Writing Diplomacy: Translation, Politics, and Literary Culture in the Transpacific Cold War

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Abstract

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This dissertation explores how literary translators mediated cultural diplomacy between the U.S. and China during the Cold War period. Focusing on best-selling bilingual authors Lin Yutang, Eileen Chang, Hua-ling Nieh Engle, and Jade Snow Wong, I show how these "cold warriors" negotiated political boundaries, concepts, and agendas while they wrote and translated literary texts. Their works, usually divided into Asian vs. Asian American literature, are here productively read together as pawns in the same ideological struggle, even as they exceed the traditional bounds of Cold War periodization, polarized nation-states, and disciplinary canons. Together, they evince new forms of transnational cultural production that shaped policies of containment, propaganda, resistance, de-colonialism, and racialization. This project thus theorizes translation as its own process of ideology-formation, rather than overlooking it as a mere medium for communication. In the end, examining linguistic exchange in the Cold War redefines what we conceive of as Asian-American, by reconfiguring the outright ideological struggle between Democracy and Communism as an equivocal conflict in the space opened up by translation.

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Dedication

for my family,

a lifetime of hoorays

Introduction

In Hua-ling Nieh Engle's novel *Mulberry and Peach*, translated to English from the Chinese in 1981, an early scene features the female Chinese protagonist evading the interrogations of a United States Immigration Service officer who visits her home:

> 'Don't make jokes. I represent the Immigration Service of the Department of Justice and I am here to investigate Mulberry… I need your cooperation. Please tell me everything you know about Mulberry.'
>
> 'OK, listen.' Peach sprawls on the floor and pillows her head with her arms. She crosses her legs and swings her calf up and down as she talks. She is speaking in Chinese.
>
> The agent can't understand. He paces back and forth. The papers rustle under his feet. He motions for her to stop, but she goes on speaking in Chinese. Gusts of wind are blowing in.
>
> He finally interrupts her. 'Excuse me, may I use your bathroom?' The glasses slide down his nose, revealing his thick eyebrows. His eyes are still hidden.
>
> 'Of course.'
>
> When he comes back, Peach is standing by the window, her blouse half-open, her breasts full. She looks out the window and smiles faintly. Her belly is slightly swollen.
>
> The agent from the Immigration Service picks up his briefcase and walks out, without saying goodbye. (6)

The fraught, failed communication in this scene brims with unsaid meaning. It vacillates between intimate disclosures and insurmountable distance: the agent's eyes, still hidden behind his dark glasses, stand in stark contrast to the exposure of Peach's body, her bared breasts and belly. The body language of pillowed arms, a swinging calf, and vague "motions for her to stop" all gesture toward the nonverbal communication that is in play. But spoken language is what really undercuts the force and flow of the conversation. Peach's responses in Chinese allow her to give the agent exactly what he wants while still withholding all the relevant information. Her deliberate lack of translation disregards his discomfort. She finally desists when he interrupts with a non-sequitur request to use her bathroom. The bathroom's intimate, yet utilitarian space

makes the agent's escape a hollow exit: he goes deeper into Peach's apartment only to turn around and leave "without saying goodbye". In the end, nothing speaks louder than silence.

But what exactly is that silence saying? A stony-faced U.S. government agent trying to get information out of a barely-clothed Chinese woman does not seem like a promising starting point for analyzing U.S.-Chinese cultural diplomacy in the postwar period, except for the fact that language creates such a potent reversal of power here that it demands an account. Indeed, Peach's refusal to translate confounds intimidation and silences her opponent into retreat. How does it do so? How does it render the political discourse of interrogation into personal, even intimate channels of communication? The equivocal dynamics of this scene – the way language conceals even as it communicates, is telling even when it is oblique – is the subject of this dissertation. This dissertation studies how movement between two languages – the plain necessity of translation between English and Chinese – shaped the cultural diplomacy that developed between the U.S. and China during the decades of the Cold War. It examines four writer/translators – Lin Yutang, Eileen Chang, Hua-ling Nieh Engle, and Jade Snow Wong – who were all in different ways Chinese-American, but shared the experience of becoming "Cold Warriors". Willingly or not, all four found their lives and texts appropriated to help draw the battle lines between Democracy and Communism. They crossed the Pacific as refugees, diplomats, students, and exiles. They only knew of each other obliquely, never in direct conversation, but they embodied the ideological conflict of their time as they translated between East and West. And while each of these writers has been close-read individually, either as representatives of Chinese liberalism, Chinese literary modernism, or Asian American minority culture, they have never been read in relation to each other in order to better understand Cold War cultural diplomacy.

When read together, these writers reveal the larger strategies and assumptions the U.S. government employed to fight the Cold War in East Asia. Starting with Lin Yutang in the interwar period, this dissertation traces how the ideas of "America" and "China" took shape against each other in the minds of lay readers as the Pacific region erupted into war and conflict. After World War II, Eileen Chang and Jade Snow Wong were directly recruited by the US State Department to represent American values, both in translating novels and in person. And as Hua-ling Nieh Engle founded a Translation Workshop at the University of Iowa to promote the exchange of writers from around the world, translation became both the means and the ends of cultural exchange. In the chapters that follow, I read their translated novels, but also their bilingual letters, textbooks, and interlingual dictionaries; I examine the political documents detailing their activities, the different language media coverage of the events they hosted, to answer a crucial question: what is translation *doing* here? What cultural and political work does translation perform, especially when embedded in a high-stakes war of ideology?

The task of "telling the story of America" to the world needed to be translated before it could be understood. But while it is tempting to treat translation as a mere means for transmitting information, I argue that translation can and must be teased apart, examined closely for how it has shaped the stories that are told. It was American imperialist expansion in the postwar period that put many of the texts I study into circulation. But I show that translation obstructed communication even while it enabled it: that while translation at times facilitated the U.S.'s mission to transform "hearts and minds," at other times it turned against the policy makers that sought to use it. Moreover, translation has its own stories to tell. Literary translation has crucially shaped understandings of race, cultural authenticity, and international cooperation in the Pacific region. The four writers in this dissertation show us what goes into writing

diplomacy: how negotiating between words, syntax, and style manifests ideology. Their translations reveals how the U.S. came to define itself in the postwar period, even as translation pushes us to re-conceptualize the boundaries of Cold War history itself. In the end, these authors complicate any standard or simplistic narrative of influence or persuasion by opening up the liminal space between languages. It is in this liminal space that silence speaks much louder than words.

"Battle of the Books": Cold War Cultural Diplomacy

In order to see how translation was functioning during the Cold War, we need to briefly trace two parallel histories: the history of international relations between the U.S. and China in the 20th century, and more specifically the domain of cultural diplomacy and literary exchange that developed between them. First, the larger story: the Cold War between China and the U.S. has its roots in U.S. expansion and China's strong push for modernization at the turn of the 20th century. The U.S. acquisition of the Philippines in 1898 following the Spanish-American War is typically taken as the beginning of American expansion into East Asia.[1] It also marks the beginning of America viewing itself as an expanding power beyond just the confines of the American continent. In the meantime, China was overthrowing millennia of dynastic rule; the establishment of a Chinese republic in 1911 marked a significant move toward its becoming the Western idea of a liberal, modern nation-state. The influence of Western literature on this transformation is difficult to overestimate, as translations of writers as diverse as Balzac, Lord Byron, John Stuart Mill, Jules Verne, and Harriet Beecher Stowe all shaped the political and

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[1] Though the U.S. had already secured concessions in Imperial China as early as 1848 during the Second Opium War, its major moves into East Asia as an independent Western power did not start until decades later in the Spanish-American War. Its earlier holdings were largely predicated on collusion with British imperial might and military conflict, where America was a secondary power capitalizing on existing relations.

literary discourse of Chinese modernity.[2] New literary languages emerged in China, as well as experiments with self-consciousness in narrative and political spheres. Major shifts were thus taking place in the Pacific region, as what exactly constituted China and America, both to themselves and in relation to each other, was undergoing vast upheavals.

Still, China's presence in the American literary imagination during the 1910's and 20's was mostly enshrined by Ezra Pound's imagist poetry and the exoticism of the ideograph. After the First World War, amid intense anxiety surrounding borders and security, the U.S. government passed the Immigration Act of 1924 that restricted immigration across the board and banned Asian immigration altogether. This came after the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, a law that was then renewed in 1892 and made permanent in 1902. This immigration law marked the only instance in American history that a specific nationality was categorically excluded.[3] These closed borders pronounced a strong limit of identity: *what is Asian is not "us."* China, in the meantime, had plenty of its own problems. The Republican period of the 20's was fraught with warlordism, disputes over ports and territories with European powers, and increasingly aggressive Japanese incursions. When the 1930's saw the rise of Socialism worldwide and in China, it was the work of numerous authors, most famously Pearl Buck in *The Good Earth* (1931), that sought to present the Chinese to Americans as inherently democratic, with values similar and amenable to the liberal tradition of individual rights, private property, and the rule of

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[2] For more on this early period of massive literary translation, see Lydia Liu's *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity – China 1900-1937* (1995), David E. Pollard's edited anthology, *Translation and Creation: Readings of Western Literature in Early Modern China, 1840-1918* (1998), Qi Shuohua's *Western Literature and the Translation of a Nation* (2012), and Michael Hill's *Lin Shu, Inc.: Translation and the Making of Modern Chinese Culture* (2012).

[3] For more on the history of restricting Chinese immigration to the U.S., see Erika Lee's *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era* (2003), Mae Ngai's *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (2004), and Bill Hing's chapter on "Chinese Immigration and Exclusion (Nineteenth Century)" in the *Encyclopedia of Race and Racism* (2013).

law.[4] A shared enmity against Japanese aggression during WWII in the 1940's forged a strong alliance between the two countries, one that seemed to cement their sympathies. By 1943, through assiduous activism, the Chinese Exclusion Act was finally repealed. The U.S. and China seemed set to establish a longstanding partnership.

And yet, the rise of Mao and the Communist party to power in 1949 marked a severe reversal in these fates – showing, perhaps, that the two had never been on equal terms of mutuality in the first place. When the U.S.-supported Kuomintang government under Chiang Kai-Shek lost to Mao, it fled the Mainland and installed itself as the "true" Chinese government in Taiwan. In turn, the Americans considered the Chinese Mainland a "lost" cause, an ideological bloc that could only be managed, ignored, or contained. The U.S. turned quickly to embrace its once-sworn enemy, the Japanese, while abandoning any notion of cooperation with China, its erstwhile ally. The specter of Red Communism, against which the U.S. had openly declared war in Truman's 1947 declaration of containment[5], simply could not be borne. For its part, Mainland China largely ignored these U.S. fears and machinations, content to renounce centuries of unequal treaties and Western imperialism.

But as the Iron Curtain descended across Europe and all official communications ceased between the U.S. and Mainland China, the movement to "win hearts and minds" was just

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[4] See, in particular, Richard So's work on "coolie democracy" in his chapter on Pearl Buck in *Transpacific Community: America, China, and the Rise and Fall of a Cultural Network* (2016).

[5] In *Ends of Empire* (2010), Jodi Kim follows historian Walter LeFeber in giving a fascinating account of the Truman doctrine that takes into account economic realities: "LaFeber notes of the immediate post-World War II period that 'Americans embarked upon the Cold War for the good reasons [anticommunism] given in the Truman Doctrine, which they understood, and for real reasons [problems within the Western economies], which they did not understand… From 1947 on, therefore, any threats to [the] Western system could be easily explained as communist inspired, not as problems which arose from difficulties within the system itself. That was the most lasting and tragic result of the Truman doctrine" (52). Kim goes on state that "the political economy of the Cold War… can be seen as a trade war." While this project does not delve into the economic roots of the Cold War, one cannot underestimate the impact of those causes on the cultural diplomacy that emerged in this period, especially given how much funding was provided by the U.S. government itself for various cultural causes promoting Democracy. Future studies linking the two even more explicitly remain to be accomplished.

beginning. Here commences the second, more specific history of cultural diplomacy and literary exchange. For after WWII, there were still millions in the Asia Pacific region that had not yet declared loyalty to either hegemonic power, China or the U.S. Such nonalignment meant that there was still plenty of room for psychological warfare to sway smaller nations one way or the other. Thus began what one bystander called a "Battle of the Books," an all-out propaganda war between Washington D.C. and Beijing that mobilized entire networks of U.S. Foreign Service posts, book publishers, and higher education institutions to take sides in propagating literary representations of Democracy or Communism. And it was not just the paranoia of the U.S. government that motivated this exchange; one William Hsu 徐東濱, a local Hong Kong publisher, perhaps put it best when he said, "The chief menace to the free world, to democracy, is communism, not Stalin's armies and industries and political plots… the whole free world, [*sic*] should mobilize its cultural workers. Thousands and hundreds of thousands of books, pamphlets, magazines – in small volumes… should be published and sold and distributed. They should be translated into every language; they should flood everywhere."[6] Literary media became the moving vehicle of ideological values. Hsu's wish was fulfilled. Radio silence between Mainland China and the U.S. was simultaneously accompanied by intense, even frenetic information exchange without and about each other.[7] In a sense, turning off the official channels of communication forced open these back doors of exchange. Literature – books in translation – came to mediate between worlds at war.

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[6] Letter from William Hsu to James Ivy, December 13, 1951. Asia Foundation records, Committee for Free Asia Collection, Box P-56, Hoover Institution Archives.

[7] The Voice of America radio program, also sponsored by the United States Information Agency, seems at first like an obvious exception to this standoff, but in fact China assiduously jammed all transmissions from the VOA from entering Mainland China's field. It was thus both silence and static that thwarted radio's reach. For an in-depth contextualization of the Voice of America in larger USIS strategy, see Nicholas Cull's *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency* (2008).

A specifically literary form of diplomacy thus emerged as the staple method for winning the masses in what was quickly becoming the Transpacific Cold War. Thus far, theorizations of cultural diplomacy have mostly focused on defining the conceptual limits of culture, while I argue that in order to get a more complete picture of what developed in Chinese-American communications, we need to also look at translation. Defined by Milton Cummings as the "exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding,"[8] cultural diplomacy has come to mean any type of "soft power" that works through everything from books to exhibitions, films, tours of sports teams and dance troupes, artists, musicians, and exchange programs.[9] What remain generally undisputed are the goals of "nation branding" and exerting international influence. Indeed, Robert Albro emphasizes that cultural diplomacy is about promoting "spectacles of nationhood as forms of national aggrandizement," where cultural values are presumed to be "self-evident, portable, and contextless… unproblematic and effective vehicles for national values" (383-4). "America" and "China" were thus marketed abroad via their literary representations, cultural values doing political work.

As Ien Ang, et. al helpfully point out, "[t]he true protagonists of cultural diplomacy are never abstract 'nations' or generalized 'peoples'" (367). They are instead "*[g]overnmental* agents and envoys" with specific, national interests in mind (emphasis original). The ideas propagated about China and the U.S. did not emerge from a vacuum; nor were they simply promulgated across the Pacific via frictionless channels of free trade and information. It was in

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[8] See Cummings, 2003, p. 1.

[9] The term "soft power" was coined by Joseph Nye, political scientist at Harvard, in 1990, and it is no coincidence that the term "cultural diplomacy" also began to gain currency only in that decade. Nye's definition of "soft power" calls it "the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes you want," but not with coercion or threats, but rather a more general "attraction," whereby other countries "want to follow [this country as a model], admiring its values, emulating its example, and/or aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness" (94).

and through specific texts, institutions, and networks that these ideas found their substance. Beijing had their Central Propaganda Department 中共中央宣傳部, and the U.S. relied mostly on the United States Information Agency (USIA), a branch of the U.S. State Department that was tasked with "telling the story of America" to the world.[10] And yet, not all the agents in this story are governmental. Private organizations such as the Asia Foundation made it their mission to combat Communism in the Far East, even if it covertly received CIA funding to do so. A number of other private programs, periodicals, and organizations also took it upon themselves to join the fray.[11] The important thing about the Transpacific Cold War is thus not the official diplomats, but the writers and distributors who are in between officialdom and private interest. Lin Yutang, for instance, was working for neither government when he published a string of bestsellers translating China for American mass consumption. Hua-ling Nieh Engle, on the other hand, started programs flush with U.S. State Department funding but had significant administrative autonomy. Eileen Chang was directly commissioned by the USIS to write and translate novels, it is true; but even though Jade Snow Wong was tapped by the USIS to tour East Asia, there was considerable friction between her own interests and those of the USIS offices that hosted her. Their dealings thus spanned the spectrum of coercion to cooperation, with considerations of everything from personal finances to aesthetic commitments, from literary reputation to nationalistic sentiment. These writers also had to contend with linguistic competency and negotiation – for translation practices, as I show, were as formative as any other factor in the cultural values that were ultimately placed on display.

[10] The USIA was represented by individual foreign posts overseas, which were termed USIS (United States Information Service) offices (e.g. USIS Hong Kong). Since this dissertation deals largely with political figures and strategies implemented overseas, I will be referring to this organization as "USIS".
[11] Companies like Time-Life media collaborated with the Asia Foundation, while individual publications like *The New Leader* also recommended itself as being "one of the most effective weapons against Communist propaganda." See letter from S. M. Levitas (editor of *The New Leader*) to Mrs. Richard Pollard of the Asia Foundation, May 6, 1958. Central Files Collection, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

In short, the people who were involved in this ideological work were in a much more equivocal position than just projecting power. Their various modes of interaction with state institutions necessitate a more flexible framework for understanding how cultural and political conditions impacted diplomacy. While Ien Ang et. al have begun to theorize the complex "semantic constellation" that has emerged regarding the terms "cultural diplomacy," "public diplomacy," "cultural relations", and "soft power," all of which tend to be used interchangeably[12], what matters is the confusion itself; indeed, the "pervasive tendency to conflate" these terms "is a significant indicator of the uncertainty, not only about what cultural diplomacy is or should be, but about what it can achieve" (370). These concepts' interchangeability points both to their equivocal routes - what happens to the propaganda when it goes through the circuits of translation – and their often ambivalent results: can their strategies ever be unilaterally determined? The writer/translators I examine in this dissertation are not just tools, even if that is how they are sometimes portrayed. Rather, their varying cultural competencies and personal agendas played a significant role in determining whether there could ever be a direct transmission of meaning in their literary texts.

In becoming more indirect, these writers also became more interesting in their re-shaping of the political in the postwar period. Indeed, the focus of this dissertation on translation, with its attention to collaboration, reception, and cultural positioning, begins to complicate our traditional understandings of Asian American periodization and literary canonization. Typically, a

[12] In current usage, "cultural diplomacy" tends to be seen as a subset of the wider category "public diplomacy," in which the latter tends to focus more on non-state agents and actors who nevertheless actively build bridges across national boundaries. However, the line between the two has become increasingly blurred, just as Nye's concept of "soft power" goes back and forth between indicating specifically government-instigated actions and initiatives and those of private citizens or foundations (See Nye 2013). Furthermore, Ang et. al identify a sharp distinction between "cultural diplomacy," "which is essentially interest-driven governmental practice," and "cultural relations, which tends to be driven by ideals rather than interests and is practiced largely by non-state actors" (365). In this dissertation, I retain the umbrella term of "cultural diplomacy" to take into account the indefinite boundaries between state and non-state actors, given the four authors' navigation in and through government organizations.

watershed moment in Asian American discourse is the post-1965 immigration laws that opened up America's borders to unprecedented levels of immigration from Asia. Then there were the protests on college campuses in the 1980's that birthed Asian American Studies as a discipline. And traditionally, there has been this tension between immigrant narratives, in which the focus is on building life in America and so works within a domestic frame, and more transnational narratives that navigate between multiple national affiliations and sensibilities. By bringing together writers on both sides of this divide, this dissertation begins to show that those boundaries may be more permeable than originally thought; indeed, the writers presented here as translators and cultural diplomats cannot be reduced to either one or the other category, immigrant or transnational. Rather, the lens of translation connects various tensions in the mid-20th century, including wartime negotiation, racialization processes, and de-colonization movements, as all part of a larger network of political struggle. In short, the political antinomies of the Cold War reveal the limitations and inadequacies of the current Asian American frame, suggesting instead that the transnational and translingual underlies the politics of the postwar period.

That this ideological struggle was carried out through literature, as "soft power," indelibly imbricates politics as culture. The large body of work on "soft power" tends to deal with how U.S. cultural diplomacy was conducted in Europe. After WWII, the USIS focused its funding on sending musicians, writers, and artists across the Atlantic to "sell" the values of the Free World to vacillating and newly independent states.[13] Frances Stonor Saunders' seminal *The Cultural Cold War: the CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (1999) has been joined by

[13] A wider array of studies exploring different aspects of American cultural exportation in the service of anticommunism include Walter Hixson's *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War* (1996), Reinhold Wagnleiter's *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War* (1994), Alan Nadel's *U.S. Television News and Cold War Propaganda, 1947-1960* (1999), and many more.

Andrew Falk's study of radical playwrights in *Upstaging the Cold War: American Dissent and Cultural Diplomacy, 1940-1960* (2010) and Greg Barnhisel's *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Diplomacy* (2015), which tracks modernist visual art as it traveled across Europe in the fight against Communism. These studies have drawn out the vast variety of methods and players involved in the Cold War against the Soviets, not to mention many of the contentious relationships that these writers and artists had with the U.S. government that both sent and used them.

But what is crucial to understanding the Cold War in the Pacific is attention to how race was conceived and mobilized in the postwar period as well.[14] As mentioned above, a key facet of the U.S.'s Cold War with China was the former's expansion into East Asia, a move predicated upon very specific racial logics germane to the East Asia region. In *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (2003), Christina Klein explains the U.S.'s specific need to remake itself as a "nonimperial world power." After encountering the Nazis' extreme ideology of racial purity in WWII, combined with Franz Boas' early 20th century intervention of cultural, rather than biological, explanations for racial difference in the field of anthropology, the U.S. was wary of presenting democracy as a result of racial superiority. Rather, it sought to promote its democracy to the world as inclusive and diverse, marked by racial equality. At the same time, there was a significant contingent of "middlebrow culture" American voices (such as those of writer James Michener, composer Richard Rodgers, and dramatist Oscar Hammerstein)

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[14] This is not to say that race was not a crucial factor in determining the "cultural Cold War" in Europe as well. A number of fine studies explore precisely how race operated in America's Cold War overtures in Europe, including Nikhil Pal Singh's *Black Is a Country* (2005), which emphasizes just how much "World War II elevated U.S. racial division to a question of national security, international relations, and global justice" (103); and William J. Maxwell's *F. B. Eyes: How J. Edgar Hoover's Ghostreaders Framed African American Literature* (2015) has laid bare how U.S. intelligence communities simultaneously promoted and surveilled African American artists that were sent abroad in service of democracy. Penny Von Eschen's *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (2004) and Lisa Davenport's *Jazz Diplomacy: Promoting America in the Cold War Era* (2009) specifically examine the role that jazz played in promoting U.S. interests abroad.

who were pushing to build bridges with East Asian nations even though the official policy clamored for containment. This logic, what Klein calls a "global imaginary of integration," sought to foster mutual understanding with East Asian nations, and "envisioned U.S. global expansion as taking place within a system of reciprocity" (13). In this new system, "America did not pursue its naked self-interest through the coercion and subjugation of others, but engaged in exchanges that benefited all parties." It was a fundamentally different approach than previous Western influence in East Asia, which had consisted of outright imperialistic conquest and economic self-interest.

