinese domestic literary space.

A primary alternative discourse of travel (alternative to the discourses of *ziqiang* and *ti/yong*) during this time seems to be that of pleasure or desire. These discourses are bound to travel/writing because it is an experience of the habituated, locomotive body passing through

space and time and not a universal experience or distanced visualization. This discourse was repressed both by traditional attitudes toward travel and by utilitarian statecraft. For the former, the traditional attitude was that travel disrupted filial duty and ritual integration of self into universality. While travel might be undertaken for reasons of material gain, those reasons were ignoble, and it should certainly not be a source of pleasure to be separated from home or to perceive oneself as transgressive or alternative. For the latter, nineteenth-century Chinese utilitarianism conceives of utility in terms of benefit rather than happiness, and considers material desire or the pursuit of benefit urges to be controlled. However, the exclusion of pleasure and desire by these narratives from the paradigm of travel, significantly, does not eliminate pleasure and desire from the travel experience and the narration of it. While we might expect this from private travelogues, it is also true of official ones. I will begin with the writing of private travelers, in which pleasure, desire, and the body are least suppressed. Then, I will turn to the construction of selves and others in an official travelogue by Zhang Deyi in an attempt to, among other things, excavate the discourse of desire and the body in that text.

Although all nineteenth-century travel-related texts bear the hallmarks, to varying degrees and in varying configurations, of the transitional-era character I have so far constructed, private discourse on travel differed in a few significant ways. There were not many non-bureaucratic international travelers who left widely circulated literary records, but those who did produced an influential alternative discourse promoting the West as a site of material desire. Wang Tao is, perhaps, the most famous example. His lifelong work with westerners, several years' residence in Scotland in the home of missionary James Legge, and travels in Europe (1867-1870) led to a variety of Sino-western writings, including several important translations (both into and out of Chinese), a travelogue, and a variety of fictional short stories. Both Wang's

ostensibly factual travelogue and his short fiction, while expressing similar interest in industrial modernity and architectural sensation as the diplomatic travelogues, frame this interest primarily in terms of women and his (or Chinese male) relationships with them (Teng "Women").

A less famous but more *apropos* example is Lin Zhen (also pronounced Lin Qian), who accompanied a group of merchants on a voyage to the United States, apparently working as a translator, from 1847 to 1849. He finished his travelogue titled *Xihai jiyou cao* ("Sketchy Account of a Journey to Western Seas") at the end of his trip, but it was not published or distributed in China until 1867 with the increase of interest in the West among reformist officials. It is considered the earliest authenticated, firsthand travelogue of a western country ever distributed in China. The text is a layered conglomeration of a variety of prose dedications, prefaces composed by others, the author's preface, a central literary poem composed in a normative style, a prose record of his rescue of some Chinese compatriots wrongly imprisoned in the United States, a biography of his grandmother, and some post-faces. The effect, argues Marion Eggert, is to situate and justify his travels for the Chinese audience, according to Chinese literary generic conventions and cultural values of *xiao* (孝 filial piety) and *zhuang* (壮 heroism in the face of wondrous adventure), while cushioning the astonishing news of a different world. For example, in contrast to Wu Hongyu's brevity in accounting for the death of his mother, Lin Zhen devotes an entire section of the travelogue to eulogizing his grandmother's life and, in his preface, frequently mentions his longing for home and the foolishness of his travel venture, as in this passage:

> Each hour I wait for a message, my traces buried by layers of mountains; for a year I was a stranger in the wild, my countenance dark and haggard…. (While there, I remembered the remarkable filial piety of my grandmother and therefore wrote a report about it, which

> is appended in detail later in this book.) Voice and face seem right before me, how painful never to meet her again! Though her grave is far away, luckily the sails home are soon set…. The strange vistas of mountains and oceans are hard to describe in writing. If father and mother are alive, what does it matter to be poor? Born into a prosperous age, why should I want to stay long in a foreign country? (Eggert 92-93)

The writers of his prefaces also emphasize his *xiao, zhuang,* and return home as redemption for his travel. In between his expressions of filial piety and heroic bravery in rescuing some imprisoned Chinese, his preface reports on the technological wonders he encounters in the United States: houses 1,000 feet tall, steam-powered boats, the telegraph, water and sewer systems, "fire weapons," navigation techniques, thermometers, and photography. He reports, too, on politics, geography, and unfamiliar customs: for example, free social mixing of men and women, slavery and racial issues, religion, the six-day workweek, and valuation of invention and fact over re-creation and superstition. The unexpectedness and untranslatability of the outside world is mediated by the predictability of the traveler's proper social behavior as well as by the writer's fulfillment of genre convention. Padding the strange news with prefaces asserting Lin Zhen's reliability, filiality, and bravery conforms to literary expectations, as does the formulaic style of the central poem, which Eggert says convinces readers of the author's education even though it renders the United States an unintelligible fairyland.

Lin Zhen's travelogue shares a historic attitude toward travel with the diplomatic travelogues: both emphasize the traveler's longing for home, express the value of travel in terms of supporting the paternal home structure (that is, fulfilling some duty officially or financially), and express the chronotope China-universal and its propensity toward the cyclical return. Both types of travel also produce reports that nativize the unfamiliar, emphasizing the exotic quality of

the foreign place while expressing the new in terms of the familiar rather than by using strange new imported terminology. For example, Lin Zhen describes what is probably a kaleidoscope at a history museum as such:

> In the Hall of Display of Antiquity bright lamps create fanciful reflections, like colourful clouds at dawn. (They have a hall where wonderful things from all the world are collected and everybody can amuse himself with them; in an upper story lamps are suspended that are turned by a mysterious mechanism; their changing appearance is quite a sight.)

Mediating the new via the familiar, as Eggert points out, did not just make the trip acceptable to others but also was a way to come to terms with his own experience of facing himself when exploring an outside world (Eggert 80, 87).

However, private travelers were not as restricted in terms of personal mobility when they traveled, nor were they as constrained by genre, political and social expectation, and public censure as were the diplomats. Whereas the diplomatic travelogues (at least until the end of the nineteenth century) valued objective reporting over personal opinion, generally avoided open admissions of the utility of anything western, and rarely advocated with any particularity the importation of technologies or ideas for fear of expressing any desire toward the West, Lin Zhen relatively frequently suggests that he has mastered a new technology or hopes to implement one in China. He is particularly interested in steam-powered vehicles, which he says "can be used to public advantage and private profit" and proposes a vague plan in which joining with others on this venture could bring success within a year (Eggert 88). While he frequently expresses his traveler's melancholy, he also as frequently admits to enjoying himself, primarily with the exotic objects he encounters, including women. This is where his travelogue resembles *Jinghua yuan*

and other fictional travel texts, which likewise access the foreign through the gateways of authoritative mirroring (through dialectical evaluation) and relationships with young women. Although *Xihai jiyou cao* follows genre conventions for literary travel writing and is based in a real travel experience, and thus sets itself apart from fiction, it clearly appeals to Chinese imaginative constructions of the foreign as exotic mirror world or fantastical real in its writerly project of assimilating the experience of alterity.

The one American denominated in Lin Zhen's account is "Leijisheng Suiling," a teenage schoolgirl. Lin describes her, in poetic terms familiar to the Chinese scholar, as a beauty and a "female master" of the arts and scholarship, whose dancing feet and slender waist (coupled with his inebriation) make his spirit soar, and whose "smile in the mirror beckons flowers" (Eggert 92). Their friendship is cemented during his daring rescue of twenty-six men from Chaozhou who had been brought by an Englishman from China under false pretences and mistreated. "Leijisheng" convinces her wealthy father to bail Lin out when he is imprisoned for his efforts. Lin spends the latter portion of his preface expounding in flowery praise of her accomplishments and true friendship to him, and rhapsodizing on his unrequited desire for her. Although the foreign men and women hugging on the ship was "disgusting to see," he clearly did not mind himself "[rubbing] shoulders and [holding] hands with [a] Western women [woman] under the moon amidst flowers." The preface closes the tale of his heroism with the "whirling spring dream" of two months he spent living with the "Suiling" family after his release, secretly lusting after their daughter and gazing at her portrait at night, which made him "restless on [his] pillow" (Eggert 90-92).

Among the exotic images of the United States he presents (as technological wonderland, as discriminatory zone of power struggles and bodily danger, as distant "mirage" or mirror

world) is the image of America as utopia of social harmonization and free love, and himself as the legendary fisherman who discovered the idyllic nowhere-land of the Peach Blossom Spring (桃花源 *taohuayuan*). In this image, the United States is fragrant, musical, and hidden; it appeals to the scholar-beauty (*caizi jiaren* 才子佳人) romantic ideal that had become a common theme in Qing-Dynasty fiction, which tended to idealize beautiful and talented young women and girls (McMahon "Classic"); it fulfills the expectation of wondrousness while providing reassurance of cultural values. The scholarly romantic and utopic ideals of travel informing this text place it in a somewhat different intertextual zone[77] than other texts that appeal to alternate ideals of travel, such as political utilitarianism or even Daoist free wandering (which, as for Tang Ao in *Jing hua yuan*, would be an effort to separate oneself from culture and rid oneself of worldly desire for fame and fortune). However, a feminized, hidden United States, despite its unfamiliarity and inversions of civilized culture, can be contained since it evinces affinity with proper (Confucian) gender boundaries of publicity and domesticity and reaffirms a variety of cultural expectations for foreignness.

Lin Zhen's experience, imagination, and narration of the United States is a complex process tied up in habitus and literary and cultural iconography. As a reminder, Chapter One described habitus as the "habituated embodied and mental schemata, implied in social communication, in personal attitudes, in social identity, in cultural experience and in the production of cultural meaning" (Flach, et al., 8). It is a habituated way of being within habitat. Habitus is deeply rooted in subjective experience and in the habituation of emotion, thought, and

[77] The intertextual zone for *Xihai jiyou cao* would be rather similar to the one for Wang Tao as described by Teng in "Women and Occidentalism": as drawing on Chinese traditions of exotica and *chuanqi* (tales of the strange), Confucian gender ideology, imaginative geography including the legendary Kingdom of Women and Peach Blossom Spring, and perhaps even missionary discourse on the differences between Chinese and western women. These precedents informed Wang Tao's presentation of the West as a land of sexual adventure or voyeuristic paradise, where women are educated, beautiful, and uninhibited, and thus seemingly available.

action within environment. In turn, habitus produces spatial practice and shapes the habitat; the two are mutually productive and regenerative. As such, habitus as a theoretical concept has the distinct benefit of offering a perspective on subjectivity and representation that allows for the simultaneous and equal relevance of material (historical-political-environmental) condition, universalist conditioning (ideologies), and individual (emotional, cognitive, motive) experience. It implies a relation of oneself toward the world (connection and separation). Lin's embodied interaction with alien habitat and his production of a communicable text is accompanied by his habitus (emotional habits, embodied social meaning and distinction, embodied history and memory, habituated judgment and action). His habitus is what gives the text its communicative quality and what situates him, a traveler, and his travel text as nexuses of production of "culturally meaningful habitat" (Flach, et al., 13)—habitat that in turn produces and perpetuates habitus for other individuals. What this can imply is a competition in travel/writing between the home and the away for primacy as the "habitat" experienced by the traveler and depicted in the travel text: the traveler's imaginative mappings of the away-space can, paradoxically, mean that the habitat of the travel experience is much more the home habitat than the travelled space itself. In other words, what is depicted may not be the America of Americans, but a different America altogether. This cannot imply a hierarchy of authenticity, but rather a competition between imaginative constructions.

Lin, who lacks direct precedent in terms of witnessing and representing the United States, seeks to solve the problems of representation by assimilating as many experiences as possible into familiar cultural icons, even if sometimes the most apt icons seem to be those of fairytale. Lin Zhen's travel document, in all its heterogeneity and multi-layeredness, alerts readers to the complex underlying relationship between travel and writing: travel as personal physical, mental,

and emotional experience of the unfamiliar conditioned by habituation to and expectation of the familiar; and travel writing as interpretive work equally bound up in navigating pathways of communication that demand both genre conformity and innovation. His endless allusion to iconic metaphors as a mode of explanation, and mixing or layering of metaphors (as in the combining of "Peach Blossom Spring" with "*caizi jiaren*," which sexualizes the former and converts the United States to a "Kingdom of Women"), comes in response to the assault on his senses of "countless images" and "things unheard-of" that he feels unable to depict with a brush (Eggert 90). Lin Zhen and the other early writers of Sino-American travel were faced with problems of both excess and rarity in their negotiation of travel and writing.

Thinking about habitus alerts us to something we likely already know: that the physical body—its form, its habitus, its movements, its health, its desires—as the human interface and mediator of experience becomes highly visible and charged in travel accounts. For the habituated nineteenth-century Confucian, whose understanding of body is as ritualized medium of communication of essence and morality, the encounter of that body with non-ritualized environments and others seems particularly confounding. The emphasis in Confucianism on gaining ritual control over language, gesture, and other forms of communication comes out of the view that these are "sufficient and real indices" of the morality or essential quality of a person, and that physical gestures, like art and other cultural productions, become signifying form.[78] In this moral theory of self-expression, "forms that do not attain [the status] of guiding discourse (*dao*) cannot but end in chaos."[79] Representational praxis, thus, is a holistic integration of inner disposition (aspiration, intent, emotion) and outer expression, reliant on an assumed universal environment in which those gestures are transparently communicative. This is the Confucian

[78] For more on the expressive theory of Chinese literature, see Yu (78-82).
[79] From *Xunzi jijie*, as quoted in Yu (82).

particularity; all human cultures are rooted in some variation of faith in human communicative capacity (a faith only made possible by contract and the myth of transparent expression) and haunted by the potentiality of that contract's baselessness.

The *jiaren* (talented and beautiful young girl) in the author's preface to *Xihai jiyou cao* is a function of the representational praxis of the imperialist traveler, important to expressing a relationship of the travel experience and the travel text to its habitat (Chinese literature and culture), particularly its intertextual zone (scholarly romance, utopian idealization, gender ideology, imaginative geography). Whether or not she actually existed, in what form, and in what relationship to the writer, is inconsequential except to an historian. She is a rhetorical function or iconic figuration, a refiguration of a habituated icon, that contributes the signifying dimension (or perhaps even Laughlin's allegorical one) to the travelogue in which the real individual journey, as recorded and re-presented, gains universalized potential for envisioning Chinese journey into the modern world. In this text, the Chinese body's experience of encountering mysterious difference, desiring it, appropriating it as personal story, and narratively assimilating its strangeness is mediated and mitigated by feminization of the other place as alternative utopian society. This Chinese imperial exotic is not unique to Lin's text or even to accounts by private travelers, as I will show momentarily in the discussion of a diplomatic account. On the most basic level, it even resonates with western imperial (orientalist) discourse, in which feminization of the other place is a key function of imperialist rhetoric.

As has happened in Euro-American male imperialist travel experience and writing, the foreign woman often functions as the figure of inversion, whose unfamiliar gender roles are taken as indicative of her society's primitivity,[80] but whose sexual difference from the male

[80] This is a basic concept of Orientalism (as in Edward Said's 1978 book of the same name). In terms of figurations of the foreign in Chinese travel writing, Teng has speculated that the popularity of the Kingdom of Women trope

traveler is a form of translatable alterity that provides an inroad for travelers into the local experience and offers the writer a promise of a transparent medium of expression for feeling and bodily experience in narrative. While inversion is alienating to the traveler, the biology of human heterosexuality, in these cases, provides a paradigm for otherness to be desirable (and imaginable as utopian) or fearsome (and potentially dystopian). In short, one way travelers assimilate their experiences "among others" is by conceiving those others in sexual terms. Sexualizing the adventure (regardless of the event of actual sexual encounter) makes the journey conform to the expectations for experiencing the exotic and promotes the sensation of intimacy with and dominance over place (which lends writerly authority to represent it). Feminizing the foreign as place of inversion (a primitive "mirror world") renders it controllable, apprehendable, and representable under patriarchal paradigm, even as it holds up a mirror that exposes primitive, hidden, or socially/ideologically/morally questionable aspects of the self. Expressions of the West as land of gender inversion only reinforced Chinese impressions of the West as primitive or barbaric—representations of the feminized West, as with western representations of the feminized east, despite their introduction of new information about the west to the Chinese public, cannot be read as reformist, but rather as imperial, appropriative, and sinifying.

Employing the lens of habitus allows us to read Lin's text both as a transcription of bodily experience and as a cultural process of inscription so integral to Chinese travel writing praxis, since it recognizes the deep complexity of relations between the literary-cultural sphere and the physical sphere and the necessity of both to the process of binding disparate elements to a unified real. Travelogues are a type of writing that bring this interconnection to the forefront, as they bind narrative constructedness to actual experience, placing the mobile yet habituated

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may derive from the Chinese traveler's enduring interest in female sex roles, "not only because they appeared anomalous in their own right, but also because they functioned to mark the strangeness of the foreign society as a whole" ("Women" 102).

body at the center as test subject for interaction with non-habitual elements. It is obvious, then, that travelogues would show great interest in the body's subjection to a variety of travails, elations, and humiliations in the foreign environment. The narrative result in nineteenth-century Chinese travel texts is often the self's *hyper-embodiment*, or a defamiliarizing over-visibility as other, resulting in an increased emphasis on bodily-related confusions.

In contrast to familiarizing episodes like those describing Lin's relationship with Leijisheng Suiling, most of Lin's images of the United States are expressed as habitat for his hyper-embodiment: he frequently describes scenarios by depicting his confounded selfhood within that environment. Readers experience the United States, then, as an endless stream of challenges to ritualized performance that must be rendered absurd to be rationalized. His description of life at sea on a foreign ship, for example, hyper-embodies him as subjected other, an unfamiliar self-positioning, to the proud "kings and princes" also traveling on the ship:

> My stomach an empty vault, no use to expect breakfast and dinner…. With 1,000 pieces of gold for one meal, only kings and princes can retain their pride…. Demon-like vapours and frog-like sounds add to the traveller's distress; with unkempt hair and ashen head I force myself to partake of the dregs. (Eggert 85)

Lin counters these unsettling figurations later in the travelogue with images of his success: he is ultimately able to express mastery over the alien domain in a number of orthodox ways, including by rescuing the Chaozhou men, by feminizing the United States and tying it to familiar cultural icons, and by expressing his filialty. For Lin, figuration of the United States becomes a problem of boundary formation: controlling desire, managing distances between people, inscribing the United States as culturally meaningful space while recognizing its insurgent resistance to conformity, grappling with familiarization and defamiliarization. Figuration of the

United States also becomes a problem of creating readability: constructing justification when proper margins are vandalized, and arresting the proliferation of movements and sensations of his body in specific space and time and rendering them visible and recognizable to readers. Like all travel writing, Lin's writing is not the reproduction of reality but the rendering visible of an image of reality—an *image* that arises out of the *imagination* and is communicative, as Sabine Flach writes, because it "freezes" or iconifies a moment in a way that makes its emotion visible, "factual," recognizable, decipherable ("Lament in Contemporary Art," 198).

This theorization of the traveler's representational praxis, with its de-naturalization of travelogue representations and the images they construct, bears relation to the problems in the usage of this terminology of "image," "figuration," and "iconification." At a structural level, Lin may at times employ the figurative style, or rhetorical flourishes that, as Gérard Genette describes them, transform the commonplace into the stylized and create meaningful imagery in the text. However, there is something in the travelogue's uneasy hovering between fact and fiction that forces us to think beyond the figure or image as simple stylization toward the figure or image as complicated tool of knowledge production. The genre's accountability to "authenticity" implies a relationship between actual time-space (the experienced, not only the rhetorical, though often experienced in terms of the rhetorical) and narrative discourse. In travel literature, what poetic impulse the writer may have to stylize a description is tempered, to varying degrees, by a practical impulse to convey the momentary experience of the real. In this sense, the figurative is not oppositional to the literal, but rather complementary to it.

As such, I think of figuration in the terms described by Roland Barthes, who likens a writer toiling to adequately represent to a lover confronting the silent other within himself (the "loved object") by struggling with the image repertoire at his disposal. The chaotic "running

here and there" of the discursive mind and the resulting "outbursts of language" (*Lover's* 3-4) represent only fragments of the underlying activity that has prompted the writer to write. Figures, in this sense, are immobilized expressions of mobility, fated to inadequacy and paradox, bound to the inevitable abysses separating the experience, the thought, and the inscription. Figuration is a process of abstracting and reducing the plenitude of the real into immobilized images, which in turn become recognizable and, often, transferable to other cultural scenarios. The iconic quality of a figuration arises from its recognition and, eventually, reproduction by others.

The fragments of language that are the explosive product of the writer's racing mind are not to be considered schematic (rhetorical) but more photographic: still moments, captured, as they burst out impulsively from the totality of activity and potential. Lin expresses the process in this way:

> Moved by what I lived through and saw, I sing my softly sad song; spreading out things of the past in idle talk, I cannot exhaust all my feelings. Thus, I list what appeared before me like mirages, offering marvellous tales of new wonder; I make use of [the illusions of] *flowers in the mirror and moon in the water* to present great vistas of imposing splendour. (Eggert 85, emphasis added)

Lin's reference to the same idiomatic phrase (鏡花水月 *jinghua shuiyue*) as the one mentioned by the Fairy of a Hundred Flowers in *Jinghua yuan* serves as a method of expressing his travel/writerly frustration at seeing things that cannot be communicated. He recognizes his reliance on rhetorical figurations to combat his own linguistic insufficiency, and recognizes that these idiomatic figurations only grasp at the real while offering dreamy, distorted reflections. Travel writing presents the problem of figuration constantly, as it attempts to grasp the motion

and change of human life and still it into language. The writer struggles to immobilize in words the totality of the event and its memory in the writer's mind, to share the event with the reader—even more so the travel writer who does not have habituated knowledge of his environment. The resulting representation is built out of figures that are by nature reductive but necessary for establishing the connection of recognition by the audience, becoming established as iconic or idiomatic image, shaping the cultural idea of the text's topic and the total event.

The fragmentary preface to *Xihai jiyou cao* is almost a visible image of Barthes' "fragments of discourse": Lin races from one topic to the next, summing up the marvels he has experienced in one- or two-sentence images, often followed by an explanation. It is relatively easy to see the constructedness of a text like this one because it de-naturalizes its own content through the form of narration itself. We can see language in action as it shuttles between the recognizable image and the mental activity of the writer in comments like these:

> Mountains and rivers, men and things: light caught in a mirror can fix their appearance. (There is an ingenious mirror; together with certain chemicals and by making use of the sunlight the images of flowers, birds and persons can be taken up in a second. I know the method in detail.) (Eggert 88-89)

The photographic process seems here almost unrecognizable, and yet it relies on only what language would be familiar to readers to abstract a complex process, one that readers are promised is familiar to the author. The depth of the author's experience and knowledge of "the method" is reduced to a linguistic figure that, like all figures, becomes a site only half full of meaning and which individuals fill up with meaning "according to his own history" (Barthes, *Lover's* 5).

Because so many of the body images that Lin presents are those of uneasy hyper-

embodiment, his text makes the problems of travel writing more visible than many other travel texts that do not adopt a similar writerly stance of humility, acknowledging constantly the problems of embodiment and transmission, and seek instead to naturalize the images they present. The pleasure-oriented images of himself as traveler to a land of women are always recognizable as fantasy, since such are their cultural referents, and especially since they are juxtaposed with images of himself as filial son and faithful husband pining for home. However, fantasy and reality are mixed up for Lin in this text. Even the body images of the "real Lin" in which he expounds on his melancholy and pines for home, family, and wife are expressed in terms of dream, as in this phrasing: "In my dream I return home and take delight in the old quarters; awakened, I am a stranger again, and my eyes meet only red-haired people" (Eggert 85). All of the body images Lin offers of himself as unrecognizable other in a dream or mirror world reality are bound up in his own habituation: economic distinction, filial piety, emotional spectrum and referents, cultural myth, environmental description, and poetic arsenal. For example:

> Thinking back to the tears of Herd-boy and Weaving-maid, the traveller knows that he does wrong to his spouse…. Lifting his head to the spinning of the Great Dipper, the unsteady one feels painfully that he has no home…. (The great earth revolves without pause; what is day in China is night in the West.) Thinking mournfully thus far, tears overcome me; things all pass away like this—a deep feeling in ancient as in modern times. (85-86)

In spite of the multitudinous ways he can describe his experience in terms of idiom, the fragmentation and boundary transgression characteristic of the mirror world, for Lin, lead to personal chaos. The normal pattern of habituation, with its emphasis on bodily mimesis

(imitation of recognizable others and images) and accompanying practices of simulating and dissimulating to produce a likewise "recognizable" image of one's own, is disrupted by the failures of relational knowledge: even with an arsenal of recognizable images to which to relate encountered bodies and environments, Lin lacks sufficient categories for justifying the reversal of night and day. Even his ritualized performance as "traveler" and "writer"—the habituation of his desire by Chinese literary culture, his positive performance of filialty, his appropriate stance in relation to both Chinese and barbarians, his accessing of the literary genres and tropes at his disposal—do not, in the mirror world, guarantee his authority which is compromised by the defamiliarization he experiences and the unfamiliar he must represent. As a pioneer and progenitor of writing about America, who faced the problem of marking the new landscape with its first inscriptions and original iconifications, Lin bravely expresses the unsteadiness he feels in presenting these problematic and paradoxical reversals of the self through the method of inscription itself: by asserting the factuality and authenticity of information even as it defaced the universality of his method in the process.

The attitude of openness about advantages and disadvantages of the mirror world's ways and means marks Lin Zhen's text as transitional. It does not express otherness only in terms of inferior alterity as in traditional travel texts, but it also does not yet express a cosmopolitan transnationalism that marks modern travel writing. It sinicizes the United States by attempting to translate it to Chinese socio-linguistic worldview and native-normative poetic style, but it also faces the inherent problem of translation, which is the ultimate untranslatability of things, and as such becomes itself a foreign aperture that opens up in Chinese local space. The story it recounts is, for the most part, an archetypal tale of travel and adventure with its cyclical tale of disintegration and reintegration/return of the universal, but it bears the scars of its novelty and

lack of direct literary precedent.

Zhang Deyi and Figuration of the United States and Pacific

A travel writer's anxiety comes out of the clash between the impulse to iconify (immobilize) and the promise or threat (depending on one's point of view) of mobility and change. The writing task requires one to arrest the vitality of the environment and experience into a series of representable images of motions and emotions, to make the decontextualized self relevant to the alternate place in which he or she is impermanently found, to find or invent words to fix onto the nameless, and to mediate between exotic desire and habitual constraint. Travel writers must apprehend and control the chaotic excess of incongruity that results from unfixedness: unbounded shifts between stabilization and vitality in selves, environments, and their relations to one another. As such, it is an anxiety about self-definition as much as about rationalizing and decoding the other, and is characterized in both Chinese and American contexts by a dichotomy of desire and disavowal (manifest in attitudes toward both self and other). Many nineteenth-century Chinese travel writers, particularly toward the latter part of the century, tended to express this anxiety not as personal but as collective, as in Laughlin's individual-as-surrogate model, in which the writer draws cultural meaning from every personal episode, and thus mobilizes an imagery of the collective drama of the Chinese nation. This leads to Laughlin's suggestion that nineteenth- and early twentieth-century travel writing projects "a sense of China in crisis and an overriding concern with the question of its 'way out' (*chulu*) of the predicament or dilemma posed by the insistent economic, religious, and military incursions of Western countries in the nineteenth century" (Laughlin 43).

The concentration in travel writing on China in crisis certainly grew over the course of

the nineteenth century up to its flowering in early twentieth-century nationalism—Lin Zhen in the 1840s records no sense of China in crisis—, but the production of collectivity in mid-nineteenth-century travel accounts comes as much out of defensive rhetorical strategies as it does out of classic Confucian social norms. The Chinese creation and reception of the American image during the nineteenth century is associated with an enigmatic tension between desire for the "way out" of Chinese problems and the arguably more strong feeling of affinity for the past. Even if the way out was frequently sought via a literal route out of China, the propensity toward the cyclical return always presents as well, whether as desire for continuity or as the habitual reproduction of the orthodox, as in writing. This resonates with Hongbing Zhang's characterization of the same era as exhibiting a "global passion" that is rooted in self-interest and wavers between positive desire (curiosity, attraction, consumerism), repugnance or denial, and pragmatic acknowledgment of historical conditions.[81]

When we look at the dichotomy of desire and disavowal in terms of the two divergent nineteenth-century discourses of the West that I have been discussing, utility and pleasure, we can see the detotalizing effects of travel on this narrative of travel as producing collectivity. The problem presented by the two divergent discourses can be understood in terms of the reading and writing audience's simultaneous habituation to two dissimilar discourses of alterity. The other iconified as pragmatic benefit and the other iconified as exotic are perpetually attempting in nineteenth-century travel writing to overwrite one another, yet both are nativizing processes of the Chinese imperial travel habitus. It creates a second dichotomy, in which anxiety is created by the fluctuation between the collective (national self and concerns, represented by the individual body) and the personal travel experience (as exotic encounter, contingent on the movements, emotions, and desires of the individual body) and the possibility of narrating one

[81] See also Huters for a detailed explanation of this tension in *jindai* intellectualism.

without the other.

The diplomatic travelogues seem to have a particularly heightened awareness of the threat of travel to totalization, since the diplomats were the ones charged with investigating and reporting on global threats to Chinese sovereignty and worldview. As one might expect, they tend to narrate their personal experiences in terms of a collective self. Further, as Hongbing Zhang notes, they generally omit their European companions and translators from their travel accounts, and tend to inscribe encountered others on ships and trains as either statistical presence or organic part of the naturalized mechanical transportation tool (H. Zhang 52-54). However, these are not universally the case, and the insurgent eruptions of individual personality and humanized alterity point toward the transitional era problems in the habituation of the traveling Chinese and his representational praxis. Zhang Deyi, an interpreter on the Anson Burlingame diplomatic mission begun in May 1868, which included high ranking Qing envoys, produced an account of that mission titled *Further Strange Tales* (*Zai shu qi*, alternately *Ou Mei huanyou ji: Zai shu qi* [Travels in Europe and America: Further Strange Tales]) that offers insight into the variety of problems for representing travel in the mid-nineteenth century. This was his second overseas mission, one that followed a route from China to Japan, then across the Pacific to California. After spending a period there, the group went by ship south along the coast of Mexico to Panama, where they crossed by train, boarded another ship and sailed up the Atlantic to New York for a tour of the eastern cities. After the American tour, the group continued on to Europe.

There is a memorable entry in Zhang's diary in which he encounters a fellow Chinese at an extravagant party for foreign ambassadors in Washington, D.C. The other man, however, is unrecognizable to Zhang as Chinese, because although he was clearly racially Asian ("black hair,

yellow face and Asian features"[82]), he did not wear his hair in a queue and was "cross-dressed" as a westerner. Furthermore, when Zhang questioned the man he found that the man had been in the United States for seven years studying to be a missionary with the intention of returning to China. The man allies Zhang and himself by interpreting Zhang's mission as aiming to promote "western improvements to Chinese manners and politics" upon his return. Zhang's vehement retort, which is primarily an attack on the man's filial failures, amounts to a denial that China needs anything whatsoever from the West.

That Zhang transcribed this conversation as dialogue, which is uncommon in his diary, and that the conversation ends in his heated castigation of the missionary (and Zhang's perceived need to note that the others in his party approved of his tirade), signals a number of things. First, Zhang, like Lin Zhen, rarely spends time on characterization (of others or of himself) or on transcription of conversation, so the inclusion of this episode in which he juxtaposes himself with another character alerts readers to an important expression of self through dialectical evaluation. This is a tactic presumably borrowed from traditional fiction, which emphasizes the arrangement of characters into contrastive or analogous pairs in order to build moral meaning and establish a hierarchy of moral character through repetition and juxtaposition (Rolston; ch. 8), but it is not developed in travel writing as deeply as in fictional narrative. Second, it is an eruption of visibility of humanized alterity, not as constitutive part of the general image of environment, as human others are most often presented in these travel accounts; but rather as an individual emerging out of the continuum of "nature" into an alternate subjectivity. Including humanity and all cultural or civilizational alternatives in the scenario is a method of imperialism that has received attention in the western context as well for its dehumanizing and objectifying effects. This episode is distinct from others in the diary in that it offers readers a direct image of

[82] Translated by Simon Johnstone under the title *Diary of a Chinese Diplomat* 81.

a self in a mirror: Zhang (the representative of the universal self) stands face to face with an othered self whose transgressive body bears resemblance to the universal self, exposing fragmentive potential and manifesting the fear of becoming other. This figuration, the missionary, foreshadows what will become a prominent icon in later Qing fiction for expressing cultural fragmentation and transgression as well as external (non-Chinese) authority.[83] In Zhang Deyi's account, the Chinese missionary is a figuration of a similar anxiety to the one addressed by Li Gui in his comments on education referenced in Chapter Two. Nineteenth-century political utilitarianism was based in the faith that those Chinese who went abroad could avoid being sucked into the western moral vacuum, but Zhang's missionary provides an example of a case in which that might not hold true. To satisfy generic convention, though, Zhang completes the cyclical return in this episode, even if the chaotic individual himself cannot be rectified, through rhetorical rectification. He ends the entry by saying, "I overheard the diplomatic corps discussing the man slightingly without at all blaming me. Returned to our lodgings at two" (Johnstone 83).

The late Qing's re-figuring other (or, as in this example, the other as unrecognizable self) presented a dialectical challenge to the self and its representational practices, and passages like this one show self-awareness about the difficulty of describing and comprehending the strange, along with the difficulty of maintaining objectivity in narrating the encountered phenomena. It raises a further problem: if the good associated with ritual is broken down by travel's upending of ritual, the travel endeavor draws into question the utility of itself and the proposed utility of the foreign. This has something to do with the disconnect between the predominance in domestic official discourse of foreign utility as a mode of justification and the negation of foreign utility in official travelogue discourse in favor of the rhetoric of empirical observation

[83] For example, as in Li Boyuan's *A Brief History of Enlightenment*; see discussion in Chapter Four.

and objective reporting. Likewise, it seems to be related to the multiplication of divergent expressions of the American image in both private and official travelogues. Teng, writing on Qing imperialism in Taiwan, describes an "inner dissonance" in Qing imagined geography that comes out of tensions between difference and sameness, distance and union, and the exotic and the familiar, that mark the process of transforming Taiwan in the Chinese imagination from a "savage island" into a "Chinese province" (*Taiwan's*, 17). This inner dissonance plays a role in attempts at fixing the American image, too. The ideal American image of barbarian cultural inferiority and compliance coupled with useful, directly importable technology is exploded by the eyewitness who recognizes similarity in unexpected contexts, who observes elements of positivity and alternative authority blooming out of the perceived chaos of primitivity, who is troubled by his own incapacity to rectify forms and make them communicative, and who even at times himself energizes the defense against importation of things and practices because of the revelation of those things and practices contextualized by their habitat.

This particular set of tensions contributed to the predominance of utopian imagining in Sino-American transpacific representational practices. I've already discussed a number of ways in which utopian imagining played a part in other texts in the intertextual zone: creating the imaginative potential for envisioning alternatives or recentering to historical ideals, providing a framework for assimilating and nativizing exotic desirability and inversion while maintaining habituated ideals of social harmonization (the Confucian utopian *datong* or great unity), or legitimizing a playful or pleasurable writing project by allowing it to transmit allegorical meaning. Diplomatic travel and writing in the mid-nineteenth century reaffirms all these aspects in terms of the state's specific goal of pure transfer of technology (divested of its cultural and geopolitical constraints) (H. Zhang; ch. 2). The combination in travel writing of historical

narration and utopian ideation, along with the travelers' barriers to cultural and linguistic literacy, gave writers some freedom to figure the resources of the United States in terms of, as Hongbing Zhang notes, utopian, neutral, global accessibility (55). Coincidentally, the predominance in modern literature of the utopian mode shows the influence of nineteenth-century travel writing: texts such as *Xin Shitou ji* (New Story of the Stone) and *Mao cheng ji* (A Record of Cat City), along with countless others, all utilize the tropes of travel and utopia to narrate modernism's *chulu* obsession.

The utopian image of America as tribute state, which aligned the United States with historical images of foreignness propagated by premodern travel literature, did not survive long past the mid-nineteenth century (and even in these initial accounts it is already disintegrating), but it played an influential role in introducing the United States to China and in connecting Chinese travel writers to a pre-existing travel writing praxis and intertextual zone. As with descriptions of other people, descriptions of other places also tend to reveal more about the Chinese cultural-geographical configuration than about American spatial practice. Zhang Deyi's description of the diplomatic party's arrival in Boston, for example, appropriates the United States as imperial Chinese space while also emphasizing its exotic (different) qualities. Zhang writes that they were met upon arrival by a massive welcoming party, including a military salute and escort, and a rainy parade through the city. Granted, Zhang acknowledges that Boston is Burlingame's hometown, which may have accounted for the ostentatious reception, but his treatment of the event implies that he considers it respect due the representatives of the Son of Heaven. At the same time, the tributary relationship implies that the other place be imitative of China without achieving similarity. He mentions that the entire parade route was hung with Chinese flags and overflowing with Americans (many of whom had ornamented themselves in

random pieces of Chinese-style attire) shouting "hooray" and throwing flowers.[84] Consider the difference between Zhang's description of the procession and the one in the official account by the city of Boston, which briefly lists the streets through which the procession proceeded, and notes that "The customary salutes in honor of a Foreign Minister were fired from Washington Square, at the Highlands, and from Boston Common" (Boston City Council, 7). Zhang emphasizes the capacity for Boston to be incorporated into the Chinese sphere—perhaps even American desire to become Chinese-like—even as he muses on the exotic American oddities that separate it culturally and spatially. Zhang's configurations of images like this one formulate the relationship between home and away by projecting imaginative desire onto the other space.

Significantly, utility discourse does not enter in as part of Zhang's travel/writing praxis, except in its disavowal, as in the missionary example mentioned above. Perhaps this is simply attributable to chronology: whereas Zhang's attitude in 1868 still resembled more closely the early nineteenth century attitude toward America, Li Gui, writing in the *Huan you diqiu xin lu* only eight years later in 1876, offers an evaluation of American technology and social relations and suggestions for adoption of certain things in China. That early nineteenth century attitude that Zhang seems to share arose out of the only vague sense that Chinese had of the existence of the United States, informed by the earliest geographical texts such as Xu Jiyu's *Yinghuan zhilue* (1848), which were documents of imperial, empirical description. The United States was simply the place furthest west from China, whose people must therefore be very simple-minded.[85] Americans, while more peaceable and less threatening than other westerners, such as the British (Swisher, ch. 3), were considered equally uncivilized (Iriye 33-36).

There is little expression in Zhang Deyi's *Diary* of any potential usefulness of the United

[84] 133-134, entry for 3rd [Thur., Aug. 19].
[85] Arkush and Lee (16). They cite Qiying's *Chouban yiwu shimo* (All about managing barbarian affairs) (Daoguang 73:29a), translated after Swisher (48).

States. In comparison, for example, to Liang Qichao's travelogues from the turn of the century, which frequently ponder the potential for incorporating various technologies and other western, "modern" advancements into Chinese structures, Zhang observes without judgment. A section on the greater prestige of women over men among westerners, for example, is included not as suggestive for improvement in Chinese culture, but only "to show again the local character of manners."[86] Descriptions of prisons, schools, mints, and so on are presentations of factual observation unencumbered by moralization. This omission of judgment constitutes a type of disavowal that projects its own version of utopian imaginative desire. Disavowal of the imperative to perform the ritual ethical integration into universality of a subject, through conversion of the subject into moralized narrative, demotes that subject to the sub-human as in traditional travel accounts. Additionally, disavowal of any necessity or benefit of the diplomatic tour translates it to imperial tour and contains the outbreak of divergent images of the American under the overarching categorical marker "tribute state." This re-centers the tour on the home and helps to pacify the "inner dissonances" that continually, inevitably crop up in the travel account.

However, comparing the positive image of the Boston parade to the negative image of the missionary emphasizes the ultimately inevitable dissonances in imperial practice, which requires that others be different from the self yet aspire to likeness, and which narrates in terms of collectivity to subsume the individual experience into the allegory of universal experience. Imperial practice requires that there be a universal standard, but finds everywhere fragmentations of the standard. If difference is like to the universal self, then the universal self is fragmentary and imperial travel/writing praxis becomes one of imagining unity (ideally represented in the travel text by "home") while rectifying disunity (which the writer struggles to conscript to the

[86] 70, entry for 26th [Mon., May 19].

"away"). The diplomatic travel diary, with its entry-based structure which already emphasizes recurrence (day follows day, each entry noting the weather and location, fantastic vision follows fantastic vision, data is collected and compiled) comes to resemble the traditional fictional narrative practice of juxtaposition and assembly which invites moral judgment on the part of the narrator and reader.[87] These tensions between likeness and divergence are constructed in Zhang's diary by a central set of travel/writing practices that are fluid and overlapping. Dialectical evaluation, as in the missionary example, is just one of these. Other practices I have identified are spatial recognition, fragmentation of the universal self, collectivization, and sexualization. Zhang utilizes all these practices, even though they at times present mutually contradictory figurations. The major contradiction may be that between collectivization, which gathers all in to the self, and dialectical evaluation, which separates, distinguishes, and recognizes the dangers to the self of collectivization. Although they are not mutually exclusive of one another, treating them individually highlights a number of issues central to travel and writing, connects Zhang's diary in a variety of ways to other texts in the intertextual zone, and reminds us of the unrectifiable complexity of the travel/writing venture.

Spatial recognition. If we can speak in terms of some common characteristic in the Chinese conception of travel, it would have something to do with the particularity of the habituated relationship between the home and away. Euro-American imperial conceptions of travel might be said to differ in the sense that travel is frequently associated with positive escape from home and its restrictions, which extends to the foreign place the potential as space in which secret desires can more easily be acted upon. The Euro-American, it is argued, sees mirrored in the racial other a manifestation of his own sublimated wildness, which he simultaneously fears and

[87] See Doleželová-Velingerová's "Typology of Plot Structures in Late Qing Novels."

desires, and this is the root of colonial violence (Stoler 169-190). Of course, this is not universally the case, but if I am speaking for a moment in generalizations, there are some significant differences in Chinese imperial representations of travel. Both seem to imagine their racial or geographical others as primitive (uncivilized) versions of humanity, and in that wildness see the potential for violence, though there may be some differences to be seen in terms of the self's perceived role as aggressor or defender. Where the distinction becomes most pronounced is in the traveler's conception of home in relation to "the away." Home is (or should be) always on the mind of the traveler who is failing in his filial duty by prolonging his absence. Without the duty toward home, travel is meaningless and amounts to a loss of self. Daoist free wandering may share the positive association of travel with escape from the restrictions of home, but it is with the goal of escape from desires rather than to them, and the imagined endpoint is enlightenment rather than degeneration or selfish gain. For the most part, habituation to Confucian standards of filial piety informs the traveling and writing praxis of Chinese sojourners: the traveler does not escape the home, but rather brings it with him wherever he goes.

Zhang Deyi's travelogue, like so many others, makes continual, habitual reference to the home, which the traveler carries with him like a snail's shell. Chinese travel writers' more or less obligatory laments about their separation from home and parents are one of the more transparent evidences of this home-inhabitation praxis. Phrases like this are similar to countless others in Chinese travel writings: "Dreamt last night of my dear parents. Deliciously happy until the sound of the watchman's clapper in the street and the neighbours' cock crowing somehow reduced me to tears."[88] Spatial understanding has to do with recognition: seeking signs and symptoms of cultural arrangement that are familiar to one's own habitus and translating the experienced environment to construct meaning out of it. Zhang recounts being affected by

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[88] 26, entry for 25th [Tue., Feb. 19].

moments, primarily while still in Japan, in which the foreign place reminds him of home:

> I was reminded of late nights, hearing cock crows, barks, caws and birdsong in the jabber of voices, as if I had been back at home, until I was presently shaken from my revery by a cable clattering to the ground as the deckhands cleaned the ship, and there I was back on board with the same scene before my eyes.[89]

These expressions of personal emotion tied to spatial experience actually serve to bind the traveler to home and the collective self, as "nostalgia [becomes] a threshold between centric and eccentric position[s]" (Söffner 91). The foreign space is transported home through the representation as a sinified abstraction; in these two passages the writer resorts to the trope of "dream" to describe the incongruity he experiences when trying to transport familiar spatial codes from one setting to another, despite their incapacity for interpreting the new space. The writer's process of abstracting the totality of the experience (filtering and translating it, divesting the image of the other from its local context and transporting it elsewhere) results in a depiction that may present as nonfiction or verisimilitude but is actually as constructed, as any fictional account is, to project meaning onto the events and relationships referenced by the story. For readers, the reductiveness of travel writing creates an illusion of transparency about the information presented (the events, a space, its users, and its uses), but travel accounts are not passive reflections of environment. The writing task demands creation of a unified product, a text that expresses a knowable and perhaps even cohesive cosmos and some ideological meaning, or at least a linear narrative. The result is a produced set of marketable abstracted images defined by their chronotope, writerly habitus, and habitat. And so travel texts are not passive in another way too: texts become integral links in the production of the away space for the home audience and create what Pico Iyer has called the "dream of travel": the desire or

[89] 38, entry for 15th [Sun., Mar. 9].

illusion of the other present in the text. The recognizable image offers the dream of mutual recognizability (the away as incorporated space; the home as recipient of foreign recognition), and once fixed as icon in the imagination of the home audience becomes embedded and proactive in producing subsequent relationships of those readers to the space.

Fragmentation of the universal self. The generic convention of lamenting one's separation from home and family shows that home-inhabitation is reinforced in travel writing practice; some of the content of Zhang's diary reveals that it was also socially reinforced among travelers. Zhang remarks that other Chinese in his traveling party criticized him for his interest in and socialization with non-Chinese. His defense consists in interweaving his "transgressive" activity (to his mind, simply trying to do his job) with Chinese collective ideologies and goals:

> There has been some veiled criticism of late from gentlemen on board of my association—fruitful association—with Japanese. This I counter openly with the profession that every part of this world where we live may solicit our study and no one in it be denied our confidence, as admirably expressed in the old saw that 'travel wastes no learning'.... Surely, when we have come all this way to tread this ground and meet these people, their conditions and customs deserve the trouble of careful recording as the provender of many a full day rather than rejection as foolish nonsense. Objections to this are, I maintain, misguided in the extreme. It is also the case that what an ambassador abroad fails to grasp in his accustomed terms will penetrate by its own truth inasmuch as he treats it himself with plain honesty. "True words and respectful deeds," as Confucius says, "are current beyond all pales.["] Shall I counter them thus, I wonder?[90]

The passage is exemplary of Late Qing scholarly ideals of authentication (direct observation)

[90] 36-37, entry for 12th [Thur., Mar. 6].

associated with *kaozhengxue* and of nineteenth-century changes in global space (proximity to the foreign). Zhang's great faith in his powers of observation and the communicative quality of truth (if not of accustomed words) may have something to do with his training as a translator, but to lend these concepts weight and make them communicable to others he fortifies them with a Confucian saying. Readers are called upon to judge whether this "I" that erupts out of the predominantly collectivized subject of the text has indeed diverged from universality: even if Zhang has transgressed according to the parameters of culturally proscribed relationships between the traveler and his home, other people, and encountered spaces, has this been done according to a higher universal ideal?

That Zhang is a translator is what seems to put him in this position and, in a way, figure him as an icon in himself. His roles as creator of communicative forms on the diplomatic mission, as writer, and as character in the text create a multi-layered commentary on travel's enigmatic play between forces of unification and disunification. Zhang's professional goals of frank interaction and truthful representation compound and foreground the standard travel problem, which is the untranslatability to others at home of the individual encounter of a foreign, culturally saturated, and socially produced space. On the one hand, Zhang undermines orthodox relations between China and its others by his cross-cultural literacy and boundary crossing, but on the other this is precisely what enables him to rectify foreign unreadability through sinification. He represents the dangers to the self of consummate, ultimate collectivization (that is, imperial incorporation of alterity) since it results in the creation of divergent selves. However, he also represents the authority of the universal self to dominate the unreadable foreign environment and translate it to recognizable narrative. The resulting text forms a connection between the traveled space and the home by newly producing or re-producing the

experience of encounter as a readable, translated text with features and characters recognizable to a home audience. In this sense, the travel text becomes the social space of the home audience, invested in the moral judgment of the collective readership. It is a product of activity by an identifiable self, marked by the traveler's movements and habitus, but also a dynamic agent in itself of cultural production with effects on the home audience's perception of Japanese or American space and, consequently, Chinese activities in regards to those spaces. If, for example, the cultural practices of non-Chinese are "foolish nonsense," then diplomatic attitudes that regard other people as childish or inconsequential are justified and propagated. If, however, others are worthy of regard, then one can approach and consider them without a threat to one's morality.

Collectivization. The passage above, in which Zhang speaks about himself, is uncommon in the diary because of its characterization of the subject as a singular "I." The majority of the diary collectivizes Zhang's experience, depicting it as group experience rather than as one of an individual body. Zhang's collectivization practices, while achieving a similar goal of defining and upholding the universal self, differ quite starkly from the mirroring practices of dialectical evaluation and present a different type of intersubjectivity. This passage describes the travelers' experience of a hurricane on the Pacific Ocean:

> Major hurricane even worse than yesterday's, with wave peaks vying to outdo each other and the ship weaving and tossing.... Everything aboard clatters, crashes and booms,... and everything everywhere positively soaked through.... Even seamen used to all weathers have been scared by the vicious storm of the past days.... Plainly "Pacific" is scarcely an apt name for this viciously tempestuous Great Eastern Ocean.[91]

And on the following day:

[91] 42, entry for 22nd [Sun., Mar. 16].

> With the storm calmly over, joy succeeds care and recovery attends sickness; congratulations are passed and food kept down. For three days when the dark of night blended with the light of day the healthy have been morose and the indisposed in such an extremity that they teetered momentarily on the brink of dire organic crisis and were all but despaired of.[92]

The event is characterized as collectively effecting everything, everywhere, and everyone; a unified experience. The effects of collectivization are multiple. For one, it provides Zhang with a protective screen; he can be vague about his own state of affairs, never divulging whether he was among the healthy or the indisposed. His self-subsumption into a plurality is not only a retreat from self-exposure, though. It is also a writerly methodology of carrying the home, reinforcing the universal self, and inscribing the landscape. Although the traveled territory is inhospitable, the social environment is translatable and the responses of all passengers to the storm can be summed up in total. Zhang even goes so far as to reclaim the ocean from its inappropriate western name and rectify it to the Chinese geographical universe.

Zhang's collectivizing approach utilizes one further methodology. It, at times, appropriates non-Chinese aspects of his experience and refigures them as belonging to the self (*propre*). These examples show the Chinese passengers' experiences being filtered through and described in collective relation with the experiences of others aboard the ship. For example, following this hurricane, a Japanese on board writes and shares the following poem:

> I wonder who I am that at the age of twenty-four
> I trot the globe, an idiot quite pitiful to see.
> One brother makes his name within my native orient;
> Another plies his trade upon th'inviting western sea.

[92] 43, entry for 23rd [Mon., Mar. 17].

Why, at one's sons' departure there can only by regret,

And of my country's favour deeply conscious though I be,

I will, I think, throw in my lot upon some foreign shore,

For fame, achievement, fortune, wealth: these things are not for me.[93]

Although alignment of *propre* sentiments with Japanese sentiments may introduce dissonance into collectivity, the poem resonates with Zhang, who has previously expressed similar sentiments of fealty toward both parents and country. He includes it in his text as a way of indirectly expressing wonder at his own motivations for leaving the "inviting" space of home to undergo a dangerous sea voyage and uncertain experiences on the opposite shore, and as a way of setting an inscription on the oceanic landscape. The poem is, sentimentally, familiar territory, and it inscribes the Pacific Ocean as familiar, sinocentric territory. Poetry as historical mode of landscape inscription creates a connection between text (and its rhetorical zone of writers, readers, and intertext) and landscape (culturally saturated territory) and mobilizes collective consciousness about a place, making it "known" (Strassberg "Introduction"). Zhang even incorporates the activities of westerners into his account of the experience of the sea voyage. A few days later, after some further foul weather, he records the following: "Head wind somewhat abated: no longer expect to capsize. The Occidental ladies and gentlemen on board all dressed up last night for songs and music in the saloon, merrily drinking and talking away till the break of dawn."[94] Although the Euro-American passengers have a different social convention for expressing relief about the weather situation, their activities, for Zhang, express a generalized sense of improved spirits.

In Chapter Two, I discussed the rise of the *tongzhong* (same race) concept, offering

[93] 43-44, entry for 25th [Wed., Mar. 19].
[94] 44, entry for 28th [Sat., Mar. 22].

evidence of its early appearance in transpacific travelogues prior to its acceptance as a more mainstream concept accompanying the rise of nationalism at the turn of the century. Zhang's diary offers further evidence of this. His practices of collectivization extend to Chinese living in the United States, reflecting both the early stages of the transition toward nationalism and the transitional-era territorial externalization of the self. The discovery of other Chinese people traveling and living abroad seems to indicate to Zhang a movement of the universal self beyond domesticated participation in the Central Kingdom toward global identity. Rather than a protective barrier, the Pacific (the Great Eastern Ocean) begins to be seen as a liminal space of flow between one Chinese reality and another, opening apertures in self-conception (ones frequently unwelcome to the home audience, judging by the public reception of early transpacific travelogues at the time of their writing).

Zhang's descriptions of San Francisco's Chinatown express the aperture while incorporating territorially foreign space as legitimate Chinese space:

> On to the streets in the afternoon, where the visual impression is rather less than Western, the roads, shops, temples, halls, taverns and theatres having all been contrived by Chinese most neatly. The main streets, known as *Chinatown*, do look from a distance astonishingly Cantonese.[95]

Zhang's spatial recognition binds American Chinatowns to the homeland, as do the appearance of Chinese practices in these spaces: "Devotional attendance to offer incense at the temple of Lord Guan, a lavish structure with brilliant plaques, built with donations from Cantonese merchants. There is no limit to the reach of divine holiness."[96] This global *tongzhong* proto-nationalism draws on the time-tested travel text chronotope China-universal but goes beyond it.

[95] 48, entry for 10th [Thur., Apr. 3].
[96] 60, entry for 1st [Thur., Apr. 24].

It, like previous travel texts, offers an allegory of the "central" traveler demonstrating control over totality despite (or even via) displacement from the geographical center, but like other transitional-era texts it presents the possibility for de-territorialization of the central self. The latter is reflected in the travel dream of the United States as incorporated, recognizable Chinese space, and in the increasingly global national Chinese identity that would allow Cantonese merchants to be emissaries and pioneers of "divine holiness." Transnational Chineseness, however, introduces liminality to this travel text by "failing" to gather all selfness back to the geographical center even as happens in *Jing hua yuan*'s cyclical return.

The problem of transnational Chineseness is a central underlying issue in Zhang's diary, as evidenced in all these examples, revealing what was probably a major identity struggle for Zhang himself. Rectifying a diplomatic position defined both by the homeland tradition for foreign relations (tribute, domestic defense, barbarian pacification) and the global stage ruled by a system of international relations (in which China was just one in a community of states) (Svarverud) meant recognizing a decentralization of power. His and other Chinese resistance to this decentralization, which has been characterized frequently as emerging from western "modern" intervention, is reflected in his descriptions of two events. The first is a banquet given by governor Haight, at which the building is hung with "the Dragon Banner of the Qing and the Stars and Stripes of the U.S., flanked by the British and French flags, rippling and flapping handsomely in the wind."[97] The outward expression of political relations at this international event is one of suggested equality among nations on a diplomatic level. At an equally splendid all-Chinese event, at which the Chinese envoys were received by the secretary of the Six Companies, the banners expressed a different sentiment about international relations. For example: "May the holy Son of Heaven tend the rites and pacify his neighbours, making the

[97] 62, entry for 6th [Tue., Apr. 29].

barbarians simple as infants; / And may the wise envoys spread benevolence and virtue, bringing the ends of the earth under one roof."[98] This instantly iconic image, the Chinese-language inscription of imperial Chinese rhetoric onto American space, is esoterically separated from the pleasantries of international relations. Zhang is one of the early diplomatic travelers who latched onto the potential for *tongzhong*, global Chinese identity, and extra-domestic participation in the Central Kingdom to mitigate the decentralization of power associated with modern global political frameworks.