By setting its sights on reciprocity and integration, the U.S. was able to use "a wide-ranging discourse of racial tolerance and inclusion that served as the official ideology undergirding postwar expansion" (11). In other words, the U.S. could preserve a self-image of beneficence while expanding its influence throughout East and Southeast Asia. Its expansions were supposed to be improving the lives of Asians, not just promoting American interests. Klein points out that this strategy was especially important during the 50's and 60's, as former colonies throughout Asia and Africa began to decolonize. In these waves of independence movements and nationalistic feeling, the last thing America wanted to do was come across as the next colonizer. In the immediate postwar period, then, the Americans had to answer a nuanced question: "How can we define our nation as a *nonimperial* world power in the age of decolonization?" (9, emphasis mine). How, in other words, would America's new global hegemony be different from what the European powers' had been in Asia? Klein builds her argument on the U.S.-centered English literature that makes up "the middlebrow imagination," but this dissertation takes these questions and adds to them the significant archive of Chinese-language sources. In short, while Klein paints a compelling picture of U.S. desire to integrate

with East Asia, this dissertation also accounts for the translation process that was required for the American imagination to even conceive of that integration. How does the story of U.S. expansion into Asia look different if we examine other voices, in other languages? How, indeed, might integration come at a cost when it is pushed through the matrix of translation?

Examining translation thus pushes us to analyze the propagation of books embodying liberal American values. Even with its transnational frame, this dissertation focuses on telling only one side of the story of bilingual cultural diplomacy – that of the U.S.'s self-projections into Asia – though an implicit claim of this argument is that many other sides of this story exist. And if, according to Raymond Williams, cultural diplomacy is effectively a "cultural policy of display," then its goals include projecting a certain image of oneself abroad, and of managing events to ensure that that projection is perceived in a favorable light. But both processes – projection and perception – allude to a slippage between appearance and reality, an imperfect correlation requiring work to maintain. My focus on translation allows us to get at this space of incommensurability, the messiness of focused but imperfect communication strategies. Historian Akira Iriye has called American postwar designs in East Asia a series of "intricate interactions between vision and power," whereby "the United States was in principle opposed to territorial aggrandizement which could not be reconciled with the ideal vision of freedom in the liberated Pacific" (69). But American wars in Korea and Vietnam, as well as ongoing military presence in Japan and the Philippines, made these claims of control and domination hard to refute. Meanwhile, the State Department's channeling of millions into private organizations (such as the Asia Foundation[15]) and to individual publishers, booksellers, and distributors connected to the

[15] Much of the problem with the U.S.'s policies in East Asia had to do with its disavowal of self-interest and need for control while they aimed precisely at procuring those things. In 1954, for instance, the Committee for Free Asia that was dedicated to "counteract the appeal of Communism to Asians who desire rapid social change" declared that it must go through a re-naming process to better accommodate the feelings of the locals: "The name 'Committee for

USIS clearly pushed for ideological, if not territorial, aggrandizement.[16] For America, which wanted to be an imperial power without *seeming* like one, cultural diplomacy was the perfect tool to wage a war of ideas.

Traversing the Transpacific

How, then, do we see the space of the "Transpacific"? An important debate is emerging about how we frame our analysis around this geographic, political, and cultural formation. Indeed, some scholars would say that the U.S.'s self-projections during the Cold War were nothing new, but were simply continuing centuries-old practices of specular self-projection and fantasy. Viet Thanh Nguyen and Janet Hoskins' *Transpacific Studies: Framing an Emergent Field* (2014) asserts that the "Pacific" has not only long stood as a limit case of difference for the West, but also that "the idea of the Pacific is inseparable from fantasies of economic expansion and domination" (2). Indeed, in this conception the East has long been subjected to the territorial and economic predations of the West, and their history is a long string of Western domination and Eastern resistance. In Yunte Huang's *Transpacific Imaginations* (2008), "the Pacific" stands as a more flexible "contact zone between competing geopolitical ambitions and a gap between literature and history that is riddled with distortions, half-truths, longings, and affective burdens never fully resolved" (2). Ever both an imaginary space and a site of imperial contestations, the Pacific region has long existed as a mirage of what Bruce Cumings has called "parallax visions":

Free Asia' has proved an impediment in the established of the character desired for CFA. It has a political connotation and irritates Asians, proud of the fact that they are already free. Therefore, the name is being changed to 'The Asia Foundation' and appropriate organizational changes are being made in that connection." Memorandum for Project Review Committee, 24 June 1954. Available online at https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DTPILLAR%20%20%20VOL.%202_0034.pdf.

[16] Records indicate that diverse organizations like the Hong Kong Publishers and Distributors' Association, and individual publishing houses like Hong Kong's Union Press and Rainbow Press, as well as Nanyang Printers and United Publishing House in Singapore, all collaborated with the USIS in distributing a set list of approved and translated material, celebrating the values of the Free World. See especially letters and memos in GRUSIS RG 84, Box 1, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

of desires of the self mixed in with and imposed upon the other. While Nguyen and Hoskins argue for a new term, the "transpacific," to displace older, more capitalist-minded phrases like "the Asia-Pacific", or the "Pacific Rim", who or what actually frames this newest configuration between politics, geography, literature, and history has still remained indeterminate – or at best, "imaginary." The term only loosely encapsulates "the traffic in peoples, cultures, capital, and ideas between 'America' and 'Asia'" (2).

I choose to use the term "Transpacific" in my project rather than simply "Sino-U.S. literary culture" because there is more at stake in these cultural diplomacy interactions than just two nation-states, two geographical locales, and two audiences in isolation. Richard So's conception of the Transpacific as "a network encourages us to think about power beyond a binary frame and rediscover this space as animated by *exploits*" (xxxvi, emphasis original). Indeed, in *Transpacific Community*: *America, China, and the Rise and Fall of a Global Network* (2016), So examines how literary exchange between China and the U.S. constituted a major untold history during the interwar period. Radical leftists and liberals from both countries were able to find common ground in the shared field of literary narrative, composition, and translation. In the meantime, technological advancements like that of the telegraph and the radio made the "Transpacific" more deeply interconnected than ever. Yet, So concludes that the era of "Transpacific Community" ended "in failure" with the onset of the Cold War, that this vibrant exchange in which two cultures could meet and find "provisional accord" in literary mediation could not survive the Cold War's rigid antinomies. On a general level, his surmises are correct. The post-WWII mandates for authors to write within predetermined ideological frames, unequivocally declaring their allegiances, did in fact lessen the possibility for individual agents to think through alternative modes of political affiliation and literary purpose.

And yet, I fundamentally dispute So's claim regarding the silencing of Transpacific voices in the postwar period.[17] This dissertation demonstrates that literary exchange was not silenced with the onset of the Cold War, but that these voices were pushed into different channels; official communications may have ceased, but this only gave rise to new, albeit more constrained, modes of communication. Indeed, what emerges in the Cold War period is less a network mediated by technology and more a constellation of traveling translators, connected less directly to each other and more indirectly by shared patterns of flight and directed political forces. Richard McCarthy's Book Translation Program that recruited Eileen Chang and marketed Jade Snow Wong; Hua-ling Nieh Engle's International Writing Program at the University of Iowa; Lin Yutang's interlingual glossaries for American readers, informed by the League of Nations and UNESCO: all operated at intersections of foreign policy strategies connecting Shanghai, Taiwan, Beijing, Southeast Asia, San Francisco, Washington D.C., and the American heartland. They were not always writing directly for U.S. or Chinese audiences, but were more often writing to Overseas Chinese communities scattered both in Southeast Asia and in American Chinatown communities. What emerges through looking at these writers is thus a Transpacific that is far more translocal and transcolonial than has previously been considered. These writers hover at the edges of thick information exchange, connected by lines that criss-cross each other without ever directly connecting.

[17] To be fair, So does leave the door open for Chinese-American literary writing to have some fruitful encounters in the Cold War period through his theorization of the Chinese phrase 宣传 *xuanchuan*, which is typically simply translated into English as "propaganda." So writes that, even if Chinese writers and the U.S. State Department disagreed on the possibilities of propaganda, the concept of *xuanchuan* as developed by the writer Lao She "introduces the idea of a minority-racial aesthetic that works generatively with the state and not merely with a coerced or complicit form. It reminds us that, at key moments, both the state and literary authors share common conceptions of the importance of communication, and the unique role that literature can play in this process" (209). This is the end of So's narrative of "Transpacific Community", but only the starting point of my own theorization of the Cold War.

The government documents and letters examined in this dissertation thus regularly refer to these geographical spaces as within the same ideological systems, linked by the same key figures, grouped as part of the same linguistic worlds. The Transpacific was a category that had to be understood structurally, as a connected whole rather than as nations in isolation. One fall to communism, after all, might have a domino effect on all the others. This dissertation clarifies the messiness of this created space that arose directly in response to Cold War exigencies and demands. At the same time, thinking through these writers also helps us to expand the typical temporal boundaries of the Cold War itself. Lin Yutang's work in the 1930's, for instance, was deeply influential for setting the terms of bilingual Chinese-U.S. conversation in the postwar period. And Hua-ling Nieh Engle's International Writing Program is still extent today, despite the fact that it was initially founded upon Cold War logics and fears. Taken together, these writers thus push beyond the typical 1950's-late 1980's paradigm that governs our understanding of the Cold War. Instead, they connect the political forces of ideological struggle to both older and more contemporaneous political trends. Focusing on the work of translation thus not only stretches and illuminates Cold War history, but re-connects that history to larger frames than just the postwar narrative with Russia and "Red China" would lead us to acknowledge.

While So describes the progression of East-West relations as one from "fantasy" or "imagination" in the 18th and 19th centuries, changing into one of "community" and integration" in the early 20th; what we have in the Cold War period is one of *diplomacy*: of state-sanctioned and -fostered relations seeking deliberately to align communities along specific metrics of liberal democracy, a racial logics of integration, and staunch anticommunism. This dissertation shows that literature's mediation of transnational, translingual conversation continued well into the Cold War period; and that in fact, the lines of communication dictated by ideological antinomies

fostered more activity than anyone thought possible. And it would be a mistake to consider the texts that I study in this dissertation as merely propaganda. Instead, my chapters show the *excess* of ideas, meanings, and literary forms that could not fit into the intersections formed by the U.S.'s ideological programs. This excess refers to the stylistic innovations and surprising confluences that emerged, not despite the polarized split between Democracy and Communism, but because of it: Jade Snow Wong was keenly aware of Lin Yutang, for instance, and recommended him for State Department purposes when she felt herself not up to the task. At the same time, Hua-ling Nieh Engle anthologized and translated Eileen Chang's work after she was settled in Iowa in an attempt to inscribe a new China for American readers. Richard McCarthy, USIS officer stationed in Hong Kong, either knew personally or knew of all of them, and tirelessly strategized how best to position them to promote U.S. interests in East Asia. The writers that I examine were not so much writing to and with each other as they were profoundly aware of how each other fit in a broad cultural struggle greater than any one individual. What they wrote thus has paratactic, horizontal lines of influence and meaning rather than mere top-down ideological broadcasting.

Each of these writers saw each other only circuitously, through the mediation of governmental programs, or via the intimacy of translating each other's work. What results is a situation in which their own agency and options were limited by exigencies they could not control. But I choose not to ignore these limitations, or even to say that these writers were simply able to supersede them; rather, this dissertation argues that those limitations – of finances, resources, community, or language – are precisely what provided the conditions for a stunning variety of translational forms/effects to emerge. For instance, some writers sought to smooth over translations, to erase the fact that it had happened at all; others sought to highlight and

capitalize on the process by putting both languages on the same page. This dissertation treats translation from the perspective of form: as something that creates meaning, but also as something that is embedded in its own frames of mediation and meaning-making. It does not exist outside of mediating structures. Like the literary texts in the chapters, translation itself becomes an object of analysis and theorization. It was through translation, after all, that the U.S. could begin to claim openness to integration and reciprocity across the Pacific; it was also through translation that the U.S. disappeared the evidence of its own propaganda programs, trying to persuade Chinese-speaking audiences of the universality of its values.

It is to further theorize translation that I turn next. But first, one last point bears mentioning on the subject of the "Transpacific": Lisa Yoneyama has theorized its transnationality as "much more than mere movements across nation-state borders or exchanges among multiple national actors and locations" (7). Rather, Yoneyama writes, transnationality "comprises insurgent memories, counterknowledges, and inauthentic identities that have been regimented by the discourse and institutions centering on nation-states" (7). It is this kind of excess, the "counterknowledges," that emerges when we examine the Cold War network of literary translation. The constellations of power and disaggregated journeys connecting Lin Yutang, Eileen Chang, Hua-ling Nieh Engle, and Jade Snow Wong indeed exceed any one national, disciplinary, or linguistic frame. They are neither simply Chinese nor American, simply claimed by either "Asian American Studies" or "East Asian Studies." Their modes of transnationality illuminate uncomfortable ideological connections that push us to consider new pathways of connection, rather than just rehashing familiar antinomies. Rather, their navigating between languages forms a critical pathway for us to not just navigate the messy world of Cold War history, but also to consider what alternate histories could have been between China and the

U.S., histories that have since become invisible in the aftermath of political strategies. In the end, the "Transpacific" that emerges between the U.S. and China during the Cold War was a space of both strident slogans and subtle critiques, shouted truths and muted efforts, desperate flights and masterful sleights of hand. But its equivocations also made it a space engendering new forms of feeling, knowing, and writing that both account for some of our current cultural stereotypes and racial divides, and provide us with the tools to re-negotiate them. Specifically how studying translation allows us to do so, is the subject of the next section.

On Translating

Reading the four Chinese-American writers in this dissertation together sheds light on the nuances involved in practicing diplomacy. For what typically separates these writers is the fluidity of their language: all bilingual, their works have appeared in both English and Chinese, and so they have been claimed and interpreted along disciplinary divides between Asian and Asian American Studies. But one of the starting premises of this dissertation is that diplomacy does not precede language, as if it could exist before or outside of language. Rather, diplomacy is written into being, and then transformed in unexpected ways as it is translated – "ferried across," in the English root of the word – into other languages, scripts, and contexts. I attend to these effects to allow the literary, political, and epistemological frames of the Cold War to emerge. My analysis of literary texts in the following chapters explores these frames in tandem. What gets lost in the slippage between narratives of truth and their translations? Who speaks, in which language, to which audience? And what is at stake as ideological texts are released into the world through linguistic transformation? Lydia Liu describes the "eventfulness" of translation thus: that translation is not "a volitional act of matching words or building

equivalences of meanings between languages," but rather "a precarious wager that enables the discursive mobility of a text or a symbol" (153). Making a wager alludes to the risk inherent whenever a claim is made from one language and culture to another. Ideas – especially political ones – never travel without values attending them. It is in this sense that Liu describes translation as also bearing the element of chance: "[t]he wager releases the multiplicity of the text and opens it up to an uncertain future, more often than not an uncertain political future" (153). Caught up in wars, upheavals, and exile, all the translators in this dissertation experienced this uncertainty firsthand. That they translated anyway – for profit, national service, or just sheer survival – resulted in the real variety and unpredictability of their works. The (often unintended) effects they had are what make for that excess that escapes the pure political determinism of typical Cold War cultural formations.

This dissertation proceeds by taking seriously the cultural work that a translation – even a "bad" translation – does. In accordance with Liu, Lawrence Venuti writes, "a translation cannot be judged according to mathematics-based concepts of semantic equivalence or one-to-one correspondence."[18] Rather than claim that something is "unfaithful" or "bad," it is more productive to ask what that "error" – which Venuti elsewhere calls "the remainder" – is doing in a given cultural field. With the exception of Richard So's work on the Transpacific, none of the numerous studies of cultural diplomacy even acknowledge, much less study the effects of, the translation process. This dissertation seeks to fill in that gap, exploring the insights that become visible when we treat translation as its own process of determining access, ideology, and literary form. There was no one way that translation did so. Lin Yutang's personal involvement in early efforts to Romanize written Chinese flirted with technology and mass communications; Eileen

[18] *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (2005), 18.

Chang sought refuge in the USIS' Book Translation Program; Hua-ling Nieh Engle invented a co-translation method; Jade Snow Wong represented Chinatown's cultural charms to the world. Every one of the authors I examine did not just conceive of themselves as novelists or writers, but also as translators, people negotiating between distinct cultural systems, values, and modes of interpretation. The fact that they are in these equivocal positions helps to reveal the moral and ideological complexity of the Cold War, even as they problematize its traditional dualistic and period boundaries.

Put together, their various effects not only reveal that a gap can exist between cultural diplomacy's stated purposes and its ultimate effects, but they also uncover the precise and surprising mechanisms by which that gap can become fruitful and productive, a generative space in which the political is revealed through negotiation and compromise. They do so by mediating the effects of "Democracy" and "Communism" in the same literary style, connecting them even (and especially) when the two sides are at their most extreme; by engaging in literary collaborations; by overturning expectations as they turn their books into textbooks and teaching aids. Translation becomes a means of generating epistemology, fostering conversation, and deconstructing cultural authenticity. As a result, what translation fundamentally "is" in the dissertation changes by the chapter, for the goal is to showcase the variety of meanings and transformations that result from linguistic negotiation, rather than demonstrate how they are all the same thing. It is their complexity that enables us to move past straightforward assumptions of "meaning," "culture," and "history" as they were conceived in the Cold War period. Each chapter thus introduces a new facet of translation's work in influencing cultural diplomacy.

Chapter 1 begins by theorizing the "translation of affect" in an interlingual glossary in Lin Yutang's American bestseller, *The Importance of Living* (1937). The glossary, in tandem

with his policy work for both the League of Nations and UNESCO, demonstrates that Lin used translation itself as a means of educating the public about a foreign Other. Indeed, he does so through translating not meaning, but affect: imbuing his readers with a sensory experience and education as they read. Beginning with Lin Yutang allows me to situate the Cold War's charged ideological dichotomies in the earlier period of the 1930's, when international peace-keeping organizations such as the League of Nations first sought to use literature's power to move the world toward peace. Drawing upon theorists Walter Benjamin and Jean Laplanche, I read Lin's discursive glossary entries to show how they operate on the reader's senses and sentiments. In particular, I reveal the way that untranslatability operates to shape reading practices and ideology. Indeed, Lin persuades readers by making them do the work of translation itself, rather than simply presenting them with the result thereof. In the end, his glossary offers a compelling alternative to the machine translation and mass communication agendas of the U.S. in the years leading up to the Cold War.

My second chapter adumbrates the effect of translation upon affect as I examine Eileen Chang's 1953 translation of Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) while under the employ of the USIS in Hong Kong. Chang's oblique translation makes its readers *feel*, rather than merely read, the novel's message of rugged individualism. I show that Chang navigates political ideologies by eschewing linguistic equivalence to favor equivocation instead, ultimately transforming Hemingway's modernist form via her own. Translating Hemingway then influenced the way Chang later translated her own novel, *The Rice-Sprout Song* (1955), into English, also at the USIS' behest. This pair of translations, one promoting democracy and the other denouncing Communism, not only reveals the strategies of truth-telling in U.S. foreign policy in East Asia; they connect these strategies to literary form. As she translated, Chang

enmeshed literary modernism's urge to "write the truth" with propaganda strategies based on truth telling. While other writers have approached Chang's collaboration with the USIS as a matter of institutional affiliation, then, my focus on the formal aspects of Chang's translations uncovers connections between Chinese and American literary modernisms that have previously been unexplored.

I then examine Hua-ling Nieh Engle's role in the International Writing Program that developed out of the Iowa Writers' Workshop in the 1960's. Specifically, I examine the method of co-translation that she pioneered with her husband Paul Engle, in which she paired together Chinese writers with American MFA students at Iowa to complete translation projects. I read co-translations of Nieh Engle's own novel, *Mulberry and Peach* (1981), whose different versions in Taiwan, Beijing, and America expose a pattern of reinforcing existing ideological boundaries while seeming to circumvent them. The then-favored U.S. policy of containment thus became a literary force through the practice of translation at Iowa, one that curtailed conversation as much as it fostered it. Reading Nieh Engle's novel illuminates how American foreign policy regarding communications with the two Chinas of Taiwan and the Mainland dovetailed with domestic U.S. creative writing programs, drawing them together to set the boundaries at mid-century upon the possibilities of multilingual communication in American letters.

Finally, my last chapter centers on Jade Snow Wong, a Chinese-American who wrote a novelistic autobiography about growing up in San Francisco Chinatown that was then translated abroad and propagated as a language textbook by the USIS. Wong's in-person visit to promote her book ended up embroiling her in politicized battles over language education in de-colonizing Malaya, forging a heretofore unexplored link between Wong's status as an American ethnic minority and a de-colonizing community in the third world. I examine the way Wong used

translation in her in-person tour abroad, specifically noting how she disappeared the translation help she received, to re-read the novel that was also sent to represent American values. I show that reading Wong's text in translation into Chinese ultimately reveals the hidden operations of the original novel in English: that in fact, Wong's linguistic performances and translational sleights of hand challenge our notions of cultural authenticity and authority. Ultimately, reading Wong's novel in translation to Southeast Asia changes the way that we understand the premises of "ethnicity" as a postwar category to explain difference.

As a whole, this project showcases the historical contentions that operated to give us the Cold War legacy that we have today. Indeed, with its focus on translation, my project reveals how those contentions took shape, but also how they could have been otherwise. After all, understanding the equivocal nuances of literary culture in this period makes "the political" not just a pre-determined category, but rather that which exceeds the predictable. This dissertation thus advocates for learning from interlingual communication at a dichotomized moment in political history, that we may find new imaginaries to respond to the need for diplomacy in the present.

Chapter I
Untranslatable: Lin Yutang, Cultural Diplomacy, and the Translation of Affect

"In my efforts at translation of Chinese literature," wrote Lin Yutang in 1937, "I have constantly run across phrases or terms that are extremely difficult to render into English. This has made me think that perhaps a list of Chinese critical terms with explanatory comments will be both useful and enlightening." Thus came about "A Chinese Critical Vocabulary," a glossary of Chinese aesthetic and affective concepts appended to Lin's 1937 bestseller, *The Importance of Living*. Lin's career in America got off to a running start in the mid-1930's largely because of American readers' rising interest in all things Chinese. In the 1920's to 30's, American writers as diverse as W.E.B. Du Bois, Pearl Buck, and Edgar Snow were all writing monographs that sought to humanize China and its people.[1] As the rising tide of socialism swept the globe, the political future of the most populous nation in the world was at stake in the American popular imagination, and American writers of all political affiliations were working to mobilize the emotional reality of Chinese people for their own agendas. "China" in American letters lent power to appeals to racial solidarity, exhortations to socialist uprising, and deliberations on the essence of democratic spirit, all in the same decade.[2] When Lin arrived on the American literary scene with the popular *My Country, My People* in 1935 and the even more successful *The Importance of Living* in 1937, he was stepping onto an already-lit stage. The 1937 text, a collection of short essays loosely elucidating Chinese philosophy and aesthetics, struck such a

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[1] Du Bois' *Dark Princess* (1928), Buck's *The Good Earth* (1931), and Snow's *Red Star Over China* (1936) were but a few of the volumes published in this period featuring Chinese characters – and, in particular, featuring their political leanings and what that might mean for the U.S. Others that joined in the fray in other literary genres include Ezra Pound (*The Cantos*, 1922), Agnes Smedley (*Daughter of Earth,* 1929), and Langston Hughes ("Roar, China!" 1937).
[2] While Du Bois was trying to build solidarity Afro-Asian solidarity with other countries and peoples affected by the Color Line, Buck worked (at times directly with Lin) on repealing the Chinese Exclusion Act. Smedley sought to use the Chinese people as inspiration for the socialist movement in America.

chord with Lin's American audiences that it made him into an overnight celebrity. He went on to become a *New York Times* bestselling author for the entire year of 1938, enjoying the praise of writers like Theodore Dreiser and W.H. Auden.

But Lin's literary works did not simply feature Chinese settings and characters; his contribution to American letters lay in the realm of language. Unlike his American peers, Lin explicitly translated philosophical and aesthetic concepts from the Chinese language into English, and he paid special attention to the translation of feelings and emotions. In this chapter, I argue that Lin's glossary to *The Importance of Living* attunes his readers to a new mode of reading that is contingent upon the "translation of affect": that is, by translating individual feeling words, Lin ends up training readers to re-align their sentiments and sympathies by reading between languages. As a philologist and a lifelong translator, Lin made the matter of emotional relatability essentially into a question of translation. And yet, what happens when language, with all its fraught layers of history and semantics, takes on the task of building emotional bridges across cultural difference? And what happens to emotions – amorphous, culturally specific sentiments often bound to and by language – when they are pressed into linguistic form and through linguistic transformation? Ultimately, these glossary translations of "aesthetic feelings" do not merely transfer or even create semantic *meaning*, but rather enable affective reading *experiences* for Lin's English-speaking audience. They create the conditions for redefining the aesthetic – and with it, the emotional relations one can have to the political.

In what follows, I use Lin's Chinese-English translations in the glossary to *The Importance of Living* to reframe the larger arc of cultural diplomacy in which he took part, as a participant in both the League of Nations and its post-WWII reincarnation as Unesco, the scientific and cultural branch of the UN. Lin's glossary explores the work that translation *does*

in creating a field of meaning, stimulating sentiment rather than listing facts – especially around the thick, mutually constitutive concepts of aesthetics and culture. This mattered in an era that sought to polarize the cultural and the political. Both the League of Nations and Unesco imagined transcendent intellectual communities, united through cultural interchange and operating far beyond the purview of competing national agendas and realpolitik. Lin himself was involved in the pursuit of this "international understanding" that sought to rid the world of nationalistic baggage, beginning by eliminating burdensome cultural and linguistic differences. Indeed, it was for his work seeking to Romanize Chinese characters that Lin was nominated to attend the League of Nations conference in the first place. But in practice, Lin's glossary translations operate against this transcendent paradigm. Perhaps even despite himself, Lin's glossary consistently downplays unimpeded cross-linguistic communication in favor of generating an affective experience. And rather than make the political aspects of Lin's work *more* inaccessible, the turn to translating aesthetic feelings opens up the possibility for the act of cultural exchange to begin to critique itself.

The operating logic of Lin's glossary is what I call the "translation of affect," whereby "affect" refers to not just emotions in general, but particularly the emotions that are evoked and engaged in the process of responding to the aesthetic. In *Antinomies of Realism* (2013), Fredric Jameson defines "embodied affect" as the reader's personal, almost visceral response to a literary text. Affect is an emotional experience outside of narrative time, embodied because it exists in the lived experience of the reader as opposed to the bound timeline of the text. In fact, it presents a phenomenology that resists being confined either in language or in time, existing instead as the ineffable, the linguistically indeterminate, the unnameable. Pure affective experience, in other words, can be contained by no words at all. This definition of affect

dovetails in part with Lin's own birfucated definition of the aesthetic: Lin writes that "[a]ll painting, all poetry and all art are based upon two elements… *ching* [景 *jing* in contemporary *pinyin*]… or the scene, the picture" and "*ch'ing* [情 *qing*]… or the sentiment or mood of man" (431). Like Jameson, Lin's conception of art is predicated upon both the work of art and the "sentiment or mood" external to it, and internal to the viewer or reader. Unlike Jameson, however, Lin is intent on finding words for these sentiments, to make speakable those emotional intensities which seem to be, by Jameson's very definition, *un*speakable – in fact, Lin is determined to find words for them in more than one tongue. The "translation of affect" in this chapter, then, refers to Lin's attempts to find words in another language, or at times in the space between languages, for sentiments that are often unspeakable in just one or the other, either English or Chinese.

But the "translation" part of "translation of affect" requires some definition as well. Walter Benjamin conceives of translation as not primarily about communication across foreign languages, but *completion*. For Benjamin, the relationship between the original and the translation is not one of imitation or one-to-one correspondence, but rather one of complementarity, in which one language completes the other. Benjamin famously compares different languages to the broken pieces of an urn that must be pieced together in translation to reveal a greater "pure" language. In "The Task of the Translator," he writes:

> Fragments of a vessel that are to be glued together must match one another in the smallest details, although they need not be like one another. In the same way a translation, instead of imitating the sense of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's way of meaning, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel. (260)

The goal of a translation is thus not to imitate, but to "match" the original. It is not about finding equivalencies across disparate languages or even making sense from one to the other – but about

making *whole*. This theory marks a radical departure from traditional discussions of translation's faithfulness to or freedom from an original; rather, what Benjamin suggests instead is that translation is a process of combination, where the translation "lovingly and in detail incorporates" the original so that an even more fundamental Language can shine through. It is a view of translation as fundamentally allusive, pointing to an elsewhere though never fully attaining it. Benjamin takes pains to note that this "greater" language can only be approximated but never fully achieved. Still, translation, "in a singularly impressive manner… at least points the way to this region: the predestined, hitherto inaccessible realm of reconciliation and fulfillment of languages" (257).

Importantly, however, Benjamin's theory of translation does not celebrate an endless series of translations into other languages so that we can approximate a fuller, more reconciled whole. That is, simply adding more translations (from Chinese to English to Hindi to Russian, for instance) does not make for a more complete urn. Rather, the "pure language" that Benjamin believes to "shine through" in translation is defined as that "element in a translation which goes beyond transmittal of subject matter. This nucleus is best defined as that element in the translation which *does not lend itself to a further translation*" (257-8, emphasis mine). It is, in other words, the untranslatable. Later theorist Jean Laplanche would concur with Benjamin, stating that "it's possible to distinguish between what he calls on the one hand the view (*le visé*), that is, in a certain way the flattest level of meaning; and on the other hand, the aim (*la visée*)… the intrinsic value that does not contain meaning but a poetic content" (204). In other words, both theorists agree that while meaning is translatable, there is something about literary texts (*la visée*) that always remains irresistibly *un*translatable, an irreducible element that can only be "aimed at" instead of "viewed"; this is Benjamin's "nucleus" of "pure language" and

Laplanche's "poetic content." That nucleus – to which an act of translation so mythically gestures – is not something that benefits through more translations into more tongues; rather, it is that which is approximated in each individual act of translation and *does not gain* from further translations. The very act of bringing together and matching any two fragments of an urn is the key. It is in and *only* in each act of translation that the pure language shines through.

Translation as approximating linguistic wholeness, while not descending into endless linguistic pluralism – the stakes of this were vast for the world of cultural diplomacy in which Lin was writing. In the postwar period, many like noted U.S. mathematician Warren Weaver stated explicitly that a "most serious problem, for Unesco and for the constructive and peaceful future of the planet, is the problem of translation, as it unavoidably affects the communication between peoples."[3] Given that the stated goal of Unesco was nothing short of "advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples, through all means of mass communication," and, further, to "promote the free flow of ideas by word and image," it is little wonder that linguistic differences, especially those as stark as the ones between the Latin-based and Chinese scripts, would be seen as nothing less than threats to world peace.[4] In the context of cultural internationalism, overcoming linguistic barriers through translation was thus a paramount task for facilitating communication and fostering understanding. Lin himself advocated for this ideal.

But what emerges from Lin's glossary translations is a dual story of the paradoxes inherent in cultural diplomacy: the urgent need to communicate that is simultaneously frustrated and fulfilled by untranslatability. Indeed, if translation, according to Benjamin, is not about open communication across the world's languages, but rather about linguistic differences gesturing to a higher unity, then Lin's work invites us to ask what those differences are pointing to rather than

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[3] Warren Weaver, "Translation," in *Machine Translation of Languages: Fourteen Essays*, ed. W.N. Locke and A. D. Booth (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1955), 18.
[4] From Julian Huxley's "Unesco: Its Purpose and Its Philosophy" (1946), pp. 5-6.

leveling them to make them say the same thing. In what follows, I show how Lin's translations of affect, in his interlingual glossary and beyond, offer a compelling alternative to the dominant contemporary aims of achieving unfettered "international understanding" – particularly between the U.S. and China. In particular, I examine the pedagogical effects of translation in these modes of interchange: how, that is, the fulcrum of language exchange mediates these cultural encounters amidst attempts to simply throw open the channels of mutual understanding.
Critics like Ien Ang have pointed out that there is a deep contradiction at the heart of cultural diplomacy's ostensible purpose: "on the one hand, cultural diplomacy is supposed to advance the national interest by presenting the nation in the best possible light to the rest of the world; on the other hand, it is expected (mainly by non-state actors) to promote a more harmonious international order to the benefit of all" (370). The danger of not maintaining this distinction is "to elide the fundamentally institutional location of cultural diplomacy within the machinery of government." One thing this chapter does through tracking Lin Yutang's career as a cultural diplomat and translator is to show how the latter restores our view of the political in the former; in other words, Lin's translations of affect re-situate the ideals of "cultural understanding" back within the workings of government strategy and history.

While other studies such as Christina Klein's *Cold War Orientalism* (2003) and Jodi Kim's *Ends of Empire* (2010) have sought to reframe U.S. Cold War policy in East Asia along models of integration rather than sheer containment, those studies date only from the postwar period. Richard So, on the other hand, has done extensive work connecting Lin's pre-war translations in Shanghai to his postwar literary life in New York City. He examines an earlier glossary of Lin's, one that Lin appended to his Chinese translation of H.L. Mencken's colloquial rendition of the Declaration of Independence. But this earlier version has a mechanical, even

mathematical equation of English political concepts and Chinese phrases (with word entries like "Self-stand = independence 独立" and "Self-go = free 自由"). For So, this meant that Lin was indicating that "key liberal concepts, such as "self-go," exist indigenously in Chinese thought and thus do not require translation. It is an ideal solution to the hard problem of translation; no translation is necessary... Their readers just needed a brief 'lesson' to see it" (132).

The earlier glossary's form and function could not be more different than what happens in *The Importance of Living*'s.[5] The glossary to *The Importance of Living* is also an educational project, but one with a completely different pedagogical schema in place. Rather than equate political concepts, and thus show how English and Chinese modes of thinking are essentially the same, Lin's American glossary seeks to avoid politics altogether, emphasizing an irreducible difference that purports to be merely cultural. Lin's own staunch anticommunism led him to avoid all mention of Chinese words loaded with political meaning in *The Importance of Living*. What I will show, however, is that this deferral away from translating political concepts nevertheless re-scripts our understanding of the contemporary political situation between China and the U.S. In fact, Lin's Chinese to English glossary in the *Importance of Living* helps us to reframe his earlier Shanghai writings and later diplomatic letters, written in response to happenings at the League of Nations and Unesco. The translation of affect thus recovers emotional valences buried in the interstices between two languages, training readers to better comprehend the politics they ostensibly avoid. In this way, Lin's glossary takes the project of cross-cultural sympathy in Chinese-American works to new depths.

[5] So: "The glossary does two important things. First, the use of the equal sign is significant because it indicates that key liberal concepts, such as "self-go," exist indigenously in Chinese thought and thus do not require translation. It is an ideal solution to the hard problem of translation; no translation is necessary. Second, the glossary is pedagogical. It is meant not only to teach the Chinese reader the meaning of various key democratic-liberal terms, such as 'self-stand,' but also to show the reader that these ideas already exist immanently within Chinese... the goal was to demonstrate that core American liberal concepts already existed within the living Chinese language. Their readers just needed a brief 'lesson' to see it" (132).

But it is not just new depths of mutual understanding. Rather, reading Lin's glossary alongside his bouts of official cultural diplomacy ultimately offers *untranslatability* instead of "understanding" as the goal of translation. What I want to suggest is that seeking out and privileging the untranslatable, rather than forcing it to become understandable across languages, makes for the basis of a more robust approach to cross-cultural unity. While I am far from suggesting that a mythical pre-Language or -Culture exists between the U.S. and China, one to which we must return and somehow reclaim, what I am asking is whether relations between the two countries could not be better served by attempting to recognize difference rather than merely crossing over or overcoming it. The U.S.'s rise to superpower status with the commencement of the Cold War saw, more often than not, the bending of "mass information" and the "free flow of thought and image" to expressing a specifically American point of view as the order for world peace. One wonders whether Lin's turn in this period to untranslatability can have something to say to a world committed to being united in saying only one thing.

The Translation of Affect

"A Chinese Critical Vocabulary," Lin's glossary of Chinese aesthetic and affective concepts, appears at the end of *The Importance of Living*. Over sixty word entries are divided among sections with such titles as "Expressions concerning man's style and specific charms of culture," "Concerning one's talent or character or spirit," and "Concerning human emotions and feelings." The glossary acts as one might expect for an appendix to a lengthy, cross-cultural text, defining and elaborating upon key concepts for the reader's benefit. But once we step into the actual entries, it becomes apparent that this appendix is *not* a typical glossary of Chinese concepts and their closest English equivalents. Observe just one of the entries Lin includes:

> 30. 文 *wen*: originally "grains of pebbles, ripples on water, waving lines of objects (*e.g*. brocade)," now meaning "literature." The fundamental idea is the natural lines of movement or beauty of lines and form, and when applied to writing, it refers to the movement of one's thoughts and language. We speak also of the "whirls" or "eddies" of one's literary composition (*wenchang p'olan*), describing the curious overlapping and back-and-forth twists and turns of the author's thoughts. In addition, there is the idea of decoration or refinement, as contained in the idea of "dress," and particularly of brocade or embroidery. In connection with *wen*, the idea of *tsao* "water-cress" refers to the "embellishments" or "intrinsic beauties" of a writer's language. (437)

The rambling, conversational entry draws on Chinese cultural references while reading like the fragmented clauses of an English dictionary. It is, in many ways, perfectly formatted to translate between cultures in mediation. And yet, despite all that is written to explain it, the fact is that *wen* appears here with a serious lack: it is the first part in the compound phrase *wenhua*, that which in modern Chinese is most commonly used to denote "culture" in the sense of a distinct civilization or way of life. But this most obvious definition of "culture" is conspicuously absent in this entry, despite the fact that it starts the entire section of the glossary titled "Some general ideas about culture." Rather, Lin brings into the field of this word entry the oldest meanings of the Chinese word with regards to texture and graceful motion; *wen*'s "fundamental idea" as "the natural lines of movement" speaks suggestively of "culture" as an expansive and multivalent, rather than fixed, thing. The back-and-forth movement of the sentences emphasizes its fluidity: various ideas on beauty, writing, and refinement flow seamlessly into each other in Lin's English translation of "culture."

This emphasis on movement in both the form and content of *wen*'s translation foreshadows the rest of this glossary as far more than a mere word list establishing straight or even approximate equivalencies between Chinese aesthetics and English replacements. *Wen*, like every other entry in Lin's appendix, eschews any attempt at one-to-one linguistic correspondence between key words in favor of multiple points of contact. And yet, the

effacement of salient primary meanings (such as "culture" in the case of *wen*) for many of these Chinese terms leads to a paradoxical reading experience of simultaneous excess and lack, of both too much meaning and too little explanation at the same time. While potentially confusing, this combination can also be seen as presenting the space for the reader to engage on a deeper level rather than be spoon-fed all he or she would need to know about "Chinese culture." The word lists in this glossary thus present an invitation akin to what Doris Sommer calls "A Sentimental Education": for the general reader to gain an *experience* of learning rather than an example of it. Indeed, the very linguistic movement of the appendix, with its "curious overlapping and back-and-forth twists and turns," constitutes a first-hand aesthetic education between two languages.

We see this also in the entries on actual sentiments. There are "three charming words" that Lin translates together: "23. 憐 *lien*, pity, tender love, love for what is small and beautiful; 24. 恨 *hen*, regret, exasperation, hating the beloved; 25. 惜 *hsi*, be tender, be careful in spending, be worried lest something is spoiled or gone" (436). Each entry moves rapidly through a series of loosely connected situations and feelings, following a flow of thoughts and associations. They digress rather than find the most efficient or direct translation between Chinese and English, each one cascading as a veritable narrative of English feelings rather than pointing to just one idea. Elsewhere, Lin mentions that "It is understood that all these words in this list can be used indifferently as nouns or adjectives, and sometimes as verbs," highlighting a grammatical indeterminate-ness to the terms that not only makes them even less directly amenable to English understanding, but gets at the heart of what Lin's translational word list is trying to do. Indeed, these translations of affective terms, some of the shortest entries in Lin's glossary, *move* the English-speaking reader, first in the perambulatory English explanations (*hsi* takes us all the way from being "tender" to being "worried lest something is spoiled or gone"), and then from

grammatical category to category (where nouns, verbs, and adjectives coexist "indifferently"), all to, ultimately, move the readers emotionally by playing on their affections.

For example, while the simplest and most direct translation of 恨 *hen* is just English "hatred," Lin translates it as "hating the beloved," pulling the English-speaking reader into a spectrum of simultaneous adoration and animosity. But the phrase "hating the beloved" also mimics the very push-and-pull motion of "love-hate" relationships, too: each English word in this sequence adds to the reader's understanding of the Chinese aesthetic concept (thus expanding their understanding of *hen*, across the language divide), but also forms new associations among the listed English emotion words as well. Previously disconnected terms like "regret" and "exasperation" become aligned alongside each other in this entry; together, they form a newly created, multi-dimensional emotional space between all the English approximations and the Chinese term, as opposed to a flat line from the Chinese to a single English word. Lin's translation thus expands the understanding of the term far beyond merely defining it; he re-creates its complexity in the experience of reading a translation.

One can say much the same for *lien* as well, wherein "pity, tender love, love for what is small and beautiful" adds more layers of meaning the more that you read. Indeed, the word entry evokes an entire story with its many parts. In *lien*, feeling words spiral inwards, whereby general "pity" sinks inward to a particularly "tender love." The English translation focuses the feeling in an ever-tightening circle. The gradually more detailed terms thus build upon each other in English and intensify the feeling that they translate, again not only deepening the reader's understanding of the Chinese term but also creating an English narrative that draws one from generic pity feelings to intensely protective care. Lin's multivalent English translations thus pull the readers like thread through the space between languages, opening up the reader's experience

to an emotional space rooted in both Chinese and English. And in so doing, they begin to upend Jameson's antinomy. Lin's translations of affect force a back and forth, not only between languages, but also between that which cannot be named (like *hen*, because it is pure experience) and that which *must be* named in order to be experienced by the English-speaking reader ("regret, exasperation, hating the beloved"). Entries like *hen* and *lien* do not just give linguistic embodiment to affect; they embody it in the reader by creating their own narrative space, enacting linguistic motion through translation.

This ability to affect the reader's emotional experience underlies Lin's entire project of cultural translation for American audiences. In the text of *The Importance of Living*, Lin consistently asserts that this volume on Chinese philosophy and aesthetics is written to cultivate a real sense for the world, as opposed to mere knowledge of it. "Philosophers have long pointed out that all human knowledge comes from sensuous experience," he writes, and

> We can no more attain knowledge of any kind without the senses of vision and touch and smell than a camera can take pictures without a lens and a sensitive plate. The difference between a clever man and a dull fellow is that the former has a set of finer lenses and perceiving apparatus by which he gets a sharper image of things and retains it longer. And to proceed from the knowledge of books to the knowledge of life, mere thinking or cogitation is not enough; one has to feel one's way about – to sense things as they are and to get a correct impression of the myriad things in human life and human nature not as unrelated parts, but as a whole. (139)

This emphasis on wholeness – one gained by "*feeling* one's way about" – accentuates the dynamic work of the glossary, in which Lin's word lists actively act upon the reader's senses rather than content themselves with conveying semantics. As we have seen, they give a felt sense, and not merely a description, of the Chinese concepts that Lin is trying to communicate in English. Their process of translation thus offers its own kind of aesthetic reading experience, complete with affective import and effects for their English-speaking reader. They both provide

the *jing* “the scene, the picture” and invoke the *qing*, or “the sentiment or mood of man,” in their reading.

Indeed, Lin’s push to “assemble the ruined parts of a dislocated life again into a whole” is so reminiscent of Benjamin’s own desire for reconciliation between languages that it hardly seems surprising that the two to come together at the nexus of translation and aesthetics. Their shared philosophy of wholeness generates an allusive aesthetic to a world without fracture, one that can never be attained but nevertheless approximated and pointed to. While Benjamin’s “fulfillment and reconciliation of languages” might not have the explicit humanist bent of Lin’s philosophy, its conception of the “nucleus” and “poetic content” of translation nevertheless emphasizes the aesthetic as the basis of an original linguistic unity. Benjamin’s theories thus find a distinct meeting point in Lin’s translation practices, emphasizing the importance of generating aesthetic experience over the communication of semantic meaning.

These aesthetic ramblings were themselves far from free of political overtones. Lin’s liberal beliefs were paramount to how he understood aesthetics and culture, and thus how they should be translated to an American reading public. While researchers disagree as to the exact roots of Lin’s aesthetic philosophy[6], what remains undisputed is that Lin subscribed to a humanism that preferred to elevate culture, wit, and humor rather than toe a party line. Indeed, Lin’s transpacific move from Shanghai to New York was due partly to the fact that his unwavering anticommunism was beginning to make him unpopular within Chinese literary circles, most of whom took very seriously the need for literature to serve nationalist and socialist

[6] Researchers such as A. O Aldridge and Qian Suoqiao have shown that Lin’s theories of human nature and art emerged during his time at Harvard under the humanist Irving Babbitt, while Richard So has eschewed this line of thinking, arguing instead that Lin arrived at his principles of aesthetic “self-expression” (Chinese *xingling* 性灵) via combining the theories of the Italian aesthete Benedetto Croce and that of the Chinese philosopher Yuan Zhonglang during his days of writing bilingual essays in Shanghai. Lin first encountered Croce through his mentor at Harvard, J.E. Springarn, who would go on to have a far-reaching influence on Lin’s ideas of culture.

causes. Lin attacks the issue of art and ideology within the body of *The Importance of Living* itself:

> The utter confusion of art and propaganda in fascist and communist countries and its naïve acceptance by so many intellectuals in a democracy make it necessary for every intelligent person to come to a clear understanding of the problem. The Communists and Fascists make a false start at the very beginning by ignoring the role of the individual, both as the creating personality and the object of the creation, and placing in its stead the superior claims of either the state or the social class. While literature and art must both be built on personal, individual emotions, the Communists and Fascists emphasize only group or class emotions, without postulating the reality of emotions in varying individuals. With individual personality pushed out of court, one cannot even begin to discuss the problem of art and morality sanely… Morality, therefore, is not a thing that can be superimposed from the outside, according to the changing whims of a dictator or the changing ethical code of the Chief of the Propaganda Department. It must grow from the inside as the natural expression of the artist's soul. (373)

Somewhat unsurprisingly, Lin's take on warring ideologies revolves around the world of emotions: Communists "get it wrong," so to speak, precisely by over-emphasizing "group or class emotions, without postulating" individual ones. In true liberal form, Lin asserts that no true art and literature could emerge from such a groupthink way of life.[7]

And yet, Lin's glossary also pulls against these rather naïve divisions of individual vs. state or social emotions in describing morality and art. Though one could see Lin's glossary as simply continuing his humanist inclinations, there is a way in which it also provides a window into better analyzing Lin's politics as well. We need look no further than the glossary entry for "feeling" itself to see the translation of affect mediating between "group or class emotions" and "personal, individual emotions." Lin's glossary entry for *qing*[8], or affect, is again expansive:

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[7] Richard So calls liberalism as Lin practiced it the early 20th century version of Enlightenment ideals, including political tenets like self-determination, free speech, and the rule of law; and Romanticist values emphasizing individual originality, freedom of speech, and transcendent aesthetics as its norms.