I began this section by claiming that the collectivization approach, which gathers alterity into the self, differs categorically from the dialectical evaluative approach, which aims to distinguish the self from others through mirroring. Zhang, however, employs both expressions of intersubjectivity without contradiction. The question of how he achieves this is important because it speaks to a number of ostensible contradictions that characterize travel writing praxis of the transitional era. For example, whether these texts reflect imperialist ideation, nationalist ideation, or even utopian ideation; whether they incline toward Confucian normativity or promote nascent transnationalism; whether they promote one American image or another; or, whether they ultimately produce collectivity and universality, or destroy them.

For transitional-era travel texts, the answer comes out of the contradiction (Teng's "inner dissonance") itself, in that travelers constantly encounter these contradictions as reality, and reproduce the contradictions in their writerly praxis. More specifically, collectivization and dialectical evaluation coexist in Zhang's text by the necessity to represent the endless interplay between identification and differentiation as happens in travel, as well as by the accountability of travel/writing praxis to habituation. They should be seen as complementary processes of negotiation that, while expressing different possibilities for intersubjectivity, are both habituated

[98] 61, entry for 3rd [Sat., Apr. 26].

to the same China-universal chronotope, the propensity toward the cyclical return, and reaffirmation of the normative posturing of the self. The multiplication of instances of divergence in the text come out of the task of imagining unity while rectifying disunity.

Although we can everywhere in Zhang's text find evidences of his energy toward the narrative of collectivity, I have already mentioned a number of ways in which this is continually problematized. The narrative of travel as producing collectivity is deconstructed by the detotalizing effects of travel itself, but also by the gap between collective self-conceptions and individual ones, the layering of the two in the inscription of the self, and the relationship of the practice of representation to the formation, transformation, and performance of real self-understandings. Among the results: recognition of the impossibility of the other to be pure inversion of the self (Guillaume 136), and of the impossibility of the utopian dream of collective encounter of others (as in the conflict over Zhang's interrelations with Japanese). Also, problematic collectivity provides a means for the individual to function both as allegorical representative of home and national journey into modernity and for that individual to be held accountable for his divergence. For Zhang, crossing the Pacific, the physical zone of liminality, is an integral process in complicating his relationship to home, as evidenced by the concentration of comparisons to home and country in the first part of the journey, from western end to eastern end of the ocean. The increased predominance of the Pacific Ocean and "the hard passage this ocean presents" (Zhang 47) in Chinese travel writing during the mid-nineteenth century suggests its rise as a signifying space important to Chinese imaginative geography and national self-conception, particularly in terms of justifying the disconcerting discovery of the distance between Chinese selves and spaces.

Zhang's collectivization approach depends on landscape and transportation as bearers of

the universal experience; he depends on a rhetorical approach that emphasizes the dynamism of the spatial encounter to eliminate difference in personal experience. Whereas dialectical evaluation, with its face-to-face mirroring of subjects, notes interpersonal difference, collectivization, with its filtration of experience through (physical, social, cultural, historical) habitat, relies on an assumed transparency of environmental communicativity to the collective self. In a final example for this section, Zhang describes a tour of the California coast that emphasizes the relationship of the active subject to landscape and transportation:

> Drove… to Keefe House… nestled against a long ridge overlooking the sea…. The view from upstairs was of a red sun above a blue sea silvered over with surf whose wash let up neither day nor night, empty to the horizon but for a scattering of sails and gulls. We drove the 20 *li* home round by the shore with the tide under our wheels, a coronet of blue green mist to our left and line upon line of snowy waves to our right, spiralling finally along a hill road bordered by a riot of mauve whose scent permeated our clothes.[99]

This comprises one of the more emotionally communicative, sensory expressions of experience in the diary, but even in this entry the landscape is constructed as collective social space and personal judgment is suspended. The sensation of the place is expressed via the collective "we" rather than as the individual "I." Collectivization masks the constructedness of the text's representation, as well, by creating the impression that all travelers had the same impressions.

Writerly choices like Zhang's construct the universal self as a "pitiful" globe-trotting "idiot" who nonetheless crosses the "hard passage" of the space between and establishes dominance over the multitudinous American environment. These initial accounts of American and Pacific space served a prominent role in translating those spaces for "home" Chinese, assembling a reality of those spaces that made them incorporable into the Chinese

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[99] 48-49, entry for 12th [Sat., Apr. 5].

epistemological and cultural universe. It is not difficult to imagine that the literary reality and intertext contributed to and filtered the "American dream" of subsequent Chinese who came to populate American spaces and contribute to producing those spaces in their modern form.

Sexualization. Experiencing the foreign as simultaneously assimilable and incomprehensible is what makes all these divergent literary practices work together in the same text. The imaginative capacity required for interpreting and representing makes space for elements such as the utopian, supernatural, emotive, or archetypal to coexist in travel writing with empirical practice or verisimilar reportage. The task of the traveler-writer becomes taking authority over chaos (through imagination) and narrating it in a meaningful way, creating a shared textual space through which readers participate in the imaginative mapping of the traveled space and the corporeal challenge (mentally, emotionally, physically) of binding and unbinding fragments of the self. As in non-diplomatic travel writing, this kind of imaginative work lends the text its artistic quality, as it is bound up in the central artistic preoccupation of communication. Travel writers share the artistic desire to transmit something personally known or felt; as such they suffer the challenges of artistic communication: how can emotions present themselves to others, how do we know what the emotional expression of another implies, and how are the iconic figurations in a work of art affective (essential producers of knowledge about emotion and human experience) rather than simply reflective (ornamentative, displaying an image of affect) (Flach 11)?

There is a singular example in Zhang's American diary in which he gives in "to a momentary creative itch" and composes a literary narrative rendering of an experience, rather than one framed as empirical observation and reportage. This "Tale of Oakland," like other parts

of the diary, utilizes the approach of collectivization and appropriates the United States as Chinese space, but is distinctly artistic in its utilization of poetic image to express emotional content related to the scenario. Other scenarios reported in the diary, particularly ones in which his insertion into a new environment cause him to suffer from non-recognition, project an image of frustration of his ritual embodiment. In one example, Zhang records taking a walk, during which he overhears locals speculating on his nationality in English. He interjects, in English, "Chinese!" (117). In another instance, he overhears Americans speaking derisively about his clothing: he was wearing a gown appropriate to a Chinese official, but what the Americans saw was a man going about dressed in his nightclothes (143). Subjected to the upset of social convention, Zhang is confronted with an unfamiliar bodily image, and these accounts come to be evocative images of the overall breakdown in ritual in the barbaric place. The Chinese diplomatic body, the vehicle of ritualized encounter with the foreign, subjected to the over-visibility that results from displacement and subsequent disruption to habituated selfhood, is problematic and unsettling to translate into representation. The nineteenth-century travelers are unable to avoid recording the breakdown in ritual that results from encounter with non-ritualized bodies and environments. These instances of hyper-embodiment are constantly grating, in the text, against the representations of collectivity that allow the body to disappear from the text.

In contrast to these, the "Tale of Oakland" renders Zhang's body invisible through self-construction based in sexuality and gender role-playing. It utilizes familiar scholarly imagery of the idyll to present the United States as a recognizable mythical archetype, the distant utopia, which can function as imaginarium for the home audience at the same time as it is emotionally communicative through its binding of the exotic to the habitual. The utopia, as pseudo-verisimilar fantasy, allows readers to imagine themselves in a non-habitual place, yet one that is

nonetheless desirable and recognizable enough to be expressive of emotional content. Further, the discourses of experiential pleasure and desire for otherness seem to be made acceptable via the scholarly poetic impulse and the feminine filter. Zhang finds writing this segment enjoyable and comforting, and undoubtedly readers found it enjoyable to read, since it appropriates and sinifies the United States.

The event the "Tale" describes is an afternoon stop of the diplomatic corps at a tea garden in Oakland, California, where Zhang records the unfolding of an exotic scene. In the brief "Tale," the Chinese delegation and their western companions take a meal among "native" men and women in a luxuriant and fragrant garden. Although gentlemen are present, it is the ladies he describes, who (despite their big feet) are graceful, merry and adorned in ways that make them resemble fox spirits. The guests' intoxication and the free mixing of the sexes offer an erotic image reminiscent of the ones described in Lin Zhen's travelogue. As in that rendering, sexuality and gender role-playing alleviate the sense of displacement and hyper-embodiment involved in being transported to and visible in an alien environment, since they enable the writer (and his readers) to overcome sensations of alienation and body-confusion by identifying with an authoritative subject position: participant in the sexual culture of the place. Perhaps the most iconic, lingering image from the "Tale of Oakland" is this one:

> ...anon came a fair warbling as of tuneful orioles as native women served the food; voices mingled with the twinkle of cutlery as all set to; merrily the guests began to chatter, the sexes sitting together, shoe across shoe amid the burble of native speech. Soon tea and wine were drained, plate and glass lay ravaged, and the westering sun was upon the hills. A cool breeze rustled the woods, where birdsong rose and fell. The ladies left first, trailing long skirts like foxtails along the ground and enveloped in a body of swirling

> perfume as they walked with a graceful gait despite their big feet.[100]

Zhang appeals to fox spirit mythology and by extension the *chuanqi* (tales of the strange) tradition, a traditional mode of explicating and integrating the unknowable. Many of these mixed the content of phantasy and love or eroticism. Additionally, the trope of drunkenness as gateway to fantastic experience or vision is also familiar throughout Chinese literature.

Body images like these, even as with body images of hyper-embodiment, are communicative not because they are “naturalistic”: there is little that is “natural” about representation in the sense of it being preordained by nature—although this has certainly been the logic behind many strategies of representation. They are communicative because they capture a stance that, due to the habituation of the writer and audience, can be connected to something culturally perpetuated and knowable. The image acts on the audience and causes the reading self to attribute wishes, convictions, and intentions to others in order to understand their behavior (Flach 198-199). Flach writes that:

> body images as image scenarios are… always characterized by a fundamental oscillation between *nature* and *culture, imagination* and *imago*, *facticity* and *fictionality*, between *habitus, habitat* and *heredity*..., and between *intentionality* and *non-intentionality*. This oscillation is key to understanding the connection between expression and emotion. (185)

Since the image (the “expression”) is “fictional”, “one *cannot* experience the reality of an expression *without* an encounter with its fictionality” (199). The effect is one of mutual definition, of an echo chamber, in which time and space are gathered together into a rhetorical zone (not unlike an intertextual zone) in which the self and other are produced as recognizable, “factual,” and iconifiable.

Although empirical practice would write out the individual body in the diplomatic travel

[100] 57-58, entry for 23rd [Wed., Apr. 16].

text, we find, as Charles Laughlin has, that social space cannot be reconstructed in the travel text without continual reference to the body. Laughlin notes that "[t]he body as a vehicle of perception is linked to the physical topography of social spaces and also becomes a vehicle for identification with and opposition to others around it." As in the examples of both hyper-embodiment and collective self-subsumption, the dynamism or endless movement and fluctuation of bodies, spaces, and identifications connects the body intimately to the continuum of social space, linking the successes and failures of ritualized encounter to the traveler-writer's task of appropriating, interpreting, translating, or integrating event into a relatable paradigm. As such, in travel writing there is the effect of mutual definition: "The landscape inscribes the perceiving body just as the perceptions shape and highlight the topography of the landscape" (Laughlin 31).

While other parts of the diary avoid expression of desire for the foreign, the "Tale" makes this desire acceptable as exotic abstraction. While empiricism and provincialization in other parts of the diary attend to the details of locality and their latent power for fragmenting, contesting, and de-totalizing, the "Tale's" image of collectivized identity allows goodness to be associated with pleasure (rather than ritual, as in Late Qing Chinese utilitarian thought) because it can be tied to universalization. Zhang ends the "Tale of Oakland" with the significant remark that he has recorded the memory to make himself smile. His remark bears the rhetorical expectation that readers will recognize and understand his iconic figuration of America as distant, feminized utopia and perhaps likewise enjoy vicariously participating in his sexual role-playing in their imaginative construction of "America." The blurring of the boundaries between fact and fiction in this episode draws an important connection between the relative newness of empirical travel writing practices and the historical intertext of travel writing's utopianism. The

awkward insertion of this piece of creative writing into the chronological march of daily reports emphasizes the tension between the two competing travel discourses, utility and desire, in the traveler-writer's experience. For the bureaucratic writer, traces of desire for the West were enough to ruin an official career, but diplomatic travelogues show that even these writers were unable to repress their fascination with the exotic entirely.

CONCLUSIONS

Early diplomatic accounts of travel in "the land of the flowery flag" seem interested in truthful recording of eyewitnessed things, and did not represent the United States or their experiences in it as mystical, but without proper Chinese words for translation, literary precedents or previous inscriptions to invoke, and often even no personal knowledge of English, there were voids in the system of meaning. Zhang Hongbing calls this "cultural aphasia," the loss of ability to articulate (32-40). Other Chinese travel anxieties about articulation had been associated with over-inscription (belatedness and the potential failure to contribute) and universalization (connecting the peripheries to the center), but cultural aphasia is distinctly new in the transitional period and connected to the rise of travel and its associated assault on totalized epistemology. The early travelogues cannot accurately be called "failures to represent" in the sense that they omitted, translated, and created, since all travel writing performs this task. They also were not without precedent: there were cultural and narrative expectations for information about the West and travel writing in general, and epistemological structures and modes of knowledge production that provided interpretive and iterative paradigms. They were, however, novel negotiations with an uncharted locality in a world in which cultural distinction was increasingly imperative. As initial eyewitness figurations of the United States, they establish the hegemonic figuration of that scene

of humanity, sealed in the Chinese imagination without contest until dramatic proof could be presented against the icon. On the broad scale, they participated in developing the genre of international travel writing and propelling the shift in narrative representation from domestic to local.

Chapter Four:

Agonism and Apertures: Locality, Transculturalism, and Americans in Modern Chinese Fiction

> *The other side of this shell is nothing but the Western Hemisphere, and the Western Hemisphere is where the American continent lies. For all writers of the old continent, America is the treasure island, where the unsuccessful turn successful, and the successful reap…. Falling all the way to America—that would be fantastic! A perfectly straightforward, effortless, yet refreshing experience, sparing that motion-sickness business on board a ship or an aeroplane."... The reward of being a good writer, so it appeared, was not to ascend to Heaven, but to descend to America.*
>
> -- Qian Zhongshu "*Linggan*"[101]

In spite of the strong draw that there must have been on the imaginations of countless Chinese in the nineteenth century, to have mobilized them to leave home to seek fortune in America—that distant Gold Mountain, a country so new that it was seemingly "without ghosts,"[102] a land with uncommon ideas which slowly revealed themselves to Chinese sojourners and intellectuals—representatives of this magnetic distant land rarely surface in Chinese domestic literature. Following 1895, this began slowly to change, although representations of America and Americans continued to be limited in the literature set within the territorial bounds of China. So while texts describing travel to or life in the United States had become relatively abundant by this time, commentary on the relevance of knowledge from and about the United States to China and its problems was equally increasing, and translations of many American texts were available and popular in the Chinese literary market, Chinese fictional representations of "the American" *within* Chinese local space remain few in number.

The reasons for this likely include the relatively small number of Americans present in

[101] 422-423.

[102] This was Fei Xiaotong's observation in *Chu fang Meiguo* (First visit to America), written during the year he spent in the United States (1943-1944); translation in Arkush and Lee 177.

China, even after the Opium War treaties, and the still relatively limited knowledge about America beyond the textbook representations and the exotic representations delivered in travel texts, like those discussed in the last chapter. Euro-American foreigners were still generally lumped together into one category, "western,"[103] which elided differences between them and led to the use of generic "foreign" or "western" characters in fiction. As such, the discussion of the last few chapters about the distinct images of the United States from abroad and on the official level ends in a few divergent conclusions in this chapter about the impact of those images on popular representation. The rise of international travel and the uncanny appearance of the foreign in domestic space clearly had an impact on shaping modern literature in general. While the American and the transpacific in particular did not play a more pronounced role in this than any other international relationship, they and their increasingly distinct associations do come to bear on the imaginative construction of Chinese space and subjectivity. This chapter will look at some instances in which Chinese locality or particularity becomes bound, through representation, to the American, the transpacific, and the "western."

The chapter moves beyond the observations that have already been made about these impacts, particularly the frequent critical focus on the obsession with translation and translation theory (and the impact the extremely popular translations of foreign writings had on modern literature), or the analysis of thematic employment of "the foreign" in texts that narrate the modern Chinese condition. While those aspects of Chinese engagement with the foreign certainly come into play in the texts that will be discussed, this chapter is primarily interested in the shift in sense of Chinese national geographics, from domestic to local, and the role the American and Pacific play in that revised sense of locality. Viewing the American or

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[103] *Xi* (western), *yang* 洋 (foreign), or *xiyang* 西洋 (a combination of western and foreign) (Fang 102-104).

transpacific trope in this way adjusts the impression that because of their very limited entry into Chinese local fiction they similarly had very little impact on literature. Instead, the chapter shows that the sense of local permeation by the outside, and in these texts specifically by the oceanic, American, or potentially American, constitutes one of the significant adjustments to literature that makes it "modern."

Transnational Anxieties

Local transnationality is expressed, as will also be shown in Chapter Seven in the context of American regionalism, through the unsettling of local place. Local narratives are populated by the ghosts of travel narratives past and by the shadowy presence of real foreign elements that disrupt the present unity of "home." The movement-through of people, stories, memories, objects, and ideas mean that the modern environment becomes connected to places far away but only in diminished form; subjectivity becomes dependent on shadows and fragments that flutter through one's domestic space and complicate the knowability of the whole. In earlier chapters, I described the processes of iconification that happen in travel writing, as the writer prepares the real travel experience for narrative retelling according to the habitus of the home audience. In this process, the generic conventions of travel writing and the challenges of converting experience to text perform a reduction of the experience and the dynamism of its intercultural exchange; the resulting narrative projects reified images of iconic foreign personalities and places through which he or she has passed. In local modern narratives, the described environment is not unfamiliar and thus iconified or assimilated to another semiotic system, as in a travel narrative. Instead, it is a complex and dynamic environment whose familiarity is disrupted by something that has come from afar and that frequently requires interpretation. For

readers at home of travel narratives, their anxiety at the narrated environment's unfamiliarity is alleviated by its being securely located "away" from home. Local narratives tend, however, to express unresolved anxiety about the realities of traveling elements having crept into the home space.

That foreign incursion is frequently associated negatively with problematic (or colonized) subjectivity is not surprising, given the material threat of national loss of territorial sovereignty which had been building over the course of the nineteenth century. Texts in that century did not have the sense of eagerness for or concession to Western knowledge for reasons that were discussed in earlier chapters: until the very end of the nineteenth century, Chinese intellectuals did not take the West terribly seriously or admit that China could learn anything from it. The lack of widespread scholarly curiosity about the West even up to the final years of the Qing Dynasty had a couple of implications: one of them being that the feeling about the West that shaped the intellectual arena was primarily anxiety rather than the curiosity that emerged after 1911 (Huters; Ch. 2); the other effect was that this outlook became characterized as a national failure, according to the hindsight of early twentieth century intellectuals who voraciously consumed western culture and promoted its capacity for bringing renewal and strength to China. After the end of the first Sino-Japanese War in 1895, and especially after the failure of the Hundred Days Reform of 1898 (Kwong), the agenda of the "self-strengthening" movement gave way to a newer, more radical call for reform as fears for China's survival as a nation mounted. The approach to foreign nations remained focused on strengthening the "self," but the constructedness and changeability of what had been considered "essence" became clearer as the nation became increasingly perceived as engaged in a Darwinian struggle for "survival of the fittest."

As was discussed in Chapter Two, central to this new concept of nationality was the righteous expatriation of individuals, whether to study or work abroad, who were increasingly viewed less as traitors and more as crucial links to the new world of global intercourse. Even actual "traitors," such as Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, who fled to Japan after proposing "heretical" reforms and being sentenced to death, and who activated the diaspora as relevant political actors in Chinese national politics, became central to the construction of new literature after the fall of the Qing Dynasty. And whereas previously only western scientific, geographic, political, and historical knowledge had been of some interest, cultural knowledge now also seemed vital. Translation was the portal to this knowledge, and the extreme popularity around the turn of the century of authors like Yan Fu and Lin Shu, who were prolific translators of western literature (Pollard), meant that cultural representations of the foreign came in large part through this avenue. Also, rising numbers of Chinese went abroad to study. Their increased cultural capital at home meant that these returned students frequently had an impact—or strove to have an impact—on the literary scene. Travel accounts, and even boycott literature,[104] also continued to have measurable impact on the formation of Chinese images of the United States and its people, but they retained geographical settings outside China and therefore they do not register within themselves the impact of the foreign on Chinese space itself. That the sharp increase in interest in foreign ideas particularly from the 1890s to 1920s has been linked to the major structural changes of that era has led some historians to see shifts toward the "modern" as a response to the stimulus of the west (Furth 14-15). While previous chapters showed that the beginnings of the modern in the nineteenth century was less a reaction than a native outgrowth, post-imperial writers and intellectuals became much more responsive to that stimulus.

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[104] For example, such as the widely read *Ku shehui* (Bitter Society). Boycott literature became a popular type during the anti-American boycott of 1905-1906. *Ku Shehui* was set in the United States and written about the allegedly authentic experiences of a Chinese laborer there (G. Wang 136).

After the 1890s, transnationality becomes an integral element for representing the local in many texts. Local texts are permeated by references to familiars who have gone abroad or to international politics; characters personally adopt western dress, objects, lifestyle, or speech; they discuss foreign texts; there is even the occasional foreign character. Overall, representations of Americanness seem to arise primarily out of references to American texts that the characters read, or references to a geographics of hierarchized success, not by the appearance of "American" characters. We might assume that there were less Chinese-language representations of Americans in Chinese space at the time simply because there were relatively few Americans in China then, whereas Chinese characters appear with some frequency in the literature of the U.S. west after 1850 because of the sizable numbers of Chinese laborers present on the frontier. As Lee Haiyan points out:

> foreigners, though a significant other to the Chinese psyche since the Opium Wars of the mid-nineteenth century, became morally consequential *strangers* only in the twentieth century, particularly in the reform era as China opened its doors to the outside world and allowed more and more foreigners in for commercial, educational, and leisure pursuits. (39)

Lee's study of the significance of "the stranger" to the Chinese moral imagination limits its focus on foreign strangers to her final chapter for this reason: it was not until quite recently, after the broader opening to the outside following the Cultural Revolution, that China has moved more toward the national condition prevalent elsewhere of the "community of strangers" (11). Drawing on the theoretical work of Zygmunt Bauman and Adam Seligman,[105] she suggests that in the modern national condition, the state of mixing means that physical proximity and social proximity do not coincide, and one finds oneself with strangers "at one's doorstep." The absence

[105] Bauman *Postmodern Ethics* (149), and Seligman *The Problem of Trust*.

of familiarity or shared moral evaluations leads to "civil indifference" and unavoidable and erratic "mismeetings," resulting in subjective ignorance about how to act and unwillingness to engage with "the alien next door." Having the stranger within, who is a real and not a generic other, "unites physical proximity with social distance," emphasizes the role of marginal groups to society, and introduces "the stranger's aporia" in the domestic space (Lee 11). This resonates with Claire Conceison's evaluation of Chinese occidentalism, which bears within itself a balancing act "between embracing the benefits of... globalization and intermittently reasserting native traditions and expectations so as not to relinquish self-identity," which demands, to a certain degree, that subjectivity be achieved at least partially through self-negation (54-56).

This "modern" condition of de-totalization, in which the foreign resides within and among, certainly comes to a head in the opened-up society of the post-reform era as Lee suggests. However, as I have been arguing throughout Part One, this condition was already present and growing even in the mid-nineteenth century. The slow transition during that century in conceptions of the foreign, from irrelevant sub-human barbarian toward consequential outsider, and eventually insider, is responsible for the apparently sudden changes to representation of local space as filled with intimate strangers in the twentieth century. The implications of the stranger within on the development of Chinese fiction extend far beyond the appearance of foreign characters in texts. The culture of travel altered the sense of totalized (domestic) locality and recreated the local as permeated by eruptions of the outside. This chapter's exploration of the transpacific consciousness in modern fictional representations of Chinese national space shows that travel as literary trope alters the fictional chronotope from its earlier transitional era formulation discussed in Chapter Two. It argues that the increased presence of material otherness in Chinese domestic space transforms the older form of domestic

fiction into modern local fiction, which cements the modern sense of reality as fragmented or transnational.

This implies a change in the way the foreign is represented as related to the domestic. Whereas prior to the transitional nineteenth century, entrance into Chinese territory in fiction signaled assimilation to the "China-universal," after that time the foreign is depicted as crossing into Chinese territory on its own terms. Of course, this comes in terms of overt plot elements (invasions and settlements, the ubiquitous presence and influence of foreign commodities and ideas, the lack of mastery over the foreign), but there are changes also to deeper generic demarcations caused by the epistemological changes associated with the influence of travel. The space-times of both types of traditional fictional forms discussed in Chapter Two, the domestic novel and the travel novel, changed to the point that the travel novel no longer evinces the ability to integrate all to the China-universal with a return, and the domestic novel (which conserves the interiority and timelessness of domestic space) has more or less disappeared into the local novel (in which inner space is subject to the outer and to historical moment).

This chapter explores the effects of travel on the new fictional arrangement of Chinese locality in the early twentieth century period in three cases. It first examines the new novel of domestic travel in the case of Liu E's *Lao Can youji* (*Travels of Lao Can*), which prefaces its narrative content of travel within Chinese national space by a dream sequence on the Pacific Ocean. By prefacing an eyewitness account of China with a dreamed visit to the liminal space at the edge of the national, a space representative of the encroachment of the outside on China and a void in which principles of right behavior are lost in the storm and envisioning clearly becomes problematic, Liu E prepares readers to approach Lao Can's travels with the expectation that what is on the edge of perception may be more influential than would appear. Whereas the outer made

no incursions upon the inner in previous travel novels, and internal upset was resolved by the conclusion, modern travel novels like this one represent conflict in terms of unresolvable internal difference, and their conclusions are marked by failures to return to an origin. Although *Lao Can youji* makes little reference to the foreign, suggesting that it maintains the traditional China-universal chronotope, its thematic obsession with the failures of Chinese conservatism and emphasis on the unresolvable mistreatment of Chinese by each other paints the mobility of right-minded Chinese as "frozen" in its capacity to save the Chinese "sinking ship." Liu E utilizes the allegorical connection between the liminal space of the Pacific and the national territory he traverses to suggest that locality has become a void, emptied of ethical signposts and structures.

The second case comes from another late Qing novel, Li Boyuan's *Wenming xiaoshi* (*Brief History of Enlightenment*), which more directly explores the aporia of the foreign in local space. As part of its larger purpose of exposing the progressive disintegration of totality through the mode of the carnivalesque, it uses the character type of the transgressive missionary to critique Chinese officialdom and expose the increasing axiological voids opened up in systems of value. Behind the novel's employment of foreign missionaries, who for all intents and purposes seem to positively counteract the ineptness of the Chinese officials, lies the popular hostility toward missionaries that had been fomenting throughout the nineteenth century and earlier. This text, through its strategy of humorous reversal, still retains the attitude of suspicion with which foreignness was regarded in the nineteenth century, since it presents admission of the foreign into subjective activity as one of the illogics of the modern condition that are criticized by the novel. That attitude of suspicion lent itself, as earlier chapters suggested, to those Chinese on whom the mark of the foreign was left, whether they were foreign educated, converted Christians, promoters of western ideas, or had simply traveled abroad. The missionaries are

represented as engendering confusion because of their bodily enactment of Chineseness through language, dress, and legal interference, and in the end it is their very familiarity with Chineseness that makes them ideal candidates for "holding up a mirror" to the modern Chinese condition.

Finally, the discussion shifts to a few decades later, to explore the generic qualities of modernist local fiction through two short stories that depict Americanness in particular. There is clearly a shift from the late Qing novels, which characterize generic "westerners," to those of the modernists, which utilize more nationally specific representations that suggest a more developed sense of the geographical and cultural distinctness of European and American countries. Even though on the popular level people still "can't tell the difference between the English devils, the big-nosed Russians, or the American asses,"[106] that this distinction is being made at all in the early twentieth century is a signal of the shift to knowledge that there is a significant difference. The sense of confusion about the foreign or elision of all foreignness had previously meant that the United States, despite the publication by the mid-nineteenth century of relatively accurate, empirical geographical texts like Wei Yuan's *Haiguo tuzhi* (*Illustrated treatise on the maritime countries*) and Xu Jiyu's *Yinghuan zhilue* (*A brief account of the maritime circuit*), continued to be spatially apprehended on the popular level as part of an amorphous barbaric zone beyond the seas and outside the edge of perception.

"*Shou*" ("Hands") by Xiao Hong and "*Linggan*" ("Inspiration") by Qian Zhongshu, the two texts discussed in this final section, will show however that the ability to know the difference and utilize one's international fluency had become associated in the modern era with subjective agency. In "*Shou*," the narrator's capacities as a model student are contrasted with the inability of Wang Yaming, a rural student, to master the subjects of English and geography. Wang Yaming is "sunk" by this failure to discern global difference. The story mediates inter-

[106] This line comes from the teenaged pickpocket in Xiao Jun's story "*Yang*" ("Goats") (365).

Chinese relationships through the node of an American novel, *The Jungle*, which reinforces the permeation of local uniformity by outsidedness. In *"Linggan,"* the protagonist, a famous writer, discovers at the end of his life that all his striving for distinction on the international literary scene has actually destroyed him—so he both failed to master the world and in the process failed to master China. Qian utilizes the geographical paradox of America being both an imagined height of attainment and also physically downward (through the center of the earth to the other side) to confound the sense of perception about what the nature of writerly goals should be.

While all these texts maintain a stance that C.T. Hsia famously called an "obsession with China" (533-534), by which he meant a moral obsession with narrating national crises, Qian's ironic critique of the untranslatability of Chinese modernity to the rest of the world comes closest to addressing the problems of conscription of literature by the national to write a "way out" of China's problems (Laughlin 43-44). Exploring locality in literature and its de-universalization through the travel trope is one method of overcoming the sense of obsession with nation and exploring Chinese literature in broader terms of global modernist characteristics while retaining the emphasis on the local particularity. The three tropic angles from which early twentieth century fiction is approached in this chapter all look for the spatial aperture that signals modern fragmentation: the liminal Pacific that batters at the boundaries of China, the missionary's deviltry that confounds structures of meaning, and the intrusion of American literature and geographics as an important extraterritorial contrivance against which the self is constructed.

Ted Huters has proposed that the sense of "trauma over an irretrievable past" gave intellectuals in the modern era a sense of *agonism*, or the necessity to struggle against ideas (particularly those from the West). The Hegelian conception of history that had worked its way into Chinese thought also lent a sense of failure of the old to resist Western encroachment, and it

pushed nationalism together with “modernity” to create a convulsive relation of past to present characterized by taxonomic anarchy: what is Chinese “essence,” and how can foreign things be measured in opposition to that essence and subsumed within its categories? (7-10, 14-15, 60-61). The haunted agonism that Huters describes generates pathological intellectual protagonists, who, like Hamlet, struggle in the present to avenge ghostly fathers and to arrest the regressive motion of history to validate the position of “present.” This chapter’s attempts to connect the early transpacific consciousness to modern literary expression of nation, place, and self explores these localized conflicts between the universal self and the otherness or eccentricity that presents itself and demands to be integrated. Self-oriented interpretive and appropriative structures such as those in these texts become pathological because they always refer the other to the self within the historical context of semicolonialism, of internal political, ideological, and material chaos, and of internalization of foreign discourse about the underdevelopment of China. Lu Xun’s famous character Ah Q exemplifies the ironies of modern Chinese subjectivity in his perennial capacity to turn real defeats into psychological victories, finding pleasure not in the actual but in the imagined or believed:

> Only after Ah Q had, to all appearances, been defeated, had his brownish pigtail pulled and his head bumped against the wall four or five times, would the idlers walk away, satisfied at having won. Ah Q would stand there for a second, thinking to himself, “It is as if I were beaten by my son….” Thereupon he too would walk away, satisfied at having won. All that made fun of Ah Q knew that he had this means of winning a psychological victory. So after this anyone who pulled or twisted his brown pigtail would forestall him by saying, “Ah Q, this is not a son beating his father, it is a man beating a beast.” (221)

Once Chinese "essence" lost its foothold as arbiter of value, came to be regarded as a hindrance, and appeared to only keep China from evolving toward modernity, it took on the connotations with primitivity or barbarism that indicate a colonization of mind. That metaphoric madness, manifested in diverse ways across modern literature but all concerned with the splitting of coherence, demand that subjects struggle against powers that are undefinable, and as such very difficult to defend against. The minimalism of transnational appearances within the local is exactly what becomes upsetting about them: the narrative marginalization of apparently innocuous outside elements cannot mask their fearsome powers to undo totality.

PACIFIC PROXIMITY: TRAVEL AND THE LOCAL IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER

Liu E's novel *Lao Can youji* is considered one of the major fictional works of the late Qing. The first thirteen chapters were serialized in the Shanghai periodical *Xiuxiang xiaoshuo* 綉像小說 (Illustrated Fiction) from 1903 to 1904. The full twenty chapters plus a prologue was also published in the *Tianjin riri xinwen bao* (Tianjin Daily News) (Doleželová-Velingerová, "Fiction" 724). The novel constructs a topos of travel that can be instructive in relation to other fiction of the early twentieth century. In *Lao Can youji*, the protagonist Lao Can ("Old Derelict") foregoes a life of stability that might theoretically be obtained by working as an official, since he is too poor to purchase a post and unable to pass the exams. He opts instead to learn to heal from a Taoist priest and proceeds to roam the Chinese countryside as a travelling doctor for twenty years, depending on his good reputation for his livelihood, and recording his observations of social and political upheavals that the country undergoes. His wanderings become the pretext for hearing stories about the modern Chinese condition, at all levels of society, and for curing illness and correcting abuses. Travel also becomes one source of his

mythological stature among his acquaintances, who are mystified by his lifestyle choices and repeatedly pressure him to take an official post, accept expensive food and clothing, and to marry. Travel, in this novel, is simultaneously a rejection of incorporation into the dominant paradigm and a commitment to bringing reform to that paradigm on a local level. It as such is an extension of the traditions of narratives of Taoist wandering, with a few twists that mark it as from the early twentieth century.

The major neoteric marker is the proximity of the outside, which as Chapter Two showed, was absent in texts prior to the transitional nineteenth century. In Chapter One of *Lao Can youji*, Liu E uses the traditional mythological or dream sequence to position his main character, Lao Can, as an ideal lens through which the condition of modern China may be viewed, but does so by placing him at the liminal edge of China both subconsciously and geographically. In order for this character to establish and maintain the role of adjudicator and authenticator throughout the novel, he must first see China as if from afar, to put the later experiences of the local up close into perspective.

Establishing this moral lens requires some alcohol: in Chapter One, Lao Can gets drunk, and his good "friends," Intelligence and Learning, appear and take him to a pavilion overlooking the Pacific Ocean called Penglai—a reference to the legendary land of the Immortals located somewhere off the northeastern coast. As the sun begins to rise, they see through their telescopes not a Shangri-la but a damaged Chinese ship in great danger on the stormy sea, weighed down heavily by merchandise and people who have nowhere to take shelter from the storm. Taking advantage of the situation, the sailors have begun to rob and kill the passengers. The three friends debate a course of action. Learning suggests they act ethically and jump in a fishing boat to row out and help. Intelligence calls the plan "impracticable." Lao Can offers the

following commentary:

> I do not think the people in charge of the boat are necessarily wicked,... but there are two reasons why the situation has become so desperate. Firstly, those people on the Pacific can only live in a pacific manner; when the sea is calm they can guide their boat with ease, but their nature is such that when they encounter storms they become demoralized. They were not prepared to meet a storm today so they have all been thrown into the greatest confusion. Secondly, they do not possess a compass, for ordinarily when the weather is fine they follow the old tradition and steer by the stars in the sky, without making serious mistakes regarding their direction; this is what we call "depending upon heaven for existence." But now they have run into this bad weather when the sun and stars are hidden by clouds, so they have nothing to rely upon. It is not that they don't want to do well, only they do not know the direction…. The best plan now would be to follow Learning's suggestion and take a fishing boat to catch them up… and once we have overtaken them we can give them a compass so that they will know the direction and be able to set their course…. Once they listen to us there is no reason why they shouldn't reach the coast directly. (*Travels* 18-19)

Although the friends row out to help the ship's passengers, those on the boat are so confused and demoralized that they reject the compass and try to kill their rescuers. The sorrowful friends are powerless against the angry mob, who assail their small boat with fragments of broken wood until it sinks "to the bottom of the sea." (*Travels* 23)

The beginning of Chapter Two immediately reveals that this was only a drunken dream, signalling its importance as allegorical rather than literal content, and the story continues. But the effect of this brief imagined foray into international space lingers: Lao Can's travels

introduce him to more and more situations in which Chinese are taking advantage of or destroying each other—particularly the poor and women, the most vulnerable populations—under the conditions of widespread social and political disorder. He takes great pains to convince local officials to adopt new or ancient techniques to solve problems, but just as in his dream, they frequently refuse the technological advancements he offers. For the most part, the novel envisions a China that is fairly insular, which is why this initial connection to the Pacific as "mirror world" on the other side of the coastal interface seems so important. The metaphor of China as a sinking ship, unable to weather the storm like the modern steamship that is also visible out on the sea, mirrors the failures of the old conservatism and corrupt officialdom on land, which takes even the innocent down with it. His efforts to "heal" China—Shandong Province in particular, which suffers under the cruelty of local magistrates and Boxer banditry—face (often watery) obstacles that impede his implementation of progress.

The significance of water as an impediment to mobilization is established by the allegorical dream sequence in Chapter One, and repeated throughout the novel. That the initial image of the novel is the encounter of a space of violence and extraterritoriality, one seen from the security of national territorial space at a distance, yet somehow connected to that space, is important to understanding the novel's intent. The ship on the Pacific is literally on the edge of perception: they view it through telescopes and can connect to it only visually, since it sits off in the distance, separated from them by a vast expanse of water and obscured by the bad weather and a clouded sun. Even after rowing out to it, they do not board it—they attempt to give advice but ultimately fail. Subjectively, Lao Can is positioned as invested in but exterior to the problems he witnesses, merely someone passing through, who views a barely perceptible China as if from afar yet aspires to help keep it from floundering. His distanced position is reinforced

by the equation in Chapter One of himself, Learning, and Intelligence with the scientific, rational, objective seeing-eye of the telescope lens. This moralizing focalization, which aids in likewise allowing the reader to feel connected to the story but distanced from the fray, depends on the employment of the Pacific as a screen on which the image of sinking China might be projected.

Lao Can in many ways is a traditional focalizer for Chinese fiction: established from the start as the moral lens through which to understand the rest of the novel, and who provides judgments throughout the text on the situations he encounters, by which readers too can learn proper moral judgment. The story employs the traditions of vernacular narrative, which through their "contexts of storytelling and of historical discourse" create a verisimilar effect that simulated real public contexts of storytelling such as the teahouse. That emphasis on audience and perceptible relationships (whether fantastic or verifiable) to historical sequence meant that both space and time in traditional vernacular narrative are verisimilar, not mimetic, and are located in specific, intelligible space and time. David Wang characterizes the novelty of late Qing vernacular narrative as coming from, essentially, its ingestion of the travel trope: "the continuous shifting of scenes and episodes..., together with the popularity of the themes of traveling... and eyewitnessing... [which] further destabilized the spatial conventions that characterize traditional vernacular fiction." That "conventional realist system" begins to slip, in his analysis, as writers turn away from narrating bygone history toward narrating the present, as they engage in increasing mimicry (which includes strategies of exaggeration, distortion, simplification, cynical repetition, maneuvering, and defamiliarization), and as such begin to narrate events that seem to "hang together [only] by means of a phantom analogy" rather than an "authentic raison d'être" (*Fin-de-Siècle* 44-47).

Lao Can youji does indeed hang together in this way, as it draws many analogies between various local problems by finding their source always in inter-Chinese cruelty and bureaucratic dysfunction. The contained and controlled world of earlier domestic novels, which were firmly bounded by traditional protective paternalistic hierarchies, has fragmented into the global, and the new mediator of expanded, infiltrated, and amorphous "real" China has much less agency and much more unresolved frustration. A novel like *Lao Can youji*, by representing China and not the foreign locale as travelled and estranged, brings fragmenting movement into the domestic space.

This is reinforced by the migration of important semiotic referents to the liminal "mirror" of water at several points in the novel. The Pacific Ocean in the first chapter and the scene at the Gold Thread Fountain that was discussed in Chapter One are two of these; also there are several others. Water functions as an important metaphor because it is so intimate to human space—bodies of water are located everywhere—and yet it is a part of space that remains mysterious, since humans cannot enter it or know what lies beneath its surface. As such, it is both inside and outside of the self. It presents people with images of themselves, sometimes placidly but often with great violence, as in the storm. Even the fountain shows a subdued agonism deep within itself. The metaphor is strengthened by several references to the ancient successes of Wang Jing and Yu the "Pacifier of the flood" (46), about whom Lao Can advises local officials who struggle with the problem of regular river flooding. His advice, to dredge and deepen rather than to widen, amounts to advice to contain the river's dynamism rather than allowing it to spread chaotically over broader areas, which is advice that would apply to other human problems as well.

In a final water example, Lao Can is trying to travel back to the provincial capital and

comes to a standstill in a small town. The Yellow River is freezing over, and because of the dangerous icebergs has become impassable. The ceasing of movement causes him great consternation, and he writes the following poem on the wall of his lodgings:

> The earth is cleft asunder with the howling of the north wind;
> Long slabs of ice rush down the darkening river.
> The ice behind pursues the ice in front,
> Attacking each other and struggling in rivalry.
> The river is swiftly ice-bound,
> A silvery bridge erected over frozen rocks.
> People longing to return home sigh,
> And travellers fret in vain.
> Thus on account of a single river
> The carts cannot pass.
> Let us have girls and music and a fine feast
> To enliven this chilly night. (*Travels* 128-129)

Here again, as at Penglai Pavilion, arriving at the edge of a violent body of water causes Lao Can to stop moving and to observe what is happening. His poem records his and other travellers' frustrations at curtailed movement; it is also frustrating that the source of the deadlock is the infighting of the powerful: the icebergs. Realizing that he will have to wait until the river is totally frozen over and thus pacified, so that he can cross by walking overtop, shows that there is again an effect of oscillation between the powerful and the weak: when the powerful mobilizes, the weak are immobilized, and can only move again when those forces are stabilized; the lack of a paternalistic figure of power who can pacify China and its border areas creates chaos. Lao Can

meets an old friend and they wait out the freeze together. This ceasing of motion creates a sense of fantasy. His friend invites some women over, and in an unexpected activation of the *caizi jiaren* trope, the unsuspecting Lao Can ends up getting married: a permanent form of "settledness."

The end of the novel provides little in the way of return to an origin—the upsets of the novel are not mitigated (as in *Jing hua yuan*, see Chapter Two) by cyclical recentering after the fragmentation of dispersal. Whereas that text utilized the journey motif as a way of re-collecting to stable geographic centers, *Lao Can youji* only offers an ephemeral sense of closure at its conclusion. True, Lao Can's wanderings may have ended by his marriage and final return to the provincial capital, but he is not settled. Rather, he is "frozen" (119) or "sunken" (23), unable to progress or to see beyond, and unable to be the voice of reason in a country embroiled in internal conflict. As suggested by his archivist friend earlier in the novel, he has "cast [his] ambition into the Eastern Ocean" (95) and come up with nothing as he "resign[s] himself to his fate" and "[sinks] to the bottom of the sea" (23). He has gone into the Pacific's mirror or dream irreversibly, a conclusion that is only partially satisfying because its return to stabilization is not associated with the positive, dynamic change that is actually needed in the face of the flood or storm. Instead, the return offered by the end of the novel is only partial, in that it does not conserve the inner/outer (*nei/wai*) distinction, and instead shows interfluence between these two realms which are metaphorically represented in the novel by land and water.

THE FOREIGN MISSIONARY AND CYCLICAL DISINTEGRATION IN *WENMING XIAOSHI*

Li Boyuan's novel *Wenming xiaoshi* (Brief History of Enlightenment)[107] shares the interest in the

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[107] 文明小史 (*Wenming xiaoshi*) is literally translated "a brief history of civilization / culture", but is commonly known in English by translator Douglas Lancashire's rendering, *Modern Times: A Brief History of Enlightenment*.

breakdown of epistemological structures; only it pushes the critique much further than Liu E did. In both texts, what felt enclosed, private, and contained at one point instead feels eroded, ruptured, exposed, and escaping: as Karl Marx famously put it, "All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind" (476). The novel as a whole is prodigious, filled with an endless stream of characters and scenarios, but what is of interest here is the direct employment of a character type, the foreign missionary, to achieve a similar effect of returning back to China an image of itself, this time in grotesque parody.

Wenming Xiaoshi is a story of recurrence, both structurally and in content. Serialized from 1903-1905, also in the periodical *Xiuxiang xiaoshuo*, the novel when read as a whole follows a structural pattern of narrative cycles of vignettes, which are unrelated to one another either by characters, setting, or plot, but are linked thematically to one or several preceding each through fragmented doubling. Situational and ethical interpretive differences arise from disfigurement of the original story: Li frequently characterizes a thematically similar latter cycle by its progressively incongruous and degenerate vision of social interaction. This narrative structure of cyclical disintegration creates in the novel a uniquely late Qing Chinese grotesque realism, a realism affected deeply by encounter with the foreign other and by the trauma of increasingly disordered concepts of self, social system, literature and the world. Written into Li's obsession with the social and political situation is a systematic cycling through events and responses to events that creates overabundance as it creates lack, surfacing that leads to submersion, evolution concurrent with disintegration, transgression within nonviolation.

Li's tenuous positioning of subjects within this fragile structure, influenced overtly by the chaotic political situation of the first years of the twentieth century in China, stages a distressing

performance of the social that can be categorized as carnivalesque. David Der-wei Wang has identified the carnivalesque overtones of other late Qing novels, in which humorous degradation and pan-social mockery of the ridiculous and ineffectual is essential to the castigatory (*qianze*) purpose of the novels.[108] Wang points out that the writers around the turn of the century but before the 1911 collapse of the Qing dynasty, in the face of the "axiological void" brought on by structural collapse, abandoned the traditional "heroic rhetoric" that would elevate humanity, and replaced it with grotesque realism, a radically new way of writing reality rooted in ironies publicized by exaggeration.

Generations of twentieth-century critics, upset by the unsettling comedic villainy targeted at all levels of society, saw only the pessimism or negativity of this mode of realism and suggested that the writers must have "been so demoralized by these evils that [they] endorsed them when [they] should have been denouncing them" (Wang *Fin-de-Siècle* 216). Wang's attempt to reclaim this early mode of modern writing which was "repressed" by literary history, finds positivity in the slapstick humor which writers employed in the face of "a kind of malignant force that, unlike simple hypocrisy or imposture, is hostile or indifferent not to particular values but to the very idea of value" (211-218; Ch. 4). *Wenming xiaoshi*, like the other *qianze* novels that Wang discusses, employs humor to reveal the monstrous potential in the unscrupulousness and disorder of society, to (like Lao Can) attest to the powerlessness of even the well-intentioned, including the author himself, to resist disruptive forces.

Even though missionaries only appear in two of the novel's numerous cycles, the figure of the foreign missionary is essential to Li's thematic preoccupation with social processes related

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[108] Critics starting with Lu Xun, have chosen to call these novels "castigatory" or *qianze* (literally to condemn or denounce), insisting that the purpose for exposure of corruption was to criticize those within the bureaucratic system harshly and publicly. The common assessment for decades was that because of the weakness of literary quality, most of these novels are worth only a cursory mention in a history of Chinese literature (Lu Hsun, *Brief History* 388).

to justice and power, because of the intervention these figures perform in traditional modes of judgment. That they interpose in the judiciary process, which is a ritualized expression of affirmation of the ethics and moral agreements of the social, sovereign whole, means that disruption of judgment on a criminal case comes to exemplify the dismembered embodiment of self that Chinese officials experience. This characterization unmistakably criticizes the central role foreign interference played, historically, in disrupting these processes and depleting Chinese sovereignty over them. It also is clearly based on Chinese imaginative appropriation and sinification of the "stranger within" to act as trope for indication of the imbalances and disturbing changes within China's own internal social, political and judiciary systems. Tropically, foreign missionaries in Chinese space act as voids into which meaning and power are drained out of Chinese locality, unsettling it.

Additionally, these episodes typify Li's parody of the progressive ritualization of trauma in everyday life: as the trauma recurs, it burrows into social ritual itself and becomes embedded in the very speech acts that produce and regenerate social functioning. The foreign missionaries, by their vocalizations in court, which defy traditional Chinese logic yet are not mitigated by a decisive, moralizing narrator as they would have been in traditional fiction, are able to erratically interpellate the readers and *zhongren* (the mass or crowd present, often including the witnesses who give testimony) into collusion with the discomforting new rituals or conventions. The demands made by the missionaries in both instances put the judging official in a position in which he must decide whether to bow to the considerable pressure raised by the impertinent foreign demand, or whether to uphold imperial authority by passing the expected judgment. In both situations, the official bows to foreign pressure, assimilating that other authority as justifying authorization for his juridical ruling and by his speech performing the embedding of

foreign control over Chinese spatial practice.

In doing so, the official performs a double-transfer of power: from Chinese to foreigner (giving over control), and back to Chinese again (receiving control back as a reward for compliance). In this process, power becomes enfeebled and contested. And, in the repetition of this double-transfer in recurring narrative cycles, the traumatic exchange becomes ritualized in the novel, and re-experiencing the trauma becomes integral to the process of asserting Chinese subjectivity. First, self-negation must occur, and afterward the negated self can become the positive, albeit shadowy or diminished self once again. Likewise, social processes become defined as positive in their negativity, and disintegration becomes an integral part of the social process of normalization and integration. When foreigners are involved, the speech acts of Chinese figures of authority become rituals of self-negation with the underlying presupposition that the negation of self will enable a claim to power, and will transfer the self into the position of causing, rather than being subjected to, the trauma.

This ritualization and assimilation of trauma into social performance is not just thematic in Li's novel; it becomes formalistic as well through the cyclical narrative structure. *Wenming xiaoshi* is a novel of cycles in the sense offered by Milena Doleželová-Velingerová in her detailed study *The Chinese Novel at the Turn of the Century*: it offers no central protagonist around whom the action centers throughout the novel, only a series of action sequences that are anecdotal and lack cohesion; but it remains a novel rather than a set of short stories because of a thematic unity ("Typology" 48-49). The novel does provide loose links from one vignette to another: a new set of characters and plot will often appear in the same geographical location in which the last vignette ended; a previous sub-plot will be continued under a new main character, which also involves the continued presence of one or more minor characters; a predominant

theme will persist through more than one episode. It employs the literary device common to episodic novels of organization of characters into meaningful relationships, often with one insincere and one sincere character, or a minor character acting as a "double" or "surrogate" for the major character, which provides cohesion and exposes one character indirectly via comparison with another (Rolston 197-198, 225).

The thematic unity of *Wenming xiaoshi*'s cycles is reinforced by a particular and very concrete structure. Each successive "cycle" of stories is linked to the cycles preceding it by mimicry of some characterizational, situational or thematic element, but with a twist—the twisting is what drives the story forward and causes the reader to make judgments on previous sequences by their juxtaposition to current action. The predominant unifying principle in the novel is disintegration, which is reflected in the plots of individual stories as well as in the novel's structure itself. Each cycle offers further viewpoints on or examples of civilization and the modern condition, presenting a spectrum of morality from which the reader must judge the proper path. However, in each cycle, the characters become involved in more and more degenerate activities, and the resolutions of the stories are less and less satisfactory to the reader. The effect of this cyclical disintegration—or progressive degeneration highlighted by episodic narrative repetition—is to make the reader sense that things are getting worse and worse.

Like other doubled cycles of the novel, the first cycle in which a foreign missionary appears presents him as inherently problematic but also possessing some good traits. The reader's misgivings about the earlier cycle's dubious morality only become compounded by the later cycle in which a much worse situation arises. The first missionary appears midway through the first cycle of the novel, when a scholar named Liu Boji flees from town, having narrowly escaped arrest by the local official, Prefect Fu Zhudeng, who has deliberately mistaken a

gathering of *xiucai*[109] scholars for a gathering of political dissidents, and is arresting them as they assemble to practice a traditional essay writing style. By this point in the novel, the cycles of disintegration have already been set in motion, and Li has already established the thematics of increasingly ineffective local governance in Yongshun Prefecture. The harsher and more foolish new official Prefect Fu was the replacement for a relatively fair yet incompetent official, Prefect Liu, who was removed from his post for dealing too carefully and too slowly with the aggrandized problem of a foreigner's teacup being broken. Liu's process of negotiation was undertaken at the cost of postponing the military examinations and causing local unrest among students that escalated into riots. Prefect Fu likewise undergoes interactions with the foreign that lead to his loss of authority, starting with his baseless determination that the meeting of *xiucai* to practice writing traditional essays has been called in order to plan a revolt.

In Chapter Eight, after fleeing from the city and escaping arrest, the scholar Liu happens upon a lush, charming mountain village marked by two major structures: an ancient temple, and a large foreign structure. In this rustic world of contrast to the city, Liu encounters two forms of monastic life: the familiar temple monk, acquainted with his parents and representative of a continuity of history with the present, who yet mistrusts Liu's intentions and offers services only in exchange for money; and the foreign missionary, who in "copying" the Chinese has become only recognizable as foreign by his nose and eyes. The monk offers the initial surreptitious glance at the novel's first missionary character by describing him to Liu Boji:

> Although a foreigner he wears Chinese dress, has his hair cut in our fashion and wears a queue. In all things he copies the Chinese. His eyes, however, are a little more deep-set than ours, and his nose is somewhat more prominent. People, therefore, still have to refer

[109] The *xiucai* 秀才, or "distinguished talent," appellation indicated that a scholar had passed the imperial examinations at a basic level, and would enjoy certain privileges such as exemption from manual labor and corporal punishment.

> to him as a foreigner. Yet, although a foreigner, one has to credit him with ability. He has learnt to speak Chinese with considerable accuracy, and he has a profound knowledge of Chinese scholarship. Apart from anything else, he has committed to memory the *Kangxi Dictionary*.

Liu finds the missionary's memorization of the Kangxi dictionary (*kangxi cidian*) humorous as an intellectual goal, yet there is something oddly enticing about the missionary's performance as Chinese. His interpretation, for example, of the configuration of the character for "Buddha" as "ridicul[ing] Buddhists by suggesting they are not human" applies a pseudo-linguistic "indigenous" argument against that religion. At first, scholar Liu suppresses his urge to laugh, but he eventually comes to find the missionary's arguments "quite reasonable" (*Modern* 77). The two men develop an intellectual friendship, and when Liu eventually and reluctantly reveals the reason for his exile, the missionary jumps into action. He dresses Liu in foreign clothes as a disguise, and they return to town to demand the release of the wrongly accused scholars.