[8] The discourse of *qing* in Chinese literature is at least as robust as the current burgeoning field in Western theory regarding affect. Translated by Eugenia Lean as "sentiment" or "passion," *qing*, depending on the character with which it is combined, runs the gamut from expressing objective reporting of a situation (*shiqing* 事情) to subjective experience (*ganqing* 感情); from traditional, Confucian understandings of morality (*renqing* 人情) to modern

> 16. 情 *ch'ing*: sentiment, passion, sympathy, friendly feeling. To be able to understand people or the human heart is 'to know *jench'ing* or human sentiments.' Any man who is inhuman, who is over-austere, or who is an ascetic is said to be *puchin jench'ing* or 'to have departed from human nature or human sentiments.' Any philosophy which has departed from human sentiments is a false philosophy, and any political régime which goes against one's natural human instincts, religious, sexual, or social, is doomed to fall. A piece of writing must have both beauty of language and beauty of sentiment (*wen ch'ing ping mou*). A man who is cold or hard-hearted or disloyal is said to be *wuch'ing* or 'to have no heart.' He is a worm, or 'he has a heart and intestines made of iron and stone.'

What is prominent in this entry is the sheer extent of definitions that *qing* is supposed to cover. Though we see the same anticommunist sentiment from the text expressed here ("Any philosophy which has departed from human sentiments is a false philosophy"), something happens to complicate this absolutist narrative even as it's being presented. The initial list of feeling words in "sentiment, passion, sympathy, friendly feeling" already provide too many descriptors for any one definition to take hold, but then there are slipped in more universal definitions like "human sentiments," "human nature," and even "one's natural human instincts." These various meanings are produced in a mélange of English and Chinese, where numerous Chinese phrases and aphorisms (*jench'ing* 人情 *wuch'ing* 无情 *wen ch'ing ping mou* 文情并某) mix in among the English descriptions. By being both discursive and descriptive, rather than direct, the entry once again surfaces an entire field of interconnected meanings rather than isolated equivalents. Even as Lin seeks to set up a polarized relationship between *qing* and certain political regimes that are counter to it, then, the meanings of *qing* surround and envelop these systems as constitutive of their very being. What *qing* is not or that which does not have *qing*, in other words, becomes a part of the reader's understanding of it regardless.

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expressions of emotion, like romantic love (*aiqing* 爱情). Affect Theory, on the other hand, is fast gaining traction within Western academia as a postmodern alternative to studying subjectivity and society that is not exclusively based on a materialist or rationalist view of history and society. While Affect Theory might generally focus on emotions and their psychosocial construction, this chapter uses the term to focus specifically on finding parallels between how emotions work in conjunction with and in response to art, first in Chinese and then in English.

Even if it serves as a negative foil, then, political regimes are now part of the emotional landscape of "feeling" itself. This underlies the entire process of translating affect: by making nameable and literal what were abstract or amorphous concepts, Lin himself can no longer conceive of *qing*'s opposite without including it into what it is. In a very real way, the act of translation itself, even and especially of "affect," is what requires the personal to become political, to relate to it as both parallel and foil in a linguistic field. That Lin goes on to specifically conceptualize *qing* as a component of the corporeal human body recalls Jameson's original conception of affect as an "embodied" intensity. The metaphoric final line of this entry, "he is a worm, or 'he has a heart and intestines made of iron and stone,'" is so visceral and unfamiliar that it lingers in the mind – and, it would seem, in the gut. After all, the collusion of sentiments with body parts would go on to find further reinforcement in the only other word Lin translates for feelings, 肠 *chang*:

> 17. 肠 *chang*: intestines, feelings, emotions. One who is very sad is said to have 'his intestines broken,' or 'tied up into a hundred knots.' These intestines are broad or narrow, depending on whether a man is generous or mean. A man whose ideas run dry and who constantly stops during writing is said to have 'dried-up intestines.' (434)

An accompaniment to *qing's* "sentiment, passion" & etc., *chang* unequivocally drives home the physicality of one's emotions, as well as their utter convolution. Though no specific line regarding ideology pops up here, the fact that the translated phrases explaining these emotions are all "broken," "dried-up," or "tied up in a hundred knots" seems more self-referential than anything else. Pure sentiment existing above the realm of material concerns simply breaks down in the literal act of translation. All that comes across is the failure of the aesthetic project. By the end, Lin's exceedingly metaphorical, aesthetic translations become the means of critique for his purely aesthetic positions.

In a very real sense, then, the successful translation of affect comes about specifically *not* because every concept has an immediate, corresponding concept in another language. Rather, it is in the coming together of *unlike* pieces (rather than equivalents) that forms a sum larger than the parts. And in the coming into being of something as ineffable as affect, there are the possibilities for self-reflexive critique: the personal and the political coalesce, giving a wider view than just the pure aesthetics that Lin espoused. The bilingual explanation of various sentiments thus does the opposite of elevating art above the purview of politics; rather, it paradoxically makes the relationship between politics and emotions visible.

It also bears noting that Lin never was writing alone when he was writing in America. As soon as he arrived in New York, Lin began a partnership with the John Day Company that submitted his own writing to the intervening hands of editors and their expectations. Richard So and Qian Suoqiao have chronicled the intensely collaborative relationship that Lin had with his publisher in the U.S., Richard Walsh, who wrote explicitly to typists that "[t]he problem in editing [Lin] is to preserve the delightful qualities of his style, the Chinese touch and the turns of phrase, but at the same time to save him from the mistakes, some of which are due to his exuberance, others to his not being completely at home in the English language."[9] Qian, moreover, goes into detail regarding the difficulty of culturally packaging Lin as a Chinese writer of China in the United States; valuable though Lin's English skills were for speaking eloquently to his newfound audience, preserving his Chinese-ness was even more important to his editors so as to protect the ethnic niche by which Lin gained his popularity. Accordingly, John Day's typists were told to help with "[a]voidances of slang or American idiom – which [Lin] likes, but which destroy the Chinese atmosphere."[10] He was to be relatable, but not *too*

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[9] Letter from Richard Walsh to Mary Phelps, June 5th, 1947. Box 172, Folder 25, Archives of John Day Company.
[10] Ibid.

American so as to let his readers forget that he was Chinese. In this sense, bilingualism in Lin's literary life operated as a double-edged sword, and one over which Lin had only limited control.

Any consideration of Lin's work in America must thus contend with the fact that Lin's translation practices were part of a carefully constructed effort managed by his marketing-minded editors. But even before his tenure in the U.S., Lin had had plenty of experience with translating in and around highly sensitive literary conditions. Indeed, his earlier days as a bilingual essayist in Shanghai and diplomat in Geneva did much to shape Lin's idea of cultural translation. On the stage of international diplomacy, Lin was often hard-pressed to say exactly what he meant in just one tongue. It was in this context that Lin also began to develop his representations of "Chinese Culture" to Western, and specifically English-speaking, audiences. Not only will a close look at his earlier translation practices illuminate how Lin eventually came to translate "Chinese culture" for American readers, but a look back through the lens of the glossary can help us to "read against the grain" of these older bilingual texts, bringing out nuances of meaning – and experience – that were previously invisible across the Pacific.

Speaking in More than One **T'ung**

Throughout the 1920's and 30's, Lin Yutang was one of Shanghai's leading bilingual writers, heading the popular *Little Critic* column in the English-language journal, *The China Critic*. His coming of age at St. John's University had solidified his English skills, and he was already a graduate of Harvard, celebrated philologist, and professor by the time he turned prolific journal writer. He regularly translated his own original English essays back into Chinese for other publications, and was thus well known and well received by both foreign and Chinese literary circles. An examination of just one of these bilingual essays, however, yields some

startling contradictions between its English and Chinese versions. This essay, "The Spirit of Chinese Culture," was written in 1931, when Lin was sent as a representative of China's Academia Sinica to the League of Nations Conference in Geneva. During this trip he wrote "The Spirit of Chinese Culture" as a speech for a British audience, only to later translate it back to Chinese when he returned to China.

This essay affords us the opportunity to examine a different type of translation than the word-to-word of an interlingual glossary; indeed, the two versions of "The Spirit of Chinese Culture" feature the more traditional practice of translating an entire text from a source language into a target language. The English and Chinese versions of this text, however, present enough differences and unexpected points of contact that they likewise push us to consider the very purpose of translation, as well as the role of an audience in determining a translation's manner of becoming. In "The Spirit of Chinese Culture," political censorship and oppression create certain "untranslatables" in semi-colonial Chinese modernity. That this all happens under the aegis of the League of Nations and their banner of fostering cross-cultural unity reveals the inevitable limits of translating for mutual understanding. I read these essays alongside further entries from Lin's appendix, as Lin's glossary becomes a productive tool to retroactively inform his entire oeuvre in translation. Just as translating affect in the appendix meant to enable an aesthetic experience rather that accurately carry over semantic meaning, this pair of essays in translation shows the process of making speakable those sentiments that are unspeakable in another tongue; in so doing, the Chinese translation *makes whole* the English original, adding sentiment to sense to complete our understanding of history.

The context of "The Spirit of Chinese Culture" is the complex relationship that China had to the League of Nations as a whole. For China, the Treaty of Versailles (1919) that ended WWI

and set the foundation for the League of Nations was nothing short of disastrous. Chinese participation in the First World War on the side of the Allies was expressly for the purpose of gaining it a place at the postwar bargaining table, specifically in the wrangling back of German-occupied territories in China like the Shantung Peninsula. However, when Japan, also on the side of the Allies, invaded the Peninsula and took it from the Germans in 1914, it forced China to directly cede those holdings to Japan first. Thus, by the end of the war, both China and Japan held claims to the strategically important Shantung Peninsula. At the peace talks in Versailles in 1919, the two nations fought bitterly over who should maintain control of the territory now that the war was over. When the Allies ultimately voted in favor of Japan, it was seen as a profound betrayal by the Chinese people and sparked so much public outrage and vehement demonstrations that they culminated in the cultural revolution now known as the May 4th Movement.

The May 4th Movement (五四运动), thus born out of a sense of deep betrayal and international humiliation, was a cultural revolution that sought to rapidly modernize China at all costs so that it could hold its own with the Western powers. Its proponents rejected Confucian values, traditional social structures, and even hallmark literary styles and language in favor of new forms of individuality, political engagement through public discourse, and vernacular idioms that were thought to unify and thereby "save the nation." The role of literature in this movement was critical, as much of the new ideas germane to this period were developed by leading Chinese intellectuals through essays, short stories, and debates in widely circulated periodicals. Lin Yutang was one of the dissenting voices among these intellectuals who sought to make room for literature that was not pressed into the service of rebuilding the nation.

In the meantime, the League of Nations was formed in 1920, soon after the Treaty was signed, and China was automatically enrolled for its participation on the side of the Allies in WWI. But it never forgot the shadow of Shantung. Throughout the 1920's, the Chinese representative to the League, Wellington Koo 顾维钧, put in various bids to revise the terms of the Versailles Treaty but was unilaterally ignored.[11] Nevertheless, this was to be only a part of China's participation in the League and its projects. In 1922, the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (hereafter the ICIC) was established as a premiere organ of the League of Nations, one that would bring together the world's best and brightest for intellectual and cultural exchange. It was presided over by the French philosopher Henri Bergson and included such luminaries as Albert Einstein and Marie Curie, and was headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. Viewing itself as above all "a body neither of scholars nor teachers but a Bureau of International Administration," the ICIC sought, mostly through writing, to be a veritable "League of Minds," seeking to "come to grips with the general problems which dominate the whole of our age and lie at the root of our present discontents."[12] Its basis was international intellectualism, one in which multilingualism was but a barrier and translation but a means to enabling discussion. With affairs conducted entirely in English and French, the League had certain hierarchies in place despite its desire to unify those of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

It hardly seems surprising, then, that Lin's attendance at the annual ICIC meeting in 1931 resulted in an essay defining "The Spirit of Chinese Culture" to Western audiences. The dominant tone of the international conversation being Western-centric, Lin felt the need to

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[11] See *Modern China and the West: Translation and Cultural Mediation* (2014). See also meeting minutes from League of Nations meetings throughout the year 1931, Columbia University Rare Books and Manuscripts Library.
[12] Quoted From the League of Nations' *Official Journal*, 14, No. 11, Pt. 1 (November 1933), p. 1345.

intervene on their terms. He eventually delivered the essay as a speech to the Peace Group at Oxford University in February 1932, on his way home from Geneva. This essay would prove to be seminal for Lin's later, full-length bestsellers in America. Therefore, though the essay was first delivered to English speakers across the Atlantic, its long-term ramifications reach all the way to the U.S. as it helped to fundamentally define Lin's posture of teaching and translating Chinese culture for English-speaking readers writ large. It was then translated by Lin into Chinese when he returned to Shanghai. This essay thus constitutes a fertile ground for examining the intervening effects of not just text, but *con*text in the process of translating affect.

Lin begins the original English essay with self-deprecating humor. He states that he will, "with an entire want of evangelical ardor, and a characteristic indifference… undertake to interpret to you the spirit of Chinese culture."[13] However, what Lin defines as the "Chinese spirit" presents theories of cultural interchange that are questionable at best. Lin states, "a nation's culture is more or less the result of a racial temperament. Certain cultural ideas alter the thoughts of a race or nation, but fundamentally the mental and emotional make-up of a nation remains the same." His words are unabashedly essentialist, and have long drawn fire for seeming to pander to Western audiences.[14] Indeed, Lin goes on to claim that the essence of Chinese culture expresses itself in "the culture of an old man, tolerant, humorous, peaceful and content, with the mellow wisdom and the weaknesses of old age, but even then rather loveable at that" – thus making it easy for critics to dismiss him as a self-Orientalizing assimilationist lacking backbone or depth.[15] That Lin later translated this essay into Chinese, seemingly to further propagate these essentialist claims, would seem to amply justify that criticism. However, examining the actual

[13] Lin's essays are all as printed in *Selected Bilingual Essays of Lin Yutang*, Qian Suoqiao, 2010, p. 43.
[14] Lu Xun, for instance, called him a running dog to the Western imperialists, though this might have been done following Communist Party orders after Lu Xun had become the president of the League of Left-Wing Writers. See Qian Suoqiao, especially Chapter 3 detailing the relationship between Lu Xun and Lin Yutang.
[15] Qian, 2010, p. 45.

Chinese translation of this essay reveals quite a different reading than that of cultural reductionism. For instance, though the English version starts with Lin's self-deprecating desire to introduce Chinese culture to his Western audience, the Chinese text begins with a far more complicated explanatory note that bears quoting at length. Below are the opening lines in his Chinese text, to which I have appended my own English translation thereof:

> 余去年赴欧出席国联文化合作委员年会，六月初回国，《申报月刊》记者嘱为文叙述对于国联之感想。夫中日问题之解决中国政府已声明，唯国联之命是听，国联一切处置，唯列强之命是听，而列强对于满蒙事件，又唯东京之命是听，此种感想，岂容发表？
>
> Last year, I went to Europe to attend the annual meeting for the International Committee for Intellectual Cooperation. I returned in June, and a journalist from the *Shenbao Monthly* asked me to share some thoughts regarding the League of Nations. The Chinese government has already made clear the need to resolve problems between China and Japan, and yet the League of Nations only demanded that we comply with their word. In everything the League does, all we hear is the [Western] Powers'[16] mandate to comply. Their word with regard to the Manchurian Incident is also simply to comply, while the only word from Tokyo is the same "comply." How can one possibly express thoughts and feelings like these?[17]

Writing to the Chinese audience at home, Lin changes not just his opening lines but the entire tenor of the essay from one of light-hearted cultural introduction to intense political aggravation. Indeed, much of Lin's Chinese introduction draws upon timely socio-historical concerns rather than timeless racial truths. Besides mentioning the futile attempts of the Chinese government to recover the Shantung Peninsula, Lin also brings up the Manchurian Incident, a staged event that the Japanese used to justify invading northeastern China in September of 1931. The phrase *wei ming shi ting* 唯命是听 – what I have translated as "comply" – is an expression with strong classical literary references regarding the mandates of generals and emperors, and conveys an

[16] The word here in Chinese, *lieqiang* 列强, literally translates to "Great Powers," and in this modern context refers almost exclusively to the Western imperial powers that divided up Chinese ports and territories during the days of semi-colonialism.
[17] Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Lin's Chinese texts are mine.

utter powerlessness to do anything but abide by given orders. All Chinese efforts to maintain their own sovereignty, or to seek aid from the League of Nations to redress wrongs, were met with infuriating mandates for compliance rather than any real assistance.

At the same time, that phrase that Lin uses for "comply" is also referring to the general atmosphere of informal censorship under which he and other Chinese writers were laboring in the early 1930's, especially in Shanghai.[18] The word *ting* literally means to "listen" – to passively take in and obey rather than speak out or protest. While the English version of this speech appeared in Lin's personally edited column of *The China Critic*, the Chinese version was requested by and published in the *Shenbao Monthly* 申報, one of Shanghai's most popular and widely circulated newspapers. But by the 1930's, the *Shenbao*, in addition to nearly every other Shanghai periodical, was under pressure to remain mum regarding Japanese imperialism.[19] The multi-lingual, semi-colonial space of Shanghai – divided between the native Chinese population and British, French, and American concessions, along with their multi-lingual publications – generally deferred to Japan in all matters regarding East Asia, including the topic of Japan's invasive aggressions toward China. Motivated by financial and other incentives from Japanese politicians, foreign journalists had a tacit agreement to write nothing disapproving of Japan's imperialist actions. With even the Chinese-language periodicals compromised by the League of Nations' deference to Japan, "How," Lin asked, "can one possibly express thoughts and feelings like these?"

Lin's Chinese translation thus unleashes political frustration. He makes no attempt to be pleasant, as if the Chinese language and audience allow him an outlet to vent all the feelings that

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[18] See Michel Hockx' *The Literary Field of Twentieth-Century China* (1999).
[19] See Rudolf Wagner's "Don't Mind the Gap!: The Foreign Language-Press in Late Qing and Republican China", *China Heritage Quarterly* (2012).

are absent in the seamless English original. In this sense, the Chinese translation already takes a step toward making *whole* the original instead of making sense of it – of the Chinese *matching* the original English as another missing piece of an urn, instead of merely copying or imitating it. Translating this essay into Chinese, in other words, does not merely increase the accessibility of the text for a home audience – that they may, too, become educated as to the "spirit of Chinese culture" – but rather foregrounds Lin's and others' silenced Chinese voices when it came to international politics. This reading is further reinforced in another passage entirely absent from the English, in which he writes:

> 中国今日政治经济工业学术，无一不落人后，而举国正如醉如疫，连年战乱，不恤民艱，强邻外侮之际，且不能释然私怒，岂非亡国之征？……愿读者就中国文化之弱点着想，毋徒以东方文明之继述者自负，中国始可有为。
>
> In politics, economics, industry, and scholarly research, there is not one area in which China today is not lagging behind. And the entire country is as if drunk or diseased, tangled in endless battles and heedless of the people's suffering. If, at a time when our strong neighbors are invading, one cannot even feel free to be outraged, how can this not be a sign of the end of the nation? Would that the reader consider the weaknesses of Chinese culture and not just take upon himself the role of carrying on Eastern Civilization. Only then can China truly begin.

This fiery passage, like much of the Chinese intellectual discourse of the 20's and 30's, rails against China's weaknesses compared to the West and emphasizes the need for nationalist improvement. But the real key to the passage is that Lin again "cannot even feel free to be outraged" at this state of affairs; that is, the problem is the inability of self-expression, and not just the inequality of international stature. From this perspective, the same one in which Lin simply cannot "express thoughts and feelings like these," it becomes clear that the silencing of one's emotions is one of the real roots of Lin's ire. Translating "The Spirit of Chinese Culture" back into Chinese for the *Shenbao* is thus primarily about making visible what is speakable and unspeakable in the politics of international diplomacy. Ironically, the context of censorship in

Shanghai, mentioned only obliquely in the Chinese version, serves to highlight just how much stronger was the general censorship of Chinese voices in Geneva and London, where the English version was first composed.

In a very real way, then, Lin's Chinese version speaks to that dyad between feelings that are unspeakable in one language – here, because of the realities of imperialism and publication censors – and only speakable through translation instead. Earlier, affect was discussed specifically as an aesthetic sentiment: Jameson's embodied affect, and Lin's word-by-word translated sentiments, were all in response to a literary text or artistic scene. But here, in the realm of contentious "truths" about culture, as well as who gets to speak them and in which tongue, one could say that the translation of affect both broadens and deepens in scope. The aesthetic "untranslatable" of "poetic content" gives way here to a political "untranslatable" created by historical contingencies. The lack of sympathy from a Western audience demands Lin's silence and precludes any possibility of expressing his feelings in their language, making much of the affect he feels in that situation go unspoken.

And yet, the nuances of the Chinese translation also allow us to see the two-step required for that affect to come through to Lin's audiences in Shanghai. To his Chinese readers, Lin not only wrote openly about his frustration, but he also brought in words and phrases that made the essay topically relevant to modern Chinese history. This is most evident in Lin's translation of "culture" itself. In the English speech, Lin tells the Oxford scholars that he would "be highly un-Chinese" if he were to

> put [himself] in the role of an apostle of Chinese culture, trying to make proselytes of a group of Oxonian scholars. Too much missionary zeal would indicate a deplorable lack of common sense, and to lack common sense for a Chinese gentleman is sufficient evidence of lack of culture. (43)

His Chinese translation follows:

[我] 并非自命为东方文明之教士，希望使牛津学者变为中国文化之信徒。惟有西方教士才有这种胆量，这种雄心。胆量与雄心，固非中国人之特长。必欲执一己之，使异族同化，于情理上，殊欠通达，依中国观点而论，情理欠通达，即系未受教育。(56)

[I] am not an apostle of Eastern Civilization, hoping to make Oxford scholars into apostles of Chinese culture. Only Western missionaries have that kind of daring and ambition. Daring and ambition are not the strengths of the Chinese. The need to make all like oneself, assimilating the peoples of the world, lacks common sense. From a Chinese perspective, to lack common sense is to lack education.

There are clear disparities between the English and Chinese versions of the text, including the more significant digs at the evangelicalism of "Western missionaries" in the Chinese rendition. But the real divergence lies in what constitutes "culture"; what in Lin's English original is "lack of culture," I have translated literally from the Chinese as "lack[ing] education." Elsewhere in the English version of this essay, Lin states that "The aim of Chinese classical education has always been the cultivation of the reasonable man as the model of culture," and would go on to use culture and education interchangeably in *The Importance of Living* as well.[20] Indeed, "the reasonable man," one who excels in "common sense," is the Chinese "model of culture," and that particular phrase is translated in the Chinese as *tongda* 通达 (*t'ungta* in Lin's English orthography). As the functioning definition of culture, especially culture as the product of education, *t'ungta* would go on to appear several more times in Lin's Chinese essay.

The particular word choice of *t'ungta* as "culture" is crucial when we examine its significance in the modern Chinese context. In *Sound and Script,* Jing Tsu discusses the concept of *tong* 通 (Lin's *t'ung*) and its polysemous role in the late Qing era, especially in the debates surrounding Chinese script reformation. The need then for a viable means of translation between

[20] See p. 49 of "The Spirit of Chinese Culture." Later, Lin writes, "The aim of education or culture is merely the development of good taste in knowledge and good form in conduct" (*IOL*, 364).

China and the West was urgent, and too often the Chinese script itself was found to blame. "Left unimproved, [the language reformers] argued, the ideograph would stunt any form of modern learning – especially in the areas of technology, translation, commerce, and communication."[21] The belief then was that Chinese characters were the fundamental barrier to modernity. But, the Chinese reformers thought, "if a key could be found" to simplify the Chinese ideograph and make it easier to learn, "an entire world would 'open' (*tong*) with it." Tsu lists such intellectuals as Kang Youwei 康有为 and Tan Sitong 谭嗣同 as those closely hewn to the idea of *tong* as "openness, interpenetration, communication" – for causes like intra-racial and -national connectivity, but also for the express purpose of opening or unblocking the influx of science and knowledge from the West. *Tong* in the early modern Chinese context was thus deeply tied to the flexibility of language and the opening of culture to new ideas. In fact, the phrase *tongshi* 通士 (in which the *shi* denotes a title or rank) was in the late Qing era the Chinese word for "translator" itself.[22]

Defining the very "Spirit of Chinese Culture" as *t'ung* in the central phrase *t'ungta* thus draws on a socio-historical context belying a simplistic understanding of Chinese cultural "essence." Indeed, much in line with Benjamin's thoughts on translation, Lin's Chinese version of this essay highlights the fundamental inadequacy of the English original, supplementing it with the history and context of modern Chinese "culture" in translation. For *t'ung* bears within its history a dramatic turning point, that of moving away from the traditional definition of attaining understanding of the classics to bringing in advanced technical knowledge from the West. Of course, the desire of Chinese script reformers for completely unmediated, open lines of communication with the rest of the world, is one that is all too familiar on the stage of

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[21] Jing Tsu, *Sound and Script*, p. 21.
[22] I am indebted to Lydia Liu for this insight.

international diplomacy. Lin was himself involved in the Chinese script reformation process.[23] Much of his early career was spent formulating a workable Romanized alphabet for the Chinese language, where the goal was to make Chinese more readily accessible to outsiders and for native Chinese speakers to gain easier access to Western learning. At the ICIC conference in 1931, Lin would unambiguously state that "In these days, a secret language was as serious a crime as secret diplomacy, and no attention should be paid to the sinologists and philologists who, regardless of China's real interests, maintained that the Chinese alphabet should not be changed." Though it was "impossible completely to do away with the Chinese writing now employed," a Romanized alphabet as a supplementary reading aid should be instated. He was equally adamant in asserting, though, that this was "a reform which, it must not be forgotten, could only be accomplished by the Chinese" themselves.[24] It would thus not be too far of a stretch to say that the League of Nations – as well as Lin himself – wanted *t'ung* to be the operating paradigm for the world: for culture to flow freely, in an undeterred path of open communication and shared ideas.

The situation becomes more complicated, however, when we consider Lin's damning comments on Western imperialism, available only in the Chinese version of his essay, alongside some further entries of the appendix. If we step back (or forward, in terms of Lin's career) to Lin's 1937 glossary for *The Importance of Living,* we see actual entries listed for both *t'ung* and *ta*. Excerpts from *ta* as well as the full entry for *t'ung* are below:

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[23] Lin was one of the key players in the government-run Chinese Roman Phonetic Transcription Research Committee (国语罗马字拼音委员会) in the 1920s, in which he worked to bring together Chinese language and English script. The fruit of this committee's labor was the relatively short-lived Gwoyeu Romatzyh, a Romanization scheme which pioneered a tonal spelling system. It was ultimately abandoned in favor of *hanyu pinyin* under the PRC in 1958.

[24] Minutes of the Thirteenth Session of ICIC Conference in Geneva, July 20th to 25th, 1931. United Nations Office at Geneva Archives.

> 10. 達 *ta*: the quality of understanding and consequent ability to take things lightly. A man who takes anything too seriously, or is too deeply involved in business, is 'not *ta*' or '*puta'*… But *ta* doesn't necessarily mean 'escape'; it simply means 'understanding.' One can '*ta* the human heart' or 'the ways of the world.' Again *tach'ing* represents the highest ideal of Confucian moral and political philosophy and means 'to enable men and women to satisfy their emotions or sentiments.'
> 11. 通 *t'ung*: "similar in meaning to *ta*, with specific variations. *T'ungta* means 'to have understanding' of the human heart, or of any particular subject. A man who has understanding is called either *t'ungjen* or *tajen*; *t'ungjen* also specifically refers to a man who has read a great deal and thought things through. Originally *t'ung* meant 'to go through' or 'have a clear passage.' A stupid man is said to have 'an unclear passage in his stomach or intestines.' It is interesting to note that to be *t'ung* is regarded generally as the criterion and real aim of education. We usually ask, 'Has So-and-So read his books *t'ung*?', 'Is his writing already *t'ung*?' meaning thereby whether he has reached the point where he has got his ideas in order and adopted an intelligent attitude toward things. (432-33)

In translating *t'ung*, as he does for other appendix entries we have seen, Lin goes back to older meanings of the word when he acknowledges that "[o]riginally *t'ung* meant 'to go through' or 'have a clear passage,"' recalling the fraught tensions surrounding how Western "culture" – and specifically its science and technology – was supposed to be imported through translation into early modern China. But *t'ung* in Lin's definition here is not merely about technical knowledge, but is rather emphatically "the criterion and real aim of education"; it is 'to have understanding,' both of "the ways of the world" *and* of "the human heart." *Ta* in its translation also adds a specifically *emotional* component to *t'ung*: it means, "to enable men and women to satisfy their emotions or sentiments." This emphasis on *t'ungta*'s emotional component thus adds a significant proviso to the older conception of *t'ung* as the opening up of "secret knowledge": emotional understanding, rather than technical know-how, is what underlies Lin's personal translation of culture. Indeed, these appendix entries even return us to the visceral image of intestines; for "A stupid man…to have 'an unclear passage in his stomach or intestines' situates

us squarely once again in the realm of gut feelings and embodiment of affect, rather than in the annals of head knowledge.

When we look at the "translation of affect" in *t'ung*, then, we see those familiar strategies of rambling indirectness – of both too much explanation and too little direction at the same time. There is no systematic pathway, but rather a veritable stream of thought linking a *t'ungjen* ("someone who has thought things through") to the original meaning of *t'ung* as "a clear passage," to its definition as "the criterion and real aim of education." Chinese and English mix-and-match in these wayward sentences, explicitly taking us back and forth across the language divide in phrases like "'Has So-and-So read his books *t'ung*?" and "'Is his writing already *t'ung*?'" *T'ung* comes to life for the English-speaking reader in a translingual fashion, hopping back and forth across the language divide for its meaning to become clear.

More than that, it takes going back and forth between the two languages for the *experience* of *t'ung* to become an embodied reality. Remember that *t'ungta*, in both these entries and in Lin's 1931 essay, signifies someone who has not just gained a vast amount of knowledge, but has rather attained a clear and "open passage" in his thoughts and ideas. But the ironic fact of the matter is that the path through the entry for *t'ung* is anything but straight or open. Instead, both *t'ung* and *ta* in the appendix push the English-speaking reader through the "curious overlapping and back-and-forth twists and turns of the author's thoughts." Were Lin's translations of the sort that read like a one-to-one dictionary, in which *ta* = understanding and *t'ung* = cultured, one would have gleaned just the meaning of those words and nothing more. But the twists and turns in these entries pull the reader through translation, such that one must strive to make the connections between previously unrelated concepts and languages. From "open passage" to "education," and from "the highest ideal of Confucian moral philosophy" to

"stomach and intestines," the entries for *t'ungta* together form Chinese "culture" out of a multilingual process of becoming. It is as if only in reading in this indirect, multilingual way can the reader become the kind of scholar that is, in reality, *t'ung*. In expanding these word lists to include both Chinese and English, and more examples than explanations, Lin allows for a real experience of Chinese acculturation for his general American readers.

The pathway that *t'ung* offers in translation practice is thus a paradoxically fraught openness, one requiring the painstaking process of feeling one's way between languages rather than just providing an easy or direct thruway for the passage of meaning. It is also, as we return to "The Spirit of Chinese Culture," laden with history rather than endorsing the kind of openness that either the Chinese script reformers or the League of Nations participants were trying to achieve. Returning to Benjamin's words, the goal of the translation is not to merely imitate an original; it supplements and completes it. Jean Laplanche later posits, "does translation... amount to appropriation or disappropriation?... To make come to oneself or to head out towards the other?" Finally, he asks, "Is there a third option: to prolong the movement forward?" (202). Lin's translations of *t'ung*, first in 1931 Shanghai and then in his 1937 American works, pull apart the layers of linguistic history embedded in a Chinese term to link that past with an American literary future. Alternatively, reading the essay and the later glossary together unbinds the future to read the past. Culture, like that fluid, rippling thing we first saw in the entry for *wen*, allows feelings to become guides as well as reading consequences or effects. Their being put into language – and more than one language at that – opens the reader up to an alternative reading of history.

The early modern Chinese theory of *t'ung* – in which language simply opens up to the "free flow of information" – did not die with the League of Nations at the start of WWII.

Instead, the League of Nations' ICIC was eventually resurrected in 1945 as Unesco, the United Nations Education, Science, and Cultural Operations division. The attitude toward language differences and translation would remain essentially the same; in what is a clear echo of the ICIC, one of Unesco's primary goals is "to develop and increase the means of communication between [the member states'] peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of their lives." Translation, in other words, existed simply to facilitate communication as effectively as possible, that "mutual understanding" could penetrate past linguistic, cultural, and national barriers. Indeed, the need for opening channels of communication became even more important given the U.S.'s rise to supremacy after WWII. America's eventual subscription to a dichotomous Cold War ideology increasingly demanded a "freedom of information" policy in the service of propagating democratic values on a global scale, resulting in machine translation movements that conscripted technology into not just the ends, but the means of providing technical knowledge.

But what if we were to take seriously Benjamin's admonition to take translation as aiming for completion instead of communication? How then would this affect the way cultural diplomacy is practiced, especially in the realm of cultivating mutual sympathy through cultural production? As we move on to Lin's own involvement with Unesco, his interlingual glossary appears again to re-situate the documents he produced for this international peacekeeping organization. What I suggest is that Lin's translations in his appendix, read along his UNESCO writings, offer the far more realistic – and aesthetic - alternative of finding cultural unity around the *untranslatable* instead of a generic "mutual understanding."

Untranslatability and Unesco

Following the conclusion of WWII, the League of Nations officially disbanded, only to be replaced almost immediately by the UN in 1946. Unesco itself came into being in 1945 from the combination of the erstwhile ICIC and the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME), the latter established by the British government in 1942 to focus on rebuilding democratic and cultural institutions for the wartime Allies after the war was over. Its ideals and purposes were fairly straightforward: "To develop and maintain mutual understanding and appreciation of the life and culture, the arts, the humanities and the sciences of the peoples of the world, as a basis for effective international organization and world peace."[25] Unesco thus emerged as part of a plan to use culture to educate the world. However, this ideal proved problematic virtually from Unesco's inception, for it quickly became clear that an international organization focused on mass education could too easily degenerate in practice into an international distributor of mass propaganda, motivated by interests that were more nationally circumscribed than internationally-minded. As S. E. Graham and others have pointed out, the ideal of promoting a "global humanism beyond the narrow concerns of politics" proved unfeasible once actual operations got underway.[26] At the very first conference of Unesco in November of 1945, the U.S., British, and French delegations bargained and jockeyed for influence within the organization, with the constitution drafted by the U.S. and the U.K. eventually achieving most of its aims while the French successfully secured the seat of Unesco in Paris. Furthermore, the U.K. scored a significant victory in the election of Julian Huxley, a British biologist and eugenicist, into the position of first Director General, much to the U.S.

[25] From the *Draft Proposals for an Educational and Cultural Organisation of the United Nations*, 1945. Columbia University Rare Books and Manuscript Library.
[26] S.E. Graham, "The (Real)politiks of Culture: U.S. Cultural Diplomacy in Unesco, 1946-1954," 2006.

delegation's displeasure.[27] This rough beginning set the tone for a contentious atmosphere within the organization that would persist for decades.

As for China, its presence in Unesco – and in the larger UN – during the organization's early years was without great structural influence. Though it was ostensibly one of the four nations (the others being the U.S., the U.K., and the Soviet Union) gathered at Dumbarton Oaks for the planning and formation meeting of the UN in October 1944, it was nevertheless excluded from the earlier, main part of the conference that lasted from August 21st-September 28th, as the Russians refused to negotiate with the Chinese directly.[28] The Chinese delegation was likewise excluded from the follow-up conference in Yalta in early 1945, in which Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill met to finalize the voting structure to elect members to the forthcoming UN's Security Council. Though China fared slightly better in helping to set the agenda in Unesco, it had nowhere near the amount of leverage of the Western powers. The fact is that the Nationalist government of China was too deeply embroiled in the mid-1940's in continuing conflicts with the ever-growing Chinese Communist party, and there were little resources and attention to spare for exerting its influence in a greater capacity on the world stage.

When Lin Yutang became involved with Unesco in the late 1940's, it was putatively as a representative of the Chinese government but in truth had more to do with his popularity and success in the United States. *The Importance of Living* went from being an American bestseller in 1938 to an international phenomenon in the ensuing decades: letters addressed to the John Day Company, Lin's publishing house, detail requests throughout the 40's and 50's from publishers

[27] The U.S. then stipulated that Huxley only serve two years instead of the typical four, and that the deputy director be an American citizen. Their eventual choice, Walter Laves, would end up wielding considerable influence within the organization. See more details in Anthony Q. Hazard, p. 13.

[28] According to Wellington Koo, China's erstwhile representative to the League of Nations, the conference at Dumbarton Oaks was summarily disappointing for the Chinese. His memoirs would later bitterly recount China's weak position at these conferences: "China has been excluded from the first part of the conference. This conference is in the midst of deciding the future characteristics of the United Nations, and it is very clear that China can only face the truth: the second part of this conference is but for show." Quoted in Xie (2010).

around the world for translation rights to *The Importance of Living*, including for Spanish, Hungarian, German, Dutch, French, Norwegian, and Hindi. Other letters detail the ongoing piracy of the volume in South America that John Day and its associates could do little to stop, indicating just how popular the book had become even on the literary black market. *The Importance of Living* thus established Lin as an international figure, one eventually hand-picked to lead Unesco's Arts and Letters Division in its mission of cultural exchange.

Within the U.S., however, Lin's popularity in the late 1940's had begun to fall into decline, mostly due to the increasingly problematic relations between the U.S. and China. Soon after Lin moved to New York City in 1936, the Japanese invaded Shanghai, and by the 1940's, both sides of the Pacific were heavily engaged in World War. From his comfortable position among New York City's literati and cosmopolites, Lin could not help but speak out, often boldly and stridently, against the internecine fighting between China's then Nationalist government and the Communist revolutionaries, as well as for the need for more U.S. aid to China. Lin's outspokenness eventually began to take a toll on his English literary career. Against the advice of his publishers, he went on to append an additional epilogue to a reprinting of *My Country, My People* in 1939, titled "A Personal Story of the Sino-Japanese War," followed by the full-length books, *The Vigil of a Nation* (1944) and *Between Tears and Laughter* (1945).[29] All of them detailed the specifics of the war situation in China and contained impassioned critiques of the West, pleading with it to aid China's Nationalist government now. The popular reception in America for these works was less than ecstatic. By this time, Lin had also to contend with those

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[29] In a revealing letter dated August 6, 1946, Walsh writes to Lin that, "For the first time booksellers have had the experience of not being able to sell all of the copies of a Lin Yutang book that they ordered… Numbers of your readers, who don't give a damn about Chinese politics or Communism, but who have reveled in your humanism, your philosophy and wit, feel that you have let them down… We are agreed that you will not write another political book. Good." Box 170, Folder 12, Archives of John Day Company.

writers he disdainfully called the "China Hands" – American writers in favor of Chinese Communism such as Edgar Snow, John Fairbank, and Owen Lattimore – for representation of "China" to American readers. Their public disagreements with Lin manifested in debates in the editorial sections of such periodicals as *The Nation* and *The Atlantic Monthly*, in which the term "party propagandist" was vehemently slung at both sides. The fight over which was the "real" China ultimately went nowhere.

When Lin decided to relocate his family to Paris in 1948 to work for Unesco, then, there was a fair amount of frustration with his literary life in the U.S. alongside personal financial problems motivating the move. Lin's pet project of creating a Chinese typewriter had cost him a fortune and driven him to the brink of bankruptcy by the late 1940's. In debt and with few options, Lin signed a one-year contract with Unesco to weather a difficult financial and political period. This time, unlike in the ICIC, Lin's work for Unesco endeavored much less to "represent Eastern Civilization" to Western audiences, and instead focused on affirming the universal human need for emotional and sensory experience in addition to head knowledge to ensure world peace. His first proposal as the Head of Arts and Letters Division at Unesco reads,

> In the review of a nation's culture for Unesco's [sic][30] objectives, one should take in man's creative achievements as well as his accumulation of knowledge. It should be remembered that man is an emotional as well as a thinking being, and that his actions are even more determined by his emotional reactions and ideals of the true, the good and the beautiful than by his knowledge of facts. Philosophers have always insisted that education of the senses and emotions is more important than education in knowledge. Education in art means the development of the senses and the imagination in the appreciation of the true, the good and the beautiful… When one is acquainted with what is beautiful, one does not do ugly things.[31]

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[30] Most of UNESCO's own documents only capitalize the first letter of the acronym; in choosing to capitalize the whole in this chapter, I am following scholarly convention while maintaining the original formatting in archival material.

[31] From "Proposal for Unesco Arts and Letters Division," September 13, 1948. Emphasis mine. Box 224, Folder 3, Archives of John Day Company.

Lin's proposal is a sweeping humanist manifesto, one claiming a universal aesthetic spirit as the backbone and bulwark of world peace. Unsurprisingly, Lin highlights the importance of felt, emotional experience in the creative processes of art. As in the glossary entry for *ta,* culture at its best must "satisfy the emotions and sentiments" of man; thus is the "education of the senses and emotions" even more vital than "education in knowledge." This is all very much in keeping with the Lin that we encountered translating Chinese aesthetic sentiments for his English-speaking readers in 1937. In this simplicity of logic, "[w]hen one is acquainted with what is beautiful, one does not do ugly things."

In short, it was in developing or cultivating feelings – what Lin would call "the right loves and hatreds"[32] – that one became a responsible, ethical human being, one worthy to serve and lead in society. Furthermore, Lin writes, "the modern techniques of reproduction and distribution" could "unloose the vast riches of man's creations in beauty, and cement international sympathy through a better acquaintance with each other's works."[33] One of Lin's primary responsibilities at Unesco was to oversee and expand the International Literary Pool, such that writers from around the world could gather for fruitful discussion and exchange of ideas. However, as we saw before with the League of Nations, the practice of cultural exchange had to contend with all manner of barriers unmentioned in the lofty ideals of "cementing international sympathy." Some of these were purely administrative and bureaucratic: Lin's letters to his family and friends in New York were often rife with disbelief at the "astounding, incomparable, and unparalleled miracle of bureaucartic [sic] inefficiency of this cultural and scientific institution."[34] On December 12, 1948, Lin wrote to bemoan the state of his

[32] *Importance of Living*, p. 365.
[33] From "Proposal for Unesco Arts and Letters Division," Sept 13, 1948. Emphasis mine. Box 224, Folder 3, Archives of John Day Company.
[34] Letter to Anor and Adet Lin, August 16, 1948. Box 266, Folder 24, Archives of John Day Company.

department: "We only promote and facilitate and stimulate. We catalogue documentary films of art, but cannot produce films of art, etc., etc. We stimulate exchanges of magazine articles, while I would like to publish." The daily red tape of pushing projects and ideas through Unesco's labyrinthine structure of committees and offices made Lin's own aesthetic expression but a distant dream. His became a secondary level of work, one recognizing the value of art but never practicing it.

Other barriers, however, were apparently linguistic but also political. Lin inherited with his position the Commission for the Translation of Great Books, yet another sub-committee for "making great books universally available at reasonable prices" around the world.[35] Their goal reflected the larger Unesco goal, whereby "[p]riority should be given to works the translation of which would make for greater understanding between countries, and in particular for greater respect."[36] But even this committee faced unending problems, including limited funds, vague definitions as to what constituted a "classic," and even a shortage of paper for willing publishers.[37] Most problematic was the lack of capable translators for the task. Eventually, the project became so unmanageable that it devolved upon the individual countries' national governments to finance the translations; in what is a remarkable turn of phrase redefining economic responsibility as cultural freedom, a report states, "In the last resort each country will be free to accept the international classics which it desires to have translated into its language."[38] On a merely financial level, Unesco simply couldn't make good on its professed ideals. The material reality of translation was too much for it to overcome.

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[35] Letter from Walter Laves to Mr. Li, 1947, Lin Yutang papers, UNESCO Archives.
[36] "Committee on Translations Report," April 22, 1947, p. 3, UNESCO Archives.
[37] See "Mr. Li talks about translators," Lin Yutang papers, UNESCO Archives.
[38] "Translation of the Classics" Report, October 11, 1947, p. 7, UNESCO Archives.

Even worse, the Great Books project was hard-pressed to remain free of bias when it came to which works were translated. Though it stated that the choice of works "cannot be left solely to National Commissions or Governments, for obvious reasons"[39], evidence from the meetings themselves belies this ideal. When D.H. Li, a consultant from China, mentioned in a meeting the discrepancy in terms of how many Western classics were translated into Chinese (everything from Aristotle to Shakespeare to Moliére), whereas not one Chinese work made it onto Unesco's list of classics, his comment was immediately dismissed as a minor oversight and never addressed.[40] And perhaps most interesting of all is the rubric by which the "literary" was established. Early reports state unequivocally: "Works which must be excluded under this heading even if their conclusion have a general application are those written in technical language. Others which must be excluded are those whose only value lies in their polemical character in connection with questions of current politics."[41] In no uncertain terms, the literary was defined in inverse proportion to the political; conversely put, political writing was the very limit of the literary. Unesco's humanistic bent thus sought to ensure that it could not be accused of propaganda, purveying instead a universally accessible and beneficial view of human understanding.

It is hard to imagine that by such means would the "cementing of international sympathy" proceed – and indeed, numerous studies of U.S. dominance in Unesco, particularly in its early years, have argued cogently that its means of promoting world peace were far from impartial or effective.[42] In 1947, U.S. delegate to Unesco and Assistant Secretary of State William Benton would report to Congress that Unesco "can be a major force in the security program of the

[39] Ibid.
[40] Minutes from "Committee of Experts Meeting on Translation of Great Books," May 29, 1948, UNESCO Archives.
[41] "Translation of the Classics" Report, October 11, 1947, p. 7, UNESCO Archives.
[42] See Liping Bu and S. E. Graham.