Aside from the numerous other levels on which the carnivalesque operates in this novel, this instance of cross-dressing opens up the body to become a site of socially bonding humor in the basic Bakhtinian sense. When the friends look at each other, the narrator notes, "The missionary, a foreigner, was dressed as a pseudo-Chinese, and Liu, a Chinese, was dressed as a pseudo-foreigner, and each thought the other looked highly amusing" (*Modern* 80-81). The monk's reaction to seeing Liu dressed in that manner is alarm, thinking that he must have converted to Christianity, but Liu himself thinks he looks rather "*hen hao xiao*" (很好笑 absurd, very amusing). Liu's greatly prescribed sense of self has been awkwardly penetrated by unfamiliar elements several times now in the story, beginning with being accused of trying to form an illegal political party and culminating in this moment, when dressed as a ridiculous

foreigner, he finally is able to laugh at himself. The grotesque body of the missionary dressed as a Chinese initiated the two men's friendship, and Liu's reciprocation of the absurdity provides the foundation for a socially bonding humor.

While prescribed, rationalized, official social order and sense of national "self" closes off the potential for laughter, the disintegration of this stasis elicits re-evaluation of traditional Chinese self-concept. In the humored glance between the two men is the unspoken personal knowledge that he uses the other man to achieve his own aims: Liu uses the missionary as a vehicle to return home safely and to hopefully free his friends; the missionary uses Liu to assert hegemonic influence in the Chinese sphere. By becoming grotesque, these individual bodies contribute to the reunification of society by bringing about justice—this is one of the few instances in the novel in which the carnivalesque carries in it a productive quality, even if it is achieved only by partial negation or fragmentation of the self to achieve positive identity. The humanity of the story of their relationship disappears in later tales in the novel, however, following the paradigm of steady disintegration. And additionally, this cycle suggests that foreigners are troubled by the same process of asserting subjectivity as Chinese are; as the novel progresses, however, this sense of equanimity disappears between foreigners and their Chinese doubles, emphasizing the increasing distance between phantom ideals and contextualized reality.

As elsewhere in the novel, readers are called upon to evaluate this episode of deformed mimesis and unclassifiable figuration themselves, since the traditional morally discriminating narrator is absent in this novel. The novel's *xiezi* 楔子 (author's preface) and title give the strongest clues as to the author's intent for readerly interpretation of his purpose. Li writes in the *xiezi*:

Irrespective of whether these people have succeeded or failed, been negative or positive,

> been public-spirited or selfish, proved genuine or false, they will eventually be regarded as men of merit in an enlightened world. It is for this reason that I have specially written this book, publicizing their deeds. Far be it from me to deny the pains they have taken on the lonely path of progress.[110]

The disclaimer regarding the reprehensible actions of many of his characters can only be read ironically, as the author castigating the corruption of Chinese officialdom and the foolish impression that this new social condition is "enlightened" or increasingly "civilized." It also is an underhanded jab at the disfigured subjectivities that have resulted from the cultural milieu, and, even further, an expression of authorial vulnerability and resignation to the future. For Li, there is no use in clinging to old systems that are so corrupt that it is virtually impossible to operate within them honestly, nor is there any use in projecting onto western thought some "ritualized expression of hope" (Dikötter 128) for a new China as some of his contemporaries were doing. His prediction that hindsight will judge the chaos of this period as productive, whether intended to be ironic or in earnest, shows movement beyond rigid dichotomies and receptivity toward notions of fluidity of identity and controvertible world view, or at least resignation to change. This openness never, however, undermines the underlying unwillingness to concede pre-eminence to the west, despite the traumatic paths of re-negotiation that must be taken to reach a point of being "progressive". In naming this series of deformed and laughable interactions a "brief history of civilization", Li pokes relentlessly at the concept of *wenming* 文明 (civilization or culture) itself while promoting the foundational positivity of representing the negative. The national subject, drawn out of traditional self-conception by new "modern"

[110] *Modern Times* 11. From the Chinese text's *xiezi*: "所以, 這一干人, 且不管他是成是敗, 是廢是興, 是公是私, 是真是假, 將來總要算是文明世界上一個功臣. 所以, 在下特特做這一部書, 將他們表揚一番, 庶不負他們這一片苦心孤詣也" (*Wenming* 2).

patterns of global (and by extension, social) functioning, becomes vulnerable in the axiological void, to the point of being unable to judge the actions of his contemporaries. It is, in essence, the double-negation of the individual through the ritualization of trauma that leads to reassertion of partial subjectivity.

Unlike the dream sequence used at the beginning of Lao Can, or similar sequences or prefaces in other Chinese novels, which offer an initial character or situation as the ideal lens through which the condition of modern China may be viewed, this novel sets its foundation in the uncomfortable assumption that the ideal is no longer relevant enough to bear mention. The *xiezi* publicizes the narrator's own participation in the embedding of social trauma by voicing his authorial remarks through a negating speech act, in which he creates an abundance of interpretive possibilities even as he creates a lack of one particular "correct" interpretive stance. In claiming an inability to judge, the focalizer negates his own subjective authority, but in doing so also qualifies himself to continue to narrate the events as "everyman," affected like the reader and characters by the obligation to abide by traumatic speech. He relinquishes even the sense of control over space and progression that is maintained by Lao Can in the travel novel.

The figure of the culturally transgressive or uncategorizable missionary, spatially outcast in the novel by his hiddenness away from the city on the edge of perception, becomes centralized when he is activated by the Chinese scholar. Li thus, as Liu E did, casts the late Qing situation as one in which the liminal must be approached and assimilated to the national self-conception. For Li Boyuan, as for many other intellectuals of the time period, that entailed not only that the other is apprehended in fragmented, simplified, decontextualized, impoverished, and deformed configurations, but that the self likewise experiences de-totalization in this process. It has been frequently pointed out that western cultural products underwent this process of disfigurement in

their importation, translation, and sinification[111]: in this case the foreign missionary, who in other Chinese representations may have been "conceptually eliminated" as inhuman by being named a sexually ravenous devil,[112] or in western representations may have been represented as a paragon of Christian virtue who heroically proselytizes, becomes something else that is neither of these things. As the one who interferes in Chinese social order yet does so for valid reasons, he is an indigenous invention used as a narrative tool to explore the options of the intellectual under conditions in which his identity is based on a phantom or expired set of ideals. The foreign is both the cause of and solution to the chaos of the Chinese symbolic universe, and therefore the negative impact on selfhood is integral to the late Qing methods of appropriating the other. Similarly, the other is de-totalized by sinification and yet also functions as the de-totalizing aperture in local space. Li's method of dealing with the bilateral processes of de-authentication is to expose the uncomfortable humor of this deformed condition.

The primary function of this and the other missionary in the novel seems to be to interject themselves into processes of criminal judgment, playing the part of the active, dominating Western man. They parade as beacons of justice and moral stability in the midst of social disarray, yet are upsetting by their very power to manipulate situations of which they are not part, and they reveal the fragility of order based on ritual. Cross-dressing is only the beginning of the upsets this missionary causes: what follows when he and scholar Liu reach the city compounds the confusion and weakness in the systems of social hierarchy and order. In the courtroom scene in Chapter Nine, Prefect Fu and the *zhongren* present in the court are startled to see "two foreigners" rush in, and no one dares to restrain them (*Wenming* 64). Although there were "over 100 men in the court-room… there was absolutely nothing they could do" against the

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[111] Huters; also Dikötter 129.

[112] In Chinese texts, missionaries were typically portrayed as licentious, sexually ravenous threats, who sought to convert the wives of Chinese men in order to teach them sexually perverse ways (Dikötter 44).

perceived authority of one or two foreign men (*Modern* 89; *Wenming* 52). When the missionary demands the release of the scholars on the basis that he has "unfinished negotiations" to complete with them, although Prefect Fu has over a hundred men in the courtroom, "there is absolutely nothing they could do" to prevent the "obstruction of justice" that the missionary engenders (*Modern* 89).

This impotency, reinforced by the non-participation of the narrator as traditional preliminary judge and guarantor of axiological cohesion, is reinforced by the failure of the judge to function in his traditional capacity. Gone is the perfect mediator of the "Judge Bao" tradition established in Shi Yukun's 1879 novel *Sanxia wuyi* (*Three Heroes and Five Gallants*). Judge Bao guaranteed social order by his arbitration between the heroic outlaws of the title and the imperial system; through him they could work together to keep peace and bring criminals to justice. Even this late nineteenth-century novel had invested the figure of the judge with the incorruptible and even-handed ability to dole out justice and retribution. Bao remains impervious to the corruption and crime that occurs all around, and the outlaws who associate with Bao gain some level of social acceptance because of their devotion to imperial justice. Jeffrey Kinkley describes the formula of the Judge Bao tradition:

> At the end the judge sternly reads a long-winded formal verdict admonishing the guilty. The plot includes the punishment, proving that the criminal will not still 'get away with it' after the case is solved….one knows that justice will be done, despite the terrible obstacles. The judge guarantees it. (56-57)

Judge Bao is free to operate in this way in *Sanxia wuyi* because the narrator reinforces his judgment through commentary that evaluates various characters, and because of the conformity of the indeterminate mass. In that text, the *zhongren* include witnesses who vocalize the

foundations of normative social order, and by their speeches enact the supremacy of that will. Readers are interpellated into that judging mass as well. In return, the criminal confesses, the judge punishes, and order attains supremacy as all individuals are restored to it.

The wall of social pressure to conform that drives the system of judgment and retribution in *Sanxia Wuyi* is diluted in *Wenming xiaoshi*, because significant shifts have taken place historically and textually. Textually, the narrator still employs the *zhongren* as a forceful device of narration, but the mass no longer functions as an unproblematic defendant of public (*gong*) will as it did in *Sanxia Wuyi*. By choosing to present the *zhongren* in this way, Li mollifies them and silences the voice of moralization (as he has silenced the discriminating narrator throughout the novel), again presenting the reader with the daunting task of being the sole point of reference for interpretation of the events.

Likewise, the outcast or outlaw (in this case, the missionary) is not quelled by the mediating judge and his ritual performance. Although his demands are in accordance with the actual innocence of the scholars, his demands run contrary to what action is officially required in the scholars' case. In this sense, he operates somewhat similarly to the *xia* (heroes) of *Sanxia wuyi*, by assisting the cause of justice through the actions of an outlaw. What is upsetting, however, is that in shifting the beacon of justice to a foreigner and a Christian, an outsider to this system of traditional hierarchical relationships, the ennobling outcast becomes a sinister figure. The foreign is visibly responsible for having alleviated suffering, but it is invisibly responsible for instigating the trauma to begin with, via traumatic historical relationships and as creator and possessor of the "modern." He is morally right in his disorderly conduct, but ideologically reprehensible as a representative of political humiliation (barbarian superiority).

That he is a missionary is important: Chinese skepticism about Christianity or fear of the

Christian bogeyman runs deep into history and across classes. Intellectuals had always been skeptical of Christian religious doctrine and claims to ideological authority, and the lower classes had developed a broad set of fear-mongering stereotypes about missionary villainy and perversion, including rape, kidnapping, cuckolding, bodily dismemberment and organ stealing, and corruption of justice.[113] A leaflet distributed in Hunan in the latter half of the nineteenth century, for example, provided a "ghost-busting song" to help the public guard against the terrible deeds of the "hog of heaven": a pseudonym for Christ, based on the homonymic qualities of the words for God (*tianzhu*) and hog (*zhu*) (Stooke 9-10). For example:

> The hog of heaven
>
> Cuts open your wombs,
>
> Drags out your foetuses,
>
> Slices off your nipples:
>
> All goes into the potions they prepare.
>
> Women of every family must beware.[114]

That Christians isolated their converts from the community and its rituals caused mistrust and resentment; it has also been noted that missionaries were frequently involved in litigation, which further damaged their reputation. Paul A. Varg noted that "[m]any a Chinese guilty of a serious or lesser crime joined the Christians in the hope of getting the missionary to protect him (33). Anti-missionary riots took place locally throughout the nineteenth century following the Opium War concessions, which opened China again to missionary activity; these culminated in the Boxer Rebellion that reached its height in the winter and spring of 1900. Li's employment of the

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[113] For a longer historical perspective, see Mungello Chapter Three: "Chinese Rejection of Western Culture and Christianity." Also, Varg Chapter Three: "Missionaries, Diplomats, and Boxers."

[114] Anonymous, translation by Eva Hung. She notes that these popular beliefs about bodily dismemberment may have grown out of the surgeries performed by medical missionaries at Christian hospitals (251-252). American missionary Dr. Peter Parker was the most well known of the early nineteenth century medical missionaries.

missionary figure is actually less physically grotesque than these popular stereotypes. However, it utilizes that imagery of the devil-in-sheep's-clothing, referential to the negative popular notions but smoothed over with the seductive smile of the innocent, to compound the sense that the world depicted in the novel is aberrant or monstrous, that its order has been breached, and that malevolent ghostly forces are sweeping in.

The missionary's words in court solidify his function within the text as a figure representative of national loss of sovereignty. When he demands that the scholars be brought out, he indirectly accuses Prefect Fu of degrading his own people by pointing to the thinnest one and saying:

> This is not right! This gentleman used to be extremely fat. After two months in this place his hair has grown long, his face become quite black, and he's lost all his flesh. I doubt whether he will still be alive in two days' time. I shall not feel at ease if he stays here. You must hand him over to me. (*Modern* 89)

He equates the present state of this prisoner, a respectable scholar, to that of a slave or barbarian: his hair is long, his face is black, and he is underfed and ready to die.[115] Not only has this man become hairy, like a white foreigner, but he has also become black, like a slave.[116] Clearly, this corrupt official has violated the rights of a *xiucai*; this is an affront to his own people. By passing judgment on the official ("This is not right"; *Wenming* 65), the missionary wins at their game of words and subverts the authority of Prefect Fu.

The comments Fu exchanges with the Secretary of Criminal Affairs, Zhou Zhushen, after the missionary leaves the courtroom, make clear that the conventions of criminal judgment have

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[115] 頭髮也長了, 臉也黑了, 身上的肉也沒有了, 再過兩天, 只怕生命也難保了 (*Wenming* 65).

[116] According to traditional Chinese conceptions of the non-Chinese, as discussed at length by Dikötter, there were two sets of devils with the polar extremes of skin color: white people and black people. While white people were considered ashy, hairy and generally repulsive, black people were wild and suitable only for enslavement (10-17).

been unsettled. Zhou tells him that "when he demanded the men be handed over, you should have used our treaty agreements to argue with him. After all, everyone has to listen to reason, and that would have stopped his interference." Fu responds that remembering this would be too much to ask an official, but Zhou reminds him that "serving as an official today is totally different from what it used to be," and that he must pay attention to these things (*Modern* 92). Fu's self-negation actually "does" something, in the sense described by J.L. Austin: it enacts a potentially permanent alteration of the authority associated with the official position of the Prefect.[117] What remains after judgment is not restoration but a problematized ideal or axiology of social functioning, one made phantom by the replacement of substantial efficacy with illusory efficacy. This feeling that society is "both a corrupt dungeon and a ghostly paradise"[118] arises out of the tendency for those who act appropriately and desire the right things to still find themselves unable to be effective when operating in an inappropriate system. Their ideas about their situations do not coincide with reality.

The conclusion of this cycle reaffirms social order to some degree. Prefect Fu is removed from his post because the gentry complain about his new taxes. The scholars allow the missionary to take them to Shanghai, where they can get jobs through his foreign contacts. Finally, the missionary meets with the governor-general of Hubei and Hunan Provinces, a very liberal, open-minded (*ji kaitong* 極開通) and totally incorrupt (*liangxiu qingfeng* 兩袖清風) man, who desires to rectify the estrangement of these scholars from the official system of educated men to which they belong by giving them jobs in his own city. The governor-general and the missionary, neither of them named in the narrative, are represented as doubles for one another on equal footing. The interaction between the governor-general and the missionary

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[117] See Austin's description of the functions of performative speech in *How To Do Things With Words*. Lyotard also analyzes the "agonistics of language" and explicates a theory of "languages games" in *The Postmodern Condition.*
[118] This is David Wang's explanation of his term "phantom axiologies" (*Fin-de-Siècle* 197).

provides a momentary restoration of courtesy and clear-headed, calm dealings engendered by interaction of two rational men. Their arrival at an agreement pauses the grotesque humor, as social order and dominance over the foreign within China is restored. By concluding the episode in this way, Li maintains the element of just retribution, and the Chinese social and administrative structures as the dominant operative system, even though he allows the foreign element to function as the catalyst for restoration of right.

The later cycle that involves a missionary, however, provides less certainty that Chinese society will be restored as a functioning unit, and as the degenerated double of the earlier episode, it invites judgment by that moral standard. The story of Nie Muzheng and Reverend Lavery in Chapters Thirty-five through Thirty-eight expresses the cumulative effect of the trauma associated with re-negotiation of authority, as the foreign takes its authority within the Chinese justice system to a new level of blatancy. Readers are introduced to Nie Muzheng by an eyewitness who claims to see him try unsuccessfully to shoot an official outside a Western restaurant. In an extended flashback, Li recounts Nie's background: expulsion from military school for stirring up trouble, organization of a secret martial arts society with friends who called themselves "heroes", travel to Japan to study freedom and individual rights without thinking ahead to arrange for letters of recommendation, verbally attacking the Chinese ambassador in Japan and getting himself and his friends speedily deported, which he followed with a pathetic suicide attempt. This hotheaded "reformist" and nationalistic student is a far cry from the accomplished, devoted scholar Liu. When Nie hears rumors of governor-general Lu's use of foreign troops to quell a native revolt in Yunnan, he reacts with fury, believing that Lu should be killed for his corroboration with foreigners to trample Chinese people.

When he is arrested, his friends recruit a missionary, Reverend Lavery, who the narrator

notes had at one point worn the hat of a second grade official, on the basis that Nie will convert to Christianity if the missionary manages to free him. The issue of conversion, notably, was never raised in the first cycle. The officials are in a bind—if they offend the missionary they run the risk of injuring the common people since foreigners frequently demand reparations for affronts, but if they release the assassin, they do not fulfill their mandate to the Emperor and they violate the sanctity of their posts. After concluding that they must comply with Lavery's demands, Governor-general Lu says: "China has lost her sovereignty, so we have to do what foreigners tell us to do, even when we're only dealing with an insignificant criminal. I have nothing more to say, except that my classmate [Governor Ji] ought to take precautions against assassins" (*Modern* 330). Speaking metaphorically about China's internal governance, he warns Governor Ji that people like Lavery are assassins as surely as people like Nie; what they assassinate is the authority of the Imperial government.

The spectacle of the enacting of Nie's release unfolds as more obviously malfunctional than the release of Liu Boji's friends: the roles of each character are unsuitably reassigned, characters call other characters and situations by exaggerated, unsuitable names, and there is no restoration of indigenous system and order, in fact the outcome is detestable and unjust. One example, of course, is that ironically, Nie himself resorts to the very tactics of engaging foreign "troops" to quell Chinese "bandits" for which he tried to kill Governor-general Lu. Foundationally, this episode differs from the other, because Nie is in fact guilty of the crime, whereas Liu and his friends were innocent. That innocence validated the missionary's contradiction of Chinese authority to free them. Whereas in the previous episode, Prefect Fu acted in haste and with impropriety, here all characters act in this way. The wayward student Nie, tainted by haphazard "modern" ideas, the greedy missionary Lavery, and the "three stooges"

officials all perform hyperbolically deformed characterizations of themselves. Again the missionary operates in the role of the catalyst, but Lavery is unredeemed: he is tainted by his own officialdom (he got to wear that hat!), he does not in the end yield to the higher judgment of a Chinese official, and he presents as exponentially more vile in his hunger for personal success in the form of converts, in comparison to the humanity and dedication to justice that teases at redeeming the first missionary.

The judgment in this case has disintegrated further from the judgment in the first cycle, too, because the speech acts in which Chinese officials affirm submission to foreign authority are now made during the judgment of the case, rather than as an afterthought uttered in order to make sense of the judgment. The officials in the latter cylce have internalized the advice offered earlier to Prefect Fu: they base their judgment on the traumatic conventions established by the treaties. By uttering the words that negate their own authority ("China has lost her sovereignty, so we have to do what foreigners tell us to do"), they reassert their positions as judges on this case, with the authority to make the decision to release Nie. While Lavery makes the same moves as the earlier missionary, voicing his authority as a statement of fact rather than as a question to be debated, the officials in the latter cycle do not allow him to make the decision himself, and thus through self-negating speech acts, they retain their own diminished authority.

Apparently, officials have come to realize what Fu was too ignorant to know: that traumatic international relationships do indeed need to be remembered and taken into account. Shoshana Felman writes that, in general, there is a judicial incapability to adequately delve into trauma, yet the judicial process can replicate the trauma, through a phenomenon she calls "legal memory." She writes, "Legal memory is constituted, in effect, not just by the 'chain of law' and by the conscious repetition of precedents but also by a forgotten chain of cultural wounds and by

compulsive or unconscious legal repetitions of traumatic, wounding legal cases" (57). For this reason, she argues that the victim of the crime becomes irrelevant, thus repeating the crime through revictimization, and that it is something that is not seen by the court that becomes, in fact, the center of the trial (77-79). Like Li's criminal cases, the judgment becomes based not on the facts of the case but the ethereal issues, memories of abuse, and present symptoms of social disturbance that grant the trial its inability to effectively discern without bias. She argues that the law is appealed to as the "*vehicle of correction of the abuse*," but it ends up being the "source, *the very vehicle of the abuse*" because of the history of traumatic abuse of certain groups by the law.[119]

If the process in the novel is a combination of power plays and precedents being constantly created and manipulated, then this is happening not only at the global level, followed by implementation locally. Although the officials realize that authority to govern the conventions of ritual criminal judgment has already been renegotiated in China, they also recognize that the ability to manipulate the conventions and assert authority within them has not been lost at the local level. Their negating speech acts, ritualized into the courtroom drama by repetition, turn the speaking subject into a phantom, shadow, or pirate of his own post, and yet they simultaneously instigate the process of him being able to reassert agency by passing judgment. This renegotiation of intersubjectivity, in which the self can only be affirmed in his relations to the other by self-negation rather than other-negation, de-authenticates the authoritative structures that bind individuals to society and engender the effect of declension.

China's Perforated Locality and Mobility Vis a Vis America

The sense of the foreign as producing a downward and disintegrating effect on the local persists

[119] 91. Felman's discussion is of African-Americans, in particular.

past the era of imperial decline. As literacy related to the foreign increased in the early 1900s, texts began to distinguish geographically between different western nationalities (rather than abstracting them as a "westerner" archetype as in *Wenming xiaoshi*). However, the association remained: in modern fiction that employs Americanness as a trope, the appearance of the American in Chinese local space engenders a "sinking" effect. This modernist trope is reflected elsewhere as well, such as in titles of short stories like Ba Jin's "*Chenluo*" (Sinking Low, 1934) and Yu Dafu's "*Chenlun*" (Sinking, 1921), which overtly associate the intrusive western in Chinese space as engendering decline. Qian Zhongshu's "*Linggan*" (Inspiration, 1944), as demonstrated in the epigraph of this chapter, spatially constructs the American within China as somewhere that one falls to, if fortuitously, but only as a reward for ceaseless toil. Xiao Hong's "*Shou*" (Hands, 1936) employs the American trope even more heavily: American literature becomes active in Chinese space as medium through which Chinese intersubjectivity can be achieved. Both of these latter short stories embed the new national identity of underdevelopment in the transnational and explore Chinese subjectivity as infiltrated by the American breach or lien on self-fashioning. Further, the disorientation inflicted by this lien expresses itself spatially, as apertures within Chinese local space. The final section of this chapter will look at the usage of this spatial metaphor of sinking through the cracks to America, and its mapping of human emotion onto geographical distance.

"Linggan." Qian's story "*Linggan*," as Julia Lovell has noted, targets the vanity of the Chinese literary scene and the perception that China had failed to launch onto the world literary scene.[120] Its "unflattering portrayal of pretentious intellectuals" (McDougall and Louie 233) is in the literary tradition of the carnivalesque, and like Li Boyuan's novel from roughly 40 years earlier,

[120] See Chapter 3 of *The Politics of Cultural Capital.*

it explores the position of the writer under the modern condition. By this point, "western learning" had deeply embedded itself in Chinese intellectual life, and there was a keen awareness that success as a writer had something to do with activating the cultural capital associated with western fluency. The story's unnamed famous Writer, a "genius," has been so prolific in life that when we encounter him as he meets death at the beginning of the story, he is hustled to the underworld by the weight of his own publications. In spite of his great success in China, and the translation of his masterwork to the proposed *lingua franca* Esperanto, he has been passed over for the Nobel Prize. To top it all off, as a result of this national shame a Chinese literary prize is proposed, one that will be the envy of the world, which he is requested to fund. The insult of being asked to fund the national prize instead of receive it does the Writer in, and shortly after his spirit enters the "other world of the deceased," it falls through the floor of his study to the underworld, which he mistakes for America. Qian describes the floor of the study as "like an empty stomach about to cave in under a load of rocks." Then it "split[s] open with a loud crack" and all he falls "down the gaping hole… engulfed by that torrent of collapsing books." At this point, remembering his geography lessons, he assumes he has gone straight through the center of the earth and arrived in America, collecting his life's reward not by "ascend[ing] to Heaven, but… descend[ing] to America" (421-422). The dignified, bearded keeper of the underworld quickly sets him right:

> No, this isn't America. To get there you've got to keep going for quite a while yet. You see, the Eastern Hemisphere is where you've fallen from, sir. Despite the weight of your genius, you haven't made it all the way through the earth, since the western half of the earth's shell is fortified by those skyscrapers of America, structures of steel and reinforced concrete. But your works have had a tremendous impact on the center of the

> earth, I'm sure, and San Francisco and other places like it may very well have experienced earthquakes of several minutes' duration…. This is, indeed, what the world's legends used to call Hades. (423)

Now obsessed with making it to America, the writer finds that not only has he lost China, he will also never gain America. Instead, to his horror, he will be sent back to China, reincarnated as the inspiration for a new writer, who needs a heroic main character. Like the types and individuals he "murdered" by casting them as oversimplified characters in his own writing, he is fated to become fodder for some other writer's ambitions.

The characterization of the literary marketplace in this story as "a circus in which everyone is complicit" (Lovell 102), in which writers subtly undermine one another through empty flattery, are obsessed with their own genius, and are castrated by their failures, is dependant on the existence of an unachievable goal: international fame. Like the inept officials in *Wenming xiaoshi*, the Writer becomes a Nietzschean subject who in "striving for distinction" succeeds only in gathering "wood for his own pyre." In this scenario:

> The striving for distinction keeps a constant eye on the next man and wants to know what his feelings are: but the empathy which this drive requires for its gratification is far from being harmless or sympathetic or kind…. [It] is the striving for domination over the next man, though it be a very indirect domination and only felt or even dreamed. There is a long scale of degrees of this secretly desired domination, and a complete catalogue of them would be almost the same thing as *a history of culture*, from the earliest, still grotesque barbarism up to the grotesqueries of over-refinement and morbid idealism. The striving for distinction brings with it for the next man—to name only a few steps on the ladder: torment, then blows, then terror, then fearful astonishment, then wonderment,

> then envy, then admiration, then elevation, then joy, then cheerfulness, then laughter, then derision, then mockery, then ridicule, then giving blows, then imposing torment: — here at the end of the ladder stands the ascetic and martyr, who feels, the highest enjoyment by himself enduring, as a consequence of his drive for distinction, precisely that which, on the first step of the ladder, his counterpart the barbarian imposes on others whom and before whom he wants to distinguish himself. The triumph of the ascetic over himself, his glance turned inwards which beholds a man split asunder into a sufferer and a spectator, and henceforth gazes out into the outer world only in order to gather as it were wood for his own pyre.[121]

Dismemberment of the subject in modern-era carnivalesque "histories of civilization" is based on repetitive trauma: cycles of climbing or falling in which the asceticism of the self is paradoxically deepened by repeated contacts with the global or local other. The subject, individual yet national, becomes split in two to both sufferer and spectator by this process of separating himself from the others. He is unable to be complete in himself, is divided by his desire to see and watch, and yet tormented by that very vision of seeing himself from the outside-in. Qian's Writer dies of the shock of seeing himself through the national eyes, as deserving hollow veneration only when others want something from him. He finds himself excruciatingly inside, involved, yet simultaneously irredeemably exiled from centrality by his international conation. His implication in the grotesque pattern of social functioning is contingent on transnational geographics, in which the untouchable American marketplace functions as both pinnacle and abyss, a construct of mental space that supposedly verifies "the saying 'slipping to fall, falling upon the best of fortunes'" (423).

The particular irony of the carnivalesque in "*Linggan*," as Lovell points out, is that it

[121] Nietzsche 68, emphasis added.

"punctures" the nationalist literary visions of "humane literature" (*ren de wenxue*) that would ostensibly, through realism and attention to the lives of the masses, bring national renewal through uplifting, patriotic cultural production.[122] She argues that its grotesque ironies, including the Ah-Q style "spiritual victory" involved in the Writer's management to trick the administrator of karma and be born as the son of the younger, living writer and not his muse, subvert the obsession with narrating China (Lovell 97-102). I would, however, suggest that as in *Wenming xiaoshi*, the laughter of the carnivalesque does not undermine the serious undertones of these types of writing. Both texts maintain focus on allegorically representing an ascetic nation in contention with its international others to sustain control over the history of culture or civilization. The pursuit of subjective power not only within official Chinese circles, but also within a global system that inserts itself into the local, makes Chinese identity seem not coherent but enfeebled and diminished by that splitting. The Writer's consumption of his fellow Chinese as "inspiration," yet refusal to submit himself to contributing back to literature as inspiration himself, further embeds the immorality of this would-be cosmopolitan positioning. The writer who aspires to international fame becomes paradoxical: by putting himself on the margins of the China-obsessed national literature, which because of its particularity always fails to achieve centrality in world literature, only finds that he still is too Chinese to do more than send a momentary shock wave through the most Chinese city in America. He dooms himself to repeat his previous life of climbing only to sink into the abyss.

"Shou." The American aperture in Chinese local space is likewise an active interferer in subjective self-fashioning and intersubjectivity in Xiao Hong's short story "*Shou.*" Xiao Hong, one of China's most celebrated modernist writers of the 1930s, frequently explores Chinese

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[122] See Zhou Zuoren's essay "*Ren de wenxue*" (Humane Literature).

geographics in her fiction, using the spatial dynamics between rural/urban and inside/outside to express felt subjectivity. "*Shou*" takes place within the confines of a girls' school, reminiscent of the one she herself attended in Harbin from 1927-1930, in which (as the principal avows) uniformity is the goal. All the girls have white hands and crisp blue uniforms, aside from one poor country bumpkin named Wang Yaming, whose "ironlike" hands are stained purplish-black by the cloth dyes used by her family's business, and whose uniform is threadbare and gray. As such, the school keeps her hidden from view (especially from foreigners), and her ostracization is not ameliorated by her utter scholastic ineptness. She simply cannot master English, nor world geography. The narrator, "Miss Xiao," is the only one of the girls that attempts to cross the distance between herself and the sorrowful girl, creating tenuous connection through the action of lending her copy of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. The American novel, specifically the passage "where the young girl laborer Marija had collapsed in the snow," creates an emotive connection between the two girls and between the situation of poor workers in the United States and China.

The two girls read and discuss the novel on days when snow likewise lies on the real ground outside, and when the dormitory is deserted. Wang Yaming tells Miss Xiao:

> "Marija is a very real person to me. You don't think she died after she collapsed in the snow, do you? She couldn't have died. Could she? The doctor knew she didn't have any money, though, so he wouldn't treat her… *haw-haw.*" Her high-pitched laugh brought tears to her eyes. "I went for a doctor once myself, when my mother was sick, but do you think he would come?" (184)

While the girl is telling the story of her mother's death and acknowledging that her family's declining hopes rest on her success at school, the narrator fixes her eyes on the cracks in the

wooden floor of the long, empty hallway lit by moonlight, considering the nobility of Wang Yaming's tears for her family and for her own failures. Much of the story takes place in the hallways of the dormitory, with glances out of the windows: this emotionally evocative scenery gains its symbolic effect from its position as the passageway or space in between, in which most people are in motion. Paradoxically, this place that others "pass through" is where Wang Yaming gets stuck—because the other girls refuse to share their beds with her, she is forced to sleep on a bench in the hallway—and yet Wang Yaming, who flunks out of the school, turns out to be the one just "passing through."

The American novel, through which the two girls tenuously pause motionless together in a moment of connection, is a "crack" in the uniform veneer of the school, through which the single individual who fails to master the English pronunciation of the novel yet who most understands its essential intent, slips through. In the *mise en abyme* of the inverted frame story, the American text becomes a central fictional node through which the protagonists of the main story can cathect. The narrator, who stands in for the universal self yet does not fully represent it because she crosses its sharply delineated boundaries, sees cracks in those boundaries because of the internalization of the outside. Implied is an agonism against forces that are powerful yet intangible, related equally to dogmatism (enforced conformity) as to economic and cultural structures, but against which literature provides a proletarian *lingua franca*. "*Linggan*" parodied this conception of multidirectional flow in the Writer's discovery that the supposed universality of literature was only unidirectional: the Chinese story remained incomprehensible to the west even when translated into the western *lingua franca*. His parody of the problems of unequal literary relations does little to change that patterning, though, and it merely comprises a different viewpoint on a shared condition of Chinese literature's indenturing to the global.

For Xiao Hong, though, as for many other modernists across the globe, the intellectual fodder of world literature provided material on which one might construct new national literature. Foreign literary texts frequently, as in "*Shou*," function as literature traditionally functioned in Chinese writing: as knowledge, against which analogies to the present work can be constructed; or as the rectifier of terms, against which present usages can buttress their own paltry representations. Unlike American post-Gold Rush literature, which frequently depicted Chinese individuals as American denizens, Chinese literature of local place offers far fewer depictions of American inhabitants. Instead, Chinese space is inhabited by American books. American figures are not present in Chinese literary space in the same way as Chinese are in American literature: they are secondary representations, fictional icons, present only insofar as their text itself is present.

That intertextual relationship comprises the depth of most Chinese individuals' interactions with Americans in the early twentieth century, yet even that subtle an intrusion of the foreign seems to have capacity to sink the already vulnerable individual or to detotalize the settled environment. In "*Shou*," by witnessing Marija as she is crushed by her American habitat, Wang Yaming is spectator to her own subjugation; the narrator as an eyewitness of this mediated production of another's subjectivity compounds the emphasis on visuality. The emphasis on visuality as a narrative strategy may have grown out of the shifts in perception associated with the rise of cinema. Zhang Zhen's assessment that "cinema as a modern global vernacular par excellence helped forge a new human sensorium and shape a synthetic and productive form of embodiment against the dehumanizing effects of industrial capitalism and colonialism" (10) might well be applied to literature in this scenario. Zhang observes that film allows for a "virtual space between the original and the copy, fidelity and fantasy, the mimed and the mime" out of

which "an embodied sense of alterity and the revived faculty to experience springs, even just momentarily, out of the prison world of alienation and fragmentation" (32). That "virtual space," which arises out of visuality, is comprised differently in film than in literature, but in "*Shou*" it is applied in that way: as a space between the American literary character and the Chinese one. Wang Yaming is fabricated by her narrative to seem more real than Marija, yet both are clearly "mimed" or created by their authors according to a purpose. Wang Yaming experiences herself through the American representation, but even that is mediated by the seeing eyes of the central self, Miss Xiao, who empirically reports on everything she observes about Wang Yaming.

This narrative structuring redoubles the sense of the local place as "traveled": not only permeated by foreign texts and rural outsiders, which bring the outside in, but also represented according to the conventions of travel writing. The environment is eyewitnessed and reported on by the trustworthy and conforming narrator who according to the conventions of the *kaozheng* (empirical) tradition (discussed in Chapter Two) ensures the authenticity of the account and relates it objectively. Miss Xiao's reportage on the multi-national suffering of the working class within her domestic space thus adds a layer of spectatorial arrangement by delivering this vision to the entire reading public. Susan Sontag has suggested that "[b]eing a spectator of calamities taking place in another country is a quintessential modern experience": something elsewhere becomes real by being seen in representations, and in turn one's own experiences of trauma "seem eerily like its representation" that one has already seen elsewhere (18-22). Presenting one's home as a traveled space introduces to that space the uncanny and de-totalizes it.

The spatial aspect of de-totalization is confirmed by the text's subversion of the uniformity of the school and the choreographed motion of the students. Uniformity is

exemplified by the morning calisthenics from which Wang Yaming is excluded, in case her black hands might be spotted by the foreigners who stroll outside the playfield. Order is challenged in the text by the narration, which characterizes the environment as filled with disordered, disconnected movement, like worms crawling, moonlight or shadows in the corners of rooms, snowflakes blowing through windows, dirty-looking gray clouds, and even Wang Yaming's trembling black hands. The motif of putting the other up as a mirror to the self remains prominent in stories with travel motifs like this one: as Miss Xiao watches Wang Yaming leave the school for good, she stares into the distance across the the snow, which "looked like shards of broken glass." She says, "the further the distance, the stronger the reflection grew. I kept looking until the glare from the snowy landscape hurt my eyes" (187). What violently attacks her is the distance between them, which is not a smooth interface but one that is painful to look at. The two girls' images do not uniformly reflect each other in this shattered mirror, which is brought into focus by the intrusive foreign literary object that alienates the Chinese from its uniform "selfness."

That they read the text in English, rather than in Chinese translation, further emphasizes Chinese female abjection in the story's scenario: translation enacts a domestication or assimilation of the foreign, and translations became "new space from which to appropriate and dispute Western Learning's claims to universal validity and authority" (Hill 51). In translations like Lin Shu and Wei Yi's *Heinu yu tian lu* (*A Record of the Black Slaves' Plea to Heaven*), a rendering in *guwen* (ancient style) prose of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a "provocative comparison [is invited] between Chinese laborers [in America] and African-American slaves" (Hill 52) that transfers Stowe's rhetorical strategies of sentimental binding of the individual to the national to China. While Chinese eyes saw themselves in American texts,

translated or untranslated, the transferral of responsibility for translation to the Chinese reading subject in China removes the barrier put in place by reading a translation: the protective barrier of cultural hegemonic appropriation that buttresses the critique of "Western Learning's claims to universal validity and authority." Wang Yaming, and eventually the narrator who cathects with her through Marija, the American immigrant laborer, can only accept this "reality" of isolation and abjection in the same type of negating speech act as those performed by the officials in *Wenming Xiaoshi*.

This apprehension of human relationships as bearing a metaphoric spatial dimension of distance-between and unassimilable movement or fluctuation reverberates in other writings by Xiao Hong, as well. *Shengsi chang* (Field of Life and Death, 1934), for example, is a disjointed narrative that shuttles between the viewpoints of a variety of characters, and is centered on their small rural village devastated during the course of the novella by the Sino-Japanese War. The apparent insularity of the locality is shot full of holes: not just by bullets during the Japanese raids, but by other disruptions of settledness. As in John Steinbeck's *Cannery Row*, which will be discussed in Chapter Seven, most of the narrative consists of a cast of people moving in and out of the space of the village, rather than the narrative setting following a certain few protagonists as they themselves move. And yet, each character has some ties to things outside the village itself. Old Mother Wang has an absentee daughter by a man from Shandong who appears suddenly in the village looking for shelter after her brother has been shot for banditry. The young men of the village hear about various revolutionary groups, which they begin to leave the village to join. Golden Bough, who went to Harbin to look for work, returns to the village but is so affected by her experience of rape in Harbin that she joins the revolution. To emphasize the "traveledness" and perforation of the local environment further, outsider elements encroach

upon the village: a team of Western doctors comes to vaccinate the children during an epidemic, corpses of "party" members begin to appear in the fields around the village, and the Japanese come to raid the villages.

The modernist technique of unsettling the local, which is reinforced in both form and content, delivers a disjointed narrative that highlights the closeness of people in the village but the separateness of their experiences of existence. In fact, characters tend to identify more closely with their domestic animals than with each other. In one particularly compelling scene, Xiao Hong uses the journey of Mother Wang into the city to take the old horse to the slaughterhouse as an opportunity to connect Mother Wang's actual journey with her metaphoric "journey" through life:

> The bare trees of late autumn, shaken by harsh winds, wailed like lost souls. The horse walked in front; Mother Wang followed behind. Step by step the slaughterhouse loomed nearer. Step by step the whistling wind ushered the old mare to its final rest. Mother Wang wondered how a person could change so drastically. In her youth, how many times had she taken old horses and oxen to the slaughterhouse? She shivered at a horrible vision of the butcher's knife severing her own spine. The switch dropped from her hand. Feeling faint, she stopped by the roadside, her hair dancing in the air like a specter…. As she drew near, she saw bloodstains splattered on the doors. She was frightened by the bloodstains, feeling as if she were about to step onto an execution ground. She strove for self-control so as not to be shaken by memories of what she'd witnessed on an execution ground in her youth. But the memories unfolded in spite of her efforts. (27-28)

The irreconcilable experience of the past is, through the present journey to an execution, relived as trauma and reintegrated into her subjectivity as "the inassimilable." For Mother Wang, the

boundary between herself and the horse, or herself and those executed long ago, is a thin wavering line, yet a line that cannot be crossed. This motif was clearly present in "*Shou*" as well: Miss Xiao hovers at the interface between herself and Wang Yaming, who is mirrored in the character of the American immigrant. These cracks in sense of self are opened up by intersubjectivity, which is apprehended spatially as well as interpersonally in the narratives. The cracks are the portals to the abysses that threaten these protagonists with the "sinking" associated with the modern Chinese condition. "Sinking," therefore, is based on traveledness: both the crossing of distances and the infusion by unassimilable outsider elements.

In *Shengsi chang*, Mother Wang travels the lonely road on her walk to the slaughterhouse in the company of memories, suggesting that the discourse of witnessing the horror of violent killing—a story collectively shared by so many yet still so personal and therefore alienating—is one that "travels." The traveling discourse of horror related to violent death spreads throughout all parts of the story, mirrored and repeated in rumor, in the ghostly appearances of corpses, and in the deaths of children. The discourse of violence, however, becomes the thread of connectivity that shuttles across localities or selves, linking them tenuously to one another in space and in narrative, and yet keeping them separate, unable to communicate with each other verbally or emotionally.

Although the traveling discourse is less overtly violent in "*Shou*," it is equally traumatic: the story of the working-class outsider crushed by the hostile modern environment, which travels in from America to resonate at the interfaces of Chinese intersubjectivity. Miss Xiao feels the distance between herself and Wang Yaming increasing, and apprehends that increase visually as the field of jagged, wounding, fragmented snow between herself and the other grows. The American novel becomes the only route through which she can cathect with her local other. The

sense of locality projected in Xiao Hong's writing is not dissimilar to older senses of Chinese locality projected in works like *Sanxia wuiyi* or *Lao Can youji*, in the sense that the local is a place in which greater powers inflict violence and trauma upon the weak. However, unlike those two earlier novels, Xiao Hong's modernist writing shows the desolation of the individual who cannot rely on the mitigation of abuse by the ethical judgment of hierarchized authority (even in the form of rectification to the Chinese language). And even unlike Lu Xun's Ah Q, these female characters do not suffer the metaphoric madness that would allow them to rationalize their trauma by relying on "psychological victories" to "feel better"—they are left only with the awareness of the abyss.

That America transitions in the modern period from the fantasyland of the nineteenth century to a specter that invites subjective disintegration (while continuing to lure with promises of wish fulfillment) engenders a paradoxical image in the popular imagination that reinforces the apparent authenticity of the semicolonial mentality. It functions simultaneously as something to be desired and disavowed, and is confounding for promising something that never seems to be delivered, at least not to the non-white races. Attaching the Chinese self in China to the *tongzhong* Chinese in America, to other immigrant groups, or even to the world literary stage pulls the Chinese subject out of his or her locality even while he or she is in it. It re-centers those subjects somewhere liminal, in-between, and adrift.

PART TWO

Chapter Five:

"Along the sea of space to grander things": The Burden of Authenticity and the Gothic Outgrowth in Travel Writing of the Nineteenth-Century U.S. West

Farewell to such a world! Too long I press
The crowded pavement with unwilling feet.
Pity makes pride, and hate breeds hatefulness,
And both are poisons. In the forest, sweet
The shade, the peace! Immensity, that seems
To drown the human life of doubts and dreams.
And later…
Listen! A deep and solemn wind on high;
The shafts of shining dust shift to and fro;
The columned trees sway imperceptibly,
And creak as mighty masts when trade-winds blow.
The cloudy sails are set; the earth-ship swings
Along the sea of space to grander things.
– Edward Rowland Sill, "Among the Redwoods" (1883)

The country was open, and the day remarkably pleasant: so that we were all in pretty good spirits…. I was too well aware, however,... that we were… narrowly watched…. About noon a Canadian bawled out "The Sioux! – the Sioux"— ….
After posting our sentries for the night…. Our exploit of the day was then freely discussed, and by most of the men was treated as an excellent joke; but I could by no means enter into any merriment upon the subject. Human blood had never, before this epoch, been shed at my hands; and although reason urged that I had taken the wisest, and… most merciful course, still conscience, refusing to hearken even to reason herself, whispered pertinaciously within my ear – "it is human blood which thou hast shed."
– Edgar Allan Poe, *The Journal of Julius Rodman*[123]

Transnationalism and the Birth of the Modern: An Introduction to Part Two

It may not be immediately apparent why this book's exploration of the impact of nineteenth-century American transpacific travel writing on the development of American modernist narrative would necessarily begin with a discussion of the early literature of the American

[123] 180, 183.

continental west. Why look to the American frontier for the beginnings of Sino-American literary relations, or for precursors to modernism? Studies of modernism have overwhelmingly favored the American east, both north and south, and its transatlantic relations as the productive space of literary modernity in the United States, extending the historic predisposition toward marginalization of other American regions in the literary sphere. And as such, the abstracted "frontier" lying west of the Mississippi River frequently is activated as the space whose wildness and domestication provide a theater for teasing out the fracturing of eastern identities or abstracted national experience. Acknowledging the east-centric attitude, with its reliance on the subordinated but essential and productive Wild West, has been a major achievement of western studies since the 1980s,[124] one that has aligned with broader efforts to expose embedded imperial attitudes in the American expansionist worldview.[125]

But despite this increased recognition, there remains a downheartedness or even guilt about the historical reality, which is that imperialist logic and a history of racism, exploitation, and violence cannot be extracted from the era of expansion. Certainly, this critical disappointment arises at least in part from the continued trouble that histories of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century literature have in figuring the imprint of the peripheral on the mainstream; there are rarely easy answers, for example, to the questions about how non-canonical or ethnically specific texts should be fit into curricula categorically organized around period, genre, and nationality. Our literary histories end up with, at best, a "separate but equal" status for not only "minority writing" like that from Native or Asian America but, particularly prior to the era we call modernism, also for the literature of entire geographical zones like the broadly conceived west. Even more often, texts bearing these affiliations are not only separate

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[124] For an overview of New Western History, see Limerick, et al. *Trails: Toward a New Western History.* More recent studies by LeMenager, Handley, Lewis, and Berlant explore these issues in the context of the literary west.
[125] As in Pratt's avowed effort to "decolonize knowledge" (2) in her influential book *Imperial Eyes.*

but also unequal, being considered either external to the production of a national literature, "belated" according to a hegemonic timeline of literary development,[126] or as "failing" in some way to match the stylizations and techniques of the elite.

It is clear that overcoming historicization and categoric limitation in American literary studies cannot come out of decontaminating history; rescuing the past from its realities is an impossibility. What should be possible, though, is the redemption of American multiplicity through decentralization from a single archetypal nationalized outlook, and the recovery of visibility for texts that have been marginalized by that narrowed focus. Part Two of this book is an experiment in shifting the center of focus in the history of national literary development to the nineteenth-century liminal spaces of the American west and Pacific. I call these spaces liminal because, from the centralized, nineteenth-century national perspectives of either the United States or China, these spaces are what is in between, barely perceptible, but central to the passage from one thing, place, or identity to another. Crossing these transnational spaces involves a suspension of cultural readability that occurs simultaneously with the expectations of the audience that coherent, authentic, and nationally significant narrative be produced. Whether or not the American interest in China ultimately proves that Manifest Destiny had extra-continental intent is not of primary interest here. The mythological importance of the American west to national narratives is undisputable: as Frederick Jackson Turner's unforgettable thesis[127] substantiated, the conceptions that frontier experience is what made Americans American and that American expansion from coast to coast was inevitable and ordained are foundational building blocks of the national imaginary.

However, this study proceeds from the notion, as articulated by William R. Handley and

[126] As in Konzett's "The Belated Tradition of Asian-American Modernism."
[127] "The Significance of the Frontier in American History."

Nathaniel Lewis, that the idea that the West made Americans American is an imperialist notion that "burdens" the west.[128] The imagined teleological trajectory of the domestication of continental space (transforming from frontier to home) is connected to the often punitive binding of western identity to reified abstractions, especially after the eventual disappearance of the frontier, the geographical condition that "authenticated" those abstractions. Euro-American masculine national identity depended on authoritative border crossing in a spatio-temporal context of transnationality and unfixedness. Writing the west has, therefore, been perpetually charged with the burden of gathering the west into the national, and western writers have struggled to legitimate particularity as authenticity. As such, in early nineteenth-century western writing the west is presented apologetically, satirically, or abstractly.

The liminal spaces between America and China—the continental west and the Pacific—are symbolically coded with the tensions at the heart of American self-fashioning in the period between the Revolution and the Civil War. Bruce A. Harvey describes the "two paradigms that have traditionally inflected how we understand the era: of the nation as an anxiously postcolonial one (in the older sense of the term), fretting over its claim of cultural independence from the Old World; or of the nation as an imperialist entity, consumed by the task of New World expansion" (3). These two paradigms are centralized in the logic of the east coast areas, which at that point constituted the national space, but as Harvey reminds us, these paradigms are only useful if we do not overlook the transnational routes whereby they are mediated and become intelligible. As such, studying mid-nineteenth-century U.S. culture requires shifting toward engaging "more polygeographic terrains of study" (4) and reevaluating our retrospective viewpoint on the nineteenth century.

Achieving the broader goal of recentering in the American west and Pacific transnational

[128] In their "Introduction" to *True West: Authenticity and the American West.*

space in order to understand the development of national literatures means resurrecting the memory of the continental west as it was prior to or in the process of becoming national. This is manifest in the literature itself: during the era of Anglo-American frontier exploration and settlement after the Revolution, the selfsame cultural representations which were called upon to validate Manifest Destiny carry within themselves a disruptiveness to progress and confusion of hierarchies endemic to the transnational. As such, the counter-discourse coexists with its mythologized alternative in Anglo-American westerly travel texts. Retrospectively, though, the frontier has come to occupy a space in the U.S. national imagination that is almost entirely domestic: the history of its exploration, wildness, and violent conquest have become intimate to the national story and the territory itself appears destined to have become part of the United States. But that national narrative of domestication demands a forgetting, which Ernest Renan recognized in a general context:[129] it relies on a loss of memory in the American popular imagination about the multinational history of the territories that have been gathered in and fenced off. The position of hindsight naturalized expansionism, as Stephanie LeMenager has pointed out, and turned it into a Barthesian myth: relieved of dialectics, freed from contradictions, because it is without depth and "wallow[s] in the evident."[130] Recovering the memory that the frontier experience was essentially a transnational one allows us to visualize the meaningfulness of the western frontier as extending beyond the boundaries of the continent and beyond the visions of Manifest Destiny.

Historical forgetfulness occurs not just on the level of national self-fashioning, but equally in its subsidiary, literary history. Jeffrey Alan Melton has noted that "[n]o other genre of

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[129] Renan, in his 1882 lecture at the Sorbonne titled "*Qu'est-ce Qu'une Nation?*" (What is a nation?), said, "*L'oubli, et je dirai même l'erreur historique, sont un facteur essentiel de la création d'une nation*" (Forgetting, and I would even say historical error, is an essential factor in the creation of a nation.)

[130] Quoted by LeMenager in a footnote on page 225; from *Mythologies* (143).

American literature enjoyed a greater popularity or a more enduring prominence in the nineteenth century than travel writing, a form which has been essentially intertwined with the development of America's literary heritage from its beginnings" (206). He goes on to suggest that the scholarly underestimation of the importance of travel books to this readership has meant that something has been excluded in investigations of identity construction in this period. That popularity meant great cultural capital for the writers that will be discussed in Chapter Five: writers of "authentic" western accounts, such as Lewis and Clark and the Illinois writer James Hall, and also for writers who employed the western trope in their fiction, such as east coast urbanite Edgar Allan Poe. Even inasmuch as the disruption of progress and confusion of hierarchies become significant counter-discourses to Manifest Destiny in western texts, we can see in the early nineteenth-century texts that part of the appeal was that the counter-discourse frequently coexists with its mythologized alternative.

In the European and early American mindset, westward movement, in its sublime novelty, had been the key to unlocking a latent youthfulness in humanity and rejuvenating society and the economy. According to the imagined geographics in the Euro-American tradition, westerly movement, along new routes in a great circle back through "the East,"[131] is the basis on which the country was founded and grew, yet the westerly is always subjected to the lordship of an "east" centered around the Atlantic. Travel writing was central to "*produc[ing]* 'the rest of the world'" (Pratt 5) for American readerships during the 19th century, which were centered primarily in the continental east. The dysfunctional binary "east-west" is, of course, complicated by its imperialist geographical associations, as well as by the specifically American context in which "east" might mean both the American continental east and Europe, and "west" might mean both the American continental west and the "Far East," Asia (and in which Chinese

[131] For a history of early American cultural, economic, and political ties to China, see Chang's *Fateful Ties.*

people move east to arrive in "the West").

I continue to use the terms in contexts where they are historically or geographically faithful, but I also promote a greater critical emphasis on directionality rather than imaginative geography by the usage of a terminology of westerly and easterly flow or orientation. Because of the binding of a variety of epistemological elements to the geographical determinants "west" and "east" in the nineteenth century and before, such as west as progressive/youthful/new and east as retrogressive/old/traditional, "the West" frequently comes to function less as a specific, geographically bounded space and more as an idealized direction for movement associated with, in any particular situation, an interwoven set of concrete personal affinities with abstracted goals, idealizations, and intents. Directionality of flow in American travel writing (and confusions of "east" and "west" in transpacific flows to the "Far East" at the far west) is of utmost importance to early modern epistemology because the east-west binary is the basis on which a variety of other functional binaries had traditionally rested in Euro-American thought: margin/center, nature/culture, wilds or forest/civilization, youth/decay, myth/reality, history/narrative, copy/original, illusion/reality, and heathen/Christian.[132] Confronting the imperial visions that support these abstractions means confronting their geographic centering and the mandate this yields for indenturing and assimilating all else to its sphere of influence. Like Stephanie LeMenager, I am looking for what undoes the myth from within: fissures and disruptions in the "self-critical counter-narratives… generated at the very sites of hegemonic dominance" (8) in texts of the American West.

Contemporary scholarship on the literary West has generally recognized the depth to which the colonial history of Anglo-American expansion has affected narrative modes through

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[132] This set of binaries important to western representative practices draws on a list compiled by Handley and Lewis in the "Introduction" to *True West.*

which the vast territory to the west of the Mississippi River has been represented. For many contemporary critics, the west has been conscripted to serve as guarantor of American authenticity and novelty, even as its particularities are emptied out to make room for wide-ranging applications of its abstracted iconography. Critique of the mythological status of Manifest Destiny and other staples of U. S. national identity began in earnest in the 1980s with New Western History,[133] and has persisted in studies of U.S. imperialism[134] and hemispheric studies. Western studies, along the trajectory developed by regionalist studies in general, identify the nineteenth century dynamics that delivered long-lasting impact on "western" literature, but most retain a primarily continental focus, which does a disservice to the transnational geopolitics of western territories in the nineteenth century. Other critics have focused on American transnationalism,[135] and the fruit of these conversations has been particularly bountiful in hemispheric studies and in conversations about U.S. imperialism. Studies of American travel writing, as well, have delivered helpful correctives to the sense of interiority promoted by a focus on the national.

However, the impact of *transpacific flows in particular* has thus far made fewer inroads on conversations about the development and character of American literature. Part of this has to do with the less-than-literary nature of much transpacific writing in the nineteenth century, or at least that has been the charge leveled against this writing for, like other westerly writing, its "failure" to show literary quality or to become integral to eastern literary culture. An equally forceful reason for this dis-integration is the historical divides between Euro-American and Asian-Pacific cultures, which have not been deeply inter-communicative. Euro-American ties

[133] See historians Patricia Nelson Limerick, Donald Worster, Richard White, and William Cronon.
[134] See Kaplan's *Anarchy of Empire*, Kaplan and Pease's edited collection *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, and Rowe's *Literary Culture and U. S. Imperialism*.
[135] Including Rowe, Kaplan, and Pratt.

are more intimate; Sino-American interactions have been more unsociable. Scholarly attention to Asian connections with American literature, at least from the U.S. national perspective, usually focuses on the impact the study of Chinese poetry had on the development of American modern poetry, or looks to Asian-American literature. Both of these are twentieth-century phenomena, and the discourse surrounding them maintains the mandate that they become significant when they are "authentic," whatever that slippery appellation implies. For example, although earlier American writers of Asian descent, such as the multiracial sisters Winnifred Eaton (Onoto Watanna) and Edith Maude Eaton (Sui Sin Far) were active in the early twentieth century, they are either excluded from the canon of "authentic" Asian American writers for their performance of Asianness rather than being of Asianness, and their internalization of hegemonic racial abstractions which ostensibly make them unable to critique those abstractions from the position of their own heterogeneity; or, alternately, they are included only with the disclaimer that they reveal the depth to which subjectivity is not fixed and in fact often staged.[136] "Real" Asian-American voices begin to be heard, according to the former viewpoint, sometime in the mid-twentieth century, when they become distinguishable from earlier sojourner voices, begin speaking in English, and arise out of "authentic," native American experience (including experience of discrimination) combined with the remnants of a non-American heritage.[137] This body of mid-century Asian American writing has been elevated for its (albeit "belated") conformity to modernist technique,[138] which clearly perpetuates a critical perspective (one that has occurred worldwide) that reinforces the hegemony or fetishization of Euro-American "high" modernism over subaltern modernities.

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[136] See E. Kim *Asian American Literature* and Ling "Creating One's Self."
[137] See the introduction to Chin, et al.'s *Aiiieeeee!.*
[138] Konzett, for example, notes that Asian-American modernist literature appeared later than modernism in did other arenas of American literature.

All of these perspectives share a primary interest in outlining the boundaries of American national literature and detailing its development, and privilege similar categorical requirements as have been privileged in determining the relevance of other ethnic literatures to the U.S. mainstream: linguistic conformity to English and accessibility to audiences in the national territory. Marginalization still occurs, though, when they append to that national focus a transnational particularity that makes them "hybrid," which reinforces the forgetfulness that the Anglo-Saxon male history likewise bears non-universal historical or racial attachments to an elsewhere.

This study is concerned with the literary project of canonization or building a national literature insofar as it asserts that there is a deep connection between that production of national memory and the obscurity of the roots of Sino-American literary relations, which does not begin with the Imagists or the Asian American writers of the twentieth century. The chapters in Part Two aim to root the modern-era emergence of visible, literary manifestations of Chinese and American interaction in the less-visible precedents established in the nineteenth century. Further, I propose that there is a distinct connection between nineteenth-century Euro-American frontier expansion and the ways that Sino-American relations developed. American transpacific writing is essentially an extension of the transnational writing of the American continental frontier, one that emerges within decades after the Corps of Discovery completed the first U.S.-national transcontinental trek, and it reflects the dynamics that informed the development of western writing. As in continental travel texts credited with shaping the dominant symbolism of Manifest Destiny, there are fissures in that symbolism that attest to the essential quality not just of tension between postcoloniality and imperialism, but also of transnational imprint and intervention. That "the West" (the frontier, the zone of contact) is constantly retreating and

moving elsewhere alone provides one major “dislocation at the heart of the American dream of progress in the wilderness” (Handley and Lewis 7). Ralph Waldo Emerson’s 1841 injunction to “accept the place the divine Providence has found for you” and to “advance and advance on Chaos and the Dark” (“Self-Reliance” 11-12) rings with the mythological teleological geographics of the westerly-progressive chronotope, a dictum placed on the frontier which it can never perfectly fulfill. The kind of critique I propose attempts to find a middle ground: one that acknowledges the impact of national mythologies while revealing them according to their limitation within actual nineteenth-century logic, historiographics, and geographics. Manifest Destiny and other rhetorics of national identification function in western texts less as mythological (emptied out, freed from depth, dialectics, and contradictions) and more as an unevenly shared imaginary, a form of collectivization nurtured by individual bondage to cultural production and memory.[139]

In this chapter, the unhomogenized significance of western space to American national paradigms and to textual representative strategies unfolds through the juxtaposition of a group of texts that rely on the westerly travel topos and the east-west binary, and that position individuals in relation to nationally, transnationally, and locally significant “western” environments. The first, James Hall’s 1835 *Sketches of History, Life, and Manners, in the West*, by its claims to authenticity as the genuine stories of the real west and westerners, positions itself within the discourse of directional opposition between east and west. The chapter also explores the paterfamilias of western travel writing, the journals of the Lewis and Clark expedition, which like Hall’s *Sketches* provides a point of juxtaposition for a lesser-known uncomplete serialized novel by Edgar Allan Poe, *The Journal of Julius Rodman* (1840), which imaginatively appropriates an emptied-out west, divested of its spatial and historical particularities, as

[139] See B. Anderson’s articulation of the social imaginary.

mythological tableau on which the eastern personality might paint its possibilities.

The discussions in Chapter Six, therefore, about American travel writing in China and American images of China and the Chinese, necessitate this chapter's exploration of westerly travel writing's modes of chronotopic construction and identity logic, and the conditions of the nineteenth-century American literary marketplace, all of which influenced the shape that travel writing by Americans about China took. The texts of western travel discussed in this chapter are roughly contemporaneous to the texts of travel in China analyzed in Chapter Six, and those texts bear generic and thematic resemblance to those discussed here. By bringing these connections to prominence, I hope to offer alternative nodes of centralization than the literary East and transatlantic culture in discussions of American literary development.

I said at the beginning of Chapter Two, in the context of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Chinese literature and overt awareness of semi-colonization, that I want to conceive of a literary history that de-emphasizes mental colonization and survivalist intellectualism in modern and early modern Chinese literature and its inglorious responses to western imperialism, and instead highlights literary relationships and continuities across national time and space. In some ways, the opposite is true here. The kinds of histories that have been written of the literature of the American West have historically been eager to integrate it into the triumphant national story. The less-written history in this case is the one that seeks to *expose* mental colonization and survivalist intellectualism in order to question the relationships between marginalized texts and writers and the national mythology which attempts to *absorb this writing without foregrounding it*. The writers discussed in Part Two are ones faced with becoming westerly, which means peripheral, for their movement away from the center to seek productive outer fields (which frequently do not produce as hoped). This is true for the early western explorers, for the China

travelers, and for later writers of western regional space. Being elsewhere than east, despite the importance of the mission or legitimacy of the land claim, endlessly echoes through the present of these texts in the sensation of desertedness, of marginalization, or of irregularity. Subtle or often overt defenses of centrality underline westerly texts to compensate for the compulsion to mimic the east and simultaneously the failure to make the national seamlessly applicable to the real local western setting.

I am working toward a sense of national identity and place in American writing that, like Hall hoped for almost two hundred years ago, is constructed not just out of old world affinities and eastern problems, but out of genuinely novel re-constructions of identity and place at the fringes. Identity production is viewed from a local standpoint in order to examine that present on the basis of itself and its past. The local perspective frees the text from interpretation along purely universal lines, in which the particularities of its encounters are subsumed under a totalizing discourse like Manifest Destiny; it also frees the text from pure contextualism, in which the material conditions of encounter are imaginatively overcome in searches for perspectives free from influence. Looking at American identity production from the local standpoint, as transcultural processes of interplay between “global relevance and local exigency,”[140] grounds texts in the idiosyncrasies of encounter and does justice to the categorical impurities that torment the fundamental binaries of exploration and settlement discourses. Hopefully, this will contribute something to discussions about how we can responsibly, in the twenty-first century, respond to a national history of interethnic and interracial violence, and seek to reclaim our relationships to history and to one another without irresponsibly rewriting historical facts.

[140] The term is borrowed from my discussion of Natascha Vittinghoff in Chapter Two.

James Hall on Travelling and Writing the Authentic West

Although not a major figure in American literary history, James Hall (1793-1868), an Illinois lawyer, writer, and journalist, became a central figure among the still relatively small group of "western" writers, who "from the very beginning strove to arouse an artistic consciousness" in the "crudeness and naïveté" of the Ohio Valley.[141] His writings, even those resembling fiction or legend, are "histories": stories of western adventure collected from the people of the wilderness themselves. The introduction to Hall's 1835 *Sketches of History, Life, and Manners, in the West* offers some words regarding the differences between writing about travels to the American West and writing about travels to "civilized" (by which he means mapped, inscribed, known, and culturally translated; essentially eastern) places. When travelling to places whose history, arts, literature, and points of attraction are familiar, the accomplished writer simply "throws new light upon subjects, which, however hacknied [sic], are always interesting, and to which every day brings some change, as each year gives moss to the rock and ivy to the ruin." The familiarity of the place "awaken[s] classic recollections, and expatiates on a field already familiar to his imagination." The design of the narratives he produces are "copies" and were pre-conceived in his home before he ever left it on his travels, and he merely hopes to improve on that which he has already read, seen, known, heard, and imagined about the place. However:

> All this is different in the west. The traveller, who launches his bark upon the silver wave of the Ohio, leaves behind him every object which has been consecrated by the pen of genius. He beholds the beauties of nature in rich luxuriance, but he sees no work of art which has existed beyond the memory of man, except a few faint and shapeless traces of a former race, whose name and character are beyond the reach even of conjecture. Every

[141] Flanagan offers a history of Hall's literary career (iv), as does Venable (361-385). Lewis presents a more contemporary exploration of Hall's contributions to American literary constructions of the West in "Truth or Consequences."

> creation of human skill which he beholds is the work of his contemporaries. All is new…. The forest… came from the hands of the Creator…. They are nameless to the poet and historian; neither song nor chivalry has consecrated their shores. The inhabitants are all emigrants from other countries; they have no ruins, no traditions, nothing romantic or incredible, with which to regale the traveller’s ear. They can tell of their own weary pilgrimage from the land of their fathers… but they have no traditions that run back to an illustrious antiquity. (13-15)

If we overlook, for the sake of argument, the ethnocentricity which would allow Hall to imagine virginity onto the American West despite the centuries of native tradition and inhabitance, we can see that these comments clearly are intended as an apology for his text, which aims to present a general history of the West. The text can present this history only in a way that strikes Hall (and assumedly, his readers) as undisciplined: by “presenting to the public such fragments of history as may be rescued from oblivion by individuals” (“Preface” 7).

However, what the fragments reveal is something that is at the same time more generic to travel writing and American writing of the West, and quite specific to the nineteenth-century liminality of the American West and Pacific, spaces which are of interest here for their position as the nineteenth-century area between China and the United States. The writer’s reliance on tradition (the fuel of imagination) and the known and formalized as the medium of experience of the new all recalls strongly the sentiments of the Chinese travel writers discussed in Chapter Two. And likewise, the responses to the uncharted domain of America—sometimes its West, sometimes all of it, sometimes the waterways and Pacific—set up this amorphous territory as a place of mutual unfamiliarity and untranslatability. The “namelessness” to new arrivals of its places limits the capacity for the romantic to be imagined there, especially when the travel itself

is so arduous. The task of traveling, and writing that travel, becomes the domestication of novelty, the designation and inscription of names, and as such the ascription of history, to places that appear as voids.

This is the progress of civilization, in both the Chinese and American national conceptions: to create tradition for a place, to mark it and imagine it, so that it can be assimilated to the "known" and maintain a position, spatially and temporally, on the literary horizon. James Hall's 1835 comments about the novelty of the American West come at a historical point at which there is still much to be considered novel or unsettled in the direction of the west, and yet the imaginative paradigms of the west in the minds of American audiences are already becoming reified. Images and scenarios that were novel for "the first ones" who experienced them, as in all travel writing, quickly became iconic when set down in representation and submitted to audiences. The cult of firstness, of experiencing terrain without having first read about it or seen images of it, of going boldly where no one has gone before—this fixation is disturbed by both the realization that others have already been there, and by the frustrations of the desire to assimilate the novelty to the familiar. "Firstness" thus finds its secondary life in "authenticity," the conceit of originality on which travelers and writers fall back when they find they have failed to be first. The west in the American imaginary frequently appears to function as the direction in which "authentic" experience might be found, where someone might be the first or at least might come into contact with the "real," and where those burdened by the stifling societies to the east might go to enter God's primal earth and be freed from boundedness to over-structured and over-inscribed worlds. The implication, of course, is that if the experience or account lacks "authenticity," it lacks meaning or relevance. As Hall writes it, though, this is an abstraction that does not speak to the realities of westerly travel. For him, the American West and its impression

of novelty carries its own burdens for the Anglo-American travelling writer, even the belated one who was not first: it does not speak to him in familiar romantic ways, because he has very little culturally integrated preconception of it, and no literary precedent on which to base his own account.

Hall's comments about the west being unromantic may strike us as odd, since from a position of hindsight the literature of the American West seems filled with tales of adventure and heroics, and romances on even grand and national scales. What his comments alert us to, though, are the divides between the American experience of the West, the national narratives of expansion, the historicizing impulse to narrate and create cohesion, and the literary conceits both of originality, and of allusion or attribution to cultural lineage. For Hall, it is lack of "consecration by the pen of genius" that limits the west and its entry into the pantheon of literary imagination.

In his account, the novelty of the American West, even though it presents great possibility, is also its negative quality. Both the poet and historian suffer from a lack of tradition on which to draw in their production of narratives of place. Hall's travelers become pragmatic, dehistoricized, and emptied out, like the land itself appears to the foreign observer. He is not alone in conceptualizing the American as a categorically new identity, who under the conditions of the American frontier finds himself remarkably transformed into a subject with limited affinity for tradition. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782), published in London and immediately popular with readers, memorably characterized the American as a renewed race of Europeans and their mixed-nationality descendents, who feel no attachment for their former countries in which they had nothing and were pawns of the wealthy and titled:

> Urged by a variety of motives, here they came. Everything has tended to regenerate them; new laws, a new mode of living, a new social system; here they are become men…. What attachment can a poor European emigrant have for a country where he had nothing? The knowledge of the language, the love of a few kindred poor as himself, were the only cord that tied him: his country is now that which gives him land, bread, protection, and consequence…. Here individuals of all [European] nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world. Americans are the western pilgrims, who are carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigor, and industry which began long ago in the east: they will finish the great circle. (Letter III)

This notion was extremely widespread. Even at the close of the nineteenth century, American identity continued to be conceived in these terms: based on its regeneration of what was formerly European, its movement west, and its navigation of subjective detachment from the east, as in Frederick Jackson Turner's conceptualization discussed in Chapter One.

"America" itself can be considered a name given to a "new world," a new geopolitical situation, that began to exist on the continent for both European arrivals *and* native nations because of the novel condition of contact that came into being with those arrivals. These encounters irreversibly refigured the geographics, politics, and economics of the continent and also the character of its inhabitants, both old and new. Mary Louise Pratt's concept of the contact zone is an appropriate parallel to note ("Introduction"). Using the term "American" to refer to the literature written by people in specifically the North American contact zone, the area that would in hindsight be considered the *propre* space of the United States, is perhaps controversial, but it is also somewhat unavoidable. There is no alternate term in use for

referencing the people and their activities of this geographical (and progressively national) space; however it also is not an inappropriate term for this new place because it carries within itself the implication of a space recreated by transnational encounter and infusion.

What newness, encounter, and regeneration mean for travel writers in America, according to Hall, is that they are cut off from history and inscription, and so despite the great stories of adventures, tragedies, and romances the early journeys to the west must have produced, writers must apologize for having no formula for transcribing them, beg forgiveness for their creativity, and fall back on their reliability as authentic eyewitnesses and residents of the west to win their audiences' regard. For this reason, westerly travelers frequently borrow the empirical strategies of naturalists and explorers, who observe, describe, categorize, and present their observations through other objective scientific methods. The ubiquity of editorial introductions and writerly prefaces in volumes of westerly writing that assert the authenticity of the eyewitnessed phenomena and the authority of the seeing author also make appeals to their audiences in this regard. Hall's own "Preface" is careful to state that the writings were completed "during a long residence in the west" and that he is primarily interested not in masterful writing and definitive history, for which he likely will be criticized, but in "the collection and preservation of these authentic narratives of early adventure."[142] The materials for writing "a regular history" are not in existence. Likewise, his "Introduction" reiterates that western writers must invent new formulae as they go out of the resources at hand: both the exotic raw material and the generic tradition of "giving moss to the rock and ivy to the ruin," which in the new context no longer fits properly to the task… and earns them the "hack writer" epithet.

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[142] Hall 1, 8. I tend to disagree with Mulvey's assessment that these were expressions of shame and "self-contempt." However, I do agree that the awareness that travel writing was perceived as inferior socially and academically to other types of writing—neither true art nor a true science—gave writers the sense that they "needed to justify themselves to a silent but possibly accusing readership," and that this motivated them to anticipate that criticism by offering it in their own introductions themselves. (22)

In the new formulae, names are given to places and people that are out of both space and time—borrowed from the "land of their fathers" or phonetically fabricated for the land of their children. Lewis and Clark, the "authentically first" Anglo-Americans to cross the whole of the continent, evince these strategies frequently in their naming practices: using the European names stamped onto geographical features by earlier explorers, such as Mt. Hood, or Mt. St. Helens; borrowing the English descriptor "Flathead" to categorically refer to both the Salish of the upper Columbia and the tribes of the lower Columbia,[143] the latter of whom flattened the heads of their infants; or awkwardly transcribing the sounds of native words to the English alphabet, and as such creating new fabricated terms (often in many variations of spelling and pronunciation: Killamucks/Kilamox, Wâc'-ki-a-cums/Wau ki a cum) (*Journals*, Wed., Mar. 19, 1806). The inroads made by French explorers also contributed to the linguistic mishmash of western terminology and de-naturalized naming, as in the iconification of the abbreviated and "frenchized" term "Sioux" for the collection of prairie nations. The authoritative Anglo-American traveler who goes out with intention to return home, as with the Chinese diplomats and sojourners of Part One, takes the authority to name by right of first encounter, but he then abandons the anachronistically, anatopically mapped habitat to the latecomers.

Thus the new stories of the people and places of the west, and of the "weary pilgrimage" of progress, are constructed of these anachronisms and anatopisms. The abstracted pioneers and explorers, the individuals of the present who represent only progress, have no immanent identity, but tensely hover between the past and the coming fulfillment of national destiny. The abstracted seeing male Euro-American traveler Hall imagines as floating down the liminal space of the Ohio River toward the west recreates the ancient forest, the "shapeless traces" of former civilizations, and the coming inhabitance of this land by white men all as the "new," the

[143] Compare March 19, 1806 to November 4, 1805.

imminent, the nameless, and the traditionless. This gathering in of past, present, and future to the westerly *tabula rasa* sends man back to Eden, to start again in the agrarian utopia of the new world, to move forward (westward) only, and not to be haunted by the past.

The fantasy of new Eden, youth, and westerly momentum has clearly been a significant contributor to what has been identified as an ideal, totalized national identity. A number of studies in recent decades have shown how the utopian vision of the nation included focalizing the development of national character in the west and on the "legitimate" subjectivity of the white man. The utopian ideology of the United States becomes "a field of social activity within which individual and collective fantasy become, nationally, embodied" (Berlant 17). The iconography of the United States accomplishes what Franz Fanon called the purpose of national culture: "to make the totality of the nation a reality to each citizen" and "to make the history of the nation part of the personal experience of each of its citizens."[144]

However, the "fantasy of national integration" (Berlant 22) provides only one intertext for individual textual representations, which in their linguistic bounty are irreducible to a singular, unified symbol; in other words, that abstracted fantasy is not alone in the individual imaginary represented in a single text. The fantasy often dominates "authentic" western narratives, those by "real" travelers, explorers, colonists, and missionaries whose feet tread the western soil and cross the western waters, and writers like Hall seem bound to represent themselves within that paradigm. And yet, even writers like Hall, who attempt to see the west through the abstracted white man's eyes, find that even these white males cannot quite figure out their own belonging. Rather than becoming a cipher for national totalization and the universalization of an abstracted perspective of the ideal citizen, texts show a crisis of national self-definition in which totality does not exist for the individual. They operate within a dream

[144] Fanon 200, quoted in Berlant 21.

that is only shared in bits and pieces, and navigate between that dream and material particularity.

This critical perspective is similar to others that adopt a localized standpoint on textual representation. Bruce A. Harvey, for example, has written:

> Travelistic works... cannot be said to collectively form a singular mirror reflecting the nation to itself in perfect coherence. They stage varied dramas, with the 'nation' playing diverse roles, contingent upon authorial psychology or profession and the non-[home] land depicted…. Imperialist thought relies upon stereotypes, and all subjects find themselves inscribed within various subtle and not-so-subtle power structures. This need not mean, however, that they become incapable of questioning or rendering ambivalent the national script itself…. The linkage between subject and nation is variable; and national citizens do not by default carry their citizenship as their only or heaviest psychological or ideological baggage. (19)

Lisa Lowe, in looking at one specific type of traveler, the immigrant, has likewise suggested that the state-citizen bind is not the ultimate construction of sociality (36). The universals proposed by the nation actually generate the critical acts that negate those universals. Immigrants' cultural expressions, which emerge out of the contradictions inherent in their marginality, "displace the fiction of reconciliation, disrupt the myth of national identity by revealing its gaps and fissures, and intervene in the narrative of national development that would illegitimately locate the 'immigrant' before history or exempt the 'immigrant' from history" (9). The idea that immigrant narratives face marginalization and exemption from history is interesting in this context as well, as we look at the question of how "national literature" has been historically constructed, from the perspective of those who opened the continental west to Anglo-American immigration and domestication.

For nineteenth-century Americans, crossing into unmarked spaces is not the precursor to the destruction of the domestic, as it was for the nineteenth-century Chinese, but rather the imagined path to creation of the domestic: the incorporation of the outside into the expanding interior space of the nation. Hall's "Introduction" describes the end of the Revolutionary War as allowing Americans to happily resume "their domestic avocations," except on the frontier where "the tomahawk was still bathed in gore." The dispersal of small bands of "hardy" and "courageous" individuals, whose homes were not in settlement groups but rather "temporary shelter[s]" and the "bosom of [their] famil[ies]" on the move, meant that the frontier was not settled in a wave that overtook the land. Instead, Anglo-American settlement seeped slowly into the "uninhabited" land, "like the gradual overflowing of a great river" (23-24). However, they eventually "subdu[ed] the whole country," possessing it and creating boundaries that defined parts as interior to the United States, and left the "Indians [to] linger on [their] borders" (27). Travelling and authoritatively stepping into spaces of defamiliarization are taken as the precondition of Americanness, as embodied in the intrepid early pioneers; although America may have been "without tradition," the orientation toward frontier comes to function as one of the major American national narratives or traditions.

Frontier orientation, as it meant for Frederick Jackson Turner in 1893, implies negotiation or transgression of boundaries, progress westward, territorial expansion, regeneration, youthfulness or newness, hierarchized racial paradigms, economic and religious growth, and endless pressing toward the outside. As a zone of contention, in literature the frontier frequently functions as space of contradiction and inscrutability, where opposites are pitted against one another in heroic face-off, and strange results ensue. The frontier narrative is among the first established by European arrivals to the continent, and remains influential, if often subsumed, in

the American mindset even after the closure of the frontier, as will be shown in later chapters. It has also been widely asserted that the frontier mentality is what contributed to the United States' shift, at the end of the nineteenth century and later, toward an increasingly assertive role abroad (Fry).

Whatever centrality history has claimed for the west and western progress to the American national story, literature—its canons, its history, its markets—have not evidenced an ascendancy of the west, but rather have perpetuated its condition of semi-colonization by the east. While the west claims some importance in construction of the American self-conception, it has frequently gained its relevance—and this is particularly true of the nineteenth century—only in terms of its capacity to support a more broadly national self-image based in expansiveness (reaching out, encompassing, assimilating) and global regenerative capacity (the ability to bring renewal to the world). In a literary marketplace dominated by the east, the west has not seemed to have played an overwhelmingly concrete and influential role in American literature in general.

I follow Nathaniel Lewis in ascribing this oversight in American literary history to the paralleling of early nineteenth-century western writing, which always seemed troubled by problems of authenticity, writerly authority, and imitation, to eastern writing, which at that time did produce a number of influential writers around whom could be built "a powerful tradition" and who, like Ralph Waldo Emerson, emphasized freedom of the mind from imitation ("Truth"). The eastern centralization of American literature meant that the troubled Western writing, which as James Hall notes was plagued by the very novelty it sought out, failed to become canonical, yet had vast and often phantom influence over American representation, both of the frontier and of other subject matter. The marginalization of early nineteenth-century travel writing to the west and the transpacific far west, including China, and the later nineteenth-century

marginalization of western regional writers—all this contributed to continued marginalization in the twentieth-century of westerly writing in the story of modernism. And yet, the "failure" that I have identified, the one in which westerly writing fails to become canonical and is subsumed under the dominance of easterly writing, is not the one that has commonly been identified as the major "failure" in nineteenth-century American literature.

Chapter Two discussed the stories that have been told of the "failures" of nineteenth-century Chinese literature and writers; literary history has also described the American nineteenth-century as one of "failure." The story goes that although American writers constantly exerted themselves to produce a national literature, American writing still failed to thrive or wield influence on any broad scale until the modern era. Twentieth-century narratives of American literary modernity frequently emphasize the ascendancy, at long last, of an American national literature in the early 1900s, when it began to have international effects and recognition. Malcolm Bradbury's classic 1983 text, *The Modern American Novel*, juxtaposed Sydney Smith's 1820 comment, "Who reads an American book?" with Gertrude Stein's 1934 claim that English writers had the nineteenth century, but the twentieth was "one 'too many for them'" (v-vi). Similarly, critics of the modern literature of the United States have found rich, consequential, and invigorating evidence of the transnational flows that contributed to the cosmopolitanism of American modernists, although most attention has been paid to the eastern or transatlantic directionality of these flows. The conversation itself about when and how American literature might have showed signs of national quality is east-centric, since it repairs to the qualitative designations imposed by European onlookers and devalues the type of literary inventiveness noted by Hall and aroused by the American situation.

Hall's assertion of the intimacy of antiquity and romance evidences the dissonance in his

self-positioning as a western writer who must footnote himself to the east. He struggles to define the romantic quality of western writing, since he so deeply associates romance with the tactical application of tradition, which the west lacks. What ends up standing in for romance is dauntlessness and dogmatic militance, combined with race-based unification against a common "dark" enemy. For Hall, the lack of heroics and romances in the traditionless frontier can be excused due to the peaceable way in which the virgin land of America provided the empty stage for "exhibit to the world the novel spectacle of a people coming from various nations, and differing in language, politics, and religion, sitting down quietly together erecting states, forming constitutions and enacting laws, without bloodshed or dissention." In contrast to the violent settlement of Europe, which Hall remembers as being accomplished by the overrunning of peaceable southerners by "savage hordes" from the north who then ruled the "blood-stained soil" with a "rod of iron," it seems to him that the settlement of America was quite different: "Never was there an experiment of greater moral beauty, or more harmonious operation" (19).

Hall so ardently projects the national dream and so eloquently interprets the history of American colonization that it is easy to see why he might become, as Nathaniel Lewis suggests, "simultaneously ignored as a minor figure in literary history and also held up as a prime mover in the institutionalization of the patriarchal, prejudiced 'Wild West' myth" (33). Contemporary ethics and sense of responsibility about historical representation might be reasons that Hall's history is currently collecting dust in special collections of academic libraries, but this is not the same reason Hall was sidelined in his own time. What Lewis points out is that Hall's mimetic reproduction of expansionist mentality, his prefatory recognition of the inferior quality of his writing, and his claims to eyewitness authenticity of the account (if not his presence at all of the historical events he recounts, at the very least his own "long residence in the west") (8) all lend

credence to his writerly authority at the same time as they delegitimate his account as "literary."

Aside from the tensions in the text based in the conditions of the burgeoning U.S. literary marketplace, there are tensions that arise from the text's geographics and chronologics. Bearing in mind that a great deal of western travel writing in the early nineteenth century is actually transnational writing, since geographically, by 1835, the states and territories of the United States did not extend far beyond the Mississippi River, we can see in Hall's comments that although there was a new sense of national sovereignty, domesticity, and boundedness following the wars with Britain, there is not a sense that the boundaries of the nation had been settled. Part of the utopian dream has to do with the frontier vision, an emigrant's vision, which is essentially a transnational one, in which the ideal citizen gazes beyond his own country's boundaries and moves west. Westerly travel texts evince complicated geographics and identities because that is the reality out of which they arise: an unsettled habitat, in which what is inside and what is outside is in constant fluctuation, and in which the interfluence of domesticity and foreignness creates dissent, disenfranchisement, regional tensions, and unfixed identity. The palpability of the foreign, as Harvey says, can "pull the national subject out of the orbit of his or her own nationality" (19). And at the same time, once the subject moves outside the national territory, his spatial de-centralization puts him in a place that is "not yet the United States," making his progress both central to and "exempt from" U. S. history.

We can see this tension reflected everywhere in texts that utilize the westerly travel topos. Although texts like Hall's attempt to assimilate the outside element to the national totality, they do not conceive of national culture as existing outside of its transnational iconography of frontier contact, which it gathers into itself despite its unassimilability. This would include not only the western anachronisms and anatopisms of the "flatheads" and "Sioux,"

imported from the eastern elsewhere and awkwardly stamped onto the local milieu; but also the eastern upsets of space-time, like the agitating arrivals of texts like Hall's that bear oddly exterior and simultaneously interior literary images in the United States. These foreign apertures, the eruptions of the unassimilable that appear in national space, show that the not-yet-national has a de-totalizing effect. Texts which only imagine travel in the west and fictitiously create a literary west out of the raw material of eyewitness travel texts, which will be discussed momentarily, utilize the westerly topos to express the anxiety felt in the bounded domestic space of the nation about the impossibility of drawing lines that keep the outside out.

In terms of narrative representation and the chronotope, the "traveled" nature of space and time in American writing is its most native element, and movement in time and space is the precondition of "presence." This is dissimilar to the transitional trajectory of Chinese narrative chronotopes, as described in Chapter Two. Nineteenth-century Chinese cosmology allowed for a sense of spatial enclosure that, after a very long dominance over epistemology, transitioned—through the rise of the culture of travel—to a *fin-de-siècle* sense of space as perforated by the foreign. We cannot speak about travel defining the transition in literature from tradition to modernity in the same way in the American context as in the Chinese one, since travel is the precondition of Americanness, and since "American tradition" is hardly something that can be spoken of as existing in any form remotely comparable to the Chinese one developed in some continuity for several thousand years. Whereas the Chinese chronotope transitioned, in the course of the nineteenth century, from expressing domesticity (closure, universality) to expressing locality (interconnection, fragmentation), American chronotopic development shows an (albeit ultimately only partially successful) push toward creating domesticity out of localities. Non-totality is the founding and defining quality in the development of American order; the

landing of the first European immigrants ignited a spread of fragmentation, destruction, reconstruction, and mixing of universalities. Also, the heterogeneity of contributors to the foundation of the new nation on old soil precludes any attribution of "tradition" to a single source; in fact, cultural warfare and human movement, much of it far-flung, outrageous, and imperiling, may be said to be the only characteristics binding premodern American experiences to one another. The ostensible failure in the nineteenth century to produce a "national literature" in the traditional sense is testament to this.

Western writing, and even a significant portion of eastern writing, utilizes the "westerly-progressive" chronotope, which binds together the impulses toward, simultaneously, homogenization and heterogeneity in the "American" space-time of the nineteenth century. This chronotope relies on the "seeing-man" characterization of self, who, like Hall's traveler and Pratt's "main protagonist" of European imperialist rhetoric, has "imperial eyes" that passively look out and possess (7). William Clark's inscription of the Anglo-American seeing-man's first vision of the Pacific, that void promised at the edge of the continent, provides one performance of this possession:

> Great joy in camp we are in *View* of the *Ocian,* [10] [*NB: in the morning when fog cleared off just below last village just on leaving the village of Warkiacum*], this great Pacific Octean which we been So long anxious to See. and the roreing or noise made by the waves brakeing on the rockey Shores (as I Suppose) may be heard distictly. (*Journals*, Thu., Nov. 7, 1805)

The Corps of Discovery's report that they successfully progressed to the far west functions as a prophecy of imminent fulfillment of a dream of possession: once the continent and its furthest edge has been seen and recorded, it becomes known and therefore assimilable. Pratt calls this

outlook a "strategy of innocence" that co-exists with assertion of hegemony. However, Hall's disavowal of tradition (and by extension, old world imperialism) alters this subjectivity from the one familiar to critics of European imperialism. The idealized American self is loyal only to the American space of aggressive beginning-again in an environment of deracination, even if that loyalty paradoxically also requires a transnationalism that sometimes looks east. And so the westerly-progressive chronotope contains within it its challenger, the easterly-retrogressive, and vice versa. But further, as is clear from the maneuverings of Hall, the virgin, traditionless west, haunted by its manly histories and Indian remnants lurking at the edges of settledness, punctuated by names out of time and space, and interfused with the disorientations of its multinational roots, the chronotopes of western texts are fated for incongruity and paradox.

FICTION AND THE WESTERLY-PROGRESSIVE CHRONOTOPE: *THE JOURNAL OF JULIUS RODMAN*

Non-synchronic, de-contextualized, paradoxical space-time is even more evident in early nineteenth-century fiction than in nonfiction. Unlike the firsthand narratives, which were popular in their own time but marginalized by the canon, the writers who have been gathered to canonical centrality as the earliest to produce nationally distinct and significant literature tend to absorb these abstractions as a mythological basis for generalized critique. In many cases, because readers and writers are primarily eastern, the western cipher becomes a screen on which the concerns of the east can be projected.[145] This "use" of the west by the east continues even after the terrain has been marked and the frontier pressed to its limits. Writers look to the West as a cipher of authenticity and novelty against which to explain the tensions and anxieties of the universalized eastern states and to entertain them with their own proximity to the savage, long

[145] MacFarlane has similarly argued that westerns, as the nineteenth century progresses, become little more than meditations on relations between the East and West.

after the "western genre" has been reified and its icons turned to stone. The dismembering of the totalized discourse of western novelty and progress that happens in both fiction and nonfiction paradoxically empties the "real" west out even further by disavowing the firsthand narratives that attest to its peculiarities. Allow me to explain this further.

The early nineteenth-century conceit of *tabula rasa* and deliverance from tradition, which is the American peculiarity of imperial thought, already faced criticism in its own time, as did the entire social-economic-political structure that would capitalize on the myth. The contesting version of "real" America, not the one "objectively" seen and "accurately" reported by the traveling witness, but the one conjectured by the seeing conscience, insists that the real experience of the American Eden is not emptied out, but fully haunted. Hall's more well-known contemporaries, fiction writers based in the American east such as Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, and slightly later Herman Melville, Edgar Allan Poe, and Nathaniel Hawthorne, endlessly attest to the haunting of "Eden" through their forays into what is outside yet speaks to the contemporary condition or national imaginary.[146] Although Hall would not have put it this way, the America of apertures, ghosts, liminality, and outsiders is what has been argued to have distinguished its variety of romance from non-gothic forms of European Romanticism. American fiction found its Adamic, prelapsarian heroes in a mythical space of "the natural, the metaphysical, the noumenal," making it less "romantic" in the European sense and rather an "eminently… 'gothic' fiction."[147] And yet, that Edenic, pre-cultural "place in

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[146] Simpson writes that Hawthorne, Poe, and Melville look outward to find the universal and historical: Hawthorne to the local past, Melville to the oceanic and unexplored, Poe to the psychological and mysterious (vii). According to a common narrative of American literary progress, this was the form that American romanticism took during its "Renaissance," a time during which a tradition was established against which modern literary forms could be developed.

[147] Bradbury vi. He is appealing to Kantian philosophy, which pits the noumenal, the thing-in-itself, which is impossible to truly get at, against the phenomenal, which is the thing filtered through perception. Bradbury notes that the scholars of the 1950s and 1960s, in the tradition of promoting American national literature, were particularly interested in finding a way to characterize American fiction as distinct.

itself" is impossible, because it is already partly "filled up" with divergence, with people, with names, with perception—with knowledge, from the bitten fruit of the tree. Examples of writers appealing to chronotopes of exteriority as bases for contemporary critique of idealized national space can be found readily in the fiction of the early nineteenth century.

But first, some comparisons: the gothic predilection enters into even the most empirical, official travel accounts as well. Lewis and Clark's journals occasionally reflect on the dangerous, primal side of "Eden," which can be curious and dreamlike, full of "dark monsters and inexplicable powers."[148] For example, on Friday, June 14, 1805 Captain Meriwether Lewis, having been out exploring a series of "sublime" waterfalls, starts the twelve mile hike back to camp around 6:30 in the evening. He immediately begins to be met with strange, unidentifiable animals—the first being perhaps a wolf, or a tiger, which he fires his gun at. He wrote the following about his experience:

> It now seemed to me that all the beasts of the neighbourhood had made a league to distroy me, or that some fortune was disposed to amuse herself at my expence, for I had not proceded more than three hundred yards from the burrow of this tyger cat, before three buffaloe… ran full speed towards me…. [I] did not think it prudent to remain all night at this place which really from the succession of curious adventures wore the impression on my mind of inchantment; at sometimes for a moment I thought it might be a dream, but the prickley pears which pierced my feet very severely once in a while, particularly after it grew dark. (*Journals*)

The monsters lurking in the shadows of the western space produce a psychological response that

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[148] Bergon suggests that in the Lewis and Clark journals, "The wilderness becomes animate in a way that is as primal as it is gothic. Measurable topography and objective events melt into romantic "seens of visionary inchantment" (4:226) and "curious adventures" that "might be a dream" (4:294).... The journals often become an epic story of confrontations with dark monsters and inexplicable powers" (55-56).

unsettles his positioning as a disinterested observer, and by extension his sense of position in the traveled habitat.

The troubled sense of relationship to history, place, and values felt in both fiction and nonfiction writing seems to achieve different expression in the accounts that claim veracity, promote the national (or other popularized) identitary logic, seek to establish history and context for the new nation, while rejecting romantic links to tradition, like Hall's; and those that embrace the critical capacity of fictionalization to undercut national fantasies, and in doing so unearth their subsumed personalities and phantom axiologies,[149] but that achieve capacity for critique at the expense of submission to European lordship over culture and the literary marketplace (Gross). However, there are few solid distinctions between texts that are romantically attached to Europe and those that are not, or texts that are invested in the production and re-production of the national westerly myth (or its roommate, the doctrine of evangelical progress) and those that are not. Most writers find themselves tied to institutional apron strings by the expectations of their audiences and the literary marketplace, by their obligations to their investors, by their own doctrines and persuasions, and by their career-oriented capacities as diplomats, missionaries, historians, businessmen, military personnel, professional writers, and so on. And although there would seem to be a distinction based on whether or not they are committed to production of factual and authentic accounts, "truth" becomes a major issue as it does in every context in narratives of travel, and the lines between fact and fiction, authenticity and plagiarism, second-handedness, or imaginativeness become frontiers for the crossing themselves. Lewis and Clark's journals of their expedition, for example, were finally published in Philadelphia in 1809 after

[149] I borrow the term "phantom axiology" from Wang (Chapter Four of *Fin-de-Siècle Splendor*), who uses it in the context of Late Qing carnivalesque fiction. Although there is not the emphasis on absurdity, inversion, and the grotesque in the American fiction of the nineteenth century, the emphasis on the uncanny, satire, and the contestation of systems of value make the term interestingly applicable in the early nineteenth century American context.

careful polishing and revision, but not before being threatened with being beaten to the punch by other minor members of the expedition who sought to publish their own "unofficial" versions (Jackson).[150]

Although Edgar Allan Poe is far better known for his gothic fiction and poetry, and his obsessions with the feminine, the psychological, and the mysterious, than for tackling the issues of westerly writing, he is responsible for one text that does broadly address those issues in a way that is of interest here for a variety of reasons. In January of 1840, five years after the publication of Hall's history and thirty-odd years after the completion of Lewis and Clark's expedition, Poe, who was at the time an editor for *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, began writing a serialized novel titled *The Journal of Julius Rodman, Being an Account of the First Passage across the Rocky Mountains of North America ever Achieved by Civilized Man*. The first six installments of the story were published in that magazine before Poe was fired from his position and thus refused to continue writing the story.[151] The tale was presented as a rediscovered account of a real expedition by a Euro-American across the Rocky Mountains, one that, had it been authentic, would have predated the Lewis and Clark expedition. The story was at first taken so seriously by readers that it was presented to Congress as authentic, before it was recognized as a hoax.

Actually, this was Poe's third attempt at writing a "hoax," which John J. Teunissen and Evelyn J. Hinz describe as a story that presents itself as an authentic eyewitness account, vocalized by a fabricated narrator who claims to have undertaken the journey himself, but which was actually a "pseudorealistic" journey to an unknown place (318). Like the first two of these

[150]See "The Race to Publish Lewis and Clark" by Donald Jackson.
[151] The first six chapters of the text were serialized in *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. VI in 6 installments Jan.-Jun. 1840. The Edgar Allan Poe Society reports that the text was presented to the 26th Congress in 1840 as authentic.

parodies, "The Unparalleled Adventures of One Hans Pfaall" (1835) and *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1837), *Julius Rodman* appears to be intended to comment on the issues of authenticity, plagiarism, and travel writing. Poe had, by 1840, already been a vocal and sarcastic critic of literary plagiarisms, even in *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*. Teunissen and Hinz argue that we should read *The Journal of Julius Rodman* as a continuation of this critique: one that "sarcastically attack[s] plagiarism, condescendingly ridicul[es] the gullibility of his public and their uncritical taste for strange adventures, and finally, ironically expos[es] the true motives of westward voyagers and the hack quality of the descriptions of such travels" (321). And certainly, the six existing chapters of the novel take on the multitude of representational strategies and paradigms associated with western writing.

Taking Poe's text in comparison with Hall's introductory remarks to his account (remarks that resonate with so many introductory remarks to other works of "western" writing in this time period, both in travel and historical genres), and exploring the two texts' divergent treatments of the major paradigms associated with "the west," reveals the complexity of issues associated with westerly writing. The issue is not reducible to the confrontation between what Poe called "hack" writing and what Hall called "hacknied" writing, although these epithets underline the overall devaluation of American literature not only by European writers and audiences, but also by American writers themselves. Accusing other writers of failing to progress by parodying their idea of "progressive" writing seems to be one of Poe's goals in utilizing the westerly topos, and in directly plagiarizing other famous works of westerly writing himself.

What seems to be at stake for readers and many writers who Poe indirectly criticizes, is the importance of the question of who was first to explore the West and cross the Rockies, and next, how that honor has been claimed in writing. President Thomas Jefferson's Lewis and

Clark expedition (1804-1806) had claimed that national honor, although Alexander Mackenzie had already crossed the Canadian Rockies and reached the Pacific Ocean in 1793 for Great Britain. It was also true that Lewis and Clark had carried Mackenzie's account on their expedition, opening them to charges of copying Mackenzie in their own journals. And many later western explorers carried Lewis and Clark's account with them, further deepening the questions of what shapes "authentic" experience and how travel experience is mediated by the literary. Kris Fresonke notes that, in line with the "Enlightenment impulse toward encyclopedic, 'literary' presentations of knowledge" and "a Romantic's attachment to authentic, individual experience," Lewis was obstinate about claiming personal authority over his journals and presenting information in them "not as a corporate mission statement but as a direct chronicle of experience from the subject himself," despite charges of his copying Mackenzie (5). What these charges point to is the conceit of originality and the valuation of the "real," even as real experiences, ones perhaps filtered through travel traditions, are stamped out as bearing the false witness of dependence on established imagery of western experience. Fresonke writes: "*Of course* the Lewis and Clark journey was plagiarized; *of course* the route had essentially been traveled before; *of course* there was little novelty left in the Far West in 1806" (5).

This scenario is the one parodied by Poe in *Julius Rodman*. Poe's devaluation both of travel writers' familiarity with existing accounts of their traveled route and of the conventions of western writing is evident in the "editor's notes" of the first chapter. For one, the notes suggest that Lewis and Clark had seen Rodman's manuscript and may have borrowed from it—when in fact Poe had clearly borrowed from that historical document in the fabrication of the Rodman tale. Teunissen and Hinz detail the extent to which Poe imitates the contemporary practices of

western writing in order to expose them as "shockingly bad taste"[152]: the verification by "editors" of authenticity and the existence of the narrator, the long-winded title, the descriptions of local human and geographical particularities directly borrowed from the journals of Lewis and Clark, the "gaudy" stylistic and thematic borrowings from various English writers, the farcical imitations of anglicization of Indian names ("Minnackennozzies," for example), the accentuation of westward exploration as amusement for the "party" of travelers, Rodman's fleeting self-consciousness about the moral implications of violence perpetrated against the Indians, and even the resemblance of the character of Julius Rodman to real explorers like Meriwether Lewis.

Poe's goal in creating Julius Rodman and his western journal was clearly to offer a social critique; whether his critique was intended to be primarily directed toward the literary marketplace, the "bad form" of writers who copied one another, the poor quality of American writing in general, or the entire enterprise of westward expansion itself is difficult to know. If the critique was primarily directed toward the problem of "authentic" writing, as it seems to be, it invites a compelling comparison to the one offered in 1964 by Theodor Adorno in *The Jargon of Authenticity*. Trent Schroyer's "Foreword" to the English translation describes Adorno's critique of "the reifications that conceal the truth of critical reason" as motivated by "the growth of false consciousness generated by the 'culture industry'" (ix, x). If we can think outside the twentieth century terminology, and perhaps think of the "culture industry" in terms of the early nineteenth century literary marketplace, we can imagine a similarity between Poe's and Adorno's goals of liberating readers from idealism by exposing the reification of representational modes and imagery.

For Adorno, the "jargon of authenticity" is "a mode of magical expression" that makes it appear as if the words contain some deep truth that come out of real experience, when in fact the

[152] Quoted in Teunissen and Hinz 324.

words are abstract illusions, merely a theatrical effect, and achieve their impact only through their aura of "authenticity." Poe sees in western writers, as Adorno saw in the existentialists, an inauthenticity based in the use of abstracted jargon (sometimes to the point of plagiarism) presenting itself as authenticity. The writers, having failed to sufficiently reflect on the relationship between the "in-itselfness" of the object of reflection (the habitat and travel experience) and the consciousness of the thinking subject who experiences that object, have resorted to the jargon and abstracted the full range of possible experience into a forgetful reification or uniform mode of speech. Thus, what may have been genuine becomes mediated. The words are touched by history, but history withholds some supposed original meaning that the jargon is always trying to recover. Redressing old words with the aura of "truth," guaranteed by editorial notes and prefaces and their affirmation of the existence of the writer and the genuineness of his experience, blows them up, gives them an aura of "moreness," "as if they were empowered and guaranteed by some absolute which is kept silent out of reverence." Further, "that which is mediated has become the caricature of what is natural" (Adorno 11, 19). This concern about loss of meaning has something to do with what makes us consider Poe a harbinger of modern consciousness.

Poe doesn't stop at pointing to these writers' pompousness and the illegitimacy of their fabricated narratives as "good writing." Teunissen and Hinz conclude that:

> Instead of spokesman for Poe,... and even less "hero," Julius Rodman is the vehicle for Poe's attack upon the mentality of the Western voyager. His romanticism is the kind that masks the reality of his activities; his imagination is the kind that reveals a disordered mind; his literary style is the kind that indicates a vulgar and commercial sense of

values.[153]

Rodman’s disorderly romanticism is giddily expressed in his sublime “seeing-man” moment in Chapter Two, as he looks up a stream that stretches to the sky, and reflects “on the immensity of territory through which those waters had probably passed, a territory as yet altogether unknown to white people, and perhaps abounding in the magnificent works of God.” In this moment he feels “an excitement of soul,” a sense of resolve to push farther ahead “than any previous adventurer,” and possession by superhuman energy and longing to “give full vent to the feelings which inspired [him], by leaping and running in the prairie.” Further, he shares these feelings with a companion on the expedition, Thornton, which establishes a homosocial bond of “fellow-feeling” between them that would be familiar to readers of European romantic works. Poe’s parodic revision of the westerly travel account undermines the facade of sober empirical “seeing” by ascribing to these writers a much less lofty goal: “hilarity” (Poe 83). The great romantic desire to push to the furthest bounds of civilization, the “wild and savage pleasure” of fighting with bears (258), the caprice of drinking parties in the boats, the titillation of spying on a family of beavers building a dam: everything this party of adventurers does is recounted in such a way as to bear little resemblance to the actions or motivations of a pragmatic explorer or settler.

Poe’s criticism extends to the social currency of the categorical marker “authentic” for travel texts, and perhaps even to westerly travel as an entire disordered, vulgar, and commercial enterprise. Poe himself, for all his devaluation of western hack writing, does not himself conceive of a way to inscribe the west outside of the western paradigms (or perhaps he just wasn’t interested in trying). He appropriates the western topos without contributing anything to its literary construction beyond abstraction: he overlays romantic jargon onto a de-contextualized

[153] Teunissen and Hinz 338.

"prairie" and unspecified location on the Missouri River, and employs the most emptied-out stereotypes possible for describing categorical others. As such, he delivers the "whole of the west," everything it is and implies, up to the slaughterhouse, in order that he might explore his own concerns as an eastern literatus. The situation is an ideal example of the problems of the paralleling, or in this case the open antagonism between, the writing of the American east and west that Nathaniel Lewis described.

To put this scenario of use and abuse into context, we must take a broader look at the question of literariness and the American "failure" to produce a unified national literature of quality, which was of the utmost importance to nineteenth-century intellectuals. During the early 1800s in the American east, writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose writing made some of the strongest calls for breaking American writers free from the chains of imitation of Europe, were pushing for authenticity of individual voice and experience as essential to the development of an American national literature. Robert Gross writes that European critics in that era found that "[f]or all their industrial success and national wealth, Americans were lacking in civilization," which complicated the American sense of self. In fact, due to the condition of the early nineteenth-century literary marketplace, in which copyright law was not yet a factor, reproducing editions of European works was cheaper for American publishers than it was to publish original American writers (315-316), which meant that American audiences were habituated to viewing European literature as of higher literary quality than that by Americans. And also, it meant that American writers faced difficulty in making their works available to American audiences, since they most commonly found interested publishers in Europe. Opinions vary on when the cultural colonization of America by Europe finally ended,[154] or to what degree the United States has

[154] Although many agree with Malcolm Bradbury that even "in the 1890s American fiction was still regarded as an offshoot of British fiction" and that nineteenth-century American writers remained generally unrecognized in their

actually disentangled itself from its sense of cultural inferiority to the "old world." Calculating a timeline seems less important, though, than developing an awareness of east-centrism and the ways it is exploded by marginalized writing (even in all its "mediocrity"). Certainly, the question of literary independence was of great importance in the post-independence era, and the "quest for national distinctiveness" a great shaper of literary history (Gross 316). The problem of seeking out the authentic American voice, though, seems to have been stymied by the very unprecedented American experience itself, and by the challenges for the literary writer to position himself in such a way as to disavow indebtedness to both the literary east (Europe) and the poor quality writing of the American "hacks."

Western writers' reproduction or imitation of other writers, nationalist rhetoric, or traditional literary generic conventions meant, theoretically, abstraction and universalization of the individual, and perhaps even slavish reproduction of the material world rather than creative, self-reliant re-presentation of reality. Also, the imitation by so many eastern writers of western motifs to lend stature to their representations without having had the personal experience of living in the west meant an overall devaluation of the genre of westerly writing in the canon. This historical outcome seems paradoxically oppositional to the novelty of the experience itself and the challenges of revolutionizing travel writing modes that westerly travel created. It also is diametrically opposed to the way in which Hall presents the text: as revolutionized writing, as opposed to the "hacknied" and imitative writing of easterly travelers. Nathaniel Lewis suggests that the demand for accuracy and realism in western writing actually disallowed its development as integral part of the national literature:

> If authenticity became the discourse of legitimation, it also proved to be an implosive and crippling foundation for western literature…. Western authorship deconstructed itself

own time (v).

> because it had effect *and* was also erased. Rather than writing themselves into canonical celebrity, they wrote themselves out of literary history. (24-25, 33)

Meanwhile, eastern writers drew extensively on the western or outsider motif as the dialectic other for their own self-constructions. Whereas the traveler to the west had to be an abstracted, empirically seeing "he", eastern writers were free to mirror their individuality against that outsider element. This model of selfhood relied on the deconstructed, imploded, crippled west: simultaneously influential and erased; both legitimate and external to History.

Emerson's famous oration, *The American Scholar*, delivered in 1837, has epitomized American intellectual positioning between the idealized future (and its westerly flow) and the idolized past (with its easterly flow). Emerson, like other transcendentalists, proposed that going into nature was the Thinking Man's first guide, and the second going into the past and books. He writes: "When the intervals of darkness come, as come they must,—when the soul seeth not, when the sun is hid, and the stars withdraw their shining,—we repair to the lamps which were kindled by their ray to guide our steps to the East again, where the dawn is" (28). This is the American geographical imaginary: the East (Europe, the old ideas, literary culture, and thinking men) is where the past is, even if the future looks westward and the primary source of inspiration is the going-out into nature (the primitive, the unexplored, the young and new, the "west"). The importance of navigating this historical position, in Emerson's account, is no less than securing the future of the nation:

> If the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts, and there abide, the huge world will come round to him. Patience—patience;—with the shades of all the good and great for company; and for solace, the perspective of your own infinite life; and for work, the study and the communication of principles, the making of those instincts prevalent,

> the conversion of the world.... We will walk on our own feet.... A nation of men will for the first time exist, because each believes himself inspired by the Divine Soul which also inspires all men. (45)

Although the canonized early nineteenth-century American literary perspective acknowledges the fertility of the west and shows topical interest in it, these writers' primary interest was less in progressive movement and more in self-construction: standing on their own ground, seizing the individuality of the localized viewpoint, and exploring localized subjectivity as produced in relation to human and environmental others (all while remaining very attentive to easterly literary culture and buttressed by the knowledge that wildness was waiting at the boundary).

Dialectical self-construction is at the heart of these representations, which even amid the call to "self-reliance" can rarely find a geographic space where the man can plant himself alone. *Julius Rodman* offers an interesting case for examining self-construction in terms of dialectical evaluation, not only because of the unsubtle characterization of the Sioux as "warlike and ferocious," "great robbers," and "bugbears *par excellence*" (Poe 179). These are stereotypical abstractions in the extreme. The more unexpected and nuanced relationship between Rodman and Thornton, between these two men and the family of beavers they encounter, and between these aspects of Poe's story and the journals of Lewis and Clark that he plagiarizes seem to offer much more interest in terms of understanding the model of dialectical evaluation in play here.