United States, and in the furtherance of the broad objectives of American foreign policy." In the late 1940's, these objectives were increasingly characterized by two major issues: the anticommunist policy of containment; and the international freedom of information, a communications analog to "free trade" by which the U.S. meant allowing Western values to permeate across all national borders without hindrance. This dramatic opening of "informational" barriers largely took place through distributing educational materials, holding cultural exhibitions, and propagating various forms of literature. Accordingly, U.S. representatives to the organization, including Walter Laves, head of the Committee for the Translation of Great Books, were told to push for U.S. interests with tact; chair of the U.S. delegation to the Conference, George Allen, was purportedly impressed with

> The growing importance of Unesco and our vital interests in the Organization… and the obligation to assume a leading role in the proceedings of the conference… However, in a truly cooperative international enterprise such as this one an overriding influence by any single country would obviously detract from the usefulness of the Organization, and *it is important to avoid giving the impression that the United States wishes to wield such influence*.[43]

Lin himself would run up against the American heavyweights within Unesco, particularly in Laves, then Deputy Director General, and Robert E. Asher, a lawyer and diplomat. "Laves and Asher are the dictators," Lin bitterly wrote, "and [Director General] Huxley is manipulated into a position where he is powerless. The net result is everybody feels frustrated."[44]

Such would define the majority of Lin's personal experience at Unesco, in which the principle of "free and unrestricted exchange… of ideas and knowledge" led essentially to the dictatorship of one overriding line of thought over others.[45] In light of these political realities in

[43] Quoted in Graham, 243-244, emphasis mine.
[44] Letter to Anor and Adet Lin, August 16, 1948. Box 266, Folder 24, Archives of John Day Company.
[45] From the *Draft Proposals for an Educational and Cultural Organisation of the United Nations*, 1945. Accessed online at http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001176/117626e.pdf.

Unesco's attempts at "international understanding," it is little wonder that Lin's different take on translation can offer us a compelling alternative for achieving a different kind of cultural unity. Lin's glossary entries foster "international sympathy" most effectively through fraught communications and linguistic differences, rather than making transparent or accessible major ideas across all times and places. In other words, it is the lack of purported equivalencies that make Lin's translations so valuable, despite what he himself may have claimed in his universalizing humanist appeals. His glossary engages a reading audience in the work of translation themselves, forcing them to walk through back-and-forth waves of thought and contending definitions in the process of reading; only thus can they can begin to embrace a greater language and poetic content beyond the dictionary definitions of the words on the page. Only thus, in other words, can affect be translated from Chinese to an English-speaking audience: so that that which is ineffable and barely reachable in one language can, with two, begin to be approximated. In the realm of formal cultural diplomacy, though, what stands out is that such translation hinges on the presence of the *untranslatable*. As mentioned above, Benjamin's translation is about two languages coming together to point to something that "does not gain from further translation": it is, in other words, the "untranslatable."

We can gain a better sense of this term by returning to passages in *The Importance of Living* that directly confront untranslatability. One occurs in a seemingly unassuming instance in which Lin describes the niceties of appreciating natural rock formations from a Chinese perspective:

> [Rocks] are invariably old, and the Chinese love whatever is old. Above all, from the artistic point of view they have grandeur, majesty, ruggedness, and quaintness. There is the further sentiment of *wei*, which means 'dangerous' but is really untranslatable. A tall cliff that rises abruptly three hundred feet above the ground is always fascinating to look at because of its suggestion of 'danger.' (294-5)

It is hard to miss the "sentiment of *wei*" when it is singled out, Kantian sublime-like, from the other apparently translatable qualities in this passage. The list of "grandeur, majesty, ruggedness, and quaintness" falls short of the wonder of *wei* for no other reason than that they are more easily accessible: their English-ness defuses them, especially when juxtaposed with a sentiment that defies being named. More interesting, however, is that *wei* is presented as "really untranslatable" but approximated anyway with the term "dangerous." This sets up a juxtaposition that pulls us along that by-now familiar axis of both naming an affect and calling it "unspeakable" at the same time. An untranslatable sentiment, *we*i's mere "suggestion" of "danger" rests uneasily between that which is not truly say-able in English and that which must be said in order for the readers to gain a sense of it at all. Lin goes on to write that "In the case of rock gardens and artificial rock grottoes, a subject which is difficult for Western travelers in China to understand and appreciate, the idea is still to retain a suggestion of the rugged, 'dangerous' and majestic lines of rocky peaks" (295). The word "dangerous" appears in quotation marks, its "suggestion" re-emphasizing the inexactness of the English term. Indeed, just as the rocks "suggest" danger to their Chinese observers, these markers in Lin's text suggest to the English-speaking reader his/her own precipice, hovering precariously at the edge of language(s). "*Wei*, which means dangerous but is really untranslatable," features a translation that always carries within it the threat and reality of incompletion.

It is important to note that untranslatability is a non-issue when it comes to translation as practical communication: there is always some way to paraphrase or approximate what you are trying to say. Indeed, calling something "untranslatable" at all implies a deep understanding of both sides of a language divide, and with that understanding, also a sense of the closest possible equivalents. In terms of *completion*, though, untranslatability is paramount. Benjamin

characterizes it thus: "The obligation to translate – its very *Trieb* (drive) – doesn't come from meaning; the drive to translate – and here I use my own terms – comes more from the untranslatable." This untranslatable element is what remains of language when one "refrain[s] from wanting to communicate something" through it; what he means is Pure Language, without the burden of meaning (260). Existing beyond any one particular language, it both demands translation (as an "obligation") and yet defies it at the same time. Indeed, the untranslatable tantalizes with possibility but is never fully revealed. It is language existing not in service of meaning, but for its own sake.

In Lin's glossary, written especially in order to help his English-speaking readers appreciate Chinese aesthetics, this untranslatable is closely related to what I have been calling, after Jameson's element of the unspeakable in narrative realism, "affect." In both Lin's and Jameson's aesthetic philosophies, aesthetics cannot be defined without the affect that accompanies it. This comes out strongest in those "untranslatables" present even in the glossary. Despite Lin's earlier admission of untranslatability, he seeks to define the sentiment of *wei*:

> 60. 危 *wei*: literally "dangerous," but really "awe-inspiring." Thus a flimsy wooden bridge across a deep ravine or an overhanging precipice is *wei* or delicious to look at. (441)

Easily the most striking piece of this entry is the incongruousness of the word "delicious" to describe something simultaneously 'dangerous' and 'awe-inspiring.' Indeed, it would seem as if Lin copes with the difficulty of *wei*'s semantic meaning by deflecting entirely to the realm of the senses. The quality of being "delicious to look at" engages both taste and sight in potent synesthesia, where the word "delicious" returns one so viscerally to the body that what Lin earlier called the "untranslatable" becomes one here with embodied experience. The brevity of the entry itself also helps to accentuate its potency: the "flimsy wooden bridge across a deep

ravine or an overhanging precipice" has no further examples to support it, either verbally in the word entry and physically in the evoked image; it dangles like a single line of text across a precarious divide. Translating the sentiment of "awe" or "danger" from Chinese to English thus becomes, on multiple levels, a full-body experience approximating the untranslatability of feeling itself.

The case of *wei*, however, pales in comparison with another "untranslatable" term that the reader encounters in the glossary. The following term, even more rarefied, adds new dimensions to the problems of untranslatability:

> 57. 奇 *ch'i*: rare – really an untranslatable word. Literally, it means "remarkable," "strange," "extraordinary," but it has definite associations not fully expressed by the word "remarkable." There must go with it a subjective love of the unusual, the unconventional and the unattainable by common men. A *ch'ishu* is more than a "remarkable book": it is one of the few world masterpieces not to be duplicated. "Rare" comes nearest to it. Tired of the humdrum world and the common run of men and things, one is on the look out for *ch'i* or "rare" books, rocks, peaks, flowers, perfumes, delicacies, jewels, curios, etc. (441)

The term is ill-defined: its dependence upon "a subjective love of the unusual" makes it, by definition, resistant to any objective standard. It is thus from the start localized squarely in the realm of the affective and experiential. Indeed, *qi*'s rareness seemingly cannot be emphasized enough. The way that Lin goes about making this concept understandable to his English-speaking audience certainly follows this reading: he casts out a plethora of examples of things that can be *qi* (Lin's *ch'i*), taking the reader with him on a veritable treasure hunt through this field of words ("books, rocks, peaks, flowers…") for the meaning of this elusive concept. Even the "etc" at the end of the entry is telling – there is no end to things that can be *qi;* even after the entry is over, the hunt for its meaning continues.

It thus seems fitting that the entry for *qi* would perfectly embody Benjamin's "untranslatability." For the true untranslatable is rare, without price, and can still ever only be

searched for in the act of translation as opposed to ever fully found or defined. Later, it was in considering the "untranslatable" that Laplanche would ask, "what is it to translate a translation, and is it possible to translate a translation?" (203). The short answer, given Benjamin's definition of translation, is no. Completion through just one act of translation does not gain or become "more complete" through yet another crossing of linguistic barriers. *Wei* and *qi*, taken together, demonstrate that the element of untranslatability is beyond the pale of meaning; instead, it is a glimpse of the aesthetic itself, an experience thereof. Indeed, it is in *narratively experiencing* the 'danger' of *wei* through its precarious and "delicious" brevity and the 'rareness' of *qi* through its treasure hunt that the affect they embody is translated to the English-speaking reader. Their translations are of affect, then, not meaning, and so gain nothing from being translated again. Just one act of linguistic passage is enough, as Lin would say, for "direct, unanalyzed aesthetic experience" to meet and complete the "clear, precise, objective, and scientific facts" of literal meaning.[46]

This meeting space of translation – its *completing* space – is, I argue, essential and productive for re-thinking the paradigm of cultural diplomacy from its typical promotion of mutual cultural understanding. Lin's translations reiterate, in great variety, the need for experiential knowledge in addition to mere factual understanding. Simply translating the words from one language to another is not enough if the goal is to generate mutual sympathy. Affect – that ineffable "pure experience" of emotions defined by and at times defining the aesthetic – has thus been at the heart of Lin's translation practice. But these translations do not just make certain sentiments experientially know-able; they transform the very point of cultural translation from that of mutual comprehension to mutual completion. In a very real way, the translation of

[46] See Lin Yutang's article, "Orient Meets Occident," in *The Unesco Courier,* September 1948, Vol. 1, No. 8. Accessed online at http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0007/000738/073829eo.pdf.

affect *makes whole* one's understanding of another culture by making clear the incompleteness of one's own understanding without it. That ability of another tongue to show the limitations of one's own, to point to something deeper and beyond the immediate grasp of either—these are the beginnings of a real, felt humility.

Seen through this Benjaminian lens, Lin's translations of "Chinese culture" for American audiences have never been about describing the beauty of rocks and calligraphy or even evoking a similar emotional response from his English-speaking readers. Instead, Lin's project showcases the need for moving beyond mutual sympathy to attaining a common untranslatable that baffles us all – and in so doing, paradoxically unites us in our common experience of need. A comprehension based on communication rather than completion will thus always fall short. When we consider these principles of translation and cultural exchange alongside Lin's work for Unesco, the two could not be more different in quality and purpose. In Lin's days at the League of Nations, historical contingency and politics made internal emotional discontents a taboo topic for translation to Lin's Western audiences. Similarly, one can feel Lin's aggravation when he declaims in a letter, "The waste of time and talent (if any) at Unesco is fearful. We take two years to develop something which a commercial firm would take three months to accomplish. So the net result of the staff is a sense of utter frustration and those who can get out."[47] Internal emotional tumult again becomes something created by political conditions then kept utterly unspeakable by the same. In the end, Lin could do little but leave. Within a year, he resigned and moved back to New York to resume his own creative writing.

But perhaps this fiasco wasn't entirely due to Unesco's failings. Lin's fame and experience as a cultural diplomat eventually ensured that he was on the USIS' radar in the

[47] Letter from Lin Yutang to Anor and Adet Lin, August 16, 1948. Box 266, Folder 24, Archives of John Day Company.

1950's. Lin's literary hits in the interwar period led directly to his books being recommended for translation in the Cold War period, and for his name to be pushed as the representative of a liberal-leaning China. The USIS' interested was especially piqued after he became the head of the newly created Nanyang University in Singapore.[48] However, Lin's brief stint at Nanyang in 1954 was as disastrous, if not more, than his time spent at the UN. As will be elaborated further in Chapter 4, Lin had unwittingly stepped straight into an ongoing fight in Southeast Asia about the future of Chinese-language education in de-colonizing Singapore, as an unwitting and unwilling "cold warrior". From Lin's perspective, the politics of the university never could get beyond the divide between leftist, Communist-leaning factions of the faculty and a liberal right segment that sought to promote humanistic values. It was an ideological conflict that he felt he could no longer engage. He retired, first back to America and then to Taiwan in 1966, taking himself out of the Cold War fight for good.

And yet, Lin's legacy was long lasting. As the forerunner of future Asian writers seeking to introduce China to American readers, Lin played an outsized role in inspiring writers Eileen Chang and Jade Snow Wong, the latter of whom explicitly referenced Lin as a cultural authority in many of her personal letters.[49] Even as Wong would later seek to tell her own story of being Chinese in America, she could not escape the terms that Lin had already set in his glossary emphasizing excess and difference. One could say that Lin paved the way for the kind of cultural pluralism that would eventually come to characterize Chinese-American writing: one that highlighted exotic features of Chinese culture from the role of a translator-educator, building

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[48] See letter from Richard McCarthy to Dorothy Whipple, February 8, 1954. McCarthy recommends that Lin would be a possible editor in an anthology of American literature produced by the USIS, based especially on his recent appointment to be chair at Nanyang University. GRUSIS Box 1, RG 84, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

[49] Furthermore, according to her own admission in 《張愛玲私語錄》, in her youth Chang pronounced that she wanted to grow up and speak English even better than Lin Yutang.

bridges across contentious party ideologies while traveling in and out of the U.S. as the Cold War gained momentum. Lin's "untranslatability" highlighted this kind of difference, defining us by our shared need for the other instead of a need to make the other like us. Despite his own track record of frustration and failure at cultural diplomacy, then, or even his attempts to lay open the doors for borderless communication, Lin's translations invite us to embrace a model that both plays off of difference and essentializes it at the same time. The challenge of these translations is a double bind that survives, as the following chapters show, well into the currents of the Cold War.

Chapter II
Freedom Over Seas: Eileen Chang, Ernest Hemingway, and Translating the Truth in the Cold War

Eileen Chang's translation of Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* into Chinese in 1952 included a preface that was both adulatory and self-effacing: "I worry whether my translator's pen can express the original's faint humor and tragedy, as well as the mesmerizing rhythm of its words," she wrote.[1] This encounter between one of Shanghai's most renowned modernist writers and the iconic "Lost Generation" writer Hemingway marked a profound meeting of literary talent. Chang by then had established herself as one of China's most dynamic new literary voices. A woman in a then male-dominated game, she possessed a remarkably idiosyncratic style; perhaps no one else captured quite as well the desolation and frivolities of a city besieged by war throughout the 1940's. But her fortunes took a definite turn for the worse with the change of China's political tide in the 1950's. When Mao Zedong's Communist forces emerged victorious from China's civil war in 1949, Chang, like many other Chinese intellectuals, had to flee the country. She was picked up in Hong Kong by the United States Information Service (USIS), the propaganda branch of the State Department then looking avidly for Chinese writers to provide translation support to the Americans stationed in the Far East. It was they who commissioned Chang's translation of Hemingway's most famous novel in an attempt to combat the spread of Communism. They later also financed Chang's own Chinese-language novel, *The Rice-Sprout Song*, and the translation of that text into English.[2]

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[1] From Eileen Chang's *Two Selected Translations: The Old Man and the Sea and The Yearling*, 張愛玲 《譯作選二：老人與海、鹿苑長春》， p. 17. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Chang's Chinese texts are my own.

[2] It has been a matter of some debate in scholarship as to whether Chang's *The Rice-Sprout Song* was originally written in English or Chinese, though all agree that the subsequent translation was done by Chang herself. Letters recently uncovered in the records of USIS Hong Kong, however, reveal that their office only possessed "a complete

By all accounts, Chang was grateful to be employed by an arm of the U.S. government, and USIS officials considered the discovery of a "literary genius" like Chang an enormous stroke of good fortune.[3] The USIS itself had been forced out of China by the new government in Beijing, and from Hong Kong they maintained a watchful eye on China's political development. In particular, they sought out English-speaking writers in the midst of the fleeing Chinese – people who could, if needed, provide necessary translation and support to the Americans stationed in the Far East. Eileen Chang, with superb English skills and impeccable literary credentials, stood out amidst the refugee throng. Indeed, U.S. government-funded agencies across the board were determined to do all in their power to stymie the Communist tide. What resulted was all-out information and propaganda warfare with the PRC's Central Propaganda Department, where both sides furnished facts, figures, and reports about the other's evils to the periodicals and publishing houses of the region. It was a matter of great concern for the Americans that in this war of information, they might not be able to keep up. "We must not deceive ourselves. Currently we are losing the battle for the minds of men," a report read in 1952.[4] "The skillful lies of the highly trained, completely indoctrinated Marxists have poisoned the thinking of hundreds of millions of human beings who should be our friends and allies."

Strident naïveté aside, this accusation of falsehood does reveal what is perhaps most curious about this propaganda war: its increasingly dogmatic reliance upon the "truth" to

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English translation of *The Rice-Sprout Song* because the authoress translated this manuscript in the hope of selling it to an American publisher." The novel was thus a Chinese-language original, and not her first English work, as some have claimed. See letter from Richard McCarthy to USIA Washington, May 13, 1954, GRUSIS RG 84, Box 1, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

[3] Richard McCarthy (no relation to Joseph McCarthy), always considered it one of his greatest accomplishments as the USIS director in Hong Kong that he aided in the "discovery" and development of Chang's literary mind. See especially Jack O'Brien's interview with Richard McCarthy through the Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, available from The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training at http://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/McCarthy,%20Richard%20M.toc.pdf.

[4] Information and Reference Section Report for Radio for Free Asia, Asia Foundation records, Committee for Free Asia Collection, Box 5:8, Hoover Institution Archives.

counteract the "skillful lies" of the other side.[5] Most Americans sincerely believed that if only East Asians could know the truth about Communism, and the opposite truth about American freedom, then they would be naturally persuaded of democracy's superiority. U.S. military textbooks developed specifically for use in Asia at the end of WWII even blatantly state that "truth should be the weapon and conversion the objective" of operating personnel.[6] Richard So has further asserted "'the fact' as communication's most trusted ally in the coming 'war of words' between democracy and Communism."[7] Truth, then – a factual, faithful rendition of the world – held incredible value and power for Cold War ideology struggles in East Asia. Given this state of affairs, it seems unexpected that the U.S. government then turned to literature to achieve its aims, but so it did. Thomas E. Dewey, then governor of New York, wrote in 1952,

> What is needed is a program backed by all the book publishers in the United States, by all the best writers and editors, and by the Government itself – an intelligent, unified, all-out effort to flood the world with inexpensive books 'selling' the cause of liberty. This means we must supply better books on every level than the Communists, better children's books, better how-to-do-it books, better reference and text books, in addition to more forthright defenses of our liberal beliefs.[8]

The USIS spearheaded this effort, resolving to fill a "void created by a lack of good non-communist books in Chinese" through employing translators, who would help "to build up a counterflow of literature telling the Free World side to which Chinese students and intellectuals can turn."[9]

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[5] In 1950, President Truman explicitly launched a Campaign of Truth that solicited journalists for their support against Communist information, arguing that what was needed was "truth—plain, simple, unvarnished truth—presented by the newspapers, radio, newsreels, and other sources that the people trust." For more information on this campaign, of which the East Asian branch covered in this chapter is only a part, see Lucas.

[6] "War Report" from the Office of Strategic Services, prepared by William J. Donovan, 1945, Asia Foundation records, R. Harris Smith papers, Box 2, Hoover Institution Archives.

[7] See So (2013), p. 724.

[8] Information and Reference Section Report for Radio for Free Asia, Asia Foundation records, Committee for Free Asia Collection, Box 5:8, Hoover Institution Archives.

[9] Arthur W. Hummel and Richard McCarthy, undated USIA Report, "Summary of Activities in Hong Kong, D.C.C." GRUSIS RG 84, Box 1, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

The target audience of these contentions was neither U.S. nor Mainland Chinese readers, but the multilingual Chinese diaspora spread throughout Southeast Asia. By 1949, there were some 10-15 million Chinese living in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and etc., and over the course of the 1950's, they became not just a part, but the very linchpin, of U.S. policies surrounding China. "The influence of the Chinese in Southeast Asia is considerably out of proportion to their numbers, substantial as their numbers are," one analyst wrote in the periodical *Foreign Affairs* in 1956. "They control not only most of the retail trade of the area but much of the international trade as well… [They] have three choices: to be citizens of the new countries [i.e. Thailand, Malaysia, etc.], of Communist China, or of Nationalist China."[10] While the pro-Communist Mainland was considered "lost" to U.S. interests after 1950, and Taiwan had been settled by the Republic of China with U.S. aid, the numerous Chinese in the rest of Asia were yet undecided as to their political proclivities. They were ripe, in other words, for some well-directed persuasion. The Union Press, a Hong Kong-based publishing house supported by the CIA-funded Asia Foundation, even reported straightforwardly:

> Our programs are essentially directed toward the overseas Chinese. It is our aim that the strength of the twelve million overseas Chinese may be rallied against Communist subversion for the sake of the consolidation of a stabilized free Southeast Asia, and that, when the time is ripe, the strength of the overseas Chinese may contribute to the cause for a democratic China.[11]

Thus triangulated between Beijing and Taiwan, the Overseas Chinese occupied a crucial third category: that of Chinese not living in either iteration of modern China but with the potential to create something new – a different, democratic future.

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[10] Walter H. Mallory's "Chinese in Southeast Asia" in *Foreign Affairs,* January 1956, pp. 258-270. As cited in "Library Notes of the Asia Foundation," January 13, 1956, in Asia Foundation Records, Columbia Rare Books and Manuscripts Library.
[11] Ibid.

The USIS proceeded by founding or subsidizing liberal-aligned publishing houses, such as Union Press 友聯出版社 and World Today Publishing 今日世界出版社 in Hong Kong, which furnished Chinese-language books and periodicals celebrating individual freedom and self-determination; the most successful periodical was *World Today* magazine《今日世界》, so diplomatically renamed after *America Today*《今日美國》had difficulty sustaining readership. At the same time, under the direction of Public Affairs Office Richard McCarthy, USIS Hong Kong started a Book Translation Program employing a veritable army of contract translators reporting to one Richard Lee 李如桐. Officials in Washington D.C. and USIS agents would select which works were translated, such as anthologies of the greatest hits of American poetry (Whitman), short stories (O'Henry), and essays (such as Emerson's) – including, in 1954, Lin Yutang's *Wisdom of America*.[12] But the bilingual Chinese translators also had some freedom in choosing their translation projects.[13] Their suggestions were often approved by USIS agents, who sought to ensure quality by fixing the right price: a gig for the USIS easily paid five to six times the going market rate for translations in Hong Kong. In the meantime, pro-Communist entities such as Beijing Foreign Publishing House 北京外文出版社 and Shanghai Chung Hwa Book Company 上海中華書局, published their own translations from Russian literature, as well as more recent, socialist-minded Chinese writers like Lu Xun and Ding Ling.[14] Thus

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[12] Letter from Richard McCarthy to Lindsey M. Grant, May 18, 1954. McCarthy writes that the "idea of doing [the translation of Lin's book] in Singapore makes a large amount of sense in view of Lin's appointment as Chancellor of Nanyang University."

[13] In 《翻譯與脈絡》*Translation and Contexts* (2007), Shan Te-Hsing has done excellent work piecing together the history of the USIS Book Translation Program through analyzing documents and conducting interviews with contract translators that were in the USIS' employ. Shan's work also includes the most exhaustive collection to date (in Chinese) on which American books were translated through the Program, and by whom. My goal is one day to have that list appended to this chapter in English translation, with permission from the author.

[14] A scandalized report from the Committee for a Free Asia wrote on December 8, 1952: "According to incomplete figures of the Office of Publication, the number of Soviet books that had been translated and published in Chinese totaled 3131 titles. Of these, 71 titles are on the writings of Lenin and Stalin, 943 titles on social science, 579 titles

commenced the "Battle of the Books," as one observer called it: a literary showdown between democratic and communist propaganda programs throughout East Asia.