I'll start with the first. Rodman's relationship with the Sioux is not one of simple mirroring, in which Rodman's self is reflected onto others who echo back significant alterities to reaffirm the self and substantiate a hierarchy. There is very little comparison or self-reflection that takes place for Rodman, who reflects much more frequently on the greatness of the adventure and the pleasure of his natural sympathy with Thornton. This model of selfhood and

empiricism does not record otherness in order to reflect on the universal self, as Chinese travel writers frequently did. Here, the bold, seeing self disavows the influence of his others on himself, and allows himself a disinterested, localized standpoint that belies the centrality of the subjugated frontier and its real aliens to his self-construction, except in a few rare moments at night when Rodman's conscience gets the better of him. The moment cited in the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter is one of those.

In comparison with Rodman's account of their thrilling armed conflict with the Sioux, which lends the excitement readers desire from narratives of Anglo-Indian conflict, Lewis' description of the only armed conflict the Corps of Discovery had with the native nations on their expedition appears quite boring. According to Lewis, the party was traveling along Maria's River in present day Montana on their return trip to the east, when Lewis writes:

> I discovered to my left at the distance of a mile an assembleage of about 30 horses, I halted and used my spye glass by the help of which I discovered several indians on the top of an eminence just above them who appeared to be looking down towards the river I presumed at Drewyer. about half the horses were saddled. this was a very unpleasant sight, however I resolved to make the best of our situation and to approach them in a friendly manner. (*Journals*, Sat., Jul. 26, 1806)

Fortunately, good relations are struck up with this party of Minnatares of Fort de Prairie, until Lewis tells them that he has brought peace to the warring tribes on the west side of the mountains, the Minnetares' enemies, who now are united and armed. While the explorers are sleeping in their hosts' village, the Minnetares therefore attempt to steal the party's guns in an effort to arm themselves as well. The skirmish ends quickly, with few wounded. Clark's observation on their outward journey that the presence of Sacagawea, who along with her infant

seemed to indicate "a token of peace" (*Journals*, Oct. 13, 1805), may account for the largely peaceable interactions they experienced with various native groups on their expedition. Historically, however, this amicable formula of interrelation mediated by women and children is not the one most mythologized: that position would belong to depictions of frontier as scene of racial opposition and open "manly" conflict between groups.

The opposition between Rodman and the Sioux is built less on a mirrored comparison of their divergences of character and appearance, with the goal of producing a more nuanced understanding of self, and more on their suitability as natural enemies or states of evolution to be tamed, and the Sioux seem to be present in the text primarily because Rodman's party needs to meet with exciting adversity in order to parody the western narrative's appeal to audiences. The dynamic certainly brings to mind the Hegelian dialectic of lordship and bondage (111-119), in that the thing which is necessary to the construction of sovereign selfhood must be subjugated and erased even as it is necessarily present and productive. The party's skirmish with the Sioux ends in great bloodshed, which only Rodman seems to be haunted by as the rest return to their hilarity. In fact, mirroring happens more frequently between Rodman and Thornton, which elevates homosocial relationships in the text and Thornton to the role of positive other. Rodman experiences positive otherness in the other (male) members of his traveling party, with whom he enjoys, for example, the terrestrial paradise of the "fairy land" described in the third chapter of the *Journal*.

Poe's characterization of the Sioux comes out of a more sustained interest that he had in etherealization and brutalization, two processes that Joan Dayan argues are forms of sublimation that leave uncoded the white male at the center. In the one process, humans, particularly white women often so pale as to be deathly white, are spiritualized and rarified as ideal womanhood.

In the other, humans, particularly dark-skinned ones, become brutish, and more similar to animals or physical matter than to uncoded (white, male) humanity. The interest in the relationship between carnality (matter, mud) and ideality (spirit, perfection) is shared, Dayan claims, with popular natural histories of the time, and both processes are a "radical dehumanization" of racial and sexual others (239-273). Native Americans could never quite be a true other because they were never quite insiders (us, citizens) nor were they outsiders (them, foreigners) (Scheckel). *Julius Rodman*, as parody, so broadly abstracts the western content that it has to rely on extreme simplifications of these categories of otherness. There is very little etherealization: the missing element of the figure of the idealized white woman who pervades much of Poe's other writing means an overemphasis on disorderliness and carnality in the traveled habitat. Her kindred opposites, the brutes—kindred in that they all play abject other to the seeing-man—fill the traveled habitat in *Julius Rodman*: these are whatever the seeing-man can find to observe.

In Chapter Three, the brutes that become object of Rodman's visual possession are a family of mud-slapping, tree-chewing beavers. The "editors" (another of Poe's parodic flourishes) provide a curtailed account of Rodman and Thornton creeping into some willows where they could watch, unobserved, for many hours, the work of the beavers as they built a dam. The beavers fell various sycamores, "denude" them by gnawing and nibbling, then chew great cuts in the trees with "their fore feet resting upon the edge of the cut, and their heads thrust far into the aperture." The editors abridge Rodman's account of this experience by saying, "Although the position of our voyagers was any thing but comfortable, so great was their curiosity to witness the felling of the sycamore, that they resolutely maintained their post until sunset" (Poe 111). The strange encounter with the beavers, which most certainly codes the

“seeing” of westerly travelers as voyeurism, may also suggest a variety of other critiques. For one, the beavers take part in a partial destruction of the “little Paradise” which “afforded the travelers much sport” (112), and this may be a metaphor of the destruction of the edenic wilderness by industrious “nibblers.” Further complicating the metaphor is the conclusion of this anecdote, in which Rodman’s party eventually traps all the beavers they watched with so much pleasure and takes their pelts.

From Rodman’s disinterested, localized viewpoint, the beaver family starts to resemble the families of native Americans that Lewis and Clark frequently describe in their journals. In one example, drawn from Lewis’s journal entry for Wednesday, March 19th, 1806, Lewis describes the people who live near Fort Clatsop (near Astoria, present-day Oregon), where the Corps of Discovery spent the winter:

> I think the most disgusting sight I have ever beheld is these dirty naked wenches. The men of these nations partake of much more of the domestic drudgery than I had at first supposed. they collect and prepare all the fuel, make the fires, assist in cleansing and preparing the fish, and always cook for the strangers who visit them. they also build their houses, construct their canoes, and make all their wooden utensils. the peculiar provence of the woman seems to be to collect roots and manufacture various articles which are prepared of rushes, flags, cedar bark, bear grass or waytape. (*Journals*)

Now, despite these women seeming completely repulsive, the journals imply that the men of the expedition have so much sex with local women that transmission of venereal disease becomes a major issue. That aside, these people, clearly categorized on the “mud” end of the naturalist’s spectrum, and the women in particular, who work with trees and vegetation, share qualitative resemblance with the beavers. It invites comparison of the industry of the natives to the industry

of animals, both of which are available for study by civilized men, though neither is very attractive.

Although there is no explicit suggestion that Poe intended this to be a sexualized representation, we certainly also could suspect that to be the case. The element of voyeurism and commercial exploitation (which frames the incident as a peep show) and the comparison of the beaver family to native families is certainly there; we can also speculate about whether there was some intentional allusion as well to the slang usage of the term "beaver" to refer to a woman's pubic region. This terminology was already in use during Poe's time, thanks precisely to trappers like Julius Rodman who supplied beaver pelts that were, at times, used to fabricate the pubic wigs used particularly by prostitutes who had need of shaving their pubic areas for hygienic reasons. It is possible that this parody extends to mocking the "disinterested seeing" by explorers of lightly-clad local women. There is some resonance with what Clark writes, for example, about the Wahkiakum women who lived around the mouth of the Columbia River in present-day southwest Washington state:

> The garment which occupies the waist and thence as low as the knee before and mid leg behind, cannot properly be called a petticoat, in the common acception of the word; it is a *Tissue* formed of white Cedar bark bruised or broken into Small Strans, which are interwoven in their center by means of Several cords of the Same materials which Serves as well for a girdle as to hold in place the Strans of bark which forms the tissue, and which Strans, Confined in the middle, hand with their ends pendulous from the waiste, the whole being of Suffcent thickness when the female Stands erect to conceal those parts useally covered from familiar view, but when she stoops or places herself in any other attitudes this battery of Venus is not altogether impervious to the penetrating eye of the

amorite.[155]

The visual assault of the desirable on the seeing man unsettles his position of disinterestedness, although he quickly aims to regain it in the narrative by moving on to other subjects, just as Rodman moves on from his voyeurism by quickly trapping and killing the beavers he found so much pleasure in watching.

The Anglo-American male self is parodied by Poe as being aggressive, possessing voyeur, but within the parody lies a construction of selfhood that highlights the importance in the broader genre of the travel text not just of the mobile body and its narrative focalization, but also of the body as focalizer of the relations between things. Around the figure of the Anglo-American male traveler, which becomes a point of mediation or embodiment of the traveler's national, cultural, and other affinities, circulate the non-Anglo-American terrains and people that are encountered. These representations code the brute—the foreign/woman/animal—as figure of inversion, who threatens to upset the travelers' subjectivity; yet sexualizing the adventure also makes it apprehendable to readers who otherwise have little context for understanding the allure of the adventure. And despite the rhetorical reinforcement of ideals of possession and vision, which gather in that which is encountered to the national paradigm and tame or subdue it, the suspicion that what is seen in the other in the watery mirror of the liminal pond (or, for readers, the text) is an assault on that ideal that must be killed to be tamed.

Some Conclusions

From the turn of the century, when Lewis and Clark first embodied the new United States' crossing of the continent "from sea to shining sea," to a few decades later, when claims were being overtly and repeatedly made that national destiny was located in the west, a rapid

[155] *Journals* Thu., Nov. 7, 1805. The passage also appears in Lewis's journal entry for Wed., March 19, 1806.

reification had occurred. Whereas the Corps of Discovery's journals present the continental west primarily as a zone of exploration and international travel, through the predominant modes of description (of geographic, natural, and human features, as well as of the disposition of the expedition's members); by 1845 John Louis O'Sullivan, editor of the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, had coined the term "Manifest Destiny" to give permanent historical shape to the idea that the United States by right should possess the continent. This idea had been fomenting since the time of the Corps of Discovery expedition, but the shift from apprehension of that space as extra-territorial and timeless to a land that is promised to the nation—a domesticatable foreigner, a betrothed, that despite its unfamiliarity is mythologically linked to the nation in a future of familial intimacy—legitimated new modes of international relations. As such, international western localities become invested with intranational meaning and relevance for national debates. As in the case of *Julius Rodman*, these investitures play out in the western travel fictions of eastern writers, which hijack the western travel text's iconography and employ it in the service of their revisionist histories.

Expressions of the West as the geographic space in which there is confluence of differences (not just observation of difference) takes its cue from earlier writing such as Crèvecoeur's, but push it further, to a place in which the fundamental binaries begin to destabilize. It comes in the early 1800s only as a creeping portent underneath the prevailing mode of dialectical intersubjectivity, in which the masculinity and dominance of the Anglo-American self is affirmed by his entry into and dominance over his environment, which includes the human others he faces off with. Encounters with the native Americans in Lewis and Clark's journals, Poe's parody, and other abstracted fictionalizations familiarized readers with these nations-to-be-conquered, but only insofar as they became integral as a jargon to Anglo-American

masculine self-construction. During this time of cultural elevation of the "manly" wars between native groups and intrepid explorers, trespassing national boundaries to witness and culturally appropriate the essential yet unseen marked westerly writing as simultaneously external and internal to American self-fashioning.

In hindsight, and through the lens of the preserved narrative in which the west was destined to become part of the United States, it is easy to forget that western travel was a process of ex-patriation. For readers in the eastern audience, the foreign locale became the nexus at which the mobilized elements of multiple localities (including the home/national ones) intersect, pushing the formation of national meaning to a "traveled place" outside. This precedent comes to bear not only on the development of American travel writing abroad, as will be discussed in Chapter Six, but also on the development after 1845 of the gothic in western fiction from an undertone to a universal element, as the myth of progress begins to face dismemberment. This is foreshadowed in the momentary declension from "hilarity" to guilt at human bloodshed in *Julius Rodman*: while the myth might be exhilarating, the realities of Anglo-American activity in the west produce alienation.

There are a number of implications involved in the assumption that the inscription of American relationship to place, history, and society has relied on western directionality to provide an expressive paradigm for ideas about, for example, the sacred, or the longing for meaning,[156] even as writing tasks entail confronting the irreducibility of the west to a stable mythology. For one, the various versions of the west and its paradoxical subordinate-yet-central position in American writing, geography, and subjectivity—in short, the confusions about whether it is "real" America—produce it as a challenge to universalization. What has been centralized about the frontier west, and yet what also has made it forever marginal, is that it is a

[156] See Handley and Lewis's "Introduction" to *True West.*

cipher for growth, expansion, opportunity, and also for "the meeting point between savagery and civilization" (Turner 3). Essentially, "frontier" becomes another name for infiltration and detotalization, at the same time as it is the name for regeneration and progress. *Juilius Rodman* registers the eastern sense of horror at potentially being stripped of one's "garments of civilization" (Turner 4), and becoming something new and distinct (a killer). The west seems fated to function as a liminal space only comprehensible as transitional: on the path to some other future or past, open to hybridity and fluidity.

This "burden" and its imperialist logic, however, is challenged in many western texts themselves, especially when they begin to emerge in their modern, anti-colonial form later in the century. In zones of racial, cultural, historical, and political contention and conflict, the *actual presence* of individual others and other nations or forms of governance on the frontier complicates and undermines the myth of emptiness or virginity. This is the one final problem raised by Hall's introduction, the problem I glossed over at the beginning of this chapter: the question of the disappearance of the "others," who have supposedly left behind only "a few faint and shapeless traces…, whose name and character are beyond the reach even of conjecture." Real writers constantly subject the mythological west to rewriting as a space of conquest and violence, rather than a space of idealized self-realization, not with "faint traces" of others but filled with immanent and concrete difference and even organized resistance to Anglo-American quests for dominance. In Bruce A. Harvey's words, "the residue, that which does not overlap with national subjecthood, is oftentimes what enables a traveler—or a reader of a travel volume—to negotiate or triangulate the facticity of a non-[self identified] land or people, the popular imaginary of the region, and different [national] ideologies." This gives the local a capacity to reveal "latent, contestatory, or at least equivocal contents" (19).

And following the arrivals of the first large waves of Chinese during the mid-century California Gold Rush, the western fantasy and imagined teleology of western progression seemed to face its greatest human challenge since the untimely, unwelcome intervention of Native Americans in the process of continental expansion. The racial conflicts between black and white and the influence of the transatlantic that were major shapers of the transition to modernity in the eastern United States played a much less significant role in shaping western discourse than did Anglo-Chinese relationships. The intrusive, transgressive, non-native penetration of the eastwardly progressing Chinese during the age of industrialization, urban growth, frontier settlement, and continent building; not to mention the age of increased attention to interracial conflict as a major political and cultural force; the age of a new sense of the United States as having solidified domestic boundaries, and thus having the capacity to more forcibly distinguish between "domestic" and "foreign"; and finally, the era that marked the beginning of unequal international relations between China and the Euro-American West: all these conditions primed the development of the American image of China to follow the earlier pattern of distinguishing the self from ubiquitous but subsumed others through binary opposition and empirical hierarchies, which were challenged from within. That the Chinese were more difficult to romanticize, following the instigation of real contact, than had been the Indian in his "noble savagery," arises from this ideological apprehension of western space: whereas Indians represented the "wildness" that is so valued in the American west—to the point that histories like Hall's profess the express goal of "rescu[ing] from oblivion their former virtues" as warlike, vigorous, independent, and powerful (28)—, the Chinese who arrived in the mid-century to assist in tasks that tamed the wild west (railroad construction, business) represented an inscrutable and entrenched old civilization that seemed to stand in contradiction to American values and

presented no scenario for noble inter-ethnic conflict.

The legitimation of the missionary errand abroad, which will be discussed in the next chapter, arises from the legitimation of the ex-patriated western travel of the early nineteenth century. As such, travel and writing of the continental west provided the model for experiencing and writing transnational subjectivity, and some of the tropes used to describe experiences in China come out of western travel writing. Aside from the employment of the genres of exploration writing, there are also ideological links. Dr. Lyman Beecher, who Frederick Jackson Turner famously resurrected in his 1893 frontier thesis, said in 1835 that "It is equally plain that the religious and political destiny of our nation is to be decided in the West." He further connected the westerly mission to a sense of religious duty by suggesting that the abundance of Euro-Americans "rushing in [to the west] like the waters of the flood" necessitates the intervention of "those institutions which discipline the mind and arm the conscience and the heart" in order that there might be "moral preservation" (35). The reification of the notion of Manifest Destiny came out of this growing sense of international mission, which first took place on the continent. Bruce A. Harvey has called Manifest Destiny a mystification of the U.S. geobody, which like Chinese ideologies of centralization and cosmological design, delivered the sense that being part of the nation rested in a "quasi-religious sense of national election" (7, 19). The "quasi-religious" formulation of national destiny and the intensely religious formulation of the early protestant foreign missionaries, while distinct from one another, bear this commonality, just as they bear the commonality of the western burden: the "curiously powerful *and* impotent reach" (Lewis 33).

Chapter Six:

Figuring the Far West: Early Nineteenth-Century American Foreign Missions and Opening "Real" China

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree…
-- Samuel Taylor Colerige "Kubla Khan; or, A Vision in a Dream: A Fragment"

China has been an old country for forty centuries. It has been dying of old age and senile decay for all of this century…. During this wonderful century of Western progress it has swung slowly to a standstill to a state of arrested existence, then retrograded, and the world watches now for the last symptoms and extinction. But it lives, nevertheless, the ancestor kingdom of all the world, the long-lived, undying empire.
-- Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore, *China the Long-Lived Empire* (1)

Introduction

In 1630, John Winthrop delivered a now-famous sermon titled *A Model of Christian Charity* to his fellow Puritan emigrants while on board the ship *Arbella* before their arrival in Massachusetts. The sermon set out the goals of Christian community the new colony would espouse, setting the stakes at, should they fail, nothing less than being abandoned by God, opening God up to slander by His enemies, and the colony being "made a story and a by-word through the world." He exhorted the community to seek unity and not their own interests, saying, "For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us." He ends by suggesting that their covenant with God, if kept, will allow them to live, to multiply, and to be blessed in the land they go to possess. This sermon is exemplary of the generalized sense of Euro-American "mission to redeem the Old World by high example" (Merk 3), a self-conceptualization that remained influential even after independence and, arguably, into the present.

The concept achieved re-articulation in Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Self-Reliance" (1841):

> Accept the place the divine Providence has found for you: the society of your contemporaries, the connexion of events. Great men have always done so and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the Eternal was stirring at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not pinched in a corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but redeemers and benefactors, pious aspirants to be noble clay plastic under the Almighty effort, let us advance and advance on Chaos and the Dark. (11-12)

By this point, the new nation's focus had turned away somewhat from its fixed commitment and connection to the European old world, and had identified numerous civilizations across the continent and, increasingly, across the globe, that were ruled by "chaos and darkness" and that should become the rightful field of advancement for the American agents of the Eternal. This self-conceptualization, which arose to prominence very shortly after independence, would be dubbed "Manifest Destiny" in 1845 by John Louis O'Sullivan, editor of *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*.[157]

The mindset had such broad-scale attraction and embeddedness in the early-to-mid 1800s that it permeated the Euro-American national attitude not only toward the continent but also toward oceanic and international spaces. With the opening of China after the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842 and the annexation of a vast portion of the American west and Pacific coast after the War with Mexico in 1848, the American gaze shifted toward Asia and the potential for the U.S. to dominate in world commerce if it gained control over Pacific trade routes (León W.). The mindset legitimated Euro-American territorial expansion as "natural dominion" (Merk 16), but

[157] For the history of this concept and term, see Harvey (7) and LeMenager (3).

also legitimated a variety of endeavors less (overtly, at least) focused on acquisition and more focused on providing opportunities for outsiders to hear the American good news and join in the pleasure of that reward.[158] It bears mentioning that many Americans were less than convinced of the ability of the rest of the world to be redeemed; many travel writers record emotional responses of disgust, leeriness, and even misanthropy to foreign milieux, and fictionalizations of the foreign quite often painted it in negative or threatening terms.

Most accounts express some of both reactions, congealed in the positioning of the Euro-American who interfaces with the foreign while imbued with an attitude of innate superiority. Whether the threat of the foreign is labeled racially, culturally, nationally, or spiritually (as the devil at work in the human world), that threat is always balanced in travel accounts with some positive reason, however distant, for intermingling. And in fact, while the romance of China rapidly dissipates following direct contact, something desirable frequently remains. This chapter takes a look at some of the specific ways the desirability of the foreign interweaves with disavowals of it in nineteenth-century accounts of travel to and sojourn in China, and in other types of texts that arose out of these travels. Most of these texts are far less known than are Winthrop's and Emerson's canonical articulations of American ideology, which is due in great part to the central role that domestic texts have historically played in narratives of national literary history, and the marginalization that texts of travel or the foreign face. This chapter takes the stance that the overt transnationality of travel texts is essential to understanding the latent transnationality of texts that are ostensibly nationally internal. Emerson's description of ideal American manhood can only be understood, for example, in connection with its transnational context, in which the American man detaches himself from bondage to an external overlord and

[158] For studies of Manifest Destiny and American sense of mission, see Merk's *Manifest Destiny* and Tuveson's *Redeemer Nation*. LeMenager's more recent study *Manifest and Other Destinies* looks for counter-narratives within that symbolic paradigm.

becomes an overlord of the external himself.

To articulate the important connection of transnational activity and writing to national self-conceptualization, and in particular American self-conceptualization vis a vis the Chinese, this chapter examines the accounts of some of the first American Protestant missionaries to China—Elijah Coleman Bridgman, his wife Eliza Jane Bridgman, and Samuel Wells Williams—attending to their widely influential yet perpetually peculiar brand of missiology and its guiding doctrine of disinterested benevolence. These accounts circulated widely among a Christian demographic, and yet one knows that their rhetoric must have percolated through broader culture as well because it elicits public responses from major writers and in major works of secular fiction, a few of which will be examined in the next chapter. The chapter finishes by juxtaposing these accounts with that of non-missionary traveler Bayard Taylor, whose early eyewitness report on the "real" China, like those of the missionaries, interacted with and reshaped received narratives about China and the Chinese.

Chapter Five suggested that because the American continental west was, in the early nineteenth century, a transnational space embroiled in international conflicts over territory, texts that write that space operate within a chronotope of national geographics as westward advance into purportedly culturally uninscribed territory. Euro-American representations of western space, because they aim to domesticate that space while remaining unable to accommodate its profound transnationality, are shot through with asynchrony and displacement. I take the perspective that travel to China was, in many ways, an extension of or accomplice to that westerly "advance," and yet, as will be shown in Chapter Seven, the Chinese presents a crucial complication of the schematic arrangement of Euro-American idealization of western space.

Continental western space was popularly envisioned as opening itself up to exploration

and categorization, and to delivery of world-weary but intrepid individuals into a state of heightened closeness to nature and perhaps even to God. Of course, the myth of wildness or virginity belied the historical and cultural saturation of American continental space, and the transnational conflicts over territory created anxiety within that American dream. Regardless, the dream took those conflicts into itself: the heroic meeting of native and white men in the American wilds, and the persevering contributions of noble women, provided assurance of the epic nature of Anglo-American conquest and delivered giants into the American pantheon.

In the situation of far-westward travel, across the Pacific to China, an altered, yet uncannily related, set of expectations govern the sense of individual presence in westerly space and time. Since sharing cultural and linguistic information about China with foreigners was forbidden before the first Opium War, John Rogers Haddad has suggested that China had an unknown quality or "geographic blankness" on which Euro-American fantasy could be projected. Haddad notes that this both fueled romantic illusions of what lay beyond in the oriental dreamland of Cathay, and provoked restlessness in the western rational mind, which wished to approach China's unknowability with the same empirical vigor that drove other expeditions. China attracted grandiose individuals with its "great challenge," and offered a field on which to expend Euro-American "youthful" energies of world-redemption and rebelliousness against established political and cultural systems (Haddad "Introduction"). These "heroes" were often famous in their day, though in most cases they and their tales of adventure have been all but forgotten by American literary history.

It is generally agreed upon that Euro-American romantic impressions of China, born from earlier European accounts of exploration and exoticism and the vogue for Chinoiserie, and from the inaccessibility of real China, quickly began to dissipate following actual contact. That

contact came both in the form of foreign entree into Chinese space following the first Opium War, and from the surge in Chinese arrival in American space following the discovery of gold in California. In the early travelers' accounts, although travelers record the Pacific space as liminal, a virtually empty zone on the edge of crossing over, populated only with hints of the alterity to come, any expectation the sojourners may have had of finding China a blank slate on which they were empowered to write their own epic story is significantly adjusted by the realities of Chinese space. Chinese space could certainly not be imagined as virgin, empty, or unwritten. Quite the opposite, in fact: China, especially before 1842, was physically and mentally impenetrable, civilly and militarily defended, and populated by numbers so great that they were resistant to the normative westerly formulae of extermination or assimilation. China was perceived as over-inscribed with esoteric and dense symbology, and so entrenched in her archaic and unintelligible ways that she was literally inaccessible and shut off from the peeping eyes of others.

I need to pause to emphasize a dynamic at play here, as in all travel writing, between a variety of rhetorical and material forces. In the scenario are travelers who were first readers of the home culture and its imaginaries, who carry with them individual combinations of ideologies and affinities, who arrive in space to which they are not habituated and become sites at which crises of self-definition take place as individuals attempt to bring to terms their de-contextualization. And secondly, these individuals, who have undergone experiences that are fundamentally un-relatable, attempt to convey that experience as written information to a home audience only partly capable of processing the translations of places, cultures, and experiences with which they are presented. Trying to sort out and guess at, from the representations in historical documents, which are distilled from experiences but not equal to them, the nature of

the real thoughts, experiences, and sensations of the traveler seems like a fool's errand. Instead, it remains to sort out the interplay between a text's rhetoric, received historical knowledge, and intertextual cultural production.

Home and audience play major roles in determining the shape that the early texts of Euro-American travel to China took; even private letters would have been addressed to a far-away individual. Additionally, individuals did perceive themselves as agents of more broad-scale missions, whether religious or national. It is important to note that Sino-American relations, at the beginning, were indeed highly formalized primarily because they were carried out by a relatively very small group of individuals overseen by highly structured and powerful institutions like national governments, news organizations, and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM).[159] Grand narratives were essential to these endeavors. Furthermore, direct American interaction with China began as a national endeavor, in conjunction with the Revolution, since prior to that time Britain had controlled the trade. The first American ship to embark on a trading voyage to China, the *Empress of China*, sailed in 1784, shortly after the Treaty of Paris was signed. International intercourse with China began around that time first as an economic concern, as the U.S. pursued its new national policies geared toward solidifying its place as a nation engaged in trade with other nations. The U.S. relationship with China was distinct from its relationship with smaller Asian and Pacific nations in that China was not one of these "badly ruled, rich, and strategically important lands"[160] that could be brought under American rule, but rather retaining influence in China was a trade issue. Expansion into China seemed primarily important for economic or religious reasons; acquisition

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[159] The ABCFM was an interdenominational organization established in 1810 to support and direct Christian missionary activity abroad. See Phillips, *Protestant America and the Pagan World*.

[160] Hart 51. Hart, one among the Rooseveltian historians who, according to diplomatic historian Jerald A. Combs, "almost unanimously endorsed American imperialism as a continuation of earlier praiseworthy expansion" (88), proposed that ruling people without their consent was necessitated by commercial and strategic interests.

was not the primary motivator for the use of force in opening China, but rather the maintenance of an open door to U.S. activity in Chinese space. This meant that China was first perceived by the United States as a potential market for American goods, and shortly after as a market for American ideas and energies. By the 1830s, the United States (at that time, a nation on the east coast of the continent) was seeking to develop ports on the American west coast for trade with Asia, which fit neatly with the national ideology of Manifest Destiny. Likewise, the American idea of history placed the United States at the forefront of the teleological struggle to rise out of barbarism toward civilization. As the newest and youngest stage in this progress of history, the United States perceived itself as carrying the burden of likewise raising up the other nations of the world from their dormancy, suffering, and degradation by opening them to Euro-American "fertilizing streams of knowledge" and involving them in the march of history.[161]

However, despite the level to which the institutional impacts these texts at the rhetorical, narratological, and ideological levels, in addition to sanctioning the writers' travel to China in the first place, the texts of early travel to China show the same kinds of crises of self-definition as those travel texts explored in previous chapter. To some degree, this is just the nature of travel, which amounts to self-decontextualization. But additionally, as Prasenjit Duara has pointed out, privileging grand narratives like the collective nation, or in this case, the unified, universal national mission board, can overwrite the variety of potential positions within the national and appoint the nation (or mission board) the "new and sovereign subject of history" ("De-Constructing" 31) over and above the local or individual. Texts seem, often, to express unified national or other institutional consciousnesses because they are narratives written for broad audiences, and because they employ culturally communicative narrative patterns, references, and tropes; but personality blinks through, reminding readers that unified collective consciousness is

[161] See Iriye, particularly pages 6-7. Also Thomson, et al., particularly pages 11-18.

both essential to and elusive in texts. Further, as Haddad has pointed out, the texts are not devoid of Chinese voice or influence, since they came out of contacts and collaborations between the writers and their Chinese sources, instructors, translators, guides, and other support personnel (xvii).

The problem with understanding American images of China and the Chinese is that they are divergent and dialectical in the Hegelian sense[162]: for example, the Chinese are both dirty heathens, who carry the potential to destroy the American dream; but they are also a boundless market for American excess (of energies, goods, capital, and religious fervor), and thus essential to the American dream. The divergences are not reducible to a divide between secular and religious positionings, or to an evolutionary timeline benchmarked by historical breaks and literary movements. Paradoxical representations of Chineseness appeal in all eras of modern American literature. And both secular and religious representations can project attitudes of disinterested interest, a sense that American fate or destiny is tied up in the fate of China even while China must be kept at a distance, or characterize the Chinese as the dangerous great opposite to the American. Within the body of missionary writing on China itself there is individual variance in the sense of relationship to the Chinese "field." And as evidenced by the variances in travelers' accounts of China, it may be a place of adventure and romance, or a place of voluntary exile into filth and disappointment.

Aside from the lack of homogeneity in imagery across the literature, individual texts themselves are showcases for complex webs of personal associations and affinities. America and American individuals are sites of competing discourses as much as they are sites of heterogeneity—a dynamic as equally visible in travel texts as in texts that write domestic

[162] Particularly Hegel's thoughts on the dependence of self-consciousness on recognition between individuals.

locality, as has been repeatedly pointed out in studies of U.S. regional writing.[163] This has proven to make it not only impossible and inadvisable to produce a unified national literature, but it also means that discussing "American" modes of travel and writing always means privileging certain modes or characteristics of discourse. To be transparent about those privileged by this study, I try to make some connection between the discourses of evangelical protestantism, national expansionism, utilitarianism, regionalism, and authenticity, and find tenuous threads binding these together differently in different texts, linked in particular ways to one another through the individuality of the traveler.

One of the importances of the long-term American missionary to China as a subject positioning is that it problematizes, as do Chinese sojourners and emigrants, the one-to-one relationship between territory and identity that underpins national selfhoods. They remind us that the national boundary bounds not the national (the citizen) nor does it limit what belongs in terms of the national. These problems are even more pronounced in the texts of permanent immigrants, who attempt to assimilate new national identities that are somehow not their own while retaining the imprint of the former homeland. This dissertation deals less with those latter complexities, those of permanent re-homing, than with those introduced by mobility, although the boundary between writing travel and writing home is, to overemphasize the point, extremely fuzzy. As such, while looking primarily at people and things going places and being with others, we find ourselves also looking at what also seems settled, and finding human dramas associated with the interplay between closedness/essentiality/immobility and openness/permeability/ mobility.

Missionaries remind us in other ways, too, of the drawbacks to viewing things in terms of universals rather than particulars. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions

[163] For an example, see Watts *An American Colony*.

(ABCFM), founded in 1810, which was responsible for the selection and oversight of the early China missionaries, was Congregationalist, and though it accepted workers from other denominations, it is important to clarify that when speaking about the activities and ideologies of "Protestant missionaries" in this chapter, I am referring specifically to those affiliated with the ABCFM, who were active before the mid-century, and who held views distinct from other American denominations that were not involved in these early mission endeavors. While a number of other denominations, including Presbyterians, Dutch-Reformed, Baptists, Methodists, and Episcopalians were aroused by the revivalist culture of the second Great Awakening (1793-1810), other denominations, such as the Mennonites, resisted these revivalist influences and the Charles Finney revival of 1824-1827 (Bender).

There is also a discernable distinctness to the attitudes and activities of the first wave of mission workers in China, who were a highly intellectual group with discrete and relatively cohesive goals, who produced quality, researched knowledge about China that circulated widely at home, and had broad-scale impact on the development of Sino-American relations. Later mission workers, who were more spread out in China and in the American west, and who were less unified in their efforts, did not always have the sagacity, education, or generally productive impact on Sino-American relations as the early cohort.

There has been increased interest recently in increasing the scholarship on "the social and cultural role of the foreign missionary at home," which has been generally overlooked by both the histories of American foreign missions and by literary histories. The "significant place [of foreign missionaries] in American public life" has been rendered invisible by histories of foreign missions, which can only imagine the foreign missionary in the foreign field (Bays and Wacker 1). Likewise, histories of U.S. national literature recognize territorial or linguistic boundaries

that are problematized by the transnational lens, and erect generic boundaries that isolate national writing of "literary quality" from other genres, from transnational writing, and from its intertextual zone. In fact, American cultural artifacts across the board register the impact of foreign missions on home culture; as such, the products of the home audience's imagination, which seem to stay at home yet register the effect of the foreign, call out for attention to be paid to their missionary informants.

William R. Hutchison has also taken American history to task for its ambition to create a unified narrative, at the expense of excluding missionaries from the mainstream story of that development. He writes:

> I find it remarkable that missionaries and their sponsors have on the whole remained shadowy figures in narrations of religious and general history. The reason for such neglect is plain enough: these overseas Americans and their best-known objectives have seemed more than a little embarrassing.

His impression is that the good objectives of service and sacrifice were counteracted by the "supercilious and often demeaning attitude" toward cultural or religious alternatives, and that therefore missionaries are "too admirable to be treated as villains, yet too obtrusive and self-righteous to be embraced as heroes. The most common reaction, therefore, has been simple avoidance" (2). Overcoming this urge to circumvent should be no more difficult, though, in regards to the missionary writers than it is to overcome in relation to other American writers, who often espoused equally problematic ideological positions and had equally off-putting attitudes toward others. Additionally, the connection between religious praxis and political effect is very prominent in American history and deserves attention in the international sphere as much as in the national one. Major American reform efforts of the nineteenth century have

frequently been tied to doctrines of New Testament mission, and religious-sentimental-political rhetoric dominated much of the reformist literature of that era. Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and its effects on American historical development and the Civil War, is frequently acknowledged as an example.[164]

Missionary writing on China is intimately linked with this home culture of activism framed in religious terms, since it was simply the extra-territorial expression of the home culture. In terms of impact, while the direct impacts of individual non-fictional texts written by travelers to China on other fictional texts that followed would be difficult to gauge, it is easy to see the general influence of the early eyewitness representations of China on the images presented later in fiction. These writers functioned as informants, setting precedents and causing reactions; they were also deeply interconnected to their own precedents, intertextual zone, and time period, and thus were interwoven with literary culture. For other American writers they provide a significant antithetical point of reference as objects of critique, because of their monotonous obsession with Christian goals as the only lens through which to see the other. What is interesting about the frequently negative reaction other American writers had to missionaries, which comes up in the texts in Chapter Seven, is that these writers often promote the same attitude of tolerance and cultural sensitivity that the early cohort in China promoted, and likewise caution against holding extreme views of the Chinese (either positive or negative), but critique the failures of the China missionaries on the American continent to protect the individuals they aimed to serve from the violence directed at them by Euro-American nativists. This is yet another reminder of the variance possible among missionaries as a group and the indiscretion of conflation, and shows that even if they shared a variety of guiding doctrines, the interpretation and application of these doctrines was widely varied in individual situations.

[164] See works by Jane Tompkins.

The readings that follow in this chapter are of various types of texts written out of first hand travel experience in China. The focus is distributed among the writings of early China missionaries and those of other early travelers in China precisely for the reason that it seeks to emphasize the diversity of reports on China and subject positionings in relation to China that circulated during the early days of Sino-American contact, but also to show threads that connected them to one another, such as the geographics of advance into "chaos and the dark" that characterizes the space of the transnational in Euro-American symbolism. The analysis is apportioned into exploration of a set of idioms, primarily those of Protestant missions, in order to show the ways these traveler-writers assimilated their experiences to habituated American paradigms and used that idiomography to translate China and its people for American audiences. These conceptualizations, which were outgrowths of early nineteenth century American culture (both secular and religious) and the experience of the transnational, were mobilized by writers at home and away, coined by earlier writers but reified by repetition, and communicative because of their intertextual life. Despite their abstractness, they were activated in narratives as anchors for more disorienting information about China. They are the grounding ideas underlying American conceptions of their relationships between themselves and the Chinese. The texts explored in the first part, written by travelers to China who by and large believed that the Chinese, although currently debased, were redeemable, present their observations of China in a primarily constructive tone and with a sense of personal investment. Thus, as a footnote, it seems important to qualify these impressions with other travelers' impressions, which were much less forgiving. The chapter ends with a brief look at a travel account by Bayard Taylor, whose often intensely negative depictions circulated widely among American audiences and offer an important counterbalance to the images of China presented in other texts.

THE IDIOMOGRAPHY OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Pragmatic Romanticism and the Foreign Mission. China's impressions of America began to appear suddenly in the early nineteenth century at the moment the United States revealed itself as an empirically confirmed area of the world, complete with autonomous government, qualitatively identifiable culture, unique history, and accurately mapped territory. Although "real" China began to be revealed to Americans in the same ways around the same time—through knowledge about culture, geography, and history gathered by American eyewitnesses in China—this "real China" grew in the American imagination as an adaptation of or corrective to a very well-known other China, Europe's Cathay. That romantic vision of China as exotic, benign, and distant, which was repeated in European writing and other art, porcelain ware, tea culture, and in other mediums, precedes early American accounts and informs them, but is quickly altered by the pragmatism of American goal-orientation in that field. And, as contact increased, so did the number of accounts that presented China not as fairyland, but as wasteland of opposition to Americanness. The early nineteenth-century travelers represent the first stage in the opening of China to less romantic visions, but as many retain the romantic vision within the pragmatic one, their vision seems best described as pragmatic romanticism.

Gideon Nye's 1873 address to the Canton community, "The Morning of My Life in China," about his experience as a merchant there during the 1830s, provides a directly stated example. He claims that he came to China to find the imagined Cathay, "pregnant of the Romance of History"; an idealization filtered through copious literary references, mythology, and astrology. But the "real incentive" was the reasoning that he might enter into a business venture with several cousins who were already established there (4, 6). For Nye, the expectation

of romance preceded and informed his travel, but it is tempered by interest. Nye's memories of these days are of adventure and rebellion against Chinese authority: being smuggled into the closed country, witnessing the era of momentous confrontations between the great empires of the world, being in the homosocial company of a small group of intrepid, adventurous men, whose actions had consequences on a global scale, and raising resistance to the exclusion of white women and the withholding of Chinese women.

Nye's self-representation in his text as a Whitmanesque world-wise Adamic type who has grown old in circling westward evokes the America-Eden concept, as well as articulating an American Adamic type. Whitman described this type in a notebook entry as follows: "Adam, as a central figure and type /… Presenting a vivid picture,... of a fully complete, well-developed, man eld, bearded, swart, fiery—as a more than rival of the youthful type-hero of novels and love poems" (*Notebooks* 413). Nye starts his address by asserting that he is a much less brilliant lecturer than others who have recently lectured, including a "vigorous Sampson" who brought down the house and a "stripling David" who hits the mark with his pebbles. Instead, he is lecturing only because he was asked, and "in this the fortieth year since [he] reached Canton" he fears he can share only "worthless Relics of a remote past." Despite Nye's self-proclaimed "diffidence" in presenting a lecture to his peers on his early days in China, and "embarrassment" at being made "*the Hero of my own story*" (1-3), his strategy of self-abasement actually serves rhetorically to reinforce his authority as this familiar type. Walt Whitman's poem "Facing West from California's Shores" (1860), part of a collection titled *Children of Adam*, frames this connection between the American Adamic type and ceaseless westward movement:

Facing west from California's shores,

Inquiring, tireless, seeking what is yet unfound,

I, a child, very old, over waves, towards the house of maternity, the land of migrations,
look afar,
Look off the shores of my Western sea, the circle almost circled;
For starting westward from Hindustan, from the vales of Kashmere,
From Asia, from the north, from the God, the sage, and the hero,
From the south, from the flowery peninsulas and the spice islands,
Long having wander'd since, round the earth having wander'd,
Now I face home again, very pleas'd and joyous,
(But where is what I started for so long ago?
And why is it yet unfound?) (*Complete Writings* 135)

This articulation of the American romantic hero, tirelessly wandering westward into the frontier, seeking the unfound, pushes to the post-Pacific west in his expansiveness and grandiosity.

That there is something romantic in the notion of the westerly mission is acknowledged also in *The Life and Letters of Samuel Wells Williams, LL.D.: Missionary, Diplomatist, Sinologue*, written by his son Frederick Wells Williams in 1889. Samuel Wells Williams, who went to China in 1833 under the auspices of the American Board as a printer for the Canton mission press and worked closely there with E. C. Bridgman, became a fluent sinologue, writer, and occasional diplomat who was central to the shape Sino-American relations took during this era. The younger Williams records that when his father, in 1832, decided to agree to go to China to take charge of the printing office of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions at Canton, which had recently been established with a printing press, he suggests that the allure of adventure and romance may have been influential in his father's decision. He writes:

> Perhaps there was an ingredient of adventure in the career of pioneer missionary work which unconsciously actuated his prompt decision. Much more of the romance than the reality of life in the extreme East had come to the ears of civilized peoples; their peculiar customs, the result of centuries of seclusion, their unexplored territory, their unknown literature, the wonders of their works of industry and art,—these made the Chinese a principal object of the world's curiosity, and China the golden land of bold and hazardous enterprise. (40)

The reality of China, though, was that the popular reception of Christianity was very negative overall and that Williams' life became devoted to "the thankless work of introducing Christian truth and civilization to an intolerant and unwilling empire" (F. Williams 41). Regardless of the difficulty of the mission, the elder Williams wrote in a letter the following:

> I am willing to go. Many doubts and difficulties arise…. But I also look at the other side and see three fourths of the world in a state of heathenism or half-idolatry…. The way of duty is the plainest and in the end the easiest. 'Go ye into all the world' still remains as a last command. (F. Williams 44)

In the generalized battle for progress in the world, American Protestants envisioned their evangelical work as bringing about the revival of the world and their mission workers as "heroes in the field."[165] The missionaries, because their romantic and pragmatic interests in China were mediated by their unflinching fidelity to the Biblical Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20,[166] to go into all the world and to preach the gospel to everyone, filter their romantic notions regarding their errand through pragmatic adherence to this clear directive. That directive, to go

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[165] This terminology is used, for example, in Haydn's title *American Heroes on Mission Fields.*

[166] "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (*New Oxford Annotated Bible*)

everywhere and share the Gospel with everyone, so as to save others from a terrible fate of separation from God, became a major idiom, connected intertextually to an extensive library of historic texts and travels, in the rhetoric of missionary travel texts at this time. Pragmatic romanticism, as a rhetorical mode and structuring ideology, offered a formula for intersubjectivity and self-ideation in relation to others. As such, its appearance in texts is an indicator of the text's transnationality, or permeation by foreignness.

The Field and the Errand. The notions of the "field" and the "errand" are among the oldest American idioms, entrenched since the Puritans came to the continent on their "errand into the wilderness." Hutchison has noted that, "While the imagery of a city on a hill suggested the influence of an exemplary society, that of an errand into the wilderness suggested a heightened activism—the actual transporting of a message and witness to unknown, possibly fearsome and uncivilized places." As such, the "'wilderness' meant the environment into which the Church flees for protection and nurture, but also the Church's resting-place on the way to triumphs for Christ in a wider world." Finally, it implied a vision of salvation for others mediated by a fear of those others and sense of duty toward Protestant Europe whose eyes, as John Winthrop famously reminded them, were all upon them (5). The early Protestants' vision of renovating the Old World by their actions in the new may have altered over time, but it never disappeared.

The idiom of the errand is activated, for example, by Rev. H. C. Haydn, the writer of *American Heroes on Mission Fields* (1890), a popular text published in the U.S. filled with brief laudatory biographies of missionaries. His use of this idiom translates the missionary experience of the Bridgmans in familiar generic quality, as a romantic tale of captivity, escape, and pursuit in the type of James Fenimore Cooper:

> On one occasion, after a serious riot in Canton, in which the people had been greatly incensed against foreigners, with his wife and others he took an afternoon boat-trip into the country on a Christian errand. Returning they were best by a fierce and bloodthirsty mob, who from both banks of the creek hurled at their boat every available variety of missile…. Two of their boatmen were seriously wounded, and their boat was well nigh wrecked, but they were mercifully delivered from the peril unhurt. (17-18)

Captivity narratives had continued to be popular among American readers even in the 1800s, and this reformulation like earlier ones placed emphasis on the necessary peril of engaging in the work of God. The emphasis was on "activism and motion, doing and going" (Hutchison 7), being messengers for home churches, going out into the field carrying one's credo and cultural manifestation, and arriving in a place ready for redemption by God (if hostile to the message).

This epistemology of motion reverberated through American culture during the time period. For example, Ralph Waldo Emerson delivered an oration titled "The American Scholar" at Cambridge in 1837 which claimed that action is essential for the scholar: it is heroic, it takes you into the world, whereas inaction or reclusiveness is cowardice. He said:

> The world,—this shadow of the soul, or *other me*, lies wide around. Its attractions are the keys which unlock my thoughts and make me acquainted with myself. I launch eagerly into this resounding tumult. I grasp the hands of those next to me, and take my place in the ring to suffer and to work, taught by an instinct that so shall the dumb abyss be vocal with speech…. So much only of life as I know by experience, so much of the wilderness have I vanquished and planted, or so far have I extended my being, my dominion. I do not see how any man can afford, for the sake of his nerves and his nap, to spare any action in which he can partake. (11-12)

The world is the "other me" that must be taken in as part of the self through effort and mobilization. This expansive self as the American type, which Whitman later developed, is cut from the same cloth as the American Protestant missionary type, just in a slightly different shape.

One example comes from the Rev. Justus Doolittle's book *Social Life of the Chinese*, a two-volume compilation of letters titled "Jottings about the Chinese" which he had submitted anonymously to the *China Mail*, a Hong Kong newspaper, during the years 1861-1864. Doolittle, who had spent 14 years on the Fuzhou Mission of the American Board, addresses the difficulty of the task of attempting to alter the convictions and prejudices of a massive population, including a great many intelligent and learned people, who are civilized, literary, and satisfied with their customs. But he declares that the slow progress of conversion in China should not be a source of discouragement or an excuse for sharing the Gospel, and he chastises his readers for their apathy, lack of courage, and failure to support work in this the largest field in the world. The neglect of China as a mission field, from his perspective, comes from people's fear of learning the difficult language, the notion that it is an "uninteresting" field and the Chinese an "unattractive" people because they seem hopeless and bigoted. Although his goals differ from Emerson's—knowing oneself versus saving others—he like Emerson castigates those who would rest in a time of great awakening. He writes, "May the Church be forgiven for ignoring the truth that the 'field is the world,'" and asserts that:

> *The very obstacles which impede the rapid reception of the Gospel there constitute indeed, when properly considered, one of the most powerful reasons why the work should be carried forward with an energy commensurate with the momentous interests involved.* (2: 428, 431, 434)

This epistemology stands in opposition to the later wanderings of the moderns, whose pessimism

and spiritual alienation comes from a perspective of exile in a world abandoned by God.[167] For them, expatriation is equal to incessant vagrancy; for these missionaries, expatriation is a goal-oriented calling to a place of work. Community for the missionaries comes out of the connection to the stolid support of the grounding home community, and less from the journey itself and any kind of self-discovery found along the path. As such, the goal of missionary travel is specifically located in time and space, and referential to the chronotope of millennial space-time: the era of Christ on earth to come.

Protestants of the early nineteenth century generally assumed that a new universality brought about by the activities of Christians sharing the Gospel throughout the world and converting nonbelievers would lead to a millennial state on earth. Ernest Lee Tuveson's much referenced explanation of American millennialism explains that this was the belief that at some point in the future, God has promised an actual historical kingdom of God to be established on earth, which would be inhabited by redeemed humans in the flesh: not a "dreamland" but "such a condition as we should expect if honest, rightly motivated men, filled with the grace of the Gospel, were to exercise supreme control. Thus it is a form of utopia" complete with "temporal prosperity" (29-30). Also, it is a form of teleology, in which the culmination of historical development is the establishment out of the cultivated fields of the world a kingdom of God on earth. This doctrine of apocalyptic hope, utopianism, and messianism interwove easily (if complexly) with American national doctrines of Manifest Destiny and westward movement, and with the sense of self as chosen people and "redeemer nation" of the world. If we see the resonance of Manifest Destiny in the ideologies of Protestant missions, we likewise see the resonance of the Protestant ideology of disinterested benevolence, which will be discussed momentarily, in the vision of America as a refuge to the people of the world, and in the extension

[167] See Peat, Chapter 3: "Wandering Pilgrimage."

of material assistance to other nations.

Passages such as this one, by Rev. William Aitchison, who went to China under the auspices of the American Board from 1854 until his death in Shanghai in 1859, express this millennialism:

> But, dear fellow laborers, I heartily bid you God speed. Be not discouraged. The day is dawning on the nations. Even Ethiopia will soon be, if indeed she be not now, stretching forth her hands unto God. In the last day may you have the privilege of placing many jewels in the Redeemer's crown, whose reflected rays will brighten those that encircle your own brow. (Bush 71-72)

The call to serve was so strong precisely because it emerged from an intertextual tradition both of Euro-American self-conception in relation to the world and of Biblical creed. The uniquely early nineteenth century iteration of this call had slightly altered transnational geographics—no longer conceived in terms of going abroad to renew the homeland (Europe) or to start again with a blank slate, but rather going out as messengers of the land of the redeemed to other lands waiting for enlightenment.

This is the cultural context in which the ABCFM was conceived. According to the Williams College (Massachusetts) records, the idea for the ABCFM was born on the college campus in 1806, in a field, where several students gathered for a prayer meeting came to the conviction that American missions should not just be conducted on the continental frontier, but rather Americans must have their own board of foreign missions, as did Britain. In 1810, when they presented their idea to the Congregationalist General Association of Massachusetts Proper, the organization was formed. The monument on the Williams College campus to this meeting is inscribed with the phrase "the field is the world," which is lifted from Jesus' explanation of the

so-called "Parable of the Weeds" in Matthew 13:24-43 (Showalter). In this parable, Jesus explains that the world is like a field in which he and the Devil have both sown seeds. At the end of days, the angels will separate the good wheat from the evil weeds and throw the weeds into the fire.

The usage of this quote in terms of legitimating global missions presents as a contextomy unless we remember that a primary motivation for evangelical Christians of the time period was to rescue others from the fate of fire before the impending millennium. "The field" was not some abstract metaphor for a global space of work, although it functioned as that as well. As the students at the prayer meeting purportedly concluded, there was a connection between the Parable of the Weeds, which allegorizes the metaphysical activity of God and the Devil according to human logic of the local (a field, and the work one does in a field), and the extraordinary directive to Christians to become the voice of God in the entire world. According to a logic that would be circular if it were not more a procedure of linking various levels of spatial conceptualization,[168] if the world is like a (typical, archetypal) field, then the Christian (abstract, imagined) field of work must be the world and its various (physical, geopolitical, actual) fields. Thus, "the field" is a concept embedded in faith-based praxis (going into all the world and preaching the Gospel to everyone, as demanded by the Great Commission, and preparing the field for the end of days) and one networked with historically and territorially specific ideological constructs (including those considered "American" or "Protestant," including Manifest Destiny).

Although they arise concurrently and often hand in hand, the Protestant rhetoric of the errand and the field arise as alternative to the rhetoric of the rising capitalist market, which are

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[168] This explanation, of course, draws on the theory of spatial production and practice outlined by Henri Lefebvre, particularly his conceptualization of the trialectic between mental, physical, and social space.

concerned with economic returns, the political and racial implications of the division of labor, and "the 'softening of barbarous manners' that Montesquieu famously associates with commercial intercourse in *L'Esprit des lois*" (LeMenager 12). Although both conceive of people and spaces as outlets for American energies into which one moves based on interest (or disinterest), the Protestant conception sees them as fields for work rather than markets or labor pools. As Stephanie LeMenager has noted, the west became a theater in which contests between commerce and virtue payed out, since working the land is what kept people from pursuing their own petty interests (14). This analysis can be extended to the Protestant enterprise, which sees the western field as geographic site for the cultivation of virtue.

Benevolence and Revivalism. Another major idiom, connected intertextually to historic texts and concepts, and activated by early nineteenth century missionaries, was the doctrine of disinterested benevolence. This doctrine provided an authoritative mandate for Euro-American missionaries' subject positioning vis a vis their others, and became a mode of expression for these writers to express their sensations of liminality, disconnectedness, anxiety, difference, and also their successes and joys. The doctrine was first articulated during the second Great Awakening, which swept through American Protestant churches starting around 1790. It grew out of an Enlightenment concept, the doctrine of universal benevolence, which was "the idea that benevolence and sympathy can be extended to all humanity" (Radcliffe 221). The proponents of universal benevolence suggested that one can learn to feel universally and that universal sympathy can govern one's selfish attachments and lead one to promote "the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers" (Hutcheson 177; 3.8). The idea was explored systematically by the British moral philosophers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and also by the

luminary of the colonial American Great Awakening, Jonathan Edwards. It became central in debates over revolution and nationalism, because the relationship between love of country and universal benevolence engendered divides over the appropriate scope (local, national, or universal) of love of others (Radcliffe). While universal benevolence was adapted to both Christian and atheist moral systems, of particular interest here are the Christian adaptations of the post-revolutionary United States.

The doctrine of universal benevolence promoted by Jonathan Edwards had been taken up and altered by his student, Samuel Hopkins, who added that the true Christian goal must be universal *disinterested* benevolence, since Jesus' love was extended even to enemies. Hopkins functioned as a bridge between the first and second Great Awakenings, as he contributed to the earlier stages of the latter before his death. Disinterested benevolence came to be a central concept of the second Great Awakening, connected deeply to the evangelical tone of that revival and its flood of activism.[169] Charles Finney, the immensely successful revivalist of the second Great Awakening, took up the idea of disinterested benevolence and systematized it, making it the foundation of his theology and efforts toward social reform, including abolition and work with the Underground Railroad.

Finney was not the originator of the idea of disinterested benevolence, but he is perhaps its most well known advocate. His reach was very broad due to his position as an extremely popular revivalist preacher in the 1820s and 1830s; also he was influential in establishing the Oberlin Theology during his tenure there.[170] Oberlin, founded in 1833 and positioned in the free state of Ohio, is an interesting story in its own right. Due in great part to the influence of Finney's theology, it was the first American college to accept black and female students in

[169] See Brog, section titled "Evangelical Love" in Chapter Two: "The Judeo-Christian Idea: Transcending Our Selfish Genes."
[170] For a biography of Finney, see Hambrick-Stowe.

addition to white men, and it has actively sent missionaries to China's Shanxi Province since the original "Oberlin Band" in 1881. Finney's systematization of the doctrine of disinterested benevolence is significant because it increased that doctrine's impact, and clarified its differences from the broader idea of universal benevolence, which is underpinned by the secularized notion of utility, the greatest good for the greatest number.

Finney's *Systematic Theology* argues that the principle of utility is absurd because it does not acknowledge that its reasoning rests on the assumption that goodness is valuable. He writes, "[Utilitarianism], you know, teaches that the utility of an action or of a choice, renders it obligatory. That is, I am bound to will good, not for the intrinsic value of the good; but because willing good tends to produce good."[171] He asks, "But why do good? What is this love?" (52). He answers:

> The law of God, as revealed in the two precepts, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself," covers the whole ground of moral obligation (Deut. 6:5).... The command is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 19:19). This says nothing about the character of my neighbor. It is the value of [God's] interests, of His well-being, that the law requires me to regard. It does not require me to love my righteous neighbor merely, nor to love my righteous neighbor better than I do my wicked neighbor. It is my neighbor that I am to love…. So of our neighbor: we are bound to will his good, even if he is wicked, in such a sense as to need no new intention or ultimate choice to will his actual blessedness, should he become holy. We may be as holy in loving a sinner, and in seeking his salvation while he is a sinner, as in willing his good after he is converted and becomes a saint…. The fact is, if we are truly benevolent, and

[171] *Finney's Systematic Theology* 95. The excerpts here are taken from Lecture 5 "Various Theories of the Foundation of Moral Obligation" and Lecture 6 "Practical Tendencies of the Various Theories of the Foundation of Moral Obligation."

> will the highest well-being of all…. we ought to will good or blessedness for its own value, irrespective of character. (68, 69-70)

"Disinterest," therefore, is not synonymous with indifference. Quite the opposite, in fact. Instead, it is a direct opposite to "interest"; that is, action motivated by disinterest is by definition action *not* motivated by personal selfishness, stake, or affinity. The doctrine of universal benevolence, without its emphasis on disinterest, remains focused on production or gain, which retains the problematic individualistic goal of betterment for the self: bettering things for others will by extension better things for myself. Finney made certain to point out that selfishness or interest is not the same as desire or impulse: the latter are constitutional or instinctive, but human free will allows for a choice in how to respond. Selfishness is "the will's yielding itself to the impulses of the sensibility in opposition to the demands of the intelligence" (*Systematic Theology* 181-182). Albert O. Hirschman, in his critique of the development of capitalism, has described "interest" as a basely human motivating factor, a "lesser evil" frequently authorized by civil authorities as a countervailance to passion-driven action. By affirming the agency of the metaphysical over and above the human, Finney promotes the divine motivation, which can overcome both the passions and the interests, these two being equally part and parcel of the moral depravity that is the universal condition of mankind.[172] Disinterested benevolence becomes bound up in the dialectic governing the relations between American Protestant selves and their various others, as a type of disavowal of the basely human motivators of passions/desires and interests, which are oriented toward the self. (One can equally point out that it is a disavowal of any other logics, a dogmatism, which when coupled with the subjectivity of racial privilege enforced by Euro-American political and technological advantage, becomes an offensive power positioning not originally or directly intended by its proponents.)

[172] Lecture 16: "Moral Depravity" in *Systematic Theology.*

The Protestant mode of disinterest is clarified by Finney in his *Lectures to Professing Christians*:

> Benevolence is loving the happiness of others, or rather, choosing the happiness of others. This is God's state of mind…. By disinterested benevolence I do not mean, that a person who is disinterested feels no interest in his object of pursuit, but that he seeks the happiness of others for its own sake, and not for the sake of its reaction on himself, in promoting his own happiness. He chooses to do good because he rejoices in the happiness of others, and desires their happiness for its own sake. God is purely and disinterestedly benevolent. He does not make His creatures happy for the sake of thereby promoting His own happiness, but because He loves their happiness and chooses it for its own sake.[173]

This understanding of the benevolent nature of God, and of the creation of humans in the image of God, meant that Christians should have a "love of being in general, and a desire to promote happiness for its own sake." Moreover, it assumes that all humans, including enemies, are capable of happiness (which, to Finney, comes from residing in a state of closeness to God).[174]

Loving one's neighbors and selflessly giving oneself to their betterment was the guiding precept of the early missions, and it is reflected in the judgments passed by writers on individuals in the field. For example, Eliza Bridgman, wife of the first American missionary to China, Elijah Coleman Bridgman, bestows the honorific of "benevolent" on fellow American, the medical missionary Peter Parker, in her account of her missionary activities in China:

> *May 26th*.—Visited Dr. Parker's Hospital last week. Seeing such a throng of human

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[173] Lecture 12 "True and False Conversion", *Lectures to Professing Christians* (212-213). The lectures were originally given in 1836 and 1837 before being printed.

[174] From Finney's sermon titled "Blessedness of Benevolence." Hambrick-Stowe reports that this sermon was first delivered on March 17, 1827 (65).

> beings laboring under all sorts of diseases, I could not refrain my tears,—although thankful that they were under the skilful treatment of such a man as Dr. Parker, whose whole soul seems made up of benevolence. He has been very successful in removing the cataract from the eye. Some come here from a great distance perfectly blind; in a few days they return to their homes, laden with Christian books and with the blessing of sight. The largest tumors are removed, and all kinds of surgical operations performed without one cent of remuneration. (14)

Texts like these presented the image of Finney's theology in human context, and they circulated widely among the Protestant American reading public. The logic of disinterested benevolence underpins these texts, which is why attempting to divorce missionary texts from their theological context is unadvisable, because it amounts to an erasure of the logic that informs their writing. This is also what helps us to understand that missionary activity abroad, especially during the second Great Awakening, is not synonymous with American imperialist activity, although there was harmoniousness at this time of "Christian obligation and American obligation" and a "many-layered rationale" was used for promoting missionary activity, which employed "biblical, humanitarian, and 'national' arguments" roughly equally (Hutchison 44, 46). Hutchison suggests that, primarily, the activity was grounded in human compassion for lost souls, a type of noblesse oblige (48-49, 58), which also helps us to connect the rhetoric of religious-sentimental imperialism of workers like Eliza Bridgman, who "cathects with" but does not desire the other,[175] with the religious-sentimental political rhetoric of domestic reformers of the same time period within the United States.[176] Importantly, though, Americans were primarily focused inwardly after the second war with England: on continental expansion and domestic settlement.

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[175] I have borrowed Harvey's term (6).
[176] See, for example, Tompkins' essay "Sentimental Power" (501-522) and her book *Sensational Designs.*

Those promoting and engaging in foreign missions were a small minority—which is also in some ways what is so astonishing about the broad-scale impact of the early cohort in China.

Authentic Knowledge, Illumination, and Enfranchisement. The focus of missions on increasing the happiness of people in all the world frequently meant that they were involved not just with preaching and with translating and distributing the Bible, although this was a major focus and one promoted by figures like Finney. William R. Hutchison argues that it is due in part to the influence of Finney's vein of theology that American missionaries of the early nineteenth century were keenly focused on Christ-centered mission, on convincing sinners of their depravity and need for atonement, rather than on "civilizing" (Westernizing), as had been the previous practice in Christian work among the native Americans (67). And while they certainly profess this primary motivation, the early China missionaries found themselves bound to promote Euro-American civilization in order to prepare the way for the penetration of the Gospel. For individuals like Bridgman, who established a Chinese girls' school, and Parker, this meant focusing their energies on charitable social causes. For Bridgman's husband, Elijah Coleman Bridgman, and Samuel Wells Williams, another of the small group of early American missionaries to China, this meant expending their energies on gathering "real" knowledge and on translating and disseminating authentic information about China (to Americans) and the United States (to the Chinese). And because that put them in positions of being among the few China experts of the time, that meant occasionally being placed in positions to assist in advising historical negotiations and smoothing political relations between the two countries.

Their approaches to these considerably non-religious aspects of their missions was always filtered, at least in writing, by the unity of theological vision. Samuel Wells Williams'

two-volume tome *The Middle Kingdom* (1848), a text compiled from his lectures given while in the United States on furlough, which for decades served as the major reference for authentic knowledge about China in the United States, contains a frequently cited passage expressing that confluence of the religious and political:

> The future is full of promise, and the efforts of the church with regards to China will not cease until every son and daughter of the race of Han has been taught the truths of the Bible and has had them fairly propounded for reception or rejection. They will progress until all the cities, towns, villages, and hamlets of that vast empire have the teacher and professor of religion living in them; until their children are educated, their civil liberties understood and political rights guaranteed, their poor cared for, their literature purified, their condition bettered in this world by the full revelation of another made known to them. The work of missions will go on until the government is modified and religious and civil liberty granted to all, and China takes her rank among the Christian nations of the earth, reciprocating all the courtesies due from people professing the same faith. (2: 371)

Williams' vision of the future has a distinctly millennial quality: international civility will take place only when the various nations are redeemed and come to resemble God's kingdom on earth. This was not idle talk for Williams. His professional grasp of Chinese language and culture had placed him in the position of being one of the few expert sinologues, and he was frequently tapped for assistance in political negotiations. He became U.S. Secretary of Legation in China in 1856 (he resigned from the ABCFM in 1857) and helped craft the 1858 treaty of Tianjin. He returned to the U.S. legation in Beijing in 1862 after a two-year stay in the United States, and remained there until 1876. His religious and national interests clearly overlapped for

this reason, perhaps more so than other missionaries.

The demand for authentic information about China was certainly not the primary motivator for missionaries to travel to China, but it definitely became an essential trajectory for expenditure of American missionary energy in China at the early stages. Most of the material these individuals from the vanguard published was objective and informative in nature rather than subjective and personalized. The personal journals or diaries were often only compiled, edited, and published later by their children or others. Eliza Bridgman's *Daughters of China* is one exception, as it narrates events from the first person perspective, and incorporates excerpts from her personal journals to describe places, people, and culture. Even so, it is less a travel journal than a work of descriptive documentation, in the vein of the works published by her husband and Williams, personalized by her *au courant* appeals to Christian sympathy and attention to domesticity. Traveling individuals are essential to the narrative arrangement of a travel account in ways they are not in reference works, although the "objectivity" of these documentary texts is equally filtered by the phantom presence of authorial perspective in them. The vast majority of documents published by Mr. Bridgman and Williams, including those written during their tenures as editors at the printing press in Canton in both English and Chinese, were directed at increasing cross-cultural knowledge with the dual goals of improving relations between China and the United States and sharing the Gospel with the Chinese.

Bridgman was the first American missionary to China, sent to Guangzhou (Canton) in 1830 to establish a printing press for Christian literature.[177] Bridgman was the founding editor (1832-1847) of the *Chinese Repository*, a periodical published monthly by that press between May 1832 and December 1851 for the benefit of Protestant missionaries working in Southeast

[177] For an account of Bridgman and his work in China, see S. Zhang.

Asia. Williams (衛三畏) succeeded him as editor from 1848-1851. Although this periodical circulated only among expatriates in Asia, excerpts from it were regularly re-published in American Protestant publications such as the *Missionary Herald* (established 1821), the publication of the ABCFM in the U.S., which gathered reports from mission workers in the field and disseminated them among their supporters in America. For many American Christians, the *Missionary Herald* was their "window to the world," with its descriptions of Native American and global cultures, histories, and geographies along with its accounts of the penetration of the Gospel in these distant and "heathen" lands.

The tone of the *Missionary Herald* tends more toward the sentimental than does the pragmatic *Repository*, selecting from the missionary reports those passages that projected the image of China as populated by suffering, perishing heathens and the image of the mission workers as heroic and benevolent champions of God. This fashioning of information about China in terms that appealed to, as Thomson et al have named it, the "sentimental imperialism" of nineteenth century Americans was elemental to what Murray A. Rubinstein has called the "bureaucratized benevolence" of the ABCFM,[178] whose aim was to develop interest at home in foreign places as mission fields and solicit contributions and support for mission work.

This concentration of missionary effort on not just religious but also diplomatic and academic production followed in the historical tradition of Sino-Western exchange. Earlier European China experts had primarily been Jesuits engaged in the same types of efforts at mutual knowledge production in close partnership with Chinese literati and the court, as a pretext and enabler for their more central goal of conversion, before the expulsion of missionaries from China by the Qing Dynasty's Yongzheng emperor in 1724. This ushered in an era of exclusion

[178] Murray A. Rubinstein borrows this term from Perry Miller (*The Life of the Mind in America*, Ch. 2) (72).

and persecution of Christians, and the often highly negative popular attitude in China toward Christianity.[179] The nineteenth century American Protestant missionaries envisioned themselves as inheritors of this tradition and history: they adapted many of the same tactics as the earlier missionaries, but also felt poised as agents of progress to effect a change in the policy of foreign exclusion. They were of the opinion that Chinese isolation had created a condition in which there was mutual lack of understanding between the Chinese and other world nations. The Rev. John L. Nevius, who spent ten years as a missionary in China, and like Williams compiled historical, geographical, cultural, and political information gathered as an eyewitness or from "authenticated" sources in his 1869 book, *China and the Chinese*, asserts that his goal is to correct "erroneous views which we mutually entertain of each other due to a want of reliable information," "wide separation," and "infrequent and imperfect intercourse" (6-7).

Likewise, the "Introduction" to the first issue of the *Repository*, printed in May 1832 and re-printed in the February 1833 edition of the *Missionary Herald*,[180] cites intellectual and moral intercourse between nations as its prime motivation for advocating the opening of China. China, to Bridgman, was a "stupendous *anomaly*" and "the widest, and the most interesting field of research under heaven" (1). He describes China as a "vast domain" (2) stretching thousands of miles, which foreigners at one time traversed in every direction and which inevitably they will again be allowed to do one day. His goals for the publication to gather empirical, accurate, "unbiased" (4) knowledge about China, on all subjects sacred and profane, from native sources, comes out of a sense of duty to the Biblical Great Commission, but also to the sacredness of knowledge itself, and its ability to "elevate" (5) a "noble race of men" held under "despotic and cruel sway" by "*Old Custom*" which has "restrain[ed] and destroy[ed] their best energies" (2)

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[179] Williams describes the impact of this history on the activities of nineteenth century missionaries in *The Middle Kingdom* vol. 2 Ch XIX: "Christian Missions Among the Chinese."

[180] The segment was titled "The Chinese Repository" (29: 72-74).

and produced a "lamentable lack of knowledge" (5) in millions of souls. China, essentially, offered one tableau on which all the idealized historical advancements of Europe and the United States—the Enlightenment, revolution, and Reformation—could be re-enacted. China could be illuminated, and its disenfranchisement from the march of history might be corrected. And although the Chinese scenario of closure and excessive, repressive cultural inscription seems at divergence from the scenario of the American continental west with its imagined openness, wildness, and virginity; and although missionary roles of humbly and dutifully bringing elevation to lost souls seems at divergence from American national practices of expansion, settlement, and extermination; a similar pragmatic romanticism informs the idealizations of American role in both spaces. In order for Manifest will to be carried out, the space must be opened to American presence. This is not limited to the missionary endeavor, in which in order for the good news to be distributed in a fashion comprehensible to the Chinese mind, missionaries must first understand that mind and speak its language. This endeavor is of broad importance to all Euro-American positioning in relation to real, modern, globalizing China. The slippage between the sacred or profane nature of the source of this will was and continues to be problematic in both political and religious ideologies as Americans of all ideological variations attempt to formulate a workable relationship between the religious and national according to their own persuasions.

One of the main questions that arises in relation to the missionaries is whether manifest destiny and nineteenth-century evangelicalism can really be linked, or whether they are two separate impulses that happen to arise out of a linked set of circumstances. The founding of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in 1810 is usually considered the beginning of American foreign missions. At that time in U.S. history, after

Independence but only at the beginning of far westward expansion and establishment of solid U.S. commercial enterprises abroad, Protestant enthusiasm for American agency in the world was channelled into foreign missions by what has been characterized as "a potent mix of nationalistic and theological motives" (Bays and Wacker 11). I would, however, suggest that Michael C. Lazich's assessment is perhaps more fair:

> Christian missionaries, deeply motivated by the zeal of their convictions and the imperative force of their religious ideology, served as the vanguard of Western cultural penetration wherever they ventured to establish themselves. And while their methods and goals were not always in harmony with those of their profit-seeking countrymen, missionaries would come to serve a predominant role in shaping the earliest formal diplomatic relations between the Western powers and the traditional societies and governments of the non-Western world. ("American" 197-198)

The key difference, and the one that is, of course, contentious in the particularities of individual situations, is that while Christian missionaries may have had striking impact on the development of political, economic, and cultural relations,[181] they were primarily motivated by their sense of duty to religious calling and service to the world. The early writings of missionaries in China suggest that the theological motivation, to obey the Great Commission, was the primary or at least more vocalized motive. Ideological echoes of Manifest Destiny do, at times, ring in the interstices, as in this passage from the *Missionary Herald*: the "subjugation of all nations to the truth" will come not just from "the great and happy change" of the second Great Awakening, and the excitement of reviving the Great Commission in "thousands" of American churches, or the power of the press to disseminate Christian information in many world languages, but also from

[181] See, for example, Lazich's assessment in "American Missionaries" of the shaping of American Opium War era policy by a small group of American missionaries.

the coming of "all pagan and Mohammedan countries… under the power, or at least under the commanding influence, of nations nominally Christian" ("Brief View" 26-27).

That the early missionaries were "the vanguard of Western cultural penetration" in China is indisputable. The cultural information about the United States that first became available in China was in great part due to the focus the half-dozen or so workers had on publication and dissemination of information about the west as "intellectual artillery"[182] against Chinese reclusiveness. Organizations like the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in China (SDUKC), established in November 1834 by a group of Canton missionaries and merchants including E.C. Bridgman and Prussian missionary Rev. Charles Gutzlaff (Karl Gützlaff), emerged out of the desire to penetrate cultural barriers, provide reliable information about western history, geography and culture, and impress the Chinese with "barbarian" achievements in order to change Chinese vision of their own centrality on the world stage. Certainly, at that time before the Treaty of Tianjin, Bridgman and others hoped this would lead toward opening China to foreign activity by promoting better political intercourse, and they quite likely were looking for ways to distribute material on the west that would circumnavigate the restrictions on distribution of Christian material. In addition, with the Christian Millienium at hand, waking China from her enfeebled state to join the new world order seemed best accomplished by introducing her to knowledge of the world.[183] That the missionaries were borrowing an already established cultural idiom is not inconsequential: the original Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was founded in London in 1826, and an American counterpart was founded in 1829 as part of the lyceum movement (which started in 1826). Both SDUK organizations, and the

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[182] "Preamble" to the Society's "Proceedings relative to the formation of a Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in China" (380).

[183] Bridgman "Introductory Remarks" (4). The minutes for the organizational meeting of the SDUKC, which echo the goals of rousing China to join "the other nations in the march of intellect," were published by the SDUKC in the *Chinese Repository* 3:8 (378-384).

lyceum movement in general, targeted the adult public (the working classes in particular) and offered lectures, publications, debates, and other performances intended to improve the social, moral, and intellectual fabric of society. The SDUKC publications included the *Meilige heshengguo zhilue* (Concise Account of the United States of America), the first text in Chinese to describe U.S. history and geography, and it provided materials used in the compilation of important Chinese geographical works like *Illustrated Treatise on the Sea Kingdoms* (Haiguo tuzhi) and *A Short Account of the Maritime Circuit* (*Yinghuan zhilue* 1848).[184]

Chinese-language missionary publications, while fascinating and an important chapter in the story of early Sino-American literary relations, are by and large outside the bounds of this chapter. Understanding the diversity of early missionary endeavors and the truly transnational impact they had is important, though, for examining reasons why they have disappeared, for the most part, from cultural memory. Also, it serves as an impetus for resurrecting the prominent role missionary writers and other early nineteenth-century American travelers played in constructing the image of "the Chinese" at home, and remembering the role these writers play in the broader scope of the story of the development of American literature of the West. For many Americans, their first information about "real China" came from writings and lectures by the Bridgmans and Williams, and other early workers in the foreign field. American imagination of China was reshaped in the early nineteenth century by these individuals, and, later, responses to the influx of Chinese on American soil by the mid-century likewise interacted with their rhetoric. And yet, the scope of their direct positive impact on public opinion may have been limited by their moderate attitudes and objective style: what seems to have quickly come into vogue among American readers was a more embroidered relation of knowledge about China. The *Missionary*

[184] See Lazich "Placing China in Its 'Proper Rank among the Nations'," Drake *China Charts the World*, and Barnett "Protestant Expansion and Chinese Views of the West."

Herald, for example, tended to cull selections from the *Repository* that promoted negative images of the Chinese as lazy, filthy, untrustworthy, depraved, idolatrous heathens unwilling to be converted.[185] This type of presentation escalated over the course of the century, was particularly reinforced in the press, and catered to the rising nativism that perceived Chinese in America as threatening to white jobs and ways of life.

Take this in contrast to Williams' assessment in one section of *Middle Kingdom* on native Chinese charitable organizations. He states that, "Good acts are required as proofs of sincerity; the classics teach benevolence, and the religious books of the Buddhists inculcate compassion to the poor and relief of the sick." Although these institutions dedicated to "the relief of suffering" are limited in number and, in Williams' opinion, poorly funded and managed, it is important to note that they exist because "the Chinese have not been fairly credited with what they do in this line." His final assessment is that:

> Charity is a virtue which thrives poorly in the selfish soil of heathenism, but even badly managed establishments like these are praiseworthy, and promise something better when higher teachings shall have been engrafted into the public mind. (2: 263-266)

His activation of the idiom of benevolence familiarizes the Chinese for American readers, reproducing Chineseness as "like us."

By the mid century though, rhetorical practices that emphasize shocking difference and American intolerance for the Chinese seem to have taken hold even among the missionaries in China. The Rev. Justus Doolittle, who spent 14 years on the Fuzhou Mission of the American Board, submitted a series of anonymous letters titled "Jottings about the Chinese" to the *China Mail*, a Hong Kong newspaper, during the years 1861-1864. These letters were eventually compiled into a book titled *Social Life of the Chinese: With Some Account of Their Religious,*

[185] See Cronin and Huntzicker's assessment (88).

Governmental, Educational, and Business Customs and Opinions, With Special but not Exclusive Reference to Fuchau. The "Preface" to this two volume account appeals to the customary expectations of apology for the quality of writing ("it makes no pretensions to a high literary style, but is a simple and unpolished account of some of the most singular, interesting, and important phases of Chinese life and manners") (i), and to empirical authenticity (he asserts that it was written, except for a few additions, on site, firsthand, while in China). His Preface emphasizes the absurdity of Chinese custom and their bondage under old, stagnant ways. He notes that the book records many admirable and commendable traits of the Chinese, but that readers may also "tire with the senseless and useless opinions cherished, and the strange and superstitious customs practiced." In that case, he reminds readers to keep in mind that:

> for over twenty centuries China has been in bondage to the writings of Confucius and Mencius, and, for nearly the same period, to the religions of Tauism and Buddhism. This fact satisfactorily accounts for many of the absurd, superstitious, and stereotyped opinions and customs prevalent in that empire. Its people need, above all other things, the peculiar influences which the Bible—the great enlightener and enfranchiser—invariably exerts over those who make it their lamp and their law. (ii)

Doolittle maintains the religious rhetoric that has guided ABCFM China missions since the beginning (the teleology, the goals of illumination and assimilation or "enfranchisement"), but his comments register the shifting tide of American opinion following the Gold Rush era influx of Chinese in America.

Many assessments in his text, as in other firsthand accounts of China, offer informed impressions of the Chinese based on empirically gathered evidence, but he comes to popularized conclusions about the Chinese character. His assessment of the opium problem in China, for

example, focuses on the scheming, evil-minded Chinese who "engage in the manufacture and the vending of quack nostrums, hoping to make money out of the vicious habits of the their fellow-countrymen" (356), and the easy dupability of other superstitious and ignorant Chinese who are slavishly addicted to the drug. He also occasionally breaks his objective tone to bark in disbelief, as in this example regarding the rituals associated with death: "How different are all these customs from the course recommended by the Savior! Instead of laying up their treasures in heaven, they endeavor to make remittances which shall be available in the world of woe! *They actually aim at laying up treasures in hell!*" He reports that Chinese converts point this out to their countrymen, saying:

> You not only do not expect or try to enter heaven, but you really expect to go to hell when you die. While living, some of you… try to make deposits of money and of clothing in hell, ready for your use when you shall have reached that place. And after you have died your friends and relations will take it for granted that you are already in that wretched abode; for they will proceed to prepare and burn mock-money and mock-clothing for your use there.

His conclusion is the following:

> What a view do these facts give of the lamentable ignorance and strange delusions of this people in regard to the condition of the soul after the death of the body!... What language can adequately depict the moral degradation of this people?... How much do they need the light of the Bible to illuminate their dark minds! (392-393)

This overuse of *pathos* stands in contrast to Williams' stated aim, which although permeated with the same ideology, does not aim to raise emotional reactivity to the Chinese but rather open-mindedness. His "Preface" states that *The Middle Kingdom* endeavors "to show the better traits

of [Chinese] national character, and that they have had up to this time no opportunity of learning many things with which they are now rapidly becoming acquainted." He calmly reports that his forty-three years in China coincided with the "important" changes that "gradually culminated in the opening of the country," including its opening to trade and "the peaceful settlement of the *kotow*, which rendered possible the approach of foreign ministers to the Emperor's presence." He writes, "Those who trace the hand of God in history will gather from such rapid and great changes in this Empire the foreshadowing of the fulfilment of his purposes," and remarks that when he arrived in China he had to report as a "foreign devil" to the local authorities, but by 1874 he accompanied the Minister of the United States to meet the Emperor "on a footing of perfect equality with the 'Son of Heaven,'" and this shows that China has passed its period of seclusion and now has a great future as long as the progress of Christianity within China continues.

The examples of the early China missionaries suggest a relative unity of vision, approach, and theology that may be misleading. These few account only for those sent by the ABCFM before the broader opening of China. After regular relations and travel between the countries began to increase, greater numbers of missionaries to the Chinese, both in China and on the American continent, who expressed increasingly varied points of view on the relation of the Chinese to their Christian-American visions, began to direct public opinion in increasingly divergent directions (Snow). There is no consensus among Euro-American Christian voices at various stages of the nineteenth century, as there is no consensus now, about the nature of racial and cultural others, their place in the world, and their potential impact on the United States and its national character and aims. Certain missionaries working with Chinese in the American west, in particular, achieved notoriety in the later decades of the nineteenth century for

advocating hostility toward Asian immigration, and for their promotion of policies of Christianization and Americanization to curb perceived threats to Euro-American destiny to control the continent.[186] These individuals appear frequently and negatively in fiction by western writers like Bret Harte, who identify a connection between their proselytizing and their support for scientific racism and anti-Asian activism.

Opinions, likewise, vary broadly among critics of the time period as to what role missionaries and other professing Christians played in shaping viewpoints toward China and the Chinese. Missionaries on the American continent seem more likely to promote anti-Chinese sentiment, however, than do missionaries in China. In fact, in many instances, China missionaries published with the explicit intention of increasing American knowledge about China; one of the reasons Williams published *The Middle Kingdom*, for example, was to counteract the ignorance of Americans about the civilizational advancements of China, and work for the repeal of the Exclusion Act (Haddad 296-297). I think Haddad is correct in concluding that writings about China frequently challenged popular views and stereotypes rather than reinforcing them, and as such did not contribute to the exclusionist mindset. "In fact," he writes, "it is more likely that the diverse nature of these constructions provided a countervailing influence against anti-Chinese sentiment in America in a way that strengthened resistance to that sentiment" (298).

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[186] Snow mentions minister Josiah Strong, whose 1885 book *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis,* written for the American Home Missionary Society, blamed immigrants for American problems, and cited their unassimilation as a threat to the Anglo-Saxon destiny to Christianize the nation and save the world (xiii). The Rev. Otis Gibson, in his 1877 book *The Chinese in America*, offers in print his public response, commissioned by the Methodist preachers of San Francisco, to similar anti-Chinese stances publicly expressed in San Francisco during February of 1873 by a Jesuit priest, Rev. Father Buchard, and the the Hon. Frank M. Pixley, speaking for the "Church Union." The incendiary tone of those lectures were agitating such potential violence against Chinese in that city that the Methodist preachers felt obligated to counter the claims made in those speeches against the Chinese, and promote a position of tolerance and moderation. (Gibson Ch. XI: "Chinaman or White Man, Which?—Reply to Father Buchard—1873.")

BAYARD TAYLOR: A FOOTNOTE

The missionaries, with their attitudes of disinterested benevolence, were not the only reporters on China. Particularly as Euro-American travel to China increased toward the latter half of the nineteenth century, a great number of travel accounts appeared to American readers, many of which delivered on the developing negative stereotypes and denigrated Chinese civilization. Whereas the Bridgmans and Williams attempted to nativize Chinese concepts for American readers while retaining Chinese logic, other accounts emphasized the unassimilable foreignness of the Chinese, aligning with anti-Chinese sentiment and the later "Yellow Peril" agitation. Both are narrative acts intended to create authentic knowledge for American readers, but they differ in their ideological positioning of the self in relation to the subject of study. This is not to suggest that some line can be definitively drawn between missionary and other writings; clearly there were Christian advocates of Chinese exclusion, as there were writers without avowed religious intent who offered moderate viewpoints, confronted stereotypes, and advocated tolerance.[187] It does seem important, though, to footnote a chapter on the writings of early Euro-American travelers to China with some mention of alternate types of accounts that were in circulation.

Bayard Taylor's travelogue *A Visit to India, China, and Japan in the Year 1853* (published 1855) seems an apropos example. His celebrity status during his time as "the Great American Traveler," and his extensive influence over the imagination of the American public in regards to foreign lands, have led some to suggest that his assessments of the Chinese had influence that may perhaps have exceeded Williams'.[188] The two men's paths even crossed in

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[187] See, for example the writings of Thomas Wallace Knox, who traveled extensively in Asia and wrote widely read accounts and stories, such as: *Overland Through Asia* (1870); *The Boy Travellers in the Far East* (1879); and *John, or Our Chinese Relations: A Study of Our Emigration and Commercial Intercourse with the Celestial Empire* (1879). Cronin and Huntzicker discuss his series "The Coming Man" (published May 7 - July 30, 1870 in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*), which attempted to describe the Chinese in San Francisco for American readers while advocating tolerance.

[188] See Haddad (227) in his chapter on Taylor, "The Ugly Face of China: Bayard Taylor's Travels in Asia."

Japan in 1853. Williams was invited to join the Perry expedition of that year as a translator, and he was instrumental to the negotiation process of the Treaty of Kanagawa. His journal of this expedition was published much later (1910). Taylor was also welcomed to the expedition as the foreign correspondent for the New York Tribune, and he attached the expedition onto a longer sojourn he was making through Asia. The comparison I make here is between their representations of China, since both men's writings and lectures were broadly received by Americans (and both have largely fallen out of circulation among today's readers). While Williams' *Middle Kingdom* was an important reference work composed from his lectures given in the United States (1845-1848) after years of academic study and on-site research, Taylor's *A Visit* was based on first impressions, gathered while visiting just a couple of Chinese cities over a period of two months. Additionally, since Taylor spoke no Chinese, his impressions were largely voyeuristic. Publication of *A Visit* augmented his fame and provided the basis for his own lecture tours in the years following.

The dynamic is familiar: while Williams was by far the more qualified expert on China, one tapped for numerous diplomatic and scholarly posts, Taylor was popularly famous among the American public as an adventurer and a personality, and his writings appealed to the mainstream. Haddad reports that Taylor's lectures attracted great crowds, who had sometimes traveled great distances to interact with him. His female admirers frequently "swooned" when they saw him, or tried desperately to attract his attention (241-244). Taylor reacted to his fame in a letter to James T. Fields dated February 17, 1854: "This lecturing is a great business…. Everywhere I have crushing houses…. Curiosity is alive to see 'The Great American Traveler.' It provokes and humiliates me, but I suppose it is natural, and I must submit to it" (Hansen-Taylor 1:269). Tom F. Wright reports that in the mid-nineteenth century milieu, in which

attending popular lectures was an established element of the "emerging mass entertainment culture" that included the lyceum movement, travellers were important figures on these circuits. Valued for their first-hand experience of international places, they delivered oratorical performances imparting arcane knowledge, oriented toward allowing audiences to travel vicariously and toward "diffusing useful knowledge."[189] Wright notes that these "middlebrow cultural productions" had a nativist emphasis, that the lyceum movement "represented an institutional attempt to foster the ethos and values of Northeastern civic nationalism," and that lectures on the "Far West" had the secondary aim of spurring internal emigration (112-113, 116-117). In any case, travel lectures provided "excitement, escapism, adventure, instances of heroism, patriotic reassurance and guidance" (117).

Presumably, one of the major attractions of Taylor's perspective among the non-intellectual demographics of his day (and the cool reception he receives from contemporary readers and critics) was that it, unlike Williams', did not ask many difficult questions. Although he ostensibly advocated cosmopolitanism and temporarily becoming like an other to understand the other, it amounted mostly to an aesthetic of "elegant discrimination" (Wright 125) and unaffectedness arising out of play at passing or slumming, rather than any true advocacy of cultural mixing. He perched comfortably in a seat oriented toward the Euro-American popular worldview, openly promoting the easy perspective of Euro-American cultural and racial superiority, inhabiting the well-worn persona of the white seeing-man traveler, and propogating the nationalist line of enthusiasm for the pursuit of American destiny in the west.[190] His travelogue, *A Visit*, is chronotopically organized by this perspective, in that it gathers the foreign

[189] Diffusing useful knowledge was a common idiom of the era, though it was expressly connected to the lecture circuits by Josiah Holbrook, pioneer of the lyceum movement, in *American Lyceum*.

[190] See his earlier book *Eldorado; or, Adventures in the Path of Empire* (1850), a collection of travel essays also commissioned by Horace Greeley of the New York Tribune. It describes Gold Rush era California as model for American democracy.

spaces of Asia, through its narrative practices, into the American historical perspective (embodied in the narrative by Taylor's seeing-I/eye). Whereas the missionary texts examined above present, from an ostensibly objective perspective, Chinese realities as often far from but redeemable by the American religious-historical perspective of disinterested benevolence—in other words, after careful research they see paths through which those realities may potentially become confluent or opened to one another, often in a utopian future—; Taylor's travelogue favors segregation of Chinese and American spaces. Whereas Williams opposed restrictions to Chinese immigration, Taylor supported them.

Narratively, it reinforces this ideological viewpoint in a number of ways. One is the focalization: Taylor's narrative frequently emphasizes the subjectivity of what is seen, reporting on his own experiences of what seems unusual in China and filtering them through his own habituated psychosoma. In a much-discussed passage, for example, he delights in hiding at the top of a pagoda and throwing coins, like a king, down to the beggars below. Neither can see each other, yet they are experienced by one another while remaining separate spatially and visually. In another instance, he remembers riding relatively comfortably in a sedan chair in the rain, being suddenly set down, and looking out to see that the bearers had stopped to buy new straw sandals to wear against the mud. These spatial and visual segregations allow for him to feel Chinese space as separate from himself even when he is within it. His disposition toward separation, his responses to China's stimuli, and his political viewpoints all converge in his desire to remain "indifferent" to China and unaffected by it.[191]

For Taylor, coming to China results in discovering his own essential Americanness. He recounts this realization as occurring while traveling from Hong Kong to Macao and up the

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[191] Taylor's attitude is evidenced, for example, in his assessment of the official management of the Taiping uprising: "So imbecile and absurd a Court as that of China never before governed a great Empire. Its duration or overthrow is a matter of complete indifference" (311).

Canton coast to Shanghai on a ship called the Susquehanna:

> It was worth all my long wanderings in foreign lands and among strange races, to experience the pride and satisfaction of walking the deck of a national vessel, and hearing again the stirring music of our national airs. One must drink deep of absence and exile to learn the tenderness of that regard for his native land, which at home lies latent and unsuspected at the bottom of his nature. (288)

The transplantation of a bit of American "soil" to the Chinese landscape, in the form of the ship and elsewhere in the form of the foreign settlements in Shanghai, provides Taylor with some homey relief in the form of transnational misplacements. As in the spatial construction of the American west, these apertures of foreignness, whitewashed with neutrality by the privileged and civilian viewpoint of the text, subtly counter Chinese sovereignty over Chinese space by their disengaged occurrence in the spaces of overt foreign imperialist aggression against China (foreign gunboats and treaty port concessions). The point of view is one-sided in another way as well: while American geographic apertures in Chinese space are comforting, Chinese apertures in American space are disconcerting or frustrating. Taylor advocates purifying American space of Chinese elements: when the Chinese pilot fails to guide the ship up the *Yang-tse-kiang* (*Changjiang* or Yangtze River) from Shanghai and instead runs the ship up on a shoal, his assessment is that the foreign pilots would have quite capably seen the dangers that the Chinese pilots failed to see, and he advocates the Chinese pilot's dismissal.

The organization of travelogues around the figure of the individual in motion, crossing boundaries, and undergoing travail frequently means that there is a textual concentration of tensions in the movement of the individual. Bruce A. Harvey's exploration of the embodiment of U.S. national ideologies in the U.S. traveler citizen, who puts those ideologies into circulation

and mediates the U.S. national perspective's transnational connections, has led him to the assessment that U. S. travel texts are "thick with… the theatrics of nationhood and national subjects," and that they situate "'America'—the national symbolic order—within a more global, and thereby more complex, sociocomparative context" (3). The benefit of this perspective is the emphasis on the transnational construction of American ideas and texts, and the emphasis on seeing influences beyond domestic (spatio-temporally insular) ones. The important caveat is that the tensions already exist within those ideologies themselves, which are clearly amorphous to begin with, then abstracted by their translation to textual form, and finally selectively decoded by differently habituated reading subjects. Taylor and Williams, for example, construct the "American" relationship to China quite differently, and their readers most likely see yet again other versions of that relationship.

The other caveat is that the tensions only exist because of their referentiality to habituated space and time under a condition of displacement to historical and geographic contexts not governable by that chronotope. Taylor tries to apply the logic of home to China, a space constructed according to an alternate conception of human function in space and time. Taylor, habituated according to his own network of affinities, experiences China, finds he cannot adequately translate it, and confesses that he does not even want to try. As such, the tensions that seem concentrated in the individual play out in the writing of the text as well, as the traveler labors in retrospect to translate strange experiences to the available habituated narrative constructs. The sense of giddiness that readers feel in approaching a travel text comes not just from the "national theatrics," but from the more dense interplay of the expected and unexpected on the level of both content and form.

Taylor employs the rhetorical structures of Euro-American travel writing, the type

parodied by Poe's *Julius Rodman* (see Chapter Five), to organize his strange and often unpleasant experiences. The traveling individual is essential to the narrative arrangement of the travel text in a way that he or she is not in a reference work (although as *Middle Kingdom* shows, the "objectivity" of that text is filtered by the phantom presence of Williams in it). As such, the mobilized individual, only accessible as a textual reconstruction, is a rhetorical function that makes readable the incommensurability of different habituations, but only when presented according to narrative practices governed by the "home" logics. As Harvey notes, Taylor's impressions of China are most definitely filtered through his own senses and bodily reactions, such as his feeling of "unconquerable aversion" to his "first sight of a large Chinese community" in Singapore (Taylor 285). His impressions of the "scattered" arrangement of Chinese space, the unreadability of their "hieroglyphics," and their "queer, solemnly-stupid yellow faces" touched only by "a course glimmering of sensuality" make unstated reference to Euro-American standards of taste and logics of spatial and cultural organization, suggested only through dialectical opposition, which he calls for his audience share with him in their mutual judgment of the Chinese (281, 285). The Taylor of the text, a self through which the many other rhetorical functions of the text are focalized (literally, come into focus), functions as a stand-in for the reading self as a photographic positive which here can only be extracted from the negative image of the other. The textual Taylor is one undoubtedly changed from the original—reduced, abstracted, augmented, utilized, and deliberately constructed—which likely can attest to the appeal of seeing the man give a lecture in person and perhaps coming closer to touching the original.

A Visit links the focalization intimately, as one among the many rhetorical aspects of the text, to the second narratological reinforcement of Taylor's epistemology, its attempted

integration within a single narrative of what he perceives as irreconcilable chronotopic difference. Again the condition of the self is implied by its difference from China: China stagnates, moves nowhere unless prompted by violence (at which point entire cities are evacuated, as during the Taiping Rebellion), and does not progress in time. The passages from Taylor's description of the Chinese town in Shanghai provide an example of the ways these narrative tactics interweave experience with epistemology in Taylor's travelogue. He prefaces his remarks with a statement that although it is the traveler's job to "describe things as he sees them," the Chinese city was full of "disgusting annoyances" and he hopes readers will be patient as he takes them on a "promenade" to "witness" the town's curiosities "for the first and last time," since he has no further desire to describe again in his account anything that he saw within the city walls (322-323). His narrative impulse is to dislike describing the Chinese town so intensely that he condenses his observations of it, which in real time were spread out over the length of his stay in Shanghai, into a single overview. And whereas the American traveling man moves through Chinese space over a period of progressing time, and relays most of his narrative of personal experience according to that teleological perspective, the real, eye-witnessed, authentic Chinese city is set down as an exhibit in a museum. It is to be known by readers through apprehension of a specimen, a condensed visualization of motionless, monstrous life, lying flat on the page like Doctor Frankenstein's ghoulish creation on the table awaiting the shock of reanimation.

This choice, to overview rather than to integrate the daily observations into the flow of the narrative as is done elsewhere in *A Visit*, gives several impressions. One is that Chinese life is stagnant and able to be described once "for the first and last time." Despite the fact that his stay in Shanghai took place at a time when all of Shanghai expected an impending attack by the

Taiping rebels, and the city was being emptied out by an evacuation to the countryside, he manages to sit the Chinese down immobilized by his literary snapshot. Chinese stagnation is echoed in his comments about the receptiveness of the Chinese to Christianity:

> The Chinese nature appears to be so thoroughly passive, that it is not even receptive. A sort of listless curiosity leads them to fill the chapels of the missionaries, and to gather in crowds around those who preach in the public places, but when the exhortation is finished, away they go, without the least ripple of new thought in the stagnant waters of their minds. The mental inertia of these people seems to be almost hopeless of improvement. (333)

This translation of Chineseness as governed by a space-time categorically opposite to the purported American one sells America's China as moving nowhere in space or time, except to passively come and go as in daily routine, even in the face of history-in-the-making.

This contrast to American and European reactions to the invigorating breath of history in motion is highlighted by his enthusiasm for descriptions of China not as Chinese but as American space: a place where one can go to find great adventure, chaos, war, suffering, and uncertainty. Taylor reports on the "delightful state of uncertainty" (314) of being assembled with the foreign residents of Shanghai, who were mobilizing against potential attack by rebels. Daily life is punctuated not by passive coming and going, but by evacuations of the wealthy for the countryside, the constant receipt of contradictory intelligence, the crowding of the Bund and side streets with porters, the plundering and criminal activity of opportunists amid the chaos, the loss of cultural treasures and materials from libraries, the raising of a defense for the foreign concessions, and the floundering of local officials to keep control and make decisions. This kind of writing is the direct ancestor of later published accounts that combine personal chronicle of

time in China with reportage on contemporary historical events taking place in which they find themselves taking part.[192]

Taylor reports that evidence of the arousal of China (in the form of the Taiping uprising) is primarily met, at first, with excitement on the part of Europeans and Americans in Shanghai. Taylor enlists in the divertissement, dancing into the realm of China politics as an opinionated observer, a position that would resonate with most of his readers. His bystander politico-poetics take on the force of authority primarily because of his status as eyewitness and his consortion with figures of actual political stature in the Shanghai milieu. His phrasings poeticize real issues and human traumas and provide catch-phrases, as in this passage:

> Some advocate of universal peace has cited China as the example of a nation which has successfully pursued a pacific policy; but I say, welcome be the thunder-storm, which shall scatter and break up, though by the means of fire and blood, this terrible stagnation! Who would not exclaim with Tennyson: 'Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.' (333-334)

Taylor welcomes Chinese infighting that would destroy the current government and make way for China to become more like Europe and America in its spatio-temporal structuring. Thus, the locus at which the tide of opinion turns against Chinese rebellion is slightly different for Taylor than for the foreign denizens of Shanghai, who had been "previously, almost to a man, disposed to rejoice at the success of the rebels" (308). He reports that news of the torture and atrocities committed by the Taiping rebels after the taking of Nanjing, particularly that inflicted on officers and their families, led to swift reversals in the Shanghai expatriates' endorsement of the rebellion. Taylor, however, who is enjoying his voyeuristic involvement in this hubbub, calling it the "most exciting portion of my residence at Shanghai" (319), turns against the Chinese in his

[192] Kerr and Kuehn's *A Century of Travels in China* offers critical writing on a number of these accounts.

narrative not because of political events but because of his own sensibilities and taste. This judgment erupts whenever borders between the Chinese and himself are crossed and contact ensues. His movement into Chinese space, for example, most often results in racist and insulting narrative descriptions, and Chinese movement into American space generally results in reactionary comments about Chinese threat to the American. While American expansion into (and westernization of) Chinese space is recommendable, Chinese rebel attempts to reclaim the foreign settlement of Shanghai must be averted and the treaty obligations defended; even more so must Chinese settlement on American soil be avoided. Push forward, but allow for no pushback.

This positioning is directly stated as an element of his assessment of Chinese aesthetics, delivered in his report on a horticultural exhibition. He writes:

> The great aim of the Chinese florist is to produce something as much unlike nature as possible…. The only taste which the Chinese exhibit to any degree, is a love of the monstrous. That sentiment of harmony… never looked out of their oblique eyes. Their music is a dreadful dischord; their language is composed of nasals and consonants; they admire whatever is distorted or unnatural, and the wider its divergence from its original beauty or symmetry, the greater is their delight. This mental idiosyncracy includes a moral one, of similar character. It is my deliberate opinion that the Chinese are, morally, the most debased people on the face of the earth. Forms of vice which in other countries are barely named, are in China so common, that they excite no comment among the natives…. I made no attempt to collect information of this kind; but there was enough in the things which I could not avoid seeing and hearing… to inspire me with a powerful aversion to the Chinese race. Their touch is pollution, and, harsh as the opinion may

> seem, justice to our own race demands that they should not be allowed to settle on our soil. Science may have lost something, but mankind has gained, by the exclusive policy which has governed China during the past centuries. (353-354)

So bound up together are Taylor's aesthetic and moral sensibilities with his geographics that he can only translate the Chinese as an oppositional logic with the capability to destroy Euro-American culture and even nature. This is reinforced elsewhere, where he, drawing on the authority of Coleridge, describes China as bent against destroying the beauty of spring with its "horrid foulness" and the "rank ammoniated odors arising from pits of noisome manure, sunk in the fields" (329). This assessment allows the Chinese to be presented as parasitical, a leech on nature and its seasonal progression, and alien to the earth by their failure to perform proper stewardship of nature and its resources. Narrating experience is always a process of translation to a paradigm apprehendable by readers; *A Visit* approaches translation not as a form of intercourse, though, but as a process of reproducing China according to American logic. This is the third narratological reinforcement of Taylor's ideology: the embedding of translation both as a topic of interest in the narrative and as a narrative practice.

Taylor's translation of China as American westerly space comes out of the chronotope (geographics of westward advance) and the interpersonality or identity relations of textualized individuals in relation to the "I", but it also comes out of the concrete practices of translation of the foreign to American conceptual structures. Taylor eyewitnesses China, then turns that experience into shareable knowledge about China through various Americanizations. This is a practice of assimilation. *A Visit* makes linguistic translations, such as phoneticization of Chinese words and renderings of their English meanings, but it also makes ideological translations to American logic and narrative translations of real experience to established practices of American

westerly travel writing.

Here are a few examples. In one passage, rather than offering a literal or actual translation of a Chinese poster, a “manifesto issued by the Taou-tai—probably some lying report of a victory over the rebels,” he suggests that Chinese language is non-communicative even to its users, reinforcing the stereotype of Chinese inscrutability (even to themselves). He writes that the notice “is pasted against the inner gate, and there is a crowd before it, spelling out its black and vermillion hieroglyphics” (326). According to the logic of one who does not understand the Chinese language, it lacks communicative logic altogether. Likewise, a military display is “like a Chinese travesty of Don Quixote” (346); China is a travesty of a travesty, and no longer quaint, but grotesque, only understandable to American readers through reference to a shared cultural landmark. Chinese taste is “a love of the monstrous” (353), and it is only made beautiful again by Euro-American re-interpretation or appropriation. He writes:

> Every body remembers the old-fashioned plates of blue Liverpool ware, with a representation of two Chinese houses, a willow tree, a bridge with three Chinamen walking over it, and two crows in the air. These plates give a very good representation of the Tea Garden [in Shanghai], which is a fair sample of what is most picturesque in Chinese life. (330)

Taylor, like other American writers about China, grants the West the authority to distill and interpret Chineseness, and separate what is good in it from what is bad. Information about good and bad can be conveyed to readers through the translation device of the familiar icon, in this case, “blue willow” porcelain. The text gains authority from a variety of directions, including its references to familiar cultural iconography and its legitimacy as eye-witnessed account, which in turn legitimizes the home audience’s espousals of the ideology presented in the text despite

their own lack of authority on the subject. It is relatively easy to imagine how these kinds of accounts that directly promoted exclusion, written by widely known and popular figures, could have impact that extended beyond the text to its context and intertext, especially in the American geopolitical climate of the 1850s.

CONCLUSION

Among the nineteenth-century American travelers, there is wide variation in attitudes toward the Chinese, and yet there are discernable idiomatic, narratologic, and ideologic threads that run through them. This can be disorienting in terms of attempting to understand the formation of China images in the United States. However, what is interesting in retrospect is that what has been canonized in American literature of the early to mid nineteenth century likewise is so diverse in its assessment of American national and religious goals, yet unified by its attention to the major issues of the era, particularly expansion. Fictional representations of missionaries and U.S. imperialism, for example, were quite often extremely critical: Herman Melville's and Mark Twain's fiction are notable examples.[193] That the foreign mission plays such a central role in American fiction is itself a reason to examine the texts produced by these missions. China travel documents, despite their limited visibility in the broader study of American literature, have had an integral relationship with American literary development. Accordingly, texts of travel to China, along with the increasing numbers in the mid-to-late nineteenth century of histories, geographies, biographies on Chinese topics, and ethnographies of Chinese in America, were related to the cultural visualization and narration of Chineseness and its relevance to the United States. The mutual interplay in the "culture of travel" between "materials, experiences, writers and readers" (10-11) that Hongbing Zhang describes as essential to producing modernity in the

[193] See Tricomi's chapters on Melville and Twain in *Missionary Positions*, and Hutchison 75.

Chinese context applies in this context as well. The culture of movement of people, texts and ideas; the production of writing during, about, and related to that movement and the ideas generated by it, and the incorporation of that writing into other forms; the nature of travel as producing apertures and losses of meaning which must be acknowledged, refilled, patched, translated, or left gaping: all these conditions are not outside of the development of American narrative. Chapter Seven will continue this discussion by examining the development of fictional representations of Chineseness in the American West.

Chapter Seven:

The Chinese and the Development of Modern Western Narrative

> *Samuel smiled at him…. "God saw his world…. This will be a valley of great richness one day. It could feed the world, and maybe it will. And happy people will live here, thousands and thousands—" A cloud seemed to come over his eyes.... "There's a thing I don't understand. There's a blackness on this valley. I don't know what it is, but I can feel it. Sometimes on a white blinding day I can feel it cutting off the sun…. There's a black violence on this valley…. It's as though some old ghost hunted it out of the dead ocean below and troubled the air with unhappiness. It's as secret as hidden sorrow."*
>
> – John Steinbeck, *East of Eden* (145)

> *There looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable. It lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated…. Apprehensive, desire turns aside; sickened, it rejects. A certainty protects it from the shameful…. [b]ut simultaneously, just the same, that impetus, that spasm, that leap is drawn toward an elsewhere as tempting as it is condemned. Unflaggingly, like an inescapable boomerang, a vortex of summons and repulsion places the one haunted by it literally beside himself."*
>
> – Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* (1)

American images of China underwent a dramatic shift in the first half of the nineteenth century. Whereas prior to initiation of regular contact with China, Americans entertained notions of the Chinese informed primarily by European (and a few American) travel accounts and orientalist attitudes, exotic romances, and the upper-class vogue for *chinoiserie*, introduction to the "realities" of the Chinese and their national homeland contributed a significant alteration to that conception. Chinese old-world quaintness, peripherality, and irrelevance to American realities took on different shading, suffused often with sinister, devilish, immovable, anti-American aspect. This had something to do with the firsthand accounts of Chinese culture and character that drifted back from the adventurers, missionaries, and other travelers to China in the early nineteenth century, especially after the opening of China's inland at the end of the first

Opium War (1842), which were described in Chapter Six.

That duplicitous image though—of Chinese inconsequentiality yet integrality, ignorance yet deceitfulness, civility yet barbarism, desirability yet odiousness—took deep root in the popular imagination with the arrival in the mid-century of Chinese human presence in American space. The real-life interactions of Chinese and European Americans had unmistakeable effects on popular sentiment because a large part of those interactions took place in the popular press and in real locales among the middle and lower classes: laborers, missionaries, military personnel, business people, and so on. There was some interaction between Chinese intellectuals and diplomats and American elites, and some acknowledgement of Chinese modernity and cultural refinement: the Burlingame diplomatic mission of 1868, for example, which established regular diplomatic relations between the countries, painted China as awakening to international life. What shaped public opinion, though, so strongly as to result in national policies of exclusion and subordination that lasted well into the twentieth century, was the advent of actual and pervasive Chinese presence in the American west.

The mythologized continental west was already, by the 1850s, a space conceived as temptingly wild yet haunted by violence, central to fulfillment of national destiny, and the proper direction of Euro-American regenerative movement. Western writing was flourishing in conjunction with national expansion, the Gold Rush, and the outbreak and resolution of the Civil and Mexican wars; and in line with European literary developments, it was moving away from romanticism toward realism in its modes of representation. Conflict between Anglo-Americans and other Americans—native groups in particular but also increasingly Caucasian inter-ethnic dispute—were endemic to this representation. At the heart of Euro-American western representation lies a "westerly-progressive" spatio-temporal conception which I have already

detailed in Chapter Five. The necessary extermination of pre-existing national claims (Mexican, Native American, European) to western territory was an expected part of the western project; however, meeting with threats to that advancement moving east, across the Pacific from the far west, was not. Mass Chinese appearance in the continental west presented a challenge to Euro-American westerly idealizations that is one of the significant yet most overlooked in the American historical imagination.

The incorporation of western states, like California, during the mid-century raised the expectation that western domestication would soon be accomplished. The image of this coming domesticity was of enclosure of the territorial nation as a house, in which the family of the nation resides (Kaplan "Introduction"). All of the family within must be assimilable to the nation (which informs the rhetoric still utilized in populist American politics), and challenges to this assimilability took on exaggerated potential for destruction of the nation. The gothic tendency in American literature arises, immediately after the Revolution with the birth of an American national literature, out of the metaphor of untotalized domesticity, or, the haunted nation-house. The gothic is foundational to western literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in its exploration of a Kristevan type of abjection, or the adverse reactions of the self to that which is cast out of the symbolic order (1). The domestication of America—with its fertile fields that John Steinbeck's Samuel in *East of Eden* foretells will "feed the world" and be home to God's happy people on earth—is clouded by the blackness of violence and old ghosts, which is the *unheimlich* that cannot be adequately excluded.

Chinese immigrants, whose noticeable cultural differences, divergent American dreams, and predominantly lower-class status as indentured laborers not supported by their national government set them apart from other immigrants, presented a challenge to white sovereignty

over the west and led to paranoia about the coming "yellow peril." Earlier depictions in the vein of romantic exoticism, such as Edward H. House's 1859 short story titled "Mien-yaun," were set in an imagined China rather than in the United States or in an "elsewhere" subject to American epistemological interpretation, and as such project American fantasies of the foreign and do not register the Chinese challenge in America, because the Chinese is presented as entirely outside of the American. They were informed more by the European tradition of the exotic romance than by the emerging nineteenth-century American eyewitness accounts of China or the conditions of multiraciality in America.