Into this polarized ideological space enter Eileen Chang, an incorrigible aesthete whose Chinese writings rich with symbolism had won her early fame. Her route into the USIS' orbit was fortuitous: newly penniless in Hong Kong, she responded to a newspaper ad seeking translators for Hemingway's work and was immediately hired by McCarthy, whose familiarity with contemporary Asian literature enabled him to recognize her name at once. Even as she began translating Hemingway, though, Chang was also encouraged by McCarthy to begin writing an anti-Communist novel over which "the USIS [would] have editorial control over content": *The Rice-Sprout Song*.[15] Chang eventually translated this latter novel, about the cover-up of the dire state of famine under Communist policies, from Chinese into English herself. Both books were serialized in Chinese in *World Today* magazine in the 1950's. Both were also later distributed as bound books to various USIS outposts throughout Southeast Asia, provided as free reading material to local visitors of the USIS libraries. These two texts are thus deeply related in their language-crossing and truth-building: the one an English novel embodying the principles of democracy crisscrossing the other, a Chinese novel exposing the harsh truth of Communist rule. Reading them side-by-side as translations allows a two-fold contextualization of how the USIS conceived of truth, and how they sought to use it in a literary propaganda war.

Others scholars' studies on the Cold War, such as that of Wang Meixiang 王梅香 and Sharon Lai 賴慈芸, have detailed the ways that the USIS structured its translation programs, offering key insights into the publishing networks and veils of anonymity that were required to

on natural science and technical subjects, 665 titles on literature and arts, 348 titles on culture and education, and 515 titles for children."

[15] The contract for *The Rice-Sprout Song* calls it Chang's "first try at 'political' writing." For more information on McCarthy's own literary predilections and ideology, see So, "Literary Information Warfare" (2012).

publish translated texts across an ideological divide.[16] Their works give a sense of the often chaotic, unregulated manner in which texts switched names and covers in order to be published as "Communist" or "Free World" translations. But I propose studying Chang's translation work on the level of language and literary form, which would allow us to see the meeting of American and Chinese literary versions of truth on the very same page. For both Chang and Hemingway personally ascribed a certain truth-value to literature.[17] Chang was committed to "writing the truth within the falseness of modern people," while Hemingway's famously sparse prose style was always seeking to create, not describe: "All you have to do is write one true sentence," he would say to himself. "Write the truest sentence that you know" (*WW* 19, *AMF* 12). Unlike the action-driven sentences of Hemingway, though, Chang's "true-to-life" literature is grounded in structures of imbalanced likeness and difference, comparison and contrast. Her early essay, "From the Mouths of Babes," states:

> Tragedy… resembles the matching of bright red and deep green: an intense and unequivocal contrast. And yet it is more exciting than truly revelatory. The reason desolation resonates far more profoundly is that it resembles the conjunction of scallion green with peach red, creating an equivocal contrast. I like writing by way of equivocal contrast because it is relatively true to life. (17)[18]
>
> 我不喜欢壮烈 。我是喜欢悲壮，更喜欢苍凉。壮烈只有力，没有美，似乎缺乏人性。悲壮则如大红大绿的配色，是一种强烈的对照。但它的刺激性还是大于启发性。苍凉之所以有更深长的回味，就因为它像葱绿配桃红，是一种参差的对照。我喜欢参差的对照的写法，因为它是较近事实的。

[16] Wang's and Lai's scholarship is in Chinese, while English-language scholars like Frances Stonor Saunders and Greg Barnhisel have described the importance of American modernism to the "cultural Cold War." In the meantime, studies of Cold War media aesthetics by Richard So, Joe Cleary, and Colleen Lye have emphasized the role of literature in the Transpacific as well, though without centering on the influence effected by translation.
[17] Chang eventually translated numerous other American writers into Chinese for the USIS, including Henry David Thoreau, Washington Irving, and Marjorie Rawlings.
[18] All translations of Chang's work in *Written on Water* are by Andrew F. Jones (2005).

For Chang, then, "relatively true" writing consists not in helping a reader experience "the thing itself," but in manipulating structures of contrast. She argues against positing clear or blatant extremes, like the "bright red and deep green" of a Christmas tree; rather, it is precisely that twist of *equivocal* contrast, wherein the differences are dissymmetrical or slightly askew, that "resonates far more profoundly." It is thus paradoxically the "weaker" contrast of equivocation, where the elements in comparison are more alike than different (literally "equal-voiced"), that yields the far more "true" effect of desolation: an open-ended affective barrenness characterized by its very lack. This affective emptiness, as opposed to Hemingway's immediate experience of "the thing itself," is what constitutes Chang's writing of the "truth."

This equivocal aesthetic, I argue, is precisely what permeates Chang's translations and sheds new light on Hemingway's literary afterlife in East Asia. Joe Cleary has argued that the U.S.'s propaganda war against socialism ultimately devolved into a showdown of literary forms, since "wherever strong communist cultures were forged, their writers tended to favor realist modes of one form or another," whereas modernism "was taken into custodianship by New York (with generous backing from Washington)" (262-3). In like manner, Richard So in *Transpacific Community* argues that rigid Cold War antinomies destroyed a vibrant community of Chinese-American writers from the interwar period that had found a way for "two cultural systems [to] interact and find provisional accord" through the pages of literature. "With the onset of the Cold War," So writes, "this community quickly fell apart, leaving virtually no traces" (xvii). In reality, Cold War uses of literary form are more complex than Cleary lets on[19], and my argument suggests that Transpacific lines of communication could have found a way, albeit not as direct, for So's "provisional accord" to extend into the Cold War period. My argument is a multi-

[19] Not every literary tactic that the U.S. employed in the Cold War "Battle of the Books" was modernist; realist novels like Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* and, from China's side, promotions of Tang classical poetry and popular opera based on folk tales did exist, complicating a view of absolute dichotomy.

layered one: that Chang's translation of Hemingway's modernist text relays not so much content as it relays modernist *style*, privileging one's subjective and affective literary experience over a factual or accurate representation of reality. Indeed, I show that the translation of *The Old Man and the Sea* into Chinese subtly transforms Hemingway's literary truth by Chang's own measure of truthfulness, one that paradoxically uses equivocation to amplify the aesthetic experience of Hemingway's original text. I then show that translating Hemingway also influenced the self-translation of Chang's own novel, such that finding equivalencies in either direction between English and Chinese gave way to purveying a deeper literary truth based on equivocation. In the end, Chang's translations elicit a turn away from ideological antinomies and toward a more flexible understanding of how truth is formed in relationship rather than in isolation: a literary "truth" both more piercing and less precise, one that brings scrutiny to bear on purported allies and similarities rather than rehash clear opposites or extremes.

***Going Overseas: Translating Hemingway's* The Old Man and the Sea**

The daughter of a once-wealthy family that was already in decline in her childhood, Chang had had the chance to study both classical Chinese and English literature from a young age. In fact, she was given the English name "Eileen" first, which was later transcribed into Chinese (as 张爱玲, Zhang Ailing) when she enrolled in school.[20] Her years as an undergraduate in Hong Kong were turbulent – she was there during the days of Japanese invasion and occupation in 1937 – and also left a lasting imprint on her writing style and English ability. She supposedly wrote not a single word in Chinese for three years while she was there, resorting to English even in her personal correspondences so as to hone her language skills. Surrounded by

[20] See her essay "What Is Essential Is that Names Be Right" 《必也正名乎》in *Written on Water*

the pervasive Western sounds and influences of Hong Kong and Shanghai, then, Chang flitted with aplomb between Chinese and English, often translating her own essays for English-language journals and regularly incorporating English words and references in her increasingly popular essays and novellas.

Her translator's approach to Hemingway was to pay homage to his style. His famously unembellished prose, short sentences, and sparse descriptions were always in a sense performative: as Hemingway once wrote, "Since I had started to break down all my writing and get rid of all facility and try to make instead of describe, writing had been wonderful to do" (*AMF* 156). His words were creating reality, rather than portraying it. Hemingway's most iconic passages regarding horse races, bullfights, and even an old man's epic struggle with a marlin out at sea all stood out for the focus and intensity of their action. For Hemingway, one of America's most lauded and iconic modernists, writing was thus always something that sought to dispose of its communicative aspect in favor of its creative qualities. He even wrote in 1942:

> A writer's job is to tell the truth. His standard of fidelity to the truth should be so high that his invention, out of his experience, should produce a truer account than anything factual can be. For facts can be observed badly; but when a good writer is creating something, he has time and scope to make it of [*sic*] an absolute truth. (*Men at War* xiv, xv)

Hemingway's "truth" thus transcended the dull plane of facts, affirming instead a good writer's style and prose as that which "produce" an "absolute truth" out of experience instead.

In this sense, Hemingway was mainly a writer of form than of content or meaning. Indeed, it was partly modernism's inherent lack of meaning that accounts for its ascendancy to representational status for the West during the Cold War. Fredric Jameson writes that modernist literature should, by definition, *mean* nothing: "Experience – and sensory experience in

particular – is in modern times contingent: if such experience seems to have a meaning, we are at once suspicious of its authenticity" (*AOR* 34). Indeed, Jameson goes on, quoting Barthes:

> 'In the ideology of our time, the obsessive reference to the 'concrete'… is always trained like a weapon against meaning as such'… [This is] a fundamental feature of modernity, particularly in literature, whose verbal existence necessarily inclines it to idealism. *If it means something, it can't be real; if it is real, it can't be absorbed by purely mental or conceptual categories*. (37, emphasis mine)

In other words, the "real" and the "signified" – authenticity and meaning – are mutually opposed. Literature needs to exist as its own kind of experience rather than as a signifier for something else, if it is to be "true." When we pair this with Hemingway's own insistence that "a writer's job is to tell the truth," transcending the "dull plane of facts," we can see how Hemingway's stylistic truth embodying the crux of experience connected with the "daring, meaningless" truth of American freedom. Indeed, Greg Barnhisel writes that during the 1940's and '50's American modernism became "emptied of content," to focus instead on "a set of formal techniques and attitudes." This then came to represent American life because "*only a free society could create art this challenging and allow artists this daring the freedom to create*" (3, 8, emphasis original).[21] In other words, modernist style was free to mean nothing at all, an aesthetic freedom that embodied the truth of American ideological freedom. Hemingway's emphasis on style – writing a "certain type of sentence" – thus became emblematic of American individualism and a "daring," "challenging" truth of life.[22]

It was only when Hemingway's literary style met with the translator's pen, however, that it came to full fruition. For Chang's translation strove for accuracy and faithfulness in form as

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[21] Barnhisel presents this argument as "the revisionist thesis," one argued most eloquently by critics like Max Kozloff, Serge Guilbaut, and Frances Stonor Saunders from the 1970's to the early 2000's. Barnhisel himself, on the other hand, does not draw such a clear connection between "the free way of life" and the kind of art that was selected to represent it; he qualifies this statement by presenting the at times vastly divergent ways modernism was used by various cultural diplomacy policymakers during the Cold War.
[22] See Fredric Jameson's *Marxism and Form,* p. 411.

well as content; indeed, it was far more important to relay Hemingway's style as opposed to his meaning, since that was what delivered that aesthetic experience of American freedom. But even as Chang keeps sentence structure and length in nearly perfect accordance with the English in her Chinese translation, differences abound that ironically amplify or underscore Hemingway's own original stylistic processes. Chang's Chinese translation not only reveals that the working elements of Hemingway's "true" writing are fundamentally meaningless; they also force us to ask less what his literary truth *means* to what it *does*, adumbrating his own literary reliance upon creating the truth. And yet, even as Chang's Chinese translation reveals the inner workings of Hemingway's style, it also forces us to see the ultimate monolingual inadequacy of Hemingway's stylistic freedom. In the end, Hemingway's blunt, action-packed sentences in English open up to equivocation in translation by exhibiting a more relational literary truth in Chinese, a process that co-opts Hemingway's version of truth into an extension of Chang's own.

The evidence for this equivocation is abundant throughout *The Old Man and the Sea*. In this novel, Hemingway's famous economy of words pairs with long sentences to drive home clear, simple truths about his setting and characters. Early on, for instance, Hemingway writes of the old man that "Everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated" (10). This one sentence, lengthened through many conjunctions and clauses, is nevertheless direct and clear. It uses short, simple words. But its length draws out the "Everything" with which the sentence starts, eventually overcoming the reference to old age with the "cheerful and undefeated" eyes that truly outlast everything about the old man's physicality. And rather than lengthening the sentence with any number of different conjunctions, it seems as if the multiple 'and's are a mindful repetition, one that keeps returning the reader to the same, reliable phrase and maintains the narrative on the same, level plane.

Indeed, the ‘and’s create a flat, immediately accessible reality. They are instrumental for providing a mode of presentation that purports to tell all that there is to tell. By the end, the “and”’s repetitive rhythm equates man and sea such that the old man’s eyes “the same color as the sea” has the feel of an absolute truth.

In Chinese, the same sentence has to be broken down by commas. Chang’s text reads, “他的一切全是老的，除了他的眼睛，眼睛和海一个颜色，很愉快，没有战败过,” which would parse to something like “His everything was old, except for his eyes, eyes of one color with the sea, very happy, undefeated” (18). As mentioned above, Chang’s Chinese prose strives to – and nearly always succeeds at – preserving the sentence lengths and breaks of Hemingway’s English text. What this means, though, is a proliferation of commas to keep up with the pace of Hemingway’s repeated ‘and’s. This arguably has the same effect in Chinese as the “and” does in English, as commas in Chinese often do the neutral connecting work between clauses that ‘and’ does. But the commas’ functionality may be exactly the point: that “and” in English parses directly to grammatical pauses in Chinese reveals that the original English word fundamentally lacks semantic meaning. Its translation is to nothing more than a silent stop. This translational detail exhibits a turning away from the semantic meaning of a word to its syntactic function, quite literally turning away from what a word means to what it *does*. The Chinese commas lay bare the fact that the “and”’s in Hemingway’s original serve as pauses or separations, which is functionally opposite to “and”’s semantic meaning of conjoining or stringing together. In translation, then, the “and”’s become equivocations: equal-voiced in two opposite directions at once. Even (and especially) if this is just one of the language constraints that Chang had to work through in translation, it highlights the previously invisible work and syntactical operations of Hemingway’s text over its semantic significations.

Indeed, it bears emphasizing that the use of commas here may not have been a specific effort on Chang's part, but are rather the demands of Chinese grammar and syntax. But the fact that Chang was not trying to put a "modernist spin" on Hemingway's sentences make the effect she achieves all the more impressive, and to my overall point: that in simply being faithful to the English on Chinese terms, Chang effortlessly draws out what Hemingway strove so assiduously to achieve. It is as if the move to Chinese completes the act of modernist literary "creation," not description. This matters especially because commas are not the only things that Chang inserts here to mirror Hemingway's original prose: the Chinese sentence also repeats the word "eyes" to preserve the flow and length of the original English sentence. The Chinese text reads "except for his eyes, eyes of one color with the sea," a repetition that cuts Hemingway's very sentence in two; instead of the smooth, flat flow of 'and's, the Chinese sentence features a repeated word wrinkling the text, a moment of folding that disrupts the facsimile of immediate access. Indeed, that second "eyes" in Chinese works syntactically, both in the sense that it disrupts the parataxis of Hemingway's English *and* in the sense that it is grammatically required to be there: there is no other way for a sentence of this length to be grammatical in Chinese without repeating the word "eyes" from object of the previous clause to subject of the next. This moment of Chinese repetition also technically qualifies as an instance of non-sense, in which the second "eyes" contains about as much semantic meaning as the "it" does in the English sentence "It is raining."

Bringing together the two sides of this translated sentence thus pulls at a difficult tension in the way Hemingway's style creates truth: oddly, through repeating words that do not mean a thing. What is surprising is that Chang's translations do not interfere with this process, but rather fulfill it. That is, Chang's Chinese sentences seem to double down on the meaningless aspects of Hemingway's English prose, making clearer than ever that aesthetic experience of freedom from

meaning, this time for the Chinese-speaking reader. Put through the framework of equivalence that is translation, then, the inherent equivocations within Hemingway's text begin to emerge, as both original and translation rely on and yield words that are semantically hollow.[23] We see this more and more as the text continues. In another early passage, the boy Manolin recalls the intense first time experience of Santiago taking him out to sea:

> I can remember the tail slapping and banging and the thwart breaking and the noise of the clubbing. I can remember you throwing me into the bow where the wet coiled lines were and feeling the whole boat shiver and the noise of you clubbing him like chopping a tree down and the sweet blood smell all over me. (12)

The lengthy sentences again draw the reader along in an unbroken stream of consciousness, where we experience the immediacy of the boy's remembrance. In addition to the many 'and's, this time there is also the repetitive "-ing" of the many verbs: "slapping," "banging," "breaking," "clubbing," "feeling," etc. forces us into the closeness of action continuously taking place and still in the process of occurring. That repeating "-ing" becomes an endless echo of motion: the sound draws all these verbs onto the same plane, creating again that paratactic flatness of narrative that forces us to experience all of a thing at once. Even the simple repetition of the boy's "I can remember" helps to establish a rhythm for the prose, making it almost a performance or recital. Repeated key phrases and sounds thus work in this passage to facilitate an eternal present rather than the typical syntactic, temporalized structures of a narrative.

In Chinese, though, the repetition looks somewhat different. Chang's rendering of Hemingway's paragraph reads:

> 我记得那尾巴拍拍砑砑地打着，划船人的座位也破了，还有你用木棒打它的声音。我记得你把我丢到船头去，那儿堆着湿淋淋的一捲捲的钓丝，我可以

[23] Like Derridaean *différance*, which describes the way meaning is perpetually deferred from words themselves to the words surrounding them, Chang's repetition of "eyes" *abandons* sense. It momentarily lands us in a place with no literal meaning or external referent so that it can carry on the larger system of Hemingway's style, upholding his literary "truth" as it goes.

觉得整个船在那里抖，还有你用木棒打它的声音，就像砍树一样，我混身都是那甜甜的血腥气。(20)

I remember that tail hitting *paipai pingping*, the seat of the boatman was broken, and the sound [*shengyin*] of you using the club to hit him. I remember you threw me to the head of the boat, there piled up the wet *lingling* coiled lines, I could feel the whole boat shaking, and the sound [*shengyin*] of you using the club to hit him, just like chopping a tree down, and all over me that sweet blood [*xuexing*] smell.[24]

Chang's version of Hemingway's passage lacks the clear, unstoppable force of his present progressive verbs, but what is peculiar here is that she seems to have stayed true to the formal echo of the English "-ing" sound: "that tail hitting *paipai pingping* 拍拍砰砰" for "the tail slapping and banging," the "wet *lingling*" lines, and the "sweet *xuexing* smell" all imbue some of the most graphic and visceral parts of this sentence with that same sound. Indeed, that the word for "sound" itself in Chinese, *shengyin*, also repeated twice in "the sound of you using the club to hit him" likewise relies on a similar phoneme, adds even more to this persistent echo. What this brings to the fore, then, is yet another privileging of sound and form over signification: indeed, the Chinese passage, even without the straightforward rush of verbs and motion, achieves its own version of Hemingway's style by relying primarily on another grammatical entity without its own semantic meaning: the English "-ing." This is especially cogent when we consider the onomatopoeia of "that tail hitting *paipai pingping* 拍拍砰砰." The only repetition pertaining to a verb, *paipai pingping* exists as *just* sound, devoid of any extra-textual referent and without any real meaning of its own whatsoever.

Preserving formal or stylistic equivalents across linguistic media – in the interest of maintaining the "truth" of style – thus keeps returning us to the absence or deferral of meaning and the daring "essence" of democracy that that is supposed to convey. And as before,

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[24] In this back-translation the un-bracketed italicized phrases are transliterations of Chinese words without clear semantic meaning. The phrases in brackets are glosses of the word they follow (Chinese *shengyin* 声音 is "sound").

translation into Chinese does not dilute Hemingway's preference for style over meaning, but rather amplifies it. In this passage, we see this most clearly in the repeated simile: "the noise of you clubbing him like chopping a tree down." In English, that line blends into the relative flatness of Hemingway's sentences; those paratactic "and"s and "'ing"s make it only one detail among many in a scene dominated by action and agency. In Chinese, however, the commas in the sentences do not merely create pauses and stops, but also add layers of subordination and emphasis to a text that was essentially flat in the English original. The simile in Chinese, linking the noise of Santiago's clubbing to the chopping down of a tree, pops out with earth-shattering force, emerging through translation as the loudest part of the passage. What once was an undifferentiated plane of noise and danger and smell in English becomes, in the Chinese, a highly variegated surface with especially protruding sounds. The Chinese version thus takes the figure of speech in the English and makes of it a sonorous climax: yet one more instance of aesthetic "truth" finding its fulfillment in translation.

This performative view of language is also relevant for the multilingualism that permeates Hemingway's original English narrative even before Chang enacts her translation. Any translator of *The Old Man and the Sea* must reckon with the fact that it is inherently a cross-linguistic text: its characters are all Spanish-speakers, and the narration functions as both storyteller and implicit translator in making the Cuban setting the backdrop for a thoroughly American tale. The ironic fact is that this quintessentially American book does not even come close to taking place in the United States or feature American characters. Rather, many critics have argued that the novel stands as an excellent embodiment of the effects of American cultural imperialism in Latin America in the early- to mid-20th century. Philip Melling has cogently shown that many of the "techniques later employed for influencing" culture outside the U.S.

were "first tested in Latin America in the 1930's and 40's" as counter-fascist measures.[25] They then became anti-Communist strategies going into the Cold War period. In particular, popular culture such as American sports and movies were exported en masse, to the great detriment of indigenous Latin American film industries and entertainment – a fact of which Hemingway himself was well aware.[26] Santiago, and the boy Manolin after him, "worships America from afar" through their great love of baseball.[27] Operating here as part of the larger sweep of American cultural diplomacy, baseball itself becomes inflected with local color when the boy asks the old man to "'Tell me about the great John J. McGraw.' He said *Jota* for J" (22). That linguistic note accents the text with the sounds and feel of Spanish, invoking the foreignness of a setting that few Americans do or will ever actually know. Indeed, it is as if Hemingway stops here, in the middle of an all-American name, to make a simple, unadorned point about the speakable difference between his characters and their heroes.