The earliest English-language representations of Chinese in America, however, which began to appear in the decades following the Gold Rush, engaged with the problematics of Chinese vilification. In them, Chineseness appeared as an explanatory trope, on the levels of theme, aesthetic, and form, for the unfinishedness of the U.S. westerly project. The *Overland Monthly*, for example, which was the major publication of western writing from 1868 to 1935, described the Chinese in 1871 as "cold, snaky, slow, cowardly, treacherous, suspicious, deceitful" and willing to "hear nothing outside of the 'Middle Kingdom'." Likewise, the *Atlantic Monthly* described China as "so palsied, so corrupt, so wretchedly degraded, and so enfeebled by misgovernment, as to be already more than half sunk in decay" (Iriye 28, 24). Frederick Grimke in 1846 encapsulated American ideas about civilization by suggesting that it was attainable by anyone, and that nothing inherent determined whether civilization was achieved other than circumstances. However, in the realm of popular opinion, civilizational difference is often represented as threatening and antithetical to self-fulfillment.

While many writers did not condone and even criticized the hatred commonly expressed toward Chinese people, most all rationalized the problems Chineseness created in American

space by uncovering the ways Chineseness revealed the impossibility of achieving the dream of universalizing American space as domesticated and unified according to the Anglo-American ideal. Although the extent to which Chineseness appears as a trope in American fiction is not overwhelming, those representations that do exist of Chinese in American western space indicate the deep embeddedness of the popular conceptualization of Chineseness as an assault on Euro-American idealizations. They show that Anglo-Chinese conflict forcefully shaped western spaces, which hung liminally between the "civilized" zones of the United States and China. And further, they show the powerful impact of this conflict as a catalytic force on the creative energies of western writers during this era.

This point of view stands in some contradiction to the common historical diagnosis that China was perceived as relevant to the new United States mainly in terms of its potential as a trade partner and that it did not factor into the phenomenon of westward movement and the accompanying Jeffersonian agrarian dream for national cultivation of the virgin continent. In this dream, the United States was young (but mature) and advanced (yet connected to the European past), and capable of regenerating the world (Iriye 1-32). This a-historical sense of American space as existing across times was awkwardly integrated with the parallel ideal of American teleological space, in which the United States was visualized as at the apex of human global historical development, and according to which it had a destiny to *progress* westward across the continent and bring civilizational progress to that continent. The integration of these two competing historical consciousnesses meant that the new nation must be both *tabula rasa* and palimpsest—which although clearly self-contradictory and untenable, remains exceedingly influential—and gave the nation a sense of westward mission.

That mission did not end when the frontier reached the westernmost edges of the

continent or when the *tabula rasa* myth waned, but it took up the already occuring international missions (economic, religious, political) as national priority. Chapter Five explored the paradoxes of this discrepant self-conception in terms of the development of westerly writing; this chapter advances that discussion to show that, contrary to the conception that Asia played little role in westerly idealization and spatial production, the appearance of Chinese presence in idealized western domestic space actually contributed a significant *adjustment* to these myths of national subjectivity that can be measured, for one, in the effects of "the Chinese" on literary chronotopes. As such, while the idealized foreign Chinese "field" for American work and trade contributed somewhat to the westerly effort, real Chineseness was received as an oppositional force pushing east in American space, understood as limiting the ability of the Anglo-American to advance, creating friction in the West. The arguments against Chinese immigration used by nativists and white labor, in particular, are spatial to a degree that is not often recognized. Further, the literary responses to this cultural milieu preceding and during the era of Chinese Exclusion (1882-1943) register this spatiality, investing the space of the American west with the Chinese "challenge" to Anglo-American ideals. The representations explored in this chapter, by Bret Harte, Ambrose Bierce, and John Steinbeck, portray Chinese abjection in America as elemental to the production of western space, and by extension, elemental to textual chronotopes. The centrality of these texts in the canon of American national literature (and the exclusion of House's stories from that same recognition) attests to the emphasis placed historically on promoting the distinctly American qualities of the national literature, and the lionization of uniquely American forms of romanticism and realism, such as the gothic, transcendental, sentimental, and regional.

What becomes apparent when looking at texts like Harte's "Three Vagabonds of

Trinidad," or Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, is that the ostensible realism or modernism of these texts is challenged by the indwelling of the Chinese as force in the text. This registers on multiple levels: not just thematically, but also formally. The permeability and unfixedness of the supposedly closed, domesticated frontier spaces repercusses in textual practices and draws into question the categorical distinctions between romanticism, realism, and modernism, by drawing the gothic element into realist and modernist texts. That these texts are "regional" and as such qualified in their status as "national" is important—as has been pointed out, they are postcolonial in different ways than are eastern texts and constantly counterbalance their peripheral centrality with their cognizance of subjection to the east.[194]

Thinking of these texts only as processes of decolonization, in which the American west becomes a decontextualized literary occasion for national writers to think about migration, race, nation, culture, and the complexities of politics and identity, is limiting though. For one, it elides the distinctiveness of localities and individuals and abstracts them to a conglomerate image. This process of abstraction is valid to note, because it takes place on the level of audience: functional cultural impressions of otherness arise among a reading public by their assemblage from various cultural depictions of and interpersonal interactions with cultural or racial others. However, on the level of criticism, focusing only on broadly conceived abstractions (while helpful for understanding history on the broad scale) deplete particularity of locale, individual, and text. The west, and its odd, international assortment of residents and its individual textual representations, are reduced to habituated iconography. This habituation is what allows Lisa Lowe to draw the conclusion that, for example:

> the figure of the Asian immigrant has served as a 'screen,' a phantasmatic site, on which the nation projects a series of condensed, complicated anxieties regarding external and

[194] See Watts' "Introduction" to *An American Colony,* as well as Goldman's book *Continental Divides*.

> internal threats to the mutable coherence of the national body: the invading multitude, the lascivious seductress, the servile yet treacherous domestic, the automaton whose inhuman efficiency will supersede American ingenuity.[195]

This kind of viewpoint maintains the historic demand that the west and its textualizations be deliverers of American authenticity and guarantors of American connection to the primal and real, as discussed in Chapter Five.

In fact, what I am suggesting is that these texts are important precisely because they invest the west with the strange, and because they do *not* deliver up empirical authenticity, in the form of authentic Chinese voice or unembellished historical account, even as they function within historically authentic frameworks. They claim for the west a distinctness that might ransom it from national teleological thinking by returning to local spaces the memories of their disorderly and transnational histories. Even as they deploy that framework, they critique it. As such, western writing that uses the Chinese trope shows not a belatedness in relation to the development of realism or modernism, but rather shows unique sensibilities about the real and the modern that arise out of histories of global interplay in the space of the continent, and out of the imperfect success of attempts to domesticate that area of permeable borders. The western fiction discussed in this chapter uses the Chinese trope not as a screen on which to project anxieties but as an essential element to expressing the legitimate alterity and unsettledness of western space. In other words, the Chinese trope is not employed lightly for its entertainment appeal, but rather quite heavily: to show that what has settled in the cities, valleys, and fields of the west is the transnational rather than the national. Chineseness as an English-language literary trope—which until the mid-twentieth century, aside from a few exceptions, remains primarily an

[195] Lowe 18-19. She suggests that immigrant and Chinese American writing have a fragmenting effect on American idealism or universalism by breaking these apart at their boundaries.

imaginary projection of the Anglo-American mindset—is employed as an indicator of partiality, an outgrowth of travel culture, and an immanent reminder that white predominance in the west is a project and not a natural condition.

Tracing the development of the Chinese trope in nineteenth and early twentieth century western fiction of the United States is not so much about finding definitive shifts in imagery of "the Chinese," or seeking out "authentic" Chinese representations, but about seeking out the ways these images assist in problematizing the perceived or desired shift in the national sense of historical space from transnational, open, and frontier to domestic, enclosed space. Like other subjectivities in the unsettled west, the Chinese is that which travels, the thing within the domestic that is referential to that which is outside, and it opens apertures in domesticity and reverts it to locality. Western transnationality always unsettles—unfixes, unregulates, unseals, uncolonizes, unorders—western nationalism and the American mission to re-create newness in the world. And this reveals the paradoxes of the American national projects—whether political (bringing democracy), cultural (shaking off repressive old-world cultures, welcoming the downtrodden, mixing and assimilating), economic (capitalism), religious—these ideals of American exceptionalism disallow settlement even as they crave it.

This chapter connects the development of western modernism in the early twentieth century to the appearance of the Chinese trope in domestic fiction, to historical precedents, and to the continuing changes in Sino-American relations. In contrast to the travel writings of Chapter Six, none of the depictions of domesticated Chinese in this chapter are written by individuals who had travelled to China. All are set in the newly domesticated space of the American west. The terms of this selection are intentional: by seeking out the most domestic of representations, I can emphasize the depth of influence that "the Chinese" had on the

imagination of American spaces, and position these local depictions in relation to the received knowledge about China and the west.

The chapter arrives at a similar conclusion about American modernism as Chapter Four does about Chinese modernism: that the influence of travel on modern fiction is deep and permanent, in that it renders pure domesticity (totalization, insidedness) impossible, and transforms all domestic representations into local ones. The main difference in American fiction is that it never had a historical moment in which the logic of pure domesticity prevailed, since American space-time was always permeated by the outside. Although the domestic was the post-revolutionary and expanding nation's "always sought," it as equally was never achieved. The method of inquiry is not particularly novel, since critics have been seeking out the sources of the *unheimlich* in American fiction since American fiction's appearance at the turn of the nineteenth century. What it does hope to achieve is an advancement of understanding about not just the role of "the Chinese" in American self-construction, but to tie this dynamic to the development of literary form in western fiction. It moves beyond a simpler apprehension of these texts as arising out of a pure orientalist imagination of a Euro-American national subject, uninformed by contact,[196] to recognizing the powerful interplay between strikingly different individuals in real localities, caught in the middle of historic battles for the right to be there, and always shadowed by pernicious narratives that threatened them with abstraction.

[196] Haddad, drawing on Dirlik's "Chinese History" (1996), likewise contrasts his approach to that of Edward Said, whose assumption was that the represented were powerless over how they were represented by Europeans. He writes that the model of representation in play in travel texts is not one in which the represented are totally passive and powerless over their representations. Chinese input, in the form of their positioning as hosts, tour guides, translators, cultural interpreters, and so on, meant that texts of American travel writing cannot be seen as solely emerging "from a white American consciousness and reflect[ing] only the views, needs, and prejudices of white people" (xvii).

ROMANTIC CHINA DECLINES; THE GOTHIC CHINESE INHABITS

Prior to the Civil War (1861-1865), representations of Chinese characters and other forms of Chineseness seem to be extra-territorialized. For example, the short story "Mien-yaun" (1859), written by Edward H. House and published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, offers one of the earlier American fictional representations of Chinese characters. Although the story is set in "Pekin," it quite clearly resembles a European-style fairy tale, complete with star-crossed lovers, a wicked stepmother, and moral lessons. The title character is a rich and popular gentleman, obsessed with controlling others and becoming something great, and educated in the main principles of Chinese politics: "Lie, cheat, steal, and honor your parents" (House 673). His priorities change when he falls in love with a merchant-class girl, since the two must overcome numerous financial, familial, and social obstacles in order to be together at the end of the story and live out their days in romantic and pastoral seclusion.

House, a largely forgotten Boston and New York journalist and distinguished Civil War reporter, is remembered primarily for his position as the first American correspondent in Japan, although his friendships with figures like Walt Whitman, Bret Harte, and Mark Twain also played minor roles in development of their literary careers. However, at the time when House wrote "Mien-yaun," and another story set in China, "The Silent Lover" (1867),[197] House had not yet been to the Far East. He had shown interest in Japan, in particular, and had read contemporary accounts of the early Catholic missions to Japan. His coverage of the 1860 Japanese Diplomatic Mission was enthusiastic and seems to have had an effect on his career path, which eventually led him to Japan in 1870.[198]

Stories like "Mien-yaun" are in the orientalist tradition of exotic fantasy, informed by the

[197] Published in *The Galaxy: A Magazine of Entertaining Reading* (Feb 15, 1867): 426-31.
[198] For a detailed account of House's life and work, see Huffman.

earliest travel accounts to China and popular amongst the Romantics. They evince a fascination with the non-threatening and quaint oddities of the Chinese, "the most eccentric people in the world" (House 678), who, while clearly in possession of traits of civilization, are so misled as to be barbaric even in their extremely structured society. The binding of the women's feet and Chinese lack of perspective in their artwork are given as examples. The representational strategy, as with European *chinoiserie*, is imaginative appropriation and westernization: Mien-yaun's true love, for example, hosts a sewing circle at her house at which gather young maidens to gossip, which would have been an identifiable feminine scenario for House's readers.

However, despite these westernizations, the story is marked as pure fantasy and romantic gesticulation rather than authentic reportage. For one, there is no authorial claim made to authentic or eyewitnessed fact, as in travel writing or fictional parodies of travel writing. Additionally, despite the Americanization of various elements, distance is maintained between the imagined other and the implied self: the representation as a whole is filtered through the writing self, but there is no representative of the national or racial self within the story to filter the action through his judgment and seeing eyes. The otherness is entirely extra-territorialized. And because the action is set in a faraway city, with no connections to the United States and no historical markings to situate the drama as part of a larger human historical consciousness, the otherness is extra-historical according to an American national sense of historical space and progression. As such, the story belongs to a different chronotope from later American fiction that incorporates the Chinese trope as domestic element. The effect of the story is that it can be domesticated as appealing fantasy despite its utter foreignness, but that it bears no relation to American historical consciousness.

The appeal of exotic romances to European audiences has been well documented since

Edward Said's seminal work outlining the practices of orientalism. These types of works have received less attention in the American context, quite possibly because the writers of literary history were primarily concerned, from the time of the Revolution up to the modern-era obsession with the Great American Novel, with promoting the development of a coherent and competitive American national literature. Works with self-like protagonists and native chronotopic structures (those referent to the American sense of historical space and progression) were canonized. The canonized romantic tradition of the United States, which, as Chapter Five showed, is more Gothic than it is romantic in a European sense, can be distinguished from the exotic romance by virtue of being structured according to an American sense of historical space, even as that sense is defamiliarized and invested with uncanniness. Writers employed different strategies of defamiliarization: Poe invested the domestic sphere with the mysterious and psychological; Hawthorne resurrected the ghosts of the past in contemporary localities; Melville's Americans frequently exited the national space to explore the universal and historical.[199] The fantasies of these texts come alive in scenarios recognizable as relevant to the collective consciousness of the audience, even if the primary goal of the text is to awaken forgotten memories of history or explore the unnaturalness of that which is presented as natural (Berlant 46-54). The deployment of conflicted American utopianism in these canonical texts is what gives them the flavor of being haunted, frequently by otherness, eccentricity, and other forms of that which is outside of the subjective immanent. "Mien-yaun" and "The Silent Lover," on the other hand, are representations of pure otherness shaped by subjective authorship but untouched by subjective concern. While both display interest in otherness, it is the lack of self-obsession and subjective historical positioning that distinguishes the exotic fantasy from the

[199] The observation is borrowed from James W. Simpson's introduction to *Editor's Study* (vii).

national fantasy.

The extent to which chronotopes varied between popular literature and the "national" canonical literature, while worthy of further exploration, is a secondary interest here to the development of the Chinese trope in American fiction and the relationship it bears to the development of the narrative practices in literature of the American West. Suffice it to say that representations of the Chinese trope in American fiction took a different shape before the commencement of bilateral Sino-American relations and after. While Chinese, primarily men, were arriving in small numbers in western America in the early nineteenth century, it is not until after the 1844 Treaty of Wangxia and the 1868 Burlingame Mission and Treaty, and after the influx of Chinese workers to the west and particularly to the new state of California (after 1850), that American national attention became focused on Chineseness in America. And likewise, while a few American missionaries, diplomats, and merchants had been in Canton since the early nineteenth century, it was not until they were freed to enter China openly by the Treaty of Tianjin in 1858 that widely circulated accounts of China travels began to be published in the United States.

The direct effect that these accounts had on the increase in representation of Chineseness in American fiction is not something that can readily be quantified. However, the timeline seems to indicate a connection between that increase and the relatively sudden increase in awareness both of 1) China and the Chinese, and 2) the Chinese presence in America. Additionally, the parodies of transpacific travel and missionary accounts and activities that began to appear in fiction by major authors, like Mark Twain, Herman Melville, and Jack London,[200] as well as the

[200] For example, Jack London's Hawaiian stories in *The House of Pride & Other Tales of Hawaii* (1912). See Tricomi's chapters on Twain and Melville, as well as Lai-Henderson's *Mark Twain in China,* which gives a helpful overview of the literature on the anti-imperialist Mark Twain's many connections to China, including his friendship with Anson Burlingame, and on his efforts on behalf of Chinese workers in the United States. Many missionaries,

increase in writings reacting to western activities in China, suggest that these texts were being read and that there was more or less widespread awareness of missionary activity. Samuel Wells Williams' *The Middle Kingdom*, for example, which was discussed in Chapter Six, is "generally recognized as the most influential Western text written on China during the nineteenth century" (Rubinstein 76). There is also the synchronous increase, in the latter nineteenth century, in use of the Chinese trope in fiction and the generalized increase in use of regional and ethnic specificity in realism and local color writing. The Civil War and its associated programs of reform have been cited as the main historical break leading to the development of these new genres and to interest in representing American diversity. However, in the specific case of the Chinese trope, I would suggest that the historical markers in the history of Sino-American relations and the increase in Sino-American cross-Pacific interchange probably had a more direct impact than the cultural dramas of the Civil War on the increased visibility of Chineseness in the literature of the West.

This viewpoint is echoed in Shelley Sang-Hee Lee's observation that the most forceful shaper of the nineteenth-century transition in American images of China was the intimate and frequently pragmatic transpacific relationships developed with China during the mid-nineteenth century. At the point that actual political, social, and economic relationships were developed, we see shifts begin in representations of China and the Chinese in American writing. Lee writes:

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including Samuel Wells Williams, opposed the Exclusion Act and thus were denounced by labor groups. Snow's Chapter 3, "Missionaries and the Chinese Exclusion Act" points out that many times anti-Chinese were also anti-missionary, and suggested that the Chinese had no soul to save. Rubinstein echoes S. Miller's assessment in *The Unwelcome Immigrant* that the images propagated by China missionaries in the American press had something to do with the shift in American images of China from the positive, romantic ones expressed in the earlier 1800s to the negative ones predominant by 1860. He goes further than Miller, though, to explore not just the representations themselves, but also the ways those representations were received by American audiences, particularly Protestants. He suggests that written representations, which presented China as "a beautiful land of stinking, crowded cities, populated by learned but corrupt and degenerate heathens" (77), were reinforced by oral representations delivered to various audiences on the lecture tours undertaken by missionaries on their trips back to the United States. These efforts also popularized foreign missions amongst churchgoers, although it seems to have had the opposite effect on secular types who came to associate missionary work with either imperial work or anti-nationalism. The final point of interest is that this increasing sense of dislike was paralleled in Chinese anti-western sentiment.

> Asia—its people and things—would become intimately tied up in notions of American freedom and nationhood at key historical junctures. Furthermore, these moments—during which dominant thought with respect to East-West difference and the inherent foreignness of people from the "Orient" crystallized—revealed stark intellectual and ideological boundaries that cast Asians and Asian-Americans as outsiders from the national civic body. (6)

Lee also makes the suggestion that a secondary shaper of American images of Asia, the aspect that made American images significantly different from European ones, was the American worldview, which was influenced by positioning as former colonial subjects. This is accurate, but it is a broad simplification of a set of complex conditions specific to various parts of the country. The particular iteration of American colonization of interest here is western American transnationalism.

Chinese in America could be conceived as outsiders only because of the history of the frontier, and yet it is precisely that history of transnationalism that makes them integral to presenting the west as frontiersy even after it was settled. Without the internal others, the Anglo-American west might have been domesticated, but instead it is penetratingly gothic. The discussion in Chapter Five of the transnational character of early westerly writing suggested that foreignness was the precondition of the American west, a condition that presented itself as a "field of work" for intrepid Anglo-American pioneers aspiring to fulfill the Manifest Destiny of the United States. The result is that the historical pattern for the nineteenth-century American west is opposite to the one described for nineteenth-century China in Chapter Two: while China experienced a physical and epistemological opening-up, the American west experienced a closing. I am thinking, for example, about the domestication of former zones of transnational

contention, such as California in 1848; or the accomplishment of closing the frontier, according to the 1880 census. Whereas China experienced an influx of foreignness in domestic space after its opening-up, which had the effect of transitioning literature from a domestic chronotope to a local one, the Anglo-American literature of the west shows an attempt, albeit unsuccessful, to domesticate and either expel or rationalize foreignness or the transnational according to the projects of nation-building. The effect on the chronotope of western writing is a dissonance based in paradoxes of ideation and actualization, a double vision; Yunte Huang characterizes these as reciprocally reinforcing in "colonial vision" (4). Whereas exotic romances, not unlike the factual texts on China described in Chapter Six, imagined empty, homogeneous time such as that which Benedict Anderson termed the time of nation, American eruptions of the Chinese situate them in local, spatially and historically saturated time.

However, that the earlier images of China identified it as utterly unassimilable is important to the development of Chinese representation for a number of reasons. One of those reasons is that it set a precedent for "the Chinese" to function, as many other Anglo-American "others" do, as a cipher of the un-domesticable, even once they enter American space. That the initial response to that eccentricity is pleasure only makes the later response, which bears the memory of desirability, more vehemently oppositional in its disavowal of its blighted icon. This thematics arises in Ambrose Bierce's 1871 short story "The Haunted Valley." Further, it preconditions China as a field of work for Anglo-American energies, since, although clearly possessing a form of civilization, its fanciful practices are incommensurable to logic and therefore deserve to be corrected. As long as disconnectedness was maintained, as John Rogers Haddad notes, romantic notions could become overdeveloped in Europe and the United States. Without empirical evidence about the nature of Chinese geography, social organization, and

culture, the type of information that was increasingly available about other "new" places in the world, a constructed fictional Cathay presented itself as real.

Regional Writing: China as Local Literary Trope

Contact, however, changed all this for Americans. Intensely negative popular depictions of China, particularly in the scandal-mongering penny press, the popular periodicals that came into existence in the 1830s, began to grow around the time of the first Opium War (1839-1842). This reportage was a departure from earlier primarily positive and factual reporting on the China trade and Chinese geography. The penny press capitalized on the war to intensify perceived oppositions of China to the West in the direction of the negative. The exoticisms of China, formerly mystified as desirable and fascinating, were hyperbolized into faults: pompous and effeminate men, full of cunning and distrust, with distorted and ugly features, eating non-edibles, and eager to take advantage of every situation without regard for faith or truth.[201] Nineteenth-century individuals who actually traveled and resided in China frequently came to caution against holding extreme views of the Chinese, whether positive or negative; some of these were discussed in Chapter Six. They were joined by various voices in the "serious" periodical press and in western fiction; this chapter will examine Bret Harte's short stories "Wan Lee, the Pagan" (1874) and "Three Vagabonds of Trinidad" (1900). Many of the writers who promoted tolerance, like Harte and Bierce, were eastern writers who had come west (and would later return to the east). Heeding the expansionist and Whitmanesque call to "contain multitudes" (*Complete Writings* 108; sec. 51), they had brought with them eastern reform-mindedness and interest in narrating local peculiarities, habits, and distinctive ways of life. The popularity in the mid- to late-nineteenth century American literary marketplace of regional fiction, and the differences

[201] See S. Miller, Chapter 5: "The Opium War Popularizes the Unfavorable Image, 1839-1850."

between eastern and western cultural responses to the conflicts created by Anglo and Chinese coexistence in western space, meant that these stories did have a broad and receptive audience, but they also must not have appealed to an equally broad sector of the population which shouted loudly against barbarism.

Historically, the coincidence of the rise of regionalism and realism and of a U.S. national literature with the arrival of the first wave of Chinese immigration to the newly acquired western states was a significant shaper. It meant that Chinese representation in western texts generally conformed to the trends of regional writing in general, which was obsessed with a discourse of the *actual*: of describing local or regional character in terms of its complexity, globality, unfamiliarity, and unique history. These representations resonate with what Stephanie LeMenager has called “eruptions of the foreign on the projected map of U.S. nationhood” (2), for their presentation of counternarratives to the hegemonic one, or of American reality as based in present difference. Regional writing, though, was also fixated on representing “primitive” authenticity because it offered a rural analogy to the alienating urban condition. Stephanie Foote’s analysis is that:

> although the late nineteenth century’s rapid changes promised unparalleled physical mobility, they also threatened psychic dislocation..... Weightlessness, or the sense that no experience was quite real, is symptomatic alienation, or self-estrangement, and it sought its cure... in a search for some experience or place more real or more ‘authentic’ than the conditions of modern life. Regional writing’s careful, thick descriptions of the rhythms of rural life and provincial communities embodied a formal or technical commitment to fidelity. It therefore fulfilled the substantive requirement for ‘real’ experience largely *because* of this formal commitment to descriptive fidelity. (5)

The urban condition, in which dislocations and disorientations were heightened, looked to far-flung regions to offer “real” experience less available in urban situations, and through this collection of regional stories proclaimed the interconnectedness of those regions to the nation.

This is why critics of regional writing describe it as filling an imagined need for a nation that recognized its disparateness but wished to gather that into the national. Constructing national commonality by exploring local concerns and dialects mediated the “average” person’s feeling of estrangement, perhaps by suggesting readers were “less strange” than other Americans. It also reinforced the expansive, assimilationist national self and enclosed the far off place as within the zone of American influence or ownership, while making eastern Americans feel connected to what seemed like a lost closeness to the real. Kate McCullough writes that:

> [g]iven the racial, regional, ethnic, and sexual divisions produced and exacerbated by the Civil War, Reconstruction, increased immigration, Westward expansion, and the policy of Manifest Destiny, it is clear that by the end of the century any notion of a unified national identity was not simply a hotly contested fantasy but a particularly urgent and necessary fantasy in the cultural imagination of the period. (3)

In order to explore what it meant to be American, and in particular, “to be, or to aspire to become, white, Protestant, middle class, male, and probably from the Northeast” (Fox-Genovese 7) and “part of a heterosexual family unit” (McCullough 3), and to make sense of capitalism and imperial expansion, regional writers “narrat[ed] figures of cultural difference as potential participants in national culture” (Foote 124). Regional writing performed the ingathering of difference necessary to maintaining the “fantasy” of unified difference even in the face of challenges to this ideal.

The emphasis in the nineteenth to early twentieth century period on construction of

national identity meant for a large portion of regional texts a focus on the exploration of the relationship between marginal and central national spaces, through the focalization of the eastern cosmopolitan traveler (Lutz). For many far western texts, this dynamic takes specific form, as the moderate easterner apprehends the impacts of extremism on the national goals of assimilation and domesticating uncivilized space. Whereas the easterner imagines coherence and solidarity in the west that transcends ethnicity, in actuality he finds after coming west that these goals have not been achieved. And because he writes the west as an eastern outsider within, his fictions reproduce cultural relationships between the urbanized east and the country's rural communities. Additionally, much of the readership of regional writing was easterners, as were many of the writers and publishers, such as William Dean Howells, who was a major promoter of regional fiction to eastern audiences that viewed it as a minor literature.[202] The story of the development of westerly writing is a story of a geopolitics according to which the marginal had to defend itself to the spatial center even while that center claimed the marginal as cognitively, culturally, and ideologically central to the center.

Realism and regional writing, the two dominant modes to emerge in the aftermath of the Civil War era, eschewed the tendencies toward the symbolic, romantic, and transcendental that had characterized earlier American fiction writing. There emerged greater concern with social problems, and a fascination with the mundane and local as providing the key to getting at expression of the national and perhaps even some universal meaning about life. Realism was an international movement, currently on the rise in European literary circles, and as such had an easterly element. What made frontier realism unique was not just that it frequently had a gothic tendency, which added some of that outdated metaphysical flavor back to the narrative formula. It was the investment of mystery and profundity in the characterization of otherness—whether

[202] See Foote's "Introduction."

human, animal, or geographical—which on the one hand freed selfhood for rationality while also enabling "realist" representations filled with the strange and irrational. Amy Kaplan has described this as the "unstable paradox at the heart of U.S. imperial culture": the idea of things being "foreign to the United States in a domestic sense." She uses this phrase to describe spaces and people that are possessed by the United States but not incorporated into it, and therefore become "like a disembodied shade, in an intermediate state of ambiguous existence for an indefinite period." These unincorporated possessions gain occult meaning and ghostly quality, casting "dark shadow[s] across the geographic and constitutional bonds of the incorporated nation" and threatening to turn the nation into a "haunted house" (Kaplan 2-11).

This mode of representation was a response to the historical conditions of transnationalism and colonization discussed in Chapter Five, which resulted in a subalterneity both inwardly felt and physically imposed by the dominating "east," and in innate heterogeneity of the western space which was desired-to-be-but-never-quite national. The resulting sense of anachronism in the nationalized west has a past in the anachronism and anatopism of the era of exploration, explored in Chapter Five, but is made new by the geopolitical shift from frontier to statehood. Integral to that newness is the regionalist focus on "celebrating not disruption but continuity, not timely events but timelessness" and seeking "to affirm what is usable about the past and the ordinary" (Campbell 7-8). Also, as becomes clear in writing that addresses the issues of race and immigration, American space is not just haunted by its own past and historical spaces, but also by the pasts, presents, futures, and spaces of other parts of the world. This perforation of the American chronotope by the transnational, even after the space has been politically divested of its ambiguous transnational capacity through national acquisition, intensifies the struggle to imagine American values, endurance, community, and history.

Rationalizing regional America under the eastern national conception proved actually to be quite difficult, as it had always been. Whitman may have adequately summed up the mid-nineteenth century national idealist standpoint in his "Song of Myself":

> And these tend inward to me, and I tend outward to them,
>
> And such as it is to be of these more or less I am,
>
> And of these one and all I weave the song of myself. (*Complete Writings* 52; sec. 15)

That idealist standpoint expresses a capability of the national self to gather all the difference of the continent in and knit it together into a whole. Direct representation of the isolated and quaint corners of America, though, shows that the efforts to consolidate plurality in America had been ultimately unsuccessful. Edward Watts argues that regionalism, as a literary movement, arises as a central act of the decolonization "of populations and the regions written out of American cultural history in general."[203] These populations and regions are not united with the original states by their mutual resistance to British colonial rule. Rather, the tension of the lingering colonial condition in the American regions arises because they are not former colonies of Britain but former colonies of the United States, and national culture is based on a forgetfulness about that colonial interaction.[204] And like other colonial relationships, there is a distinct sense that the colony experiences a sense of inferiority to the colonial parent and must express otherness while using the words of the self (Watts, "Introduction").

Using the paradigm of travel or circulation, which recognizes subjective habituation as well as the connection of these habituated subjects to historical space, offers an alternative to the center/periphery model. It suggests ways of re-centering or making visible a variety of centers, readmitting them to history, without ignoring the impact of colonial or metropolitan history on

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[203] 218. See Watts' "Afterword." Watts calls this a move "from incoherent homogeneity to coherent heterogeneity," borrowing the phrase from Pizer's analysis of the work of Hamlin Garland.
[204] This idea is developed in detail by Goldman, as well as in Warner's essay (63).

specific locales, and without turning locales into contested border zones or hybrid "third" spaces,[205] which undermines their operative distinctiveness. It follows Arif Dirlik's directive to envision the local as porous and indistinctly bounded (or bounded differently according to perspective); without this perspective the local fails to serve as a critical concept. Under this perspective, the local reveals itself as a form of presence invested with inventive capacity, a space that is "ultimately the site for the global" ("Global" 42).

If regionalism constitutes a central act of decolonization in American literature, because it centralizes the various peripheral American voices and spaces, it equally fails at this effort. Realities represented in the text show rotation between two poles common to many representations of postcolonial places: successful decolonization by way of centralization of the periphery, and equal inability to divest of the colonial past that creates subalterneity in the locale. Combined with this is the frequent representation in regionalist texts of locality as alone geographically: the setting usually remains at the locale and its environs, rather than traveling elsewhere to distant places that are referenced in the text but not textually visited.[206] This creates the sense of ahistoricity or anachronism in the local place relevant to and inside the nation but yet distant from it and its primary scenes of national drama. As such, movement in regional texts is dictated by circular forces around the locale, both those that centripetally draw in (delimiting a boundary, albeit intangible and porous, along the arc of the path around the center) and those that centrifugally eject to the nebulous outside. The conundrum of circularity (national yet local and transnational, contemporary yet primitive, agential yet overseen, eccentric yet assimilated) predispose western America for later representations, like Steinbeck's, that make sense of western space as universal space, governed according to the laws of physics and an image of the

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[205] This shift in viewpoint is also advocated in Goldman's "Introduction" to *Continental Divides*.
[206] Campbell likewise, explores the ways regional writing depicts the local as isolated or insular through its short, careful sketches (9-12).

galaxial on the microscopic terrestrial scale.

BRET HARTE: WESTERN PROGENY AND THE SINS OF THE FATHERS

Harte's Chinese tales provide an interesting contrast to House's. The two men were familiars, and both had been part of the New York journalism scene in their youth. Their paths diverge, though: House eventually took an international post; Harte moved to California in 1853 at age seventeen and became editor of *Overland Monthly*. He never went to Asia, and in fact he returned to the east coast in 1871 and finally died in Europe in 1902. His experiences in the west and writings about the west were filtered through his eastern cosmopolitanism, as was true for numerous regionalist writers who came west looking for the broad view within the plain and the local. As such, his western stories align with the common characteristic of much regional writing: the emphasis on the importance of the outsider and his perspective to understanding the local. On the one hand, the cosmopolitan man represents the tenuous link between western spaces and eastern predominance, and his entrance into local space gives form to that geopolitical relationship. On the other hand, his narration of the events of the tale, while only being marginally involved in them, allows for a point of identification for readers, who also likely approach the scenario as outsiders.

The cosmopolitan vantage point, as Tom Lutz points out, is valued in regionalist writing for its breadth of knowledge and thus its capacity to compare, evaluate, and explore values, differences, and tensions. In fact, regionalism enacts the values of cosmopolitanism by functioning as site of "debates about the meaning, value, and purpose of literary art" (14). On the level of marketplace, the outsider is a major part of whom the regional place was represented by and for, and so although local characters were provincials without deep connections to literary

culture, the local could be presented in a literary way (69). To place this "new" genre on the historical continuum, this seems to be a survival of the original modes of western representation, in which seeing-men explored the frontier, witnessed its peculiarities, and reported back to their eastern audiences through "authentic" accounts. The major difference would seem to be the "belatedness" of regional writers, who come after the first waves of explorers and settlers, who experienced the violence of raw frontier conflict, and who seek out the violence of those raw interactions while remaining somehow aloof from them. Bret Harte, like Ambrose Bierce, lived in the social atmosphere of the frontier, which was extremely hostile to the Chinese, for a period of time, but developed nuanced representations that responded to the fear of "Yellow Peril" while generally refuting its hysteria.[207]

Harte's tales, set in the west and appearing after anti-Chinese sentiment had time to take hold, present an utterly different version of Chineseness than House's. Although Harte is sympathetic to his Chinese characters, the popular stereotypes he references are much more negative than the ones in "Mien-yaun". Whereas the territorially externalized Mien-yaun and his lover could be envisioned as purely romantic, with quaint oddities such as tiny feet and perspective-less art, Harte's stories, which find Chinese characters in the quaint world of mid-nineteenth century California, put the narrator in the role of eyewitnessing Chineseness and interpreting "authentic" Chineseness against the popular stereotypes in the United States of Chinese people and culture. He wrote a number of stories with either central or supporting Chinese characters, many of which were published after he left California.[208]

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[207] Wu offers a historical overview of Chinese Americans in American fiction in *The Yellow Peril*.
[208] Wu's Chapter 1, "The Chinese Immigrant on the Frontier," provides a comprehensive list of over twenty titles by Harte that include Chinese characters. There were several written during his residence in California, three after he moved back to the east coast, and the large remainder written during his residence in Europe after 1878.

"Wan Lee, the Pagan." In "Wan Lee, the Pagan," originally published in *Scribner's* in September of 1874, the narrator describes his friend Hop Sing, a superintendent of the Ning Foo Company in San Francisco, in the following way:

> Before I describe him I want the average reader to discharge from his mind any idea of a Chinaman that he may have gathered from the pantomime. He did not wear beautifully scalloped drawers fringed with little bells—I never met a Chinaman who did; he did not habitually carry his forefinger extended before him at right angles with his body, nor did I ever hear him utter the mysterious sentence, 'Ching a ring a ring chaw,' nor dance under any provocation. He was, on the whole, a rather grave, decorous, handsome gentleman. (164-165)

Hop Sing also speaks perfect English and French, and his words are transcribed in the text without any use of dialectical or pidgin spellings, as other Chinese characters' speech often is; this detail is important to the narrator, a newspaper editor. Hop Sing's warehouse is described as arrayed with the mysterious, uncouth, grotesque, frivolous, and indescribable, all of which were "familiar" to the narrator. This description, from the beginning of the tale, sets the two educated men in comparison to one another and presents the suggestion of an idealistic type of western urban intercultural space of familiarity within diversity and peaceful interracial relations.

The story of Wan Lee is introduced through the narrator's friendship with Hop Sing in order to provide contrast to the narrator's later relationship with Wan Lee. Wan Lee is an impish child who is "born" that night of "Friday the fifth of March, 1856," during a performance of Chinese magic at Hop Sing's warehouse. The rest of the story is the "veracious chronicle" of his reappearance to the narrator in rural Klamath County in July 1865, and subsequent fatal return to San Francisco at the historical moment of an anti-Chinese race riot in 1869. Wan Lee comes to

the narrator in Klamath County when he is about ten years old, sent by Hop Sing, to avoid the bullying he is subject to at "the hands of the younger members of your Christian and highly civilized race" (170). He was raised in a bohemian lifestyle as a performer, and cannot quite ever shake that propensity to perform tricks despite his clear intelligence. He speaks in pidgin, affects the attitude of misunderstanding, probably deliberately, and also creates lack of understanding in the sympathetic narrator who never can quite get at how to deal with the boy, who is simultaneously loyal, patient and smart, but impish, offensive, and superstitious. The narrator benevolently puts up with Wan Lee, and attempts to mold him in the newspaper profession, until he returns to San Francisco, taking the boy back with him.

This story, like others that show a self-type subject wrestling to balance the incomprehensibility and incommensurability of the Chinese with Anglo-Saxon Americanness, while maintaining the attitude that racial prejudice is a major national flaw and benevolence is the appropriate response to difference, has garnered critical interest for its characterization. The didactic elements of the story, emphasized in the final lines, offer historical evidence of attitudes toward Chineseness in America that would speak out against popular anti-Chinese sentiment and unveil its hypocrisy: "Wan Lee, the Pagan, lying there dead!... Stoned to death in the streets of San Francisco, in the year of grace eighteen hundred and sixty-nine, by a mob of half-grown boys and Christian school-children!" (181). There are reverberations of this critique of white male aggression throughout western literature; Mourning Dove (Hum-ishu-ma) perhaps puts it most plainly in her 1927 novel *Cogewea* when describing the violent effects that the illegal sale of alcohol by bootleggers has on Indians, using China as simile: "This is the heritage of the white men's civilization, forced—like the opium traffic of China—upon a weaker people by the bayonets of commercial conquest. It overshadows all of the good resultant from the 'higher'

life" (40). In addition to the story's social critique, the "local color" aspects of the story, such as its use of dialect and description, and the assertion of veracity of its report, fulfill audience desire to "see" the multiplicity of the United States and experience the authentic west.

However, Wan Lee is not just decorative, instructional, analogic, or symbolic. As a figure around which circulate the spatial and temporal structures of the story, he is central to the literary representation of historical space and consciousness. He is what provides the psychic dislocation necessary to the American gothic, not only through his obvious connections to the perceived "mysteries" of Chinese culture, and the challenges the presence of that otherness provides to the experience of San Francisco or Klamath County as incorporated Anglo-American space, but also as the element that defamiliarizes the space of San Francisco for the narrator on the level of historical consciousness. The national sense of historical progression is one of forward expansion, in the direction of the west, until the continent is claimed and assimilated. Those who go out from the east into the west purportedly meet difference in the space of the frontier and create something new, a positive hybrid, that will contribute to nation-building. But in this story, San Francisco is not an endpoint of westerly progression, but rather a central node at which converge those coming west from the east and those coming east from the west (China). Those who have gone out—the narrator, the "Chinese missionary," and Hop Sing—are ineffectual at creating a positive hybrid that will be accepted by the nation. Instead, the native-born generation is at war with each other. Wan Lee becomes not just thematic sign, but becomes the embodiment of the tragic failures of western space. The dream of western space as potential zone of prophetic fulfillment, in which the transnational is domesticated, ends in the day-lit street of a "city on a hill" in a pool of blood.

"Three Vagabonds of Trinidad." Another of Harte's tales, "Three Vagabonds of Trinidad," similarly explores the effect of imagining American youth as Chinese. The story was published in *Punch* and reprinted in *Collier's Weekly* in 1900, close to the end of Harte's life when he resided abroad in Europe. In this story, which takes place in Trinidad County, now part of Humboldt County, California, Harte shows the essentiality of race to the construction of American historical space. The "three vagabonds" of the title are a bullied Chinese child named Li Tee, his friend Jim, a homeless Native American man, and Jim's dog, all of whom are driven out of civilization. The tale is described as an account of something that happened 40 years earlier, in the 1860s, which positions the tale as one that resurrects local memory in the service of explicating the present. That present, although Harte was physically distant from it, was Chinese Exclusion, which was enacted in 1882 and continued until, for a short time, China became a U.S. ally against their mutual enemy, Japan, in World War II. The story also awakens the past, in that it fictionalizes the years during which the increasing numbers of whites in California were waging a war both on Chinese labor and also on native populations, with the goal of exterminating native culture and land claims. It specifically calls to mind the 1860 Indian Island Massacre in Eureka, California, during which the Humboldt Volunteer Militia attacked sleeping Wiyot people gathered for a ceremony at their ancient site on the island, killing somewhere between 80 to 100 men, women, and children. Harte, assistant editor at the *Northern Californian* at the time, published an editorial following the massacre in that paper, detailing it and expressing horror about the "act of wanton brutality" ("Indiscriminate"). The policies of extermination had led to a sharp decrease in native populations by 1900.

In Harte's story, the three vagabonds take refuge on an island in the bay after their offense of flying a very large kite, which had gotten caught on a clothesline and flown away with

some laundry. A young white boy in search of adventure, Master Bob Skinner, runs away to join them in their wild life, wrecks his canoe, and is rescued by Li Tee and Jim. He leaves them with his gun; but when this is discovered by the townspeople the boy lies and says Jim stole the gun and threatened his life. The rest of the story is relatively predictable: a posse is raised and Jim is tracked down and shot. Harte's position on this tragic violence is as clearly expressed in this story as it was in his 1860 editorial: he condemns the actions that the white vigilantes took against Jim by stating that the nameless dog, who at the moment of Jim's apotheosis returns to his nature and viciously attacks Jim's shooter, is the only "*real* animal" among the vagabonds. Harte is not hyperbolizing: Lieutenant Charles G. Hubbard, of the Second California Infantry, who was stationed at Camp Olney on the Upper Mattole River in Humboldt County, writes in his report from June 20, 1862:

> Cold-blooded Indian killing being considered honorable, shooting Indians and murdering even squaws and children that have been domesticated for months and years, without a moment's warning, and with as little compunction as they would rid themselves of a dog, and, as I am informed, one man did, beating his own child's brains out against a tree and killing the squaw, its mother, for no other reason than that he had no means else of disposing of them, and to keep them from falling into other persons' hands. Human life is of no value in this valley. (74)

The execution of Jim, in a classic scenario of western standoff, reduplicates the semi-official policies of violent domestication of American wildness—if not domesticable in its primitive state, the wild element must be destroyed to make way for Anglo-American male progress.

The importance of Li Tee's demise to the story is less clear: when they become fugitives, Li Tee suffers from the lack of food, becomes ill, and eventually wastes away and dies quietly.

Jim considers that Li Tee should just go back to civilization, since his people "had more claims upon civilization, through those of his own race who were permitted to live among the white men" (233). But although Li Tee seems to be a shadowy third party because of his dissipation before the denouement, his centrality to the story is confirmed by the first section of the story, in which Li Tee is introduced through his relationship to the narrator, a newspaper editor and Li Tee's advocate. In this story as in "Wan Lee," literary space is a safe space, where young Chinese boys can come for refuge from being bullied or killed by white Christian children. Following the generic convention for regional writing, which recurrently filters western discourse through the cosmopolitan outsider, the editor who narrates the story is an easterner impermanently present in the West. The editor performs the eastern perspective as the moderate view, the voice of "sympathetic mediation" (220), set in contrast to the local view, which is expressed in "Three Vagabonds" by "Mr. Parkin Skinner, a prominent citizen." Skinner, young Master Skinner's father, vocalizes the nationalist rhetoric of Manifest Destiny:

> The nigger of every description — yeller, brown, or black, call him 'Chinese,' 'Injun,' or 'Kanaka,' or what you like — hez to clar off of God's footstool when the Anglo-Saxon gets started!... It's our manifest destiny to clar them out — that's what we was put here for — and it's just the work we've got to do!" (220-221)

The editor has "ventured to quote Mr. Skinner's stirring remarks… to prove that advanced sentiments of this high and ennobling nature really obtained forty years ago in an ordinary American frontier town which did not then dream of Expansion and Empire" (221). Essentially, Skinner's comment reflects a stereotypified, abstracted, and depreciated rendering of partially overheard religious and national logic, a meme. It positions Chineseness as part of the field of Anglo-Saxon idealized religious-national work, but the narratorial filter places that localized

national ideal under scrutiny by the outsider national viewpoint, complicating national geographics. The editor's commentary on Skinner's remark contemporizes the story as germane historical knowledge to the national present of overseas expansion at the turn of the century, by arguing that the roots of expansion are in the history of continental territorial expansion.

If we wonder why Harte, at the *fin de siècle*, revisits the remembered west of his youth in terms of its violent racial and spatial aggression, signs point to the continued unsettlement of American space and the challenge this presents to the predominant view at that historical moment that American space had now achieved closure. The 1890 census had famously proclaimed the frontier line of westward expansion no longer existent because of the pervasiveness of pockets of white settlement throughout the west, and even more famously had Frederick Jackson Turner hypothesized in his 1893 thesis the importance of the end of the era of continental expansion. The impact his thesis had on the way the American west was imagined as fundamental to the national character and development was broad-reaching, and it reinforced the sense that the continent had been settled and enclosed and that American energies were now turning to extra-continental spaces. The associated literary development up to that era, the increased attention to"outsider" regional literature to the national literature (which remained anchored in New England), resonated with this national sense of satisfaction at destiny-achieved, yet hollow notes ring from within these texts as they cannot avoid registering the incompleteness of this ostensibly completed project.

The incompleteness reveals itself in "Three Vagabonds" in the topography of its plot. In the story as in real life, there are spaces "reserved" for outcasts, and those outcasts are endlessly driven out of the rest of the space. The vagabonds, forced into vagrancy then condemned for that vagrancy, retreat to an island, but then are drawn back from that island to the mainland by cold

and starvation. They attempt to stay away from civilization, but their presence is noted and they are hunted down "on their enemy's ground" (228). That they are killed in the "settled" spaces because they threaten its racial purity indicates the extent to which the project of domesticating the west remains incomplete, even suggesting that Anglo-American settlement of western space might actually "unsettle" it since it leads to homelessness, vagrancy, and civil conflict. Again the locus of that critique hinges on the younger, native-born generation: young Master Skinner and Li Tee. The "Skinners" of the west—the name is evidently a play on the practice of taking Indian scalps to collect bounty—are clearly dangerous for their extreme and ingrained ideology. But the danger comes to a head when the interactions of children, who inherit these approaches and transform them into racialized play, draw their adult armies into the skirmish.

Li Tee is constantly tormented by, again, the Christian schoolboys, and seeks refuge in separation from them. There is even greater danger, though, in befriending the immature versions of "Skinners," who are not yet decided as to whether they want to torment outcasts or to join them in their gypsy wild life. Young Skinner originally runs away to join the outcasts for the adventure of it, but eventually returns home, leaving behind promises to return with provisions. When he does not return, and instead gives away the position of his allies and accuses them of stealing his gun, the adults are compelled to retaliate. Young Skinner embodies the dichotomy of desire and disavowal that governs the relations between Euro-Americans and their "primitives," and the narrator suggests that his actions, a childish betrayal, and the violence that follows, are the results of Euro-American struggles with their conflicted desire for the loathsome.

And Li Tee? His name is the other that implies a possible wordplay. In one possible pronunciation, it could sound like "lightee," a popular way of transcribing the Chinese-ish

pronunciation of the English word "write." His association with the practices of writing the west and the hapless narrator, who fails to have any effect on the escalation of violence other than to record and critique it, suggests there may be some additional commentary intended on the impotency of the mediating voice of the writer, which dies out under the louder shouts of the "skinners." The murmurs against extremism from both the narrator and Li Tee, who dominate the beginning of the story but evanesce by its conclusion, hint at the paradoxes of conflicting nationalisms: moderate against extreme, inclusive against excluding, soft against violent, and the endless other antithetical characteristics contained within the whole. Harte's cathection with his own "devil" (as printing apprentices were commonly called and as Li Tee is named in this text), the moderate alternative endpoint of dichotomous desire and disavowal, likewise fails to attain any more satisfactory outcomes. Harte, recalling this history of frontier interaction at moment at which that frontier ceases to exist, and during a time when Chinese exclusion had attained the full force of national policy, opens an aperture in historical consciousness in order to haunt the nation with its past and probe at the probability of continued unsettlement in the future.

AMBROSE BIERCE'S "THE HAUNTED VALLEY" AND CHINESE POSSESSION OF THE GOTHIC WEST

In describing the local writing of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Lauren Berlant suggested that his works deal with the paradoxes of the "non-synchronic nature of any present tense or horizon of experience." In other words, they deal in anachronism and the discomfort associated with it, using "images of events that happen 'elsewhere' [in time or space] to describe crucial nodal points in personal/national history" (10-11). The local writing of the American west evinces the same "crisis of historical consciousness" in which, at the level of chronotope, unified national and personal identity or narrative is contested and elusive. This provides one of the numerous

"hauntings" essential to Ambrose Bierce's "The Haunted Valley": the narrative fullness of deep historical time; the geographic saturation in which space belongs to multiple ages and is suspended in but not bounded by the present. Western space, in this text, is tragic and haunted, full of historical memory that disallows itself to be forgotten—but perhaps even more importantly these failures of the past cast shadows over future potential. Like Harte's stories and other gothic western texts, Bierce's story explores the unsettlement of the west, which is teleologically idealized as moving toward domestication, yet realized as being embedded with transnationalism that foredooms totalized domesticity.

The gothic western might thus be identified as a genre that allows the East to meditate on its sometimes monstrous western creation and contemplate the consequences of unleashing this strange mongrel child on the world. Harte's "Three Vagabonds" and "Wan Lee" visualize the western chimeras as literal children, born in and of the west, descendent of its violences and ideologies. Bierce's "The Haunted Valley" envisions the specter as a force of fragmentation endemic to the scenario of contact: a west that is capable of being not won but lost, particularly to the destructive force of feminization and resultant emasculation of western men. It narrates the psychological and physical decline of two white men following the "justifiable homicide" by one of them of their mutual lover, a sexually ambiguous Chinese servant, Ah Wee. Ah Wee's effect, in both life and death, of creating emasculation in others is not limited to the human sphere. As in other gothic tales, feminine haunting evinces control over both psyche and locale. The valley was fertile during Ah Wee's life, and full of potential to fulfill the agrarian dreams of Manifest Destiny; her violently spilled blood guts the Edenic dream, drives out the Adamic types, and allows nature to begin reversing the progress of civilization. The story draws into question, like other gothic westerns, the question of authenticity: both by critiquing the capacity

of the west to deliver authenticity—many unanswered questions remain at the end of the tale—, and by suggesting that what is concretely produced in the west is not the ideal produced by the eastern imagination. The west, resultantly, becomes a scene not of prelapsarian Eden (or discovery of a lost original, and with it the potential for new arrivals to recreate the world according to original intent) but a scene in which the truth of the originals themselves is called into question.

That the spirit in this story is racialized as Chinese is central to the historical consciousness expressed in this narrative, written during an era of anti-Chinese violence in the west, fomented by populist rhetoric that shouted loudly against the threats of barbarism. This tale, and its deliverance of western space to Chinese possession, critiques the ideological bankruptcy of Anglo-American frontier idealism and project. It delivers up a paradox to the judgment of the reader: while abstracted Chineseness may seem to pose sinister threat to masculinity and progress, real Chinese abjection at the hands of a violent master who both desires and disavows her is in fact the force that produces her as an irrepressible spirit, a threat, condemning him.

Ambrose Bierce, born in Indiana and a soldier in the Union army during the Civil War, came to California as a Treasury agent after the Civil War. "The Haunted Valley" was Bierce's first short story, published in 1871 in *Overland Monthly*. At the time, Bierce was an editor at *The News-Letter* in San Francisco, and his experience with Chineseness in the west is informed, assumedly, by his first-hand impressions of Californian Chinese, by his awareness of Anglo-American stereotypes of and prejudices against the Chinese, and by his associations with Bret Harte and other western writers. He did not ever travel to China. The story's titular hidden, fertile valley, somewhere out West, probably in California, is a palimpsest: inscribed at various

times with multiple and conflicting histories; revisited at multiple historical moments by an outsider narrator who revisits the valley seeking its stories and witnesses its failures to progress and eventual degeneration. The narrator, a young traveling easterner and fictional surrogate for the author, passes through the area numerous times over the course of a number of years, waiting patiently for the "temporarily withheld" disclosure of the secrets of the sunless yet refreshingly cool ravine. The story he tells is an account of the revelation of a number of secret details of the past to him by living individuals who are haunted by that past; he witnesses and mediates the telling of the valley's history, which is one of "deepening gloom."

The first revelations come from the owner of the ravine, Jo. Dunfer, who divulges the importance of two other characters to his fate: his ostensibly male Chinese servant Ah Wee and his "white man-of-all-work" Gopher. Revelations erupt in spurts. Dunfer recalls Ah Wee's eccentric and infuriating method of chopping down trees:

> Now you Eastern galoots won't believe anything against the yellow devils… but I tell you that Chink was the perversest scoundrel outside San Francisco. The miserable pig-tail Mongolian went to hewing away at the saplings all round the stems, like a worm o' the dust gnawing a radish. I… showed him how to cut them on two sides, so as to make them fall right; but no sooner would I turn my back on him… than he was at it again. (119)

Then the narrator discovers a well-maintained tombstone inscribed with a series of memorializations of Ah Wee added by Dunfer over time, showing turns of mood from anger to dementia to bereavement, and suggesting confusion about the sex of Ah Wee:

AH WEE— CHINAMAN.

Age unknown. Worked for Jo. Dunfer.

> This monument is erected by him to keep the Chink's memory green. Likewise as a warning to Celestials not to take on airs. Devil take 'em!
>
> She Was a Good Egg. (121)

Finally, when the narrator returns four years later, Gopher reveals that Dunfer had brutally murdered Ah Wee with an ax in a fit of lover's jealousy and covered up the truth by his "righteous" claim to have killed Ah Wee for felling trees incorrectly. Dunfer's public admission that Ah Wee "Came to 'is death by a wholesome Christian sentiment workin' in the Caucasian breast" was accepted by locals, who elected him Justice of the Peace. Gopher, who went "luny" when Dunfer killed Ah Wee those nine years prior, blurts out what may be the truth near the end of the tale:

> 'that big brute killed the woman who loved him better than she did me!— me who had followed 'er from San Francisco, where 'e won 'er at draw poker!— me who had watched over 'er for years w'en the scoundrel she belonged to was ashamed to acknowledge 'er and treat 'er white!— me who for her sake kept 'is cussed secret till it ate 'im up!' (126)

Dunfer's deteriorating psychological state had by that time led to his own death, but he continues to haunt Gopher, who remains in the area but avoids the haunted valley. The equivocality of the sex of Ah Wee, which seems to fluctuate and is never pinned down, is the most compelling unresolved mystery of the story. Although the characters who knew her assert her femininity, they are both psychologically unhinged and do initially and intentionally refer to her as a him, most likely to maintain the official story of Ah Wee's "justifiable homicide." Historically, however, that a Chinese woman would appear in the wilds of the American west seems doubly unexpected, especially as there were historically so few Chinese women in America at all during

this time period.[209] Also, Ah Wee's sexual ambiguity and his or her effect of creating sexual indeterminacy in others is reinforced by the characterization of Dunfer's new establishment—the one he built to get away from the homestead he built with Ah Wee and the one in which he wastes away as a drunk—as "hermaphrodite." The Gothic elements are immediately apparent as motif—ghostly black eyes peering through knotholes, a sinister valley, uncanny conversations with characters whose insanity slowly reveals itself—but they permeate the story's chronotope as well.

Bierce transplants the Gothic mode to the western space, combining it with the inherited narrative methods of western travel narrative to produce a narrative of the failures of American westerly idealism. The Chinese character is central to this failure even in his or her departed state, as Ah Wee is presented as the guileless interferer, present in the valley not of his or her own volition. Ah Wee is an intrinsically outside element that becomes embedded in the history of the valley and the ghostly nexus around which the perennial western question of authenticity is conjured. Her intrinsic quality and aura, in the Benjaminian sense of the authentic quality of the original, is permanently lost and never present in the narrative, although her ghost has become the spirit of the valley and as such its authentic essence. The likely-she, the racially Chinese Gothic feminine spirit, drains masculine energy and neutralizes the progressive energies of Anglo-American men, even as she is idealized in memory. Her lingering remainder brings decay to what has been civilized and makes "hermaphrodite" and psychologically depleted existence the only one possible for the weakened male characters that loved her. The narrative suggests that, among the delusional memories and inscriptions on the landscape, such as her

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[209] S. Chan notes that in 1870, women made up only 7.2 percent of the total U.S. Chinese population. Efforts were already taking place to restrict the entry of Chinese women, who were assumed to be primarily prostitutes and thus a public nuisance. The California Legislature attempted to curb the traffic in Chinese women with "An Act for the Suppression of Chinese Houses of Ill Fame," passed March 21, 1866.

strange tombstone—that iconified symbolic element of the western landscape—lies the only authenticity possible in a deunified space.

While all spaces resist unity, American space (and western space in particular) is flamboyant in its resistance. Henri Lefebvre's notion of tragic space, which draws on the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche and Georges Bataille,[210] becomes useful here for its juxtaposition to idealistic theories of cohesive symbolic apprehension. Lefebvre's tripartite spatial model functions on the assumption that space is produced by junctions "between the space of inner [mental] experience on the one hand, and, on the other, the space of physical nature (below the level of consciousness: tree, sex, acephal) and social space (communication, speech)." Spatial practices (as they are perceived), spatial representations (as they are conceived), and lived representational space all intersect with one another, producing dis-union: space full of repetitions with differences, simulacra, copies of copies, the "eternal return." This resistance to unity is "tragic" in that human spatial activity gestures or reaches toward unity without the possibility of achieving it. Theories of cohesive symbolic apprehension seek that unity, and "to decode inner space and illuminate the nature of the transition from this subjective space to the material realm of the body and the outside world, and thence to social life." They expect to find a unity between these realms, one that could be communicated, decoded, made pertinent and symbolic (Lefebvre 19-20).

The spatial representations of the American Gothic foreground the tragedy of space, by their dramatization of space as full of repetitions with differences, of eternal returns, of dis-unions and copies, of simulacra. Gothic space rejects the potential for unity, reconciliation, or identity, and emphasizes the lack of coded message or meaning to impart. It refutes the absolute,

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[210] Friedrich Nietzsche, among others, contemplated this model of the cyclicality of human life and its ramifications on human thought, particularly in *The Gay Science* and *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

and the potential for a pure subject separable from others. Its tragedy arises from perpetual disillusionment, from recurring "failures" involved in spatial practice, and from the inability of characters to get what they want. The disconnects of the genre arise out of the fallibility of the lines of communication between mental, social, and physical space; because there is not concord between them.[211]

The story's hybrid western genre is reinforced in the narrator's assessment of the state of the valley on his final visit:

> All things in the valley seemed unchanged, excepting the cow-path, which was almost wholly overgrown with weeds. When we came out into the "clearing," however, there was change enough. Among the stumps and trunks of the fallen saplings, those that had been hacked "China fashion" were no longer distinguishable from those that were cut "'Melican way." It was as if the Old-World barbarism and the New-World civilization had reconciled their differences by the arbitration of an impartial decay—as is the way of civilizations. (123)

That Ah Wee is feminine is bound up with the fact that he or she is also from the old and barbaric "east," which chops at the west from the wrong directions and can justifiably be slaughtered for that transgression. The gendered and racialized spatial organization of the Valley, and the disharmonies produced by its confusions, would have been reinforced by contemporary American knowledge about female China. Reports from China about Chinese social organization, domestic life, and feminine culture, such as those discussed in the previous chapter, emphasized the hiddenness of Chinese women under "the Chinese system of ethics" (E. J. G. Bridgman 29), a system that physically secludes them from men, public spaces, and even from foreign women. The withholding of Chinese women, indeed, was emphasized as one of the

[211] These characteristics bear resemblance to those described by Lefebvre, particularly on pages 1-7.

major “hardships” that pressed foreigners confined to operate only in Canton’s foreign quarters toward advocating the forcible opening of China.[212]

However, even killing the perverse, feminine, easterly element does not diminish its capability to undermine masculine, westerly settlement and devolve civilized spaces back into wildness. In fact, the effect of her inscrutability is to engender that indistinctness in others who interact with her, suggesting that the result of Chinese apertures opening in western spaces is the breakdown of categorical boundaries in the self. Nature is the final agent in the layered inscription of history onto space: in the end, the outermost layer of the palimpsest, which covers over the insanities of the human layers, is the universalizing, abstracting force of nature. The layering of inscription and historical phases onto the western space ages it, problematizes its Edenic potential, and entangles the seeing-man from out East in these failures. The narrator does not just dig up forensic evidence as he continuously assembles the “true” story of Dunfer, Ah Wee, and Gopher. The narrator’s passages through the valley also entrap him in its dramas. On his first visit, Whisky Jo. accuses easterners of having no firsthand understanding of the dangers posed by the Chinese to white Christian settlement of the west, and thus negatively affecting a national problem they know little about. The more direct and ostentatious accusation comes during his last visit to the valley, from Gopher, who in his lunacy accuses the narrator of killing Whisky Jo. on his earlier visit by putting something in his drink. Although the locals are insistent upon the narrator’s positioning as an outsider, they are also eager to invest him with culpability for the local tragedies.

There are a number of implications here. The feminization of the Chinese within the homosocial environment of the frontier west does not so much romanticize or exoticise it, as in “Mien-yaun,” but rather it ascribes to otherness the pleasure potential (and by extension, the

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[212] See Nye’s memoirs.

potential for infliction of pain). Although the more purely homosocial environment (as in Harte's tales) is perfectly capable of creating its own fraternal violences and hierarchies, the feminine embellishment on the masculine landscape intensifies the focus on the problematic relationship of humans with their environments. The narrator's discovery that Ah Wee may have been a woman and certainly was an object of sexual attraction invests the dialectic with not just the racist's reflective opposition and easy, self-affirming antipathy toward the other; or with the reformer's empathy, directed toward his fellow man but likewise self-affirming in its distanced commiseration.

Sexual tension between subjects and the objects of their affection intensifies the realization that in reflection or interaction with real objects, the abstract ideal of individuation is lost. Material manifestation of the abstract, a priori, self-centered ideal object requires a fragmentation of the ideal; real objects cannot be purely self-referential (as abstracted objects are), and as such cannot be purely pleasurable, purely objective (Lefebvre 1-7). As Dunfer begins to attach importance to Ah Wee, her individuality causes her failures as his idealized object to begin to adhere destructively to his sense of subjectivity. His sensation of her as the hole within himself, the perpetrator of pain, becomes spatially represented through the symbolic element of the hole in the wall, within his establishment, out of which ghostly eyes peer: an aperture of visuality or conduit of sensation, mediating between subjective and objective life, the seeing and the being seen. Her superfluity—won at poker, useless as a woodsman—is like the hole's superfluity as a structural element: both are destructive to the subjective sense of environmental cohesion, and despite their inertness, they gain capacity for (unintentional) destruction.

That Ah Wee is feminized allows Bierce to explore racial relations between Anglo and

Chinese Americans as governed by a "vortex of summons and repulsion" for the one who is quite close but unassimilable, neither subject nor object. In this Kristevan paradigm for abjection, the other is not a simple opposition to the self, but rather that which is banished from the self yet unceasingly continues to challenge "its master," to cause its master to both desire it and be sickened by it. That "meaningless" other which vanishes when the west is vanquished depletes the self in its absence and reappears as the uncanny (the unrecognizable familiar), since the self finds its significance tied to that repressed, shameful other.[213]

That Ah Wee does not appear alive to the narrator is essential for his version of the story, which conscripts Ah Wee as catalyst in the drama of masculine failures of intersubjectivity and subjective authority over space. The story of the revelation of mysteries, which are never authenticated or fully communicated, and the eternal concealment of the real, raises a critique of the west to deliver eyewitnessed authenticity at all, and expresses alienation in domestic terms. The threat of miscegenation, and its sexual quality of hiddenness, likewise emphasizes the threats to domesticity/nation that cement the valley's tragic quality. Spatial tragedy is not to be confused with tragic symbolism, which is also present in the story in the tombstone iconography, and dramatic tragedy, which is born from distanced horror at and commiseration with the crushed hero, although both of these reinforce the tragedy of western space. Spatial tragedy arises out of a condition of endless repetition of irreconcilable attempts to know what can't be recognized, to represent what can't be represented, and a condition of interaction and commiseration with others who suffer things that you do not. In this story, spatial tragedy arising from human intervention, waste, excess, and imbalance is overcome or rectified by devolution back to a natural state outside of history, bearing only traces of human utopian

[213] Kristeva 1-2. See also Foote, Chapter 5: "Disorienting Regionalism: Jacob Riis, the City, and the Chinese Question."

failure.

And so, even if nature cannot function as a utopian space in which the abstract ideal can be implemented, creating spatial unity within the idealized historical timeline of progress, nature can function as a janitor. There is something of the sublime in this, yet a gothic sublime in which the confrontation with traces of human self-destruction and the triumph of nature create not psychological elation and affirmation but psychological destruction and loss of rationality. Here there is no irreversible human violence against nature, and humans do not survive their own aggression against life. There is not creation of agrarian-Edenic "second nature,"[214] a non-original but rather human-produced space of settlement and domestication; space reformulated according to subjective plan and referential to mental, physical, and social junctions. Instead, there is macrocosmic regenesis haunted by human traces of failed evolutions.

However there is something redemptive about the triumph of nature in this story, because it whispers at the potential for survival of wildness even amidst progression. This is a dream relatively unique to America, which reaches toward Edenic roots as a source of and accompaniment to modern civilization and progress. In this dream, man might find himself alone in a vast and unpopulated space, and see opportunity in this banishment. Although this dream arose out of the romantic and exploratory attitudes of imperial Europe, and was threatened with destruction by modern philosophies of tragic history and empirical science (including evolution), the North American geopolitical landscape actually allowed for this utopian imaginary to develop on a national scale. The vast amount of natural space, onto which

[214] The term is adapted from Lefebvre's conceptualization of the conundrum of urban roots-seeking, or seeking to restore primordial balance between city and nature, between human intervention and material genesis. He writes that scientific thought has produced violence against nature that is irreversible. If humanity is to survive its own aggression against life, there must be "the immediate production or creation of something other than nature: *a second, different or new nature*, so to speak. This means the production of space, urban space, both as a product and as a work" (109, emphasis mine).

relatively little human inscription had already happened, seemed to suggest that industrial evolution might coexist with natural preservation in a way that could overcome the basic evolutionary assumption of the primordial separation of human from nature. So whereas disintegration, animalism, or other forms of devolution are regularly characterized in modern Chinese fiction,[215] and in American modern forms such as Naturalism, as a dangerous staggering backwards, a blurring of the line of distinction between human and animal, in a way that entails a potential loss of national sovereignty, the devolutionary potential can carry redemptive weight in fiction of the U.S. west. The capacity for the force of the original to emerge and to cover over the violence of the past suggests that there is something quite different about western American modern ideation from the global phenomenon of cosmopolitan modernism.

Granted, the triumph of nature is the source of irony in Bierce's story: that the only permanent solution to human failures at intersubjectivity is the eradication of the human invests the blessing of wildness with a futility that characterizes its contribution to western gothic-realist fiction. As such, the valley does not *symbolize* tragedy, despite the personal tragedies that took place within it. It is tragic *spatially* because there is no concord between mental, social, and physical space; there is a lack of subjective optimism or enclosure, and no result in the eternal search for the impossibly elusive unity of a self that is impermeable by others. The valley can symbolize rebirth despite being haunted because human life is ejected from it. The disintegration of the "civilized" and inhabited spaces, on the other hand, is an insistent sign of partiality, failure, miscommunication, and madness. The mysterious hole in the wall of Dunfer's hermaphrodite establishment, through which the black, ghostly eye peers, is the spatial representation of the immanence of apertures, through which outside elements seep into

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[215] See Wang's *The Monster that is History*. Chow and Z. Zhang also explore these topics in relation to cinema in their respective books.

subjective totality. It is a reminder of the inevitable incompleteness of the utopian project, and of the inevitable nature of space as "traveled." Additionally, through its correlation with the Chinese element, the eye/hole symbolizes an intangible connection or portal to an alternate consciousness, which is mirrored in the narrative structuring of the story's point of view. This identification of Chineseness with interconnected but alternate consciousness, the "hole" in the American west, is persistent in Anglo-American Chinese representations into the next century in the fictions of John Steinbeck. And finally, the visions of non-white eyes are subversive yet direct challenges to the visions of the white seeing-man, who does not dominate western space through his appropriating visions as he did in earlier travel narratives. Instead, he finds counter-attacks of subaltern alterity in the form of these visualizing "chinks" or fissures that dissipate his sense of visual authority. In a gesture toward modernity, what is eyewitnessed in the west becomes fragmented.

Harte and Bierce, despite their self-acknowledged inability to speak for their inscrutable, multi-lingual, or voiceless Chinese characters, deserve attention for their astute fictionalizations of the crucial role Chinese presence in the American west played in adjusting Anglo-American idealizations of western historical space. Finding real Chinese in the United States, instead of far away in an exotic, ahistorical, imaginary Cathay, produced such negative public responses in the American west that these writers' ethnocentric and relatively didactic correctives are still respectable for their public and influential critiques of extreme anti-Chinese sentiment. Their re-creation of a positive or actualized potential, a fundamental position, for Chinese within the domestic space acknowledges the deep currents of dichotomous Anglo-American feeling toward the Chinese: the conflicted admixture of desire and disavowal, along with the troublesome identity crisis arising from concurrent investment in democratic ideals and habituation to

interracial enmity.

STEINBECK: POST-FRONTIER MODERNISM AND THE GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL

That Chineseness is not just narrative content but also a formal structuring element and an element of aesthetic value in western literature challenges, to borrow William R. Handley's phrasing, the "sense that the value and significance of western literature lie in the regional and historical 'reality' it mimetically (and naively) represents." Handley has stated that the "aesthetic complexity of western literature" comes out of the "writers' anxiety about historical content" and the supposed divides between frontier and post-frontier wests (2). As this chapter turns toward twentieth-century representations, I look at the transitions across this supposed divide, and suggest that the roots of western modernism lie in the earlier nineteenth century texts. They take from that gothic realist tradition the anxieties about history, colonization, and transnationalism, and from these construct modernist aesthetics that do not match the aesthetic and technical aspects of high modernism or the modernism of other regional literatures. John T. Matthews has noted, in the context of southern modernism, that the factor in the struggle with modernity that most "provokes modernist reaction in the US has to do with the painful acknowledgment of guilt" rather than resistance to tradition, as in European contexts (293). Although the specifics of past transgressions and the systems through which these aggressions against nations, races, and individuals were disavowed are unique from the south to the west, the "painful acknowledgement of guilt" in both contexts is the basis on which modernist experimentation is built.

The fiction of John Steinbeck, which defies categorization (is it realist? modernist? postmodern?), is full of the thematic obsession with acknowledgment of guilt, but it also absorbs

structurally this impulse to break systems of disavowal. While not as radically experimental with form as high modernist writing, it registers the impact of the modern (including the ostensible fulfillment of the dream of settlement and onset of domestic mundanity) by unsettling the narratives with the presence of the excluded. On a broader international level, we think of modernism as being an an amorphous artistic movement away from received conventions of form and content, and connected with changes in the material conditions of life associated with industrialization and globalization. The altered material environment of modernity that provokes a response, in the specific context of the west, is less its globalization (since its recent history is of transnationalism and unsettlement) than its domestication. The change in condition of life to ostensible domestication provokes a subjective response; the reaction in Steinbeck's narratives is to strain against that softening and dismantle the sense that the west has been housebroken and circumscribed, all the while acknowledging the alienation and nostalgia produced by the imposition of domestic constraint. It sees alternate visions through the eyes of alternate authorities; it re-articulates the familiar in unfamiliar ways; it imagines the past to make propositions about the present; it fragments and destroys in order to rebuild. It refuses speed and the emphasis on quick changes in metropolitan modernism; it contains scope, novelty, and acquisition within the local and the minutiae, to contain the universal through stasis, mundanity, and presence. Steinbeck's fiction shows limited taste for the cosmopolitan or modern, but manifests its impact as a creeping ingrowth on local environments.

Standard conceptualizations of "high" modernism favor the metropolitan, global cosmopolitan, the elite, and the southern as the primary expression of modern angst amid the urban wasteland, and see, in terms of American literature, the apex of "high" modernist expression coming from these eastern elites and their transatlantic connections in the early

twentieth century. The regional and global modernisms that both temporally and geographically circumscribe the metropolitan are different from that apex in their "failures" to be "high," even though they are, at times, appropriated or absorbed by "Modernist Literature." One commonly forwarded conception has been that rural and regional modernism challenges the sense that America, the world power and empire, has made much progress from its beginnings as primitive colonies. It suggests that the end point of frontier is immobilization, mundanity, and kitsch; a "Main Street" state of mind tensely positioned, for one, against cosmopolitan wandering and its mindset of annihilation and rejuvenation, and also against the national narratives of youthfulness, vitality, and rebelliousness with potential to energize or save the world.[216] This conceptualization of modern western space is an outgrowth of the mythos of national domestication, when in fact this totalization was never and can never fully be carried out.

Modern texts of the American west, like their nineteenth-century predecessors, are burdened with the task of answering to the various histories perceived as failures and to the national or international abstractions, because they are organized within a chronotope of colonization. That spatio-temporal structuring, embodied in western residents and inscribed on western landscapes, produces a modernism that is essentially subaltern, since its "identity is its difference" (Spivak 285). It suffers from irretrievable consciousness, having no rooted, original authenticity divested of influence by the outside (286). Western anachronism corroborates this inescapable connectivity to outsider histories (and embeddedness of the outside in the history of the inside) and "difference from" elite modernism (in its failure to progress according to modernist teleology); even as it works to divest itself of that burden of answerability to the outside. Perhaps this very condition of being always already alienated from that to which it is intended to be referential makes western literature always already modern. The American west,

[216] For one, this idea is articulated in Bradbury's third chapter.

certainly, was always already transnational and did not need the arrivals of cosmopolitan easterners to give the west a "traveledness" that was always already there.

This final section of this chapter will examine the modern writing of John Steinbeck, a California native, in terms of his formal navigation of this complex subaltern positioning. Unlike many other writers of his era, whose modernist wanderings are expatriated, and who, as Alexandra Peat has noted, deliver deeply pessimistic outlooks on the spiritual alienation of modern man in a world abandoned by God (Ch. 3), Steinbeck uses "the Chinese" as a rooting element against decay and lostness, an element which carries potential to transform the western space from a zone of unstructured wandering to a zone of globally connected community, in which movement can take place without destroying stasis. Part of this has to do with connecting the incomer status of the Chinese characters to the incomer status of the Anglo characters and placing them on even footing as "real westerners." That conception is built on the sense of Californian space being a liminal zone of convergence, which allows Steinbeck to narrate that space through a style that combines realist and experimental modes, suggesting that western modernism can not just be a rejection of realism even as it cannot avoid fragmenting that realism to reconstruct the "ordinary." By leveling Anglo-American mythologies against Chinese alterity, he invests Californian space with philosophical, rural eloquence that comes out of not a unified modernist ideology but a heterogenous zone of paradigmatic and interpretive openness. To some extent, this is what marks his texts as precursors to postmodernism, as well.

Cannery Row (1945) and *East of Eden* (1952) both utilize "the Chinese" as an organizing trope for redeeming the modern apprehension of history (as cycles of destruction and rejuvenation). This comes out of Steinbeck's understanding of Chinese philosophy and notions of history, which he encountered through his friend Ed Ricketts' library, and which he

understood as having a dialectical approach informed by paradox: the balancing of good and evil; the inseparability of opposites and their constant interplay. The Chinese does not eliminate cyclicality and alienation, but it rationalizes it in a way that teleology cannot. As such, Steinbeck creates a complex positioning for Chineseness as simultaneously redemptive of the modern sense of psychic and social alienation (and thus functionally, logically modern), and also anti-modern in its potential to restabilize modern unfixedness in areas such as moral standards and judgment. His experimentations with narrative authority and shifts in voice, while upsetting realist modes of representation, do not eliminate the potential for stability in the home, community, or nature. Whatever negative impact that war, settlement, or industrialization has on the environments and communities of these novels, it is rectified, frequently, by the quietism of the Chinese response, which unexpectedly mimics (with cultural twists) the coolness, detachment, and nonchalance of the popular western hero. Steinbeck's stories do not undo the potential for Anglo-American masculine centrality, but create room for developing their psychological complexity by balancing their excesses against one another and against their others. The legacy of being a hybrid, interstitial community means, to Steinbeck, that authenticity arises out of being integrated not unto the self but unto the community.

Cannery Row. In the prologue to his short novel *Cannery Row*, John Steinbeck ponders what method can be used to "set down alive" the sensory quality of after-hours Monterey, California, a "gathered and scattered" mise en scene of "normal life" and everyday people. This Cannery Row is not the one of the factories, with their screaming whistles, hurried immigrant assembly-line workers, and smelly rivers of silver fish to process and can, although that Monterey of capitalist mechanization surges through the otherwise "quiet and magical" town in the daytime.

Instead, Steinbeck's pen creeps out like an ocean creature from its cave when the bums, prostitutes, scientists, painters, grocers and people not dispossessed of their individuality re-emerge in the evening after the human wave, rushing toward the ocean shore from inland, has retreated. For Steinbeck, in this place that lies on the constantly fluctuating boundary between the land and sea, the writer is not distinct from the biologist, who collects the living creatures of the tidal shore and observes their qualities on a petri dish. He ends his prologue by observing that:

> When you collect marine animals there are certain flat worms so delicate that they are almost impossible to capture whole, for they break and tatter under the touch. You must let them ooze and crawl of their own will onto a knife blade and then lift them gently into your bottle of sea water. And perhaps that might be the way to write this book—to open the page and to let the stories crawl in by themselves. (358)

Monterey's geographic positioning on the shore of the Pacific Ocean, a westernmost place and a liminal space on the boundary between land and sea, is significant. Life on the coast is intertidal: bending and flowing with the tides, never permanently on solid, dry land. As Colleen Lye has noted, this is an indication of a shift in American geographics: "the Pacific Rim at last overtakes a fin de siècle sense of California as a barricaded Western outpost" (254). Her assessment points to the historical narrative of the ascendancy of the type of thinking about the west that informed Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis, and to its decline. Certainly, by the 1940s American expansion had taken an international turn; however, this turn is an outgrowth of the historical sense of western space as transnational, and merely a return to that sense following the relatively short-lived perception that the west might possibly be "closed." The focus on the constantly changing yet changeless intertidal zone allows for a modernist revisitation of western historical

narratives as well as advancing a contemporary assessment of coastal Californian space. The sense of fluctuation, of people and things going in and out, without any significant shift in the geographic setting of the story from the town of Monterey and its environs emphasizes the centrality of place in the narrative of earthly life.

As a point of comparison to the earlier chapters of this book, *Cannery Row*'s permanence as a center does not function in the same way as traditional Chinese metaphysical geographics. In that paradigm, the geographic center is both connected to the will of heaven and to earthly cultural authority. The traveling out and back of the central authority is a process of affirmation of the hegemony of the center. In contrast, there is no central voice in *Cannery Row*. The narrative shifts frequently between a cast of major and minor characters. Doc, on whom the story finally comes to rest, the narrative embodiment of Steinbeck's friend Ed Ricketts for whom the story was written, comes to represent a kind of nexus of experience and cosmopolitan viewpoint within the rural locality. However, it is significant that the first story that crawls out of the watery shallows of Monterey is that of Lee Chong, the Chinese grocer, who despite his willingness to extend credit to people who do not repay their debts, manages to run a successful business and exert significant influence over the people and commerce of pedestrian Monterey. Lee Chong is also the last man with whom Doc interacts at the end of the story, and as such Lee Chong bookends the tale. Lee Chong comes to represent his own kind of nexus, as his grocery store becomes a point of fixedness into which people rush, and out of which they retreat. Like Doc's lab and Dora's brothel, other local establishments, Lee's store affords him a fixedness of perspective that establishes him as one authority in the novella.

Part of Steinbeck's purpose in utilizing shifts in narrative point of view in this text, and expressing those points of view as mediated by their spatial environments, is to connect

individuals to his project of envisioning epistemological alternatives. *Cannery Row* suggests that this can only be done through the medium of The Word, but shows that The Word bears a deep connection to the subject and to the place. Steinbeck writes:

> The Word is a symbol and a delight which sucks up men and scenes, trees, plants, factories, and Pekinese. Then the Thing becomes the Word and back to Thing again, but warped and woven into a fantastic pattern. The Word sucks up Cannery Row, digests it and spews it out, and the Row has taken the shimmer of the green world and the sky-reflecting seas. (363)

This interplay of thing and word, of event or individual or scenario or other "real" element and narration of that thing, expresses the writer's work of shuttling between Lefebvre's three spaces: the inner (mental), the physical/natural, and the social, as he or she struggles to make the mental and physical communicative. The mundane acquires philosophic agency and appears connected, and an entire local space can be seen as fluctuating with cosmic tides that bring waves of bad and good luck, waves of sickness, and waves of movement in and out of town uniformly to all. Like other modernist texts, the medium (the word) is an active presence in the text, which foregrounds the author's artistic activity and makes enactment of form part of the story itself. Under the influence of "The Word":

> Lee Chong is more than a Chinese grocer. He must be. Perhaps he is evil balanced and held suspended by good—an Asiatic planet held to its orbit by the pull of Lao Tze and held away from Lao Tze by the centrifugality of abacus and cash register—Lee Chong suspended, spinning, whirling, among groceries and ghosts. (363)

Lee Chong, probably at least a third-generation American, stands in for the historical connection or the presence of deep time in the shallow tidepools of the present because of his links to an old

country to the far west: not only epistemologically, but also physically, as he exhumes his grandfather's bones, packs them, and sends them back to China to be buried with his ancestors. That his positioning is described in terms of astrophysics certainly attests to the period of its publication as much as to Steinbeck's desire to represent totality in the incommensurable minutiae. Lee Chong is not the only individual suspended and whirling amid modern and classical worlds: Mack and the boys, a group of bums that would be his antagonists if antagonists existed in this story, stand in for the connection to the eastern far past. They are named several times as "the Virtues, the Graces, the Beauties," vestiges of a European classical world, with a God-given gift of survival and the ability to avoid the quagmires of modernity that turn men into "trapped, poisoned, and trussed-up men" fighting for security (364).

Steinbeck had a relatively developed understanding of traditional Chinese philosophy (Farrah 59), but seems primarily interested in Daoist epistemes of non-causality and universal interconnection rather than Confucian hierarchies of cosmological space and filial relationships. He is interested in the capability of the "Chinese eye," as Bierce was, to offer an alternative vision that breaks down idealized apprehensions. This is advertised in the brief appearance of the "old Chinaman" in Chapter Four, who proclaims the importance of "the Chinese" to altering American visions of space and time. He appears only once in the narrative, but is described as making a repetitive trip down to the beach in his flapping shoe every night and back every morning. None of the schoolchildren taunt him "as they should" because he "carried a little cloud of fear about with him" (368), but all of them "thought he was a very funny old Chinaman" (368); they can perceive him only as a functionary of Anglo-American geopolitical conceptions of racialized space.

But when one boy confronts him with that vision by calling out "Ching-Chong Chinaman

sitting on a rail— 'Long came a white man an' chopped off his tail," the man turns to look at the boy, and returns a vision of an alternate, desolately lonely landscape. His eyes "spread out until there was no Chinaman" and become "one eye—one huge brown eye as big as a church door" (369), confronting the boy with an expansive and direct gaze, in which can be seen the implications of the Anglo vision from the Chinese standpoint. His Chinese eyes open an aperture in Anglo-dominated space, becoming "a Chinese mirror for the white man"[217] and reflecting a vision that reads as simultaneously dismal, confrontational, mysterious, and dangerous. Part of what is disheartening about the vision is that while it might produce sympathy in the liberal-minded, it also matches the vision of eradication of Chineseness promoted by distopian "Yellow Peril" texts like Jack London's 1910 science-fiction story "The Unparalleled Invasion." In this text, China nearly conquers the world, and is stopped only by the drastic, genocidal measures taken by western powers in using biological warfare to decimate China's population. In that sense, the old Chinaman reflects the cruel ironies of being Chinese in the American west: simultaneously central to its visions and spatial structuring, but reserved for annihilation, singularity, and loneliness. This vision is redeemed, partially, by the narrative structure, which fates all individuals and groups to togetherness in taxonomic separation, like the specimens in Doc's marine biological laboratory. If Chinese Americans are irregular, at least they are irregular among other irregulars. And additionally, the containment of types to their bottles is frequently upset in the story, usually by Mack and the Boys, who unintentionally break and spill specimen jars, free collected frogs, and in other ways promote mixing.

The simile that compares the Chinese eye to the door of a church functions also on the level of philosophical structuring, since Steinbeck was particularly invested in projecting the sense of epistemological alternatives. The church does not provide the only door to encountering

[217] This is a riff on the title of William Apess's 1833 essay "An Indian's Looking Glass for the White Man."

an understanding of the shape of the cosmos. The old Chinaman's vision of desolation is nestled in amongst the philosophical and literary reflections in the early chapters of *Cannery Row* and the introductions of central characters. Spatially, it is opened, like other spaces of the story, by a pedestrian exploration of the streets of the town. It stands out from these chapters, though, in its mysticality and unclear connection to the foregrounded spatial trope of the tidal zone. Although the old man goes out to the beach every night and back inland every morning, the vision occurs when he interrupts this regular, eerie tramp to breach local space with a chronotopic portal. Both, however, are connected in Steinbeck's sense of coastal Californian space: they "must be." Both coexist; both indicate an absence of historical progressiveness even as they indicate a cosmic understanding of the universe as contained in the minute.

Steinbeck uses absence of historical progressiveness, which David Farrah has argued is borrowed from Steinbeck's reading and discussions with Ricketts of Chinese philosophy as well as from quantum mechanics, as a modernist technique. He envisions Californian historical space as harmoniously whole and interconnected in its untidy heterogeneity. It is space formed by both teleological and non-teleological thought (what should be and what is), in which both causality and non-causality govern events, and in which the real cannot be separated from the unreal. In Steinbeck's Monterey, we see the universe through a peephole and read the scientific as a poem.[218] One result of this outlook is that, like other formal modernisms, it overcomes the modern problems of alienation and the irretrievable splitting of man from nature or originals through aesthetics. Like in other modern forms that show the decomposition of realism and naturalism, "causality and pattern diminish, consciousness dominates, and the aim is a semi-scientific study of the rhythms of mind" (Bradbury 38). The modern chronotope projects a synchronic present where things are continuously recurring and concurrent.

[218] Farrah 57-64. See also Kaname (101-104) and Railsback for non-teleological thought in *Cannery Row*.

In *Cannery Row*, this recurrence comes in the form of the tidal motion that washes up something new with each wave (expressed narratively as interwoven vignettes). Although it taxonomically separates individuals and characterizes them as alone in the presence of others, unexpected and lost in their individuality, as a collective the local functions meaningfully. Also, it finds repetition in the modern objects that accompany each individual, like Doc's phonograph and scientific paraphenalia, one couple's boiler-cum-house, Lee's broke-down truck. These signifiers of capitalist excess and subjective alienation from lost originality emphasize modern disaffection, just as does Steinbeck's narrative exclusion of industrial daytime Monterey from the scenario of "the real tales" of Cannery Row. This spatially expressed alternate form of modernity, where nature is not lost nor is it domesticated, is specific to the Pacific coast, but elementally modernist.

Unlike other modernist writers, though, Steinbeck's formal strategies neither result in grotesqueness of character or plot, stream of consciousness or other highly experimental narrative forms, nor utter loss or disenfranchisement of the subject. There is no modern colossus, as in urban fiction, to alienate subjects and doom them to separation from nature. Man's displacement from centrality is rationalized in a positive philosophical outlook that relinquishes lordly claims to authorial subjectivity; this new authority that is only a minor authority is personified partly in Doc, who collects the crawling specimens, both human and animal, into the space of his lab for study, and around whom other characters' actions circulate, yet who does not overwhelmingly shape the narrative and whose thoughts are frequently unannounced. Steinbeck invests the shuttling between experience and creation of text, or the narrative shuttling between occurrence and insight, with non-uniform cosmic design. This, combined with the renunciation of industriousness in favor of "virtue, grace, and beauty," endow

the narrative with a rural philosophical eloquence that distinguishes Steinbeck's fictions from other modernist writing.

Of course, what is disorienting about his application of traditional Chinese philosophy is its non-contemporaneity with actual philosophical events taking place in early twentieth-century China, notably including the decisive Marxist turn against the "superstitions" of classical Chinese cosmology, which means that the textual application of the Chinese trope is on the level of idealized American apprehension rather than contemporaneous intellectual interchange. His readings do not recognize that classical Chinese conceptions of circularity and the integration of the universe are generally not connected to a democratization or evening-out of authority. Instead, his application of "the Chinese" allows for a concentrated, ostensibly consequence-free appropriative misreading of less familiar cultural source material in the effort to find new ways of narrating modernity. What Steinbeck, like other modernists and countercultural writers (including the Beats), were attracted to in Chinese philosophy was the cosmological conception of the universe that integrated spatial geographics with metaphysical ones in a way that was fundamentally alternative to the dualistic western worldview, and as such seemed unpredictable and mystical to the outsider.

The chronotopic organization around tidal movement, as influenced by the shape and forces of the cosmos, and the emphasis on rational eccentricity, reinforces the theme of unfulfillable settledness. Even so, the elements that are constantly in motion need some person around which to swirl as a tide, a man who sees down into the tide and lifts out the wriggling life form, sticks it in a bottle of formaldehyde, and ships it out east somewhere to be studied:

> "Hazel picked a nobby purplish starfish from the bottom of the pool and popped it into his nearly full gunny sack. 'I wonder what they do with them,' he said.

"'Do with what?' Doc asked.

"'The starfish,' said Hazel. 'You sell 'em. You'll send out a barrel of 'em. What do the guys do with 'em? You can't eat 'em.'

"'They study them,' said Doc patiently….

"'What do they find to study?' Hazel continued. 'They're just starfish. There's millions of 'em around. I could get you a million of 'em.'

"'They're complicated and interesting animals,' Doc said a little defensively. 'Besides, these are going to the Middle West to Northwestern University.'" (374)

The writer/biologist, who is among the locals but not quite one of them, in the old travel writing and regional writing traditions, acts as the eyes of the east in the west, presumably to create a point of recognition or identification for readers. The oddities of local eccentricity, which are covered and then uncovered by the tide, make it "worth studying": alterity is justified without being minimized, meaningful without being symbolic or producing unified meaning. The wriggling threads of humanity on the petri dish seem to evade observations about their overall importance to the story of the universe. However, this scientific viewpoint actually reinforces the thematic point of the story: interconnectivity and balance, as achieved by excesses and moderations (as exemplified in the characters), and tidal shifts (from good to bad times in the town as a unit, dictated by the ebbs and flows instigated by seemingly unrelated events and circumstances). It expresses in narrative form the philosophical concept articulated by Georges Bataille in 1931:

> It is clear that the world is purely parodic, in other words, that each thing seen is the parody of another, or is the same thing in a deceptive form. Ever since sentences started to *circulate* in brains devoted to reflection, an effort at total identification has been made,

> because with the aid of a *copula* each sentence ties one thing to another; all things would be visibly connected if one could discover at a single glance and in its totality the tracings of an Ariadne's thread leading thought into its own labyrinth.... And if the origin of things is not like the ground of the planet that seems to be the base, but like the circular movement that the planet describes around a mobile center, then a car, a clock, or a sewing machine could equally be accepted as the generative principle. (5-6)

In *Cannery Row*, the eccentricities are all connected into the local, tidal unit: universal meaning is in the assemblage and plotlessness. When separated out into pieces and sent away, de-contextualized, these elements no longer bear their nodal, intrinsic meaning and must be dissected to be understood. In this way, the west bears the burden of its subaltern positioning in relation to the east: the burden of bearing oversight, just as in *East of Eden* the west bears the burden of idealization.

East of Eden. *East of Eden*, on the level of allegory, would appear to primarily be a commentary on the historical legacies of the doctrine of Manifest Destiny and the agrarian utopian myth of new Eden, wrapped up in the Biblical human dramas accompanying the fall of the original Eden and the fate of man to repeat the mistakes of his fathers. It is against this backdrop, though, that I want to explore the peripheral centrality of Chineseness, again, to Steinbeck's vision, this time of American reconstruction. It is a uniquely western vision of reconstruction, one that does not involve coming to terms with the legacy of slavery and the economic fallout of the Civil War, but rather coming to terms with western history, its geopolitics, and the conflicted role it played in national development. Thematically, this translates to a focus on failed or unreachable dreams, Indian genocide, and American geographic imaginaries, all filtered through allegorical

allusion to the Bible's earliest generations of people. Steinbeck's great American novel achieves some of its greatness through its translation of the dramas of Adam and Eve, and Cain and Abel, and through the antagonistic pairings of these fathers and sons into a story of a contemporary family seemingly doomed to repetition of the sins of the fathers. Women, likewise, are fated by their propensity toward sin to bring about masculine downfall, which means that in many ways this novel relies on the oldest tropes in the proverbial book. What refreshes the allegory, though, is the surprising agency of its Chinese character, Lee, Adam Trask's male house servant, who he takes on after moving west to California to establish his new-Edenic homestead in the Salinas Valley. Although Lee is much less frequently mentioned in explanations of the novel, he becomes the moving force of the novel away from self-destruction and failure, by virtue of his intervention, as not quite an insider nor an outsider, in the Trask family's interpersonal affairs. As in *Cannery Row*, "the Chinese" operates as a rhetorical function, a voice or an eye, through which to transmit what has been seen by the Far East (or far west, as it were), and it also becomes a structuring element of the aesthetics of the narrative. It provides visions of alterity that offer new purpose to the western space, which has failed to be new Eden, and to the people who have come there from the east, who have become disillusioned by their failures to bring about rejuvenation.

Lee enters the story almost unannounced, carrying with him very little personal history, and appears at first to merely be part of the scenery of the more central dramas of the Trask family. That he, as an element of *environment*, ends up having great influence on the subjective dramas of the tale announces the significance of habitat in the structuring of human experience. Notably, it is Samuel Hamilton, the other major male figure in the western portion of the novel, who draws Lee out of the scenery and into relevant action by forcing him to speak, honestly, in

his true American accent rather than in his play-acted Chinese pidgin. The Hamiltons, although less Biblical and dramatic than the Trasks, are the other major focus of the novel: the novel intertwines their family history with that of the Trasks, and the book is narrated from the perspective of one of Samuel's grandchildren. As such, the Hamiltons provide the major alternate sphere of perspective to the Trasks and their dramas. That Lee becomes the major third perspective in the narrative indicates his importance as structuring element, even if that importance does not turn out to merit the same attention to his subjectivity and ancestry that is earned by the generations of Trasks and Hamiltons.

Lee's significance lies in his performance of a function that is entirely outside of the totalized universe of Euro-American mythology: there is no Lee to alter the course of history for the ancient Israelites; Manifest Destiny would likewise envision a culturally homogenized western space in which heterogenous elements are expelled or assimilated. Lee's utterly other worldview, because it is not bound by Euro-American epistemology, can function as a corrective. Perspectival multiplicity, although less comprehensive in *East of Eden* than in *Cannery Row*, is key to Steinbeck's vision of western historical continuities and futures, in which no one vision achieves absolute and idealized fulfillment and the alternative to self-destruction is forcible re-vision of spatial production through the correctives of interior otherness. Revising human interrelation to space essentially involves allowing otherness to influence habitus, by opening to apertures in the habituated way of being within environment, and thus acquiescing to the real source of rejuvenation at hand: difference. Within the text, this means instigating a new western chronotope that is invested with histories other than the Euro-American idealizations.

Explaining these chronotopic constructions of the novel must start with the embodiment of the Euro-American ideal, Adam Trask, whose suggestive name positions him to bear the

burdens of mythological function, which is reinforced in his description as a "sacrifice" early in the novel (24). Adam is repeatedly "tested" (24) in the novel, first by his god-like father, then by the betrayals of his wife, and finally by the deadly antagonism of one of his sons against the other. He fails the tests of his father Cyrus, which come in the form of forcible enlistment in the army to fight in the Indian Wars, since he only play-acts participation in that genocide and eventually betrays the religious-national agenda by becoming a vagrant. Adam idolizes his wife Cathy, whom everyone else can see is filled with evil: she drugs him, sleeps with his brother Charles, passes off the twin boys as Adam's, administers a nearly fatal gunshot to Adam, and then abandons Adam and the children to disappear into a life of prostitution. Adam's ensuing depression causes him to relinquish his dreams of developing his Californian land into a "garden," to neglect his newborn sons, and to terminate all social relationships.

Adam's subjection to forcible openings over the course of the novel is allegorical for the forcible rending of the ideal of American Eden and Manifest Destiny; perhaps the most significant of these openings are the interventions of Lee and Samuel to draw him out of his depressive state following his wife's betrayals. These tender interventions against untenable eastern ideals recast western Eden as remaining always out of reach, never fantastically or divinely productive, always working to darken the memories of the east, and ultimately haunted by other narratives that do not fit in the master narrative. The western Eden reveals itself, as Samuel notes in the epigraph, as containing dark, ghostly secrets.

Lee's role in this, as the faithful manservant, is abnormalized by his racial identity, which is extremely important in the layered allegory of the novel. The Chinese for Steinbeck, like they were for Harte, are among those who answer back to the memetics of the "Skinners." Whereas Harte's dialectics were more simply oppositional, suggesting that American spatial dynamics are

built on yet resistant to the ideal of totality, Steinbeck's dialectics involve "suspension": the calculated design of Anglo-American perpetual motion toward various goals is suspended by the interference of the Chinese, which cannot be evaluated as either good or evil, since it is something entirely different from that Christian-national epistemological structuring. For *Cannery Row's* Lee Chong to be "more than a Chinese grocer," which "he must be," then he is something aside from the systemic abstraction, and instead a force that balances and suspends evil and good (363). Likewise, *East of Eden*'s Lee bears no resemblance to the abstraction suggested by his name and his fake pidgin, though he utilizes this "self-orientalization"[219] to avoid the complications that entail from deviation. He is something that cannot be mixed in despite being an American native (162), and Cathy finds him to be, unlike other men, impenetrable (159).

Instead, Lee is what halts the perpetuation of faulty thinking in both Adam and Samuel. Samuel's uncovering of Lee's real, accent-free voice (160-161) pushes Lee from the realm of abstraction into a position of influence over the development of the narrative. Lee comes to "completely control his master" (164) by undoing the death blow administered by Cathy, by acting as midwife and mother to the infant twin boys, by bringing about Samuel's interference in Adam's neglect of the children, and perhaps most importantly to the philosophic viewpoint of the novel, interpreting Biblical text to refute the resignation Adam has to his fate. Adam, in lifelong search of New Eden, represents the failures of American agrarian ideals, which requires endless westward movement and work to build the utopian continent by settling the fields and establishing the domestic. In contrast, Steinbeck gives the role of the one who births and nurtures the western new Eden, and leads Caleb, Adam's son, to the Promised Land of

[219] Arif Dirlik comments on Chinese participation in "self-orientalization," which he argues helped to hold anti-Chinese sentiment in check, in "Chinese History and the Question of Orientalism."

reconciliation at the end of the novel, to a Chinese man. The potential for recovery of an original, sinless condition, in the modernist novel, is rewritten as impossible: instead one might hope for renewal.

Lee is both the instigator of this realization, that the received narrative is dysfunctional and unobtainable, and the promoter of the new world of free choice, one in which a man might rule over precedent to create for himself a chosen future. His interpretation of the central Biblical passage of the novel, the story of Cain and Abel from Genesis 4, by overpassing the Anglo-American translations to reinterpret the original, proves that theirs is a world of chosen outcomes, not destined ones:

> "Don't you see?" [Lee] cried. "The American Standard translation *orders* men to triumph over sin, and you can call sin an ignorance. The King James translation makes a promise in 'Thou shalt,' meaning that men will surely triumph over sin. But the Hebrew word, the word *timshel*— 'Thou mayest'—that gives a choice. It might be the most important word in the world. That says the way is open. That throws it right back on a man. For if 'Thou mayest'—it is also true that 'Thou mayest not.' Don't you see?...
>
> "'Thou mayest'! Why, that makes a man great, that gives him stature with the gods, for in his weakness and his filth and his murder of his brother he has still the great choice. He can choose his course…." Lee's voice was a chant of triumph….
>
> "This is a ladder to climb to the stars."... "I feel that I am a man. And I feel that a man is a very important thing—maybe more important than a star. This is not theology. I have no bent toward gods. But I have a new love for that glittering instrument, the human soul…. It is always attacked and never destroyed—because 'Thou mayest.'" (301-302)

Lee's exhortation, recalled again at the end of the novel, when Adam lies in bed paralyzed by a stroke, forces Adam on multiple occasions of immobilization by tragedy and the failure of utopian ideal to accept the burden of choice over cowardice or laziness. Lee leads him to choose to raise his offending infant bastard sons, and later to choose to forgive one son for causing the death of the other. His blessings redeem the future and its potential even in its imperfection, and negate the expectation that the mistakes of history are fated to repeat themselves and perpetuate themselves to "upon the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation" (*New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Exod. 34.7). By his choices, Adam elects to rule over his desire to sin, and is allowed to reside closer in to Eden; unlike Cain who by his choice is marked, cast out, and exiled to the Land of Nod on the east of Eden.

Lee, like his Chinese American forebears, is written in Anglo-American fiction as pushing back against the endless western push, the endless seeking for the ideal that lies just out of reach, and yet Steinbeck idealizes Lee's perspective by delivering to it insight and magnanimity. Lee is the essential stranger in western space who preserves its transnationality: as Heidi Kim writes, "If Lee cannot function without America and his American mask, neither can this America function without Lee" (92). Additionally, Steinbeck's reordering of the U.S. timeline through the trope of the Chinese influence as a timeline that was chosen, not destined, revises the chronotopic rendering of the chronological west as not westerly-progressive but westerly-cyclical: churning through cycles of repetitive error and imperfection toward a chosen, not ordained future. As such, Steinbeck's revision gives us an uncanny outlook on the prevailing narrative of U.S. historical development forwarded by Frederick Jackson Turner, at the moment when it was decided that the frontier dream of *tabula rasa* had been sought everywhere and found to exist nowhere:

> [N]ever again will such gifts of free land offer themselves. For a moment, at the frontier, the bonds of custom are broken and unrestraint is triumphant. There is not *tabula rasa*. The stubborn American environment is there with its imperious summons to accept its conditions; the inherited ways of doing things are also there; and yet, in spite of environment, and in spite of custom, each frontier did indeed furnish a new field of opportunity, a gate of escape from the bondage of the past; and freshness, and confidence, *and scorn of older society, impatience of its restraints and its ideas, and indifference to its lessons,* have accompanied the frontier…. And now, four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of a hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history. (37-38, emphasis added)

With the Census of 1880, which proclaimed the frontier closed, came the extinction of possibility that Eden might be found in the continent. And yet, Turner claims that American "restless, nervous energy" and movement, its "dominant individualism, working for good and for evil, and withal that buoyancy and exuberance which comes with freedom"—these "traits of the frontier"—will never cease, but continue to spread abroad (37). His formulation of "each frontier" as offering an opportunity for novelty affirms the hopefulness with which westerly movement was approached. And yet, the Adamic types were found wanting a reminder of the most ancient "lessons," and reconstruction of the disturbed, assaulted, post-frontier west could come only through intervention of former "restraint" personified in the ancient wisdoms of the Biblical and the Chinese. That this retains the stereotype of Chinese antiquity is undeniable, but it imagines that peripheral otherness as central to spatio-temporal production of the west.

Conclusion

Kate McCullough has argued that Chinese-American "human bodies" were deployed in America to resolve certain material conflicts—for example, to build railroads—but they were also deployed in fiction to break down categorical absolutes. This is true in the writing not just of Chinese Americans, who began to appear on the American literary scene in the twentieth century and, as McCullough has noted in the writing of Sui Sin Far, who engaged with the complexities of racial construction to critique the naturalization of "whiteness" as a category (230). That Chinese, even American-born citizens and American-employed laborers, remained ciphers for partiality or outsidedness (against an insidedness with east coast referentiality) can explain to a certain degree their centrality to western representation as a whole. The other real America, the west, could only be written about, even by white, male, eastern, American writers, in ways that acknowledged the breakdown of absolutes in that space. And, in fact, the obsession with western frontier confrontation and culture clash in depictions and U.S. cultural understandings of that space and its peoples resulted in the construction of that iconography as "authentic" representation.

Without violence, eccentrics, permeability, fluidity, miscegenation, land wars, and internationals, the west could not be represented, since racialization of Americanness also undermines "American" as a national concept. And as such, the west as a whole—not just its outsiders within—could not be represented as fully participant in national ideals, even those promised fully and equally to all within the terrain of nation. So while citizens of Asian descent and other subordinated groups clearly faced, in life, exclusion or greater challenges to sharing equality and other American rights, in literary representation of the west their presence and abjection is essential to narrating the impossibility of this project of domestication in regional

America, and to critiquing the effect of racialized violence and identity-construction on the health of the Adamic-types themselves. American writers of Asian descent began to challenge this entrenched trope around the mid-twentieth century, and representations increasingly seek to de-link Chineseness from its deployment in this way.[220] For the writers examined in this chapter, the legacy of the popular imagination of Chineseness, along with the legacy of popular imagination of the west, are integral to one another and to their writerly reworkings that critique those imagined constructs.

[220] See Lowe, and Chin, et al.

Glossary

Ba Jin 巴金
Bao Gong 包公
Cai Xixue yi 采西學議
caizi jiaren 才子佳人
Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹
Chenlun 沉淪
Chenluo 沉落
Chouyang chuyi 籌洋芻議
Chu fang meiguo 初訪美國
chulu 出路
Chu shi tai xi ji 初使泰西紀
chuanqi 傳奇
datong 大同
dao 道
Daodejing 道德經
Dongxi yangkao meiyue tongjizhuan 東西洋考每月統紀傳
Ernü yingxiong zhuan 儿女英雄传
fan'an 翻案
Fei Xiaotong 费孝通
Feng Guifen 冯桂芬
Fu Zhudeng 傅祝登
gong 公
guwen 古文
guo 國
Haiguo tuzhi 海國圖誌
hanjian 漢奸
Heinu yu tian lu 黑奴籲天錄
hen hao xiao 很好笑
Hongloumeng 紅樓夢
hua 華
huaqiao 华侨
Huanyou diqiu xinlu 環遊地球新錄
Huang Qing zhigong tu 皇清職貢圖
Huangyu quanlan tu 皇與全覽圖
I-li-pu 伊里布
ji kaitong 極開通
Jiezi yuan 芥子園
jinghua shuiyue 鏡花水月
Jinghua yuan 镜花缘 *Jinghua yuan* 鏡花緣
jing zhong si dong 靜中思動
Kangxi cidian 康熙字典
Kang Youwei 康有為
kaozheng xue 考證學
Lao Can youji 老残游记
li 利
Li Boyuan 李伯元
Li Gui 李圭
Li Hongzhang 李鸿章
Li Ruzhen 李汝珍
liyi 禮義
Liang Qichao 梁啓超
liangxiu qingfeng 兩袖清風
Lin Shu 林紓
Lin Zexu 林則徐
Lin Zhen [Lin Qian] 林箴
Linggan 灵感
Liu Boji 劉伯驥
Liu E 刘鹗
Lu Xun 魯迅
Lun xiaoshuo yu qunzhi zhi guanxi 論小說輿羣治之關係
Lunyu 論語
Mao cheng ji 貓城記
Mu tianzi zhuan 穆天子傳
nei 内
nü'er guo 女兒國
nüren guo 女人國
Ou Mei huan you ji: Zai shu qi 歐美環游記:再述奇
qianze 譴責
Qian Zhongshu 钱锺书
ren de wenxue 人的文學
Sanxia wuyi 三俠五義
Sanzhou riji 三洲日記
Shan hai jing 山海經
Shengsi chang 生死場
Shi Yukun 石玉崑

shou 手
Taiping tianguo 太平天國
taohuayuan 桃花源
ti 體
ti-yong 體用
tianchao 天朝
tiandao 天道
Tianjin riri xinwen bao 天津日日新闻报
Tianzhu 天主
Tongcheng 桐城
Tongwenguan 同文官
Tongzhi zhongxing 同治中兴
tongzhong 同種
wai 外
wangguo 亡國
Wei Yuan 魏源
wenming 文明
Wenming xiaoshi 文明小時
wu 無
xi 西
Xihai jiyou cao 西海紀游草
x*ixue* 西學
xiyang 西洋
xia [knight-errant] 俠
x*ia* [China] 夏
xiao 孝
Xiao Hong 萧紅
Xiao Jun 蕭軍
xiezi 楔子
Xin Shitou ji 新石頭記
xinxue 新學
xiucai 秀才
Xiuxiang xiaoshuo 綉像小說
Xu Jiyu 徐繼畬
Xue Fucheng 薛福成
Yan Fu 严复
Yang [goat] 羊
yang [male principle] 陽
yang [oceanic, foreign] 洋
yi 夷
Yihetuan yundong 義和團運動
yi yi zhi yi 以夷治夷
yin 陰
Yinghuan zhilue 瀛環志略
yong 用
you 有
Yu Dafu 郁達夫
Zai shu qi 再述奇
Zeng Guofan 曾國藩
Zhang Deyi 張德彝
Zhang Yinhuan 張蔭桓
Zhang Zhidong 张之洞
Zhigang 志剛
zhong 中
zhongguo 中國
zhongren 眾人
zhongxue wei ti, xixue wei yong 中學為體，西學為用
Zhou Zuoren 周作人
zhu 豬
zhuang 壯
ziqiang yundong 自強運動
zixiu 自修
Zongli Yamen 總理衙門
Zuo Zongtang 左宗棠

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