Read critically, Hemingway's characters are classic colonial subjects idolizing the celebrities of the American cultural field, down to knowing American players by name and making them their own through adaptation into their native tongue. When it was taken through actual literary translation into the context of Cold War culture wars in East Asia, then, *The Old Man and the Sea* was only continuing a long trajectory of promoting American interests and values abroad. Eileen Chang was only one of many Chinese writers who responded to the USIS's newspaper ad calling for translators of Hemingway. By far the most renowned literary talent who applied, it is little wonder that she got the job. Hemingway had only published *The*

[25] Reinhold Wagnleiter, as cited in Melling.
[26] Hemingway's complicity in America's anti-fascist and anti-Communist drives in South America is checkered and complicated. He demonstrated a deep respect for the way of life he observed in fishing villages in northern Cuba, even going so far as to televise a speech in colloquial Spanish after his receipt of the Nobel prize affirming the "serious" problems threatening the fishermen's survival. Still, nothing in *Old Man and the Sea* is critical of the pervasive American influence felt upon Cuban fishing culture.
[27] See Melling

Old Man and the Sea months earlier, but the overwhelmingly positive critical acclaim made the work an instant bestseller; indeed, Hemingway won the Pulitzer for the novel in 1953 and the Nobel Prize in 1954. The book was also one of Hemingway's first to be seen as representative of democratic values in Washington D.C.[28]: the struggle to the death between a solitary fisherman and his worthy prey distilled the essence of individualism and heroic willpower. Furthermore, as we shall see more of in Chapter 4, Washington placed a great value on U.S. literature that showcased the "cultural diversity" of the Free World in implementing Cold War stratagems.[29] Santiago the Spanish-born, immigrant-Cuban fisherman thus metamorphosed into the perfect embodiment of American cultural values, and his un-critical, transparent love for that most American of past-times in baseball made him a perfect candidate for translation to the rest of Asia. This book, and the hundreds of other titles that passed through the USIS's Book Translation Program, were thus marshaled as the "soldiers" and "generals" that would go on to fight for the truths of American democracy.[30]

One last, ironic example of Chang's translation will suffice to show the problems within this endeavor, though. Santiago as Christ-figure is a trope that many critics have noted, especially in the scene in which the old man first sees sharks on the tail of his skiff. In English, Hemingway writes, "'*Ay,*' he said aloud. There is no translation for this word and perhaps it is

[28] Barnhisel notes that Hemingway's works were not universally welcomed onto the book lists of the USIS' Book Translation Programs. While the reasons for this are unclear, my hypothesis is that *The Old Man and the Sea* stands alone in Hemingway's oeuvre as taking place entirely in the Americas. It was also uniquely accessible for literary and popular readers alike, making it further "democratic" in its representation and reach.

[29] See Barnhisel's description of the goals for U.S. Cold War strategies regarding its book programs, pp. 118-119.

[30] It was Hong Kong publisher William Hsu who wrote that books should be the soldiers and generals of psychological warfare. In a letter to a representative from the Asia Foundation, Hsu made the impassioned case that "small volumes of popular readings are even more needed now [than serious, theoretical books], just as in a time of war, a great number of soldiers are even more needed than generals; bullets and shells are even more needed than warships. Communism shelled the free world with a tremendous troop armed to the teeth; it is far from sufficient to accept it with a few generals, however talented though they may be." Letter from William Hsu to James Ivy, December 13, 1951. Asia Foundation records, Committee for Free Asia Collection, Box P-56, Hoover Institution Archives.

just a noise such as a man might make, involuntarily, feeling the nail go through his hands and into the wood" (107). Quite curiously, in this moment explicitly mentioning translation, Chang deliberately demurs from rendering the sentence faithfully. Her Chinese translation is below:

> "唉，"他大声呼道。这个字是无法解释的，如果一个人觉得有个铁钉从他手里穿过去，钉到木头上，他或者会不由自主地发出这声音。(91)

> "Ay," he shouted. This word is not explicable; if a person felt a nail passing through his hand, nailing him to wood, he might make this sound involuntarily.

That she does so seems understandable from a formal point of view; after all, it would hardly be seemly for her translation to proclaim its own impossibility. But what makes this passage even more ironic is that the Chinese language, unlike English, has its own sound *ai* 唉 as a cry of dismay – in effect, Hemingway's declaration that "there is no translation for" Santiago's Spanish *ay* falls apart in the actual translation of the word to Chinese: the original English statement is, in Chinese, simply no longer "true." Hemingway's "absolute truth" thus struggles to survive in translation; indeed, it cannot, as Chang simply sidesteps the issue. This time it is a shared sound between Chinese and Spanish that makes for Chang's rare deviation from Hemingway's English prose; she must balance the "truth" not just between a binary of truth or falsehood, English or Chinese, but through a triangulation involving yet another linguistic Other. Semantic accuracy thus bends here for a linguistic "truth" to shine through. Again, this all takes place around a word without clear semantic meaning, an involuntary breath of sound. The way Chang's translation arranges itself around this empty word makes it all the clearer that, in the moving structure of meaning in a literary text, truth is not objective or relative, but *relational* – that is, it resides in the moment of comparison between an original and its translation: what is, in the end, an equivocal comparison rather than an equivalent one. For style can be successfully translated, but only in a way that amplifies or enlarges the logic of the original. The "truth" in Chang's

translations then becomes not a fixed, unchanging product but a culturally specific process that dances around frameworks of equivalency (*Ay*, Ay, and 唉) and the differences that those frameworks produce. Only in these slightly askew juxtapositions do we begin to see that Hemingway's style is neither lost nor found in translation, but rather fulfilled in the experience of translation itself.

Indeed, this equivocal understanding of translation is what allows us to see Chang's own style of "writing that is true to life" take precedence over Hemingway's. Recall that Chang describes her own aesthetic as one that works on the "conjunction of scallion green with peach red, creating an equivocal contrast." In that same essay, she writes that "the more closely the two shades encroach upon one another, the more uneasy the viewer will become" (*WW* 6-7). For Chang, then, writing that is "relatively true to life" operates not out of the force or bluntness of glaring distinctions, but through subtle differences and comparisons: she wrote not of sweeping historical moments, but rather of small manners and petty, quotidian problems. Such writing always works relationally, through structures of minute contrast. Chang talks directly about how "truth" functions in her narratives in much the same way: "I do not place truth and falseness in direct and unequivocal contrast; instead I utilize equivocal contrast as a means of writing the truth within the falseness of modern people... I only demand of myself that I write more truthfully" (19, my translation).[31] Even such direct opposites as "truth" and "falsehood" thus intermingle and encroach in Chang's writing, deepening a reader's sense of unease. Chang's

[31] This chapter is partly a response to Richard So's "Literary Information Warfare" (2012), in which So argued that Chang's "realist aesthetic" is what is on display in *The Rice-Sprout Song*. So follows Andrew Jones' translation of Chang's essay to say that she wants to write "more realistically," whereas here I have translated the phrase as "more truthfully." The difference is not casual but paramount, for part of my argument in this article is that the "truth" and "reality" are constantly in tension in Chang's writing, an Uncanny fact that she strives to emphasize rather than efface in her translations. I thus think that So is doing a disservice to Chang by classifying her as a realist writer without interrogating that category, or the linguistically ambiguous phrase that she uses in Chinese, 真实 *zhenshi*, to describe her main objective as a writer.

"true writing" thus relies on relations of difference that do not simply collapse but rather become uneven or misaligned.

Chang's engagement with Hemingway was thus far messier than simply propagating his modernist aesthetic as literary truth to Chinese readers. Her very act of translation transforms the blunt "absolute truth" of Hemingway's style into something much more akin to her own, one predicated upon structures of likeness and difference that create their own, translingual truth between original and translation. This point is paramount when considering the overall success of translating Hemingway for Chinese-speaking readers halfway around the world. Of all the American titles that the USIS translated into Chinese, *The Old Man and the Sea* was by far the most popular, outselling the next best title more than twice over.[32] But at the same time, the fulfillment of Hemingway's style in Chinese translation ironically suggests Hemingway's formal inadequacy: that is, that his original English prose was not enough in itself to fulfill its ideological purpose. That *The Old Man and the Sea* had even greater resonance for the signature simplicity and semantic emptiness of Hemingway's English prose, *in Chinese*, shows the inherent insufficiency of Hemingway's USIS-sponsored, English-language truth in comparison to Chang's Chinese rendition. Chang's text thus brought a particularly equivocal stylistic representation of freedom to the masses of Southeast Asia: not an unequivocal valorization of American values, but a text whose translation simultaneously accomplished and undermined the goals set for it by the USIS.

In the end, Chang's translation of *The Old Man and the Sea* upends the notion that American "freedom" or ideological truth can be experienced through the faithful translation of a modernist aesthetic, especially one based on the simple, spare prose of a pure medium without

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[32] The next best was the esoteric *This is Russia, Uncensored!*, an anthology edited by Edmund Stevens published in 1951. Stevens' book in translation sold 920 copies to Chang's translation of Hemingway's 2,740, itself a suggestion that a clear, blatant exposé of truth lost out to subtler, more nuanced narratives in the ongoing propaganda war.

much meaning. The forming of equivalencies – both in repetition, and in translation – instead becomes precisely an experience of equivocation: of meaning gone awry and subtly bent so that likeness and difference can be re-aligned. What results is not an unequivocal presentation of American values, but a bending of the structures dichotomizing English and Chinese (partly through the triangulation of Spanish), and through it the purportedly binary values of the U.S. and China, "the Free World" and Communist rule. Nevertheless, the fact that the translation was commissioned by the USIS was enough to have it banned in Mainland China, where a separate translator accomplished the task in a way more fitting with Communist ideology.[33] Translation theorist Sun Yifeng 孫藝風 has shown convincingly how the PRC translator, Zhu Haiguan 朱海觀, deleted all mention of God and Christ from the novel (even in such small moments of dialogue as "Thank God" and "Christ knows," quite unlike the heavily symbolic instance in which Chang herself side-stepped a religious reference). Zhu chose instead to focus on the poverty of the Cuban fishing village and the solidarity among its fishermen. He also lambasted the book he translated, appending to it a preface that warned readers against its "cruel world of mutual killing" [一個殘忍的互相殺戮的世界] and "nihilistic attitude" [虛無主義的態度], finally encouraging readers to "treat this work with a serious, critical attitude" [以嚴肅的批判態度賴對待這篇做評].[34] It was a far cry from Chang's admiring translation, even if both were part of propaganda machines that sought to counter each other's work. And indeed, translations and translators betraying their employers was not unheard of; a letter from Arthur Hummel, the

[33] See also Sharon Tzu-yun Lai 賴慈芸, who has done excellent work on the differing Chinese translations of many American literary classics in use during the 1950's. Because those on the Mainland felt that they could not trust the Chinese translations propagated by the pro-democracy publishing houses in Taiwan and Hong Kong, they often produced their own translations to ensure ideological congruency. However, Lai's work has shown that many such differing versions from one China to the next were in fact usually the same text, just embellished with a different name to elude government censors.

[34] Though I have yet to analyze Zhu's translation of this text due to supply and delivery issues, this would be the next step I take to expand this chapter into the chapter of a book.

head of USIS Hong Kong before McCarthy, mentions the (not uncommon) situation in which a hired translator appended a preface to his translated text, Paul Linebarger's *Psychological Warfare* (1948), "tak[ing] the opportunity to take some very wide swings at American policies and to state flatly that U.S. psychological warfare has failed."[35] The text subsequently had to be pulled from USIS publishers and library shelves.

Chang's own name did not appear on the cover of her translation of this text until its third edition in 1954, a calculated choice to perhaps allow the translation a shot at publication in Mainland China.[36] But the fact that her name eventually appeared, several editions and years later, ultimately suggests that it still carried cultural cachet in the Chinese-speaking world. Discussing Chang's translation work for the USIS cannot ignore the role played by cultural authentication, wherein a "native informant" about a cultural or linguistic Other tells the truth to cultural outsiders about an otherwise alien reality. As a well-known literary figure, Chang's name lent Ernest Hemingway's work a measure of familiarity and recognition to Chinese readers. In fact, she did this while also writing novels about rural China in English, allowing the branding of cultural insider-ness to work in her favor on both sides of the Pacific. For even as she was translating *The Old Man and the Sea*, Chang was hard at work on her own novel, *The Rice-Sprout Song*, a tale chronicling the severe spread of famine under the new Communist re-distribution of land. It was eventually translated into English and advertised for the many English-speaking members of the Chinese diaspora abroad. This novel was to have the same

[35]Linebarger's text is an in-depth theoretical exploration of propaganda during warfare, and was once used by the U.S. Army as an authoritative textbook on the subject. Letter from Arthur W. Hummel, Jr. (USIS Hong Kong) to Seymour I. Nadler, April 27, 1954. GRUSIS RG 84, Box 1, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
[36] One could also surmise that the effacement of Chang's name was due to its having been tainted by her collaborator husband, Hu Lancheng 胡蘭成, who had infamously worked with the Japanese puppet regime in Nanking during the war.

effect of Hemingway's but from the opposite side: to tell the truth, but this time of the horrors of Communist rule.

Equivocating Modernisms: Relocating Truth in Affect

During the late 1940's and 50's, there was no shortage of texts "exposing" the harsh reality of life under Communism. Besides the USIS, private American organizations like the Ford Foundation and the Committee for a Free Asia, later renamed the Asia Foundation, collected reams of testimonials and reports of Communist repression. Translation records and requests still exist for these works, many of them essays with heavy-handed titles like "Mao Tse-tung is Crowned with Blood," "Destruction of a University", and the ironic "The Benefactor."[37] Their format is largely the same: all first-person narratives, they go through the same arc of initial fervor for the party, eventual awareness of corruption, and then horror at the inhumanity of constant purges and increasing thought-control. Branches of the UN even requested such reports for use in the fight against Soviet Communism in Europe.[38] While none of them were ever labeled "far-fetched," it is interesting to note that many of these reports required several rounds of translation before the U.S.-based agencies could make use of them. Asia Foundation records note, for instance, that the task of translating more often than not became opportunities of total "rewriting," such that quality control became a question of translational and linguistic, as opposed to factual, accuracy.[39]

[37] See Letter from Robert D. Gray to The President of The Asia Foundation, November 11, 1954.
[38] "What is needed from Asia is a group of depositions from Asian leaders who have had experience living under the communists. The depositions should be as detailed as possible and should be signed," in letter from Jack E. James to The CFA (Committee for Free Asia) Representatives in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Seoul, September 13, 1954. Asia Foundation records, Committee for Free Asia Collection, Box 5:8, Hoover Institution Archives.
[39] One report from Robert D. Grey dated November 11, 1954, writes that "These depositions are in the form of an original in Chinese, signed by the author, and an English translation accomplished by the Free Writers group. As they now stand, these translations are far from satisfactory. Before any substantial use could be made of them, a rather thorough rewrite job would have to be done. We are forwarding this material as unfinished work." Ibid.

In this context, Eileen Chang's *The Rice-Sprout Song* seems just par for the course: yet one more retelling of Communism's sinister nature despite its glowing promises. But there is much that sets Chang's text apart, and not least is the fact that she translated the text herself. It received McCarthy's full endorsement, as he called it "considerably more convincing thean [sic] most stories of this type simply because it is told with a literary skill and imagination woefully lacking in most of the stuff written here."[40] At McCarthy's urging, Chang even found a publisher in New York City, Charles Scribner and Son's, and her novel was published in America in 1955 to generally positive critical reviews.[41] Still, the Chinese text was first serialized so that it could reach its intended audience: the overseas Chinese who wondered about conditions in Mainland China after the Communist regime took over.

The Rice-Sprout Song takes place a few years after the initial Land Reform policies of the Communists had set in, and the novel follows two primary sets of characters: the family of the farmer Gold Root T'an, his wife Moon Scent and their young daughter, Beckon; and the party members: Comrade Wong, the head of the T'an's village, and Comrade Ku, "a director-writer sent down by the Literary and Artistic Workers' Association" (61). This visiting writer/director from Shanghai stays with the T'an family and becomes privy to the famine-like conditions plaguing the peasantry, despite official narratives celebrating the richer and better life for peasants under the Communist government. Eventually, Comrade Wong taxes the starving farmers one time too many with "voluntary donations" to the Communist army, and the villagers

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[40] Hong Kong USIS Book Translation Program submission form, November 30, 1953, GRUSIS RG 84, Box 1, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

[41] In fact, Charles Scribner and Son's was the same publisher of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, a publication connection that merits further scrutiny, especially were one to analyze the rhetoric around which both novels were released. According to a letter dated May 19, 1954 from Richard McCarthy to B. Franklin Steiner, Chang's novel "has survived five readings [at Scribner's] with editorial opinion ranging from 'violently for to violently against.'" While no details are given, apparently a request was made for "some sample chapters of a purely non-political novel Miss Chang is working on now," which suggests that some of the American antipathy toward the novel stemmed from its clearly political nature. GRUSIS RG 84, Box 1, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

riot. Gold Root and other peasants storm the local granary, only to incur fire and severe casualties from the local militia. Beckon is killed in the chaos, and though Gold Root and Moon Scent escape into the nearby hills, Gold Root eventually dies of his bullet wounds. Desperate and alone, Moon Scent returns and sets fire to the granary, dying herself as she is caught up in the flames. The villagers' tragic end then becomes fodder for Comrade Ku's movie script, which turns the peasants' revolt into a celebration of Communism after all by setting it against the previous regime. Taking place entirely in Chinese among Chinese-speaking characters, *The Rice-Sprout Song* nevertheless had to become entirely readable to English-speaking audiences who had never entered into or even imagined the Chinese countryside. More than that, it had to become believable, whereby its literary power could convince readers of its truth.

Chang began translating *The Rice-Sprout Song* in quick order after she finished translating Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. Indeed, Hemingway's signature English prose seems to have had more than a passing effect on the final product Chang ultimately produced.[42] She stated directly in her preface to *The Old Man and the Sea* that she admired Hemingway's prose because though "Many of the book's sentences seem dull [平淡 *pingdan*], but they are in fact full of the anguish of life" (16). Curiously enough, Chang would later apply the exact same phrase to her own novel, *The Rice-Sprout Song*, as a measure of the novel's literary worth. Chang sent the Chinese manuscript to Hu Shi 胡適, one of the celebrated founding fathers of modern China and a respected literary scholar. Accompanying the manuscript was a brief note, in which Chang directly inquired whether Hu Shi felt her prose achieved that "flat and nearly natural plane [平淡 *pingdan* 而近自然的境界]" with which he had

[42] This is a possibility that other scholars have thus far raised as a question without further investigation. See, for instance, Gao Quanzhi's preface to the most recent edition of *Two Translated Works of Zhang Ailing* (2012).

earlier praised the late Qing novel, *The Sing-Song Girls of Shanghai*, in a critical essay.[43] Hu Shi's response was that it certainly did. In fact, in his epistolary reply to Chang he repeats that key phrase, *pingdan*, no fewer than four times, alternately praising her "flat, unadorned" expression of human sentiments and cautioning that this "flat" style may be one that "few readers can appreciate" due to its sophistication.

It is hard to discount this coincidence in Chang's diction with regard to both Hemingway's novel and her own, especially with regards to the books' tone and style. As we saw earlier, Hemingway's un-embellished, flat prose, a product of such techniques as repetition and parataxis, exhibit precisely the modernist "subsumption of emotion under formal technique" that Barnhisel argues came to represent the very rightness and superiority of the American way of life. This very understated prose, empty of meaning but rich and dense in style, embodied the values of American democracy itself. But while Chang admired the understated quality of this prose, the fact is that her penchant for "flatness" also traces another literary lineage that goes back beyond Hemingway and even beyond Hu Shi, through the convoluted loops of modern Chinese literary history. That phrase from Hu Shi that so inspired Chang ("a flat and nearly natural plane") was in fact first written by Lu Xun 鲁迅, the giant of modern Chinese literature at least level with Hemingway in stature and acclaim among his peers.[44] His subject was often the uneducated worker or the subaltern peasant, and their tone was precisely of that deceptively "flat" quality by which reality is presented without much narrative commentary, allowing the

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[43] A transcript of Chang's full correspondence with Hu is available online at http://www.zonaeuropa.com/culture/c20071022_1.htm

[44] Ibid. According to the ESWN blog, Hu Shi's essay on *The Sing-Song Girls of Shanghai* used this phrase multiple times, making sure however to attribute it to its original author, Lu Xun. Hu Shi makes no mention of this in his personal correspondence with Chang, however. Lu Xun used the phrase in his own positive assessment of *The Sing-Song Girls of Shanghai* in *A Brief History of the Chinese Novel* 《中國小說史略》(1923). That Chang herself had become known as *the* female literary voice of Shanghai in the 1930's and 40's exhibits the deep interconnectedness between literary tropes, styles, and lines of influence within Chinese literary modernism.

well-crafted nuances of the text to speak subtly but nevertheless cogently against social oppression. And he was not alone: Lu Xun was joined by such writers as Guo Moruo 郭沫若, Mao Dun 茅盾, Ding Ling 丁玲, and Xiao Hong 蕭紅.

Against this backdrop, a writer like Eileen Chang, who focused on romance and the subtle contradictions of human nature, should have seemed quaint and flimsy: lightweight reading at best and trashy literature at worst. But Chang gained attention nonetheless, particularly for what C.T Hsia has called "a prose fraught with the richest visual imagery of any modern Chinese writer" (393). Even among such famous "art for art's sake" aesthetes as Yu Dafu 郁達夫 and Mu Shiying 穆時英, Chang stood out as one who lived in a decadent "world fabricated of light, brilliant colors, unique lines and shapes."[45] She not only displayed a predisposition for sensory opulence; she self-consciously reveled in it. "At nine years old," she writes in an early essay, "I was extremely sensitive to colors, sounds, and words." She goes on, "When I was learning to write, I loved to use words with rich colors and clanging sounds, like "pearlescent gray," "sunset," "dulcet," "**splendor**," "**melancholy**," and so would often make the mistake of overloading with ornamentation."[46] Bodily sensation, then, and the intensity of feelings that defied easy categorization, was a lifelong obsession for Chang. By any measure, she was more indulgent of subjective feelings and decadent description than she was a realist commentator on society. She was hopelessly bourgeois. "Whenever I see the term 'petite bourgeoisie,'" she wrote in 1944, "I am promptly reminded of myself, as if I had a red silk

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[45] See Andrew Jones' introduction to *Written on Water*

[46] From "My Dream of Being a Genius." Bolded words are English words in Chang's original Chinese text.

placard hanging from my chest imprinted with these very words" (3).[47] It is little wonder that she felt she had to flee after the Communist Revolution took hold in 1949.

So how this writer, redolent with feeling and fond of adornment, came to aim for flatness of feeling is a matter of particular interest in her Cold War writings. While most of the writers of Lu Xun's generation eventually drifted (or were conscripted) into the League of Left-Wing Writers 中国左翼作家联盟, a socialist organization, Chang went an entirely different direction. With her self-imposed exile to Hong Kong in 1952, Chang threw herself and her literary development upon the auspices of the U.S. government. Her furiously paced translation of Hemingway's most widely acclaimed novel brought her into intimate contact with American literary modernism exactly as she was learning to write under ideological constraint for an English-speaking audience. Under these conditions, the tracing of that phrase *pingdan*, or "flatness," from the days of Lu Xun's sharp observations of China's broken social order, into Hu Shi's critical essays and through Hemingway's translated prose, leads us from a writer renowned for her literary acuity in writing "the truth of the human heart" to a woman writing for her life in a new linguistic medium and for a new political purpose.[48] That "flatness," then, encompasses Chang's navigation through political writings on both sides of the linguistic divide, ultimately fusing the literary lineages of American modernism with early modern Chinese writing in her own translation practice.

But this flatness, for Chang, seems ultimately to be but a medium from which she can project the far more prevailing affect of unease. In a telling passage featuring Moon Scent and Gold Root spending the day together, she writes,

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[47] Unless otherwise marked, excerpts from Chang's early essays all come from Andrew Jones' translation of Eileen Chang's collection, *Written on Water* (2005).
[48] From C.T. Hsia's *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, p. 397.

> With the warmth of the sun upon her, Moon Scent felt itchy at the waist. She lifted her jacket, revealing a good deal of yellowish pale flesh. She scratched the skin into a dull red flush, then, inspired by a sudden suspicion, seized Gold Root's jacket. She spread it out and looked it over carefully. Nothing there. Then, turning one sleeve inside out, she went on with her mending. (58)

What Moon Scent is looking for in this passage (signs of infidelity? Inadequate hygiene?) is a mystery, and yet that "sudden suspicion" of a wife that makes her search her husband's clothing is a detail that speaks volumes as to the complexity of their relationship. This is a level of relational complication created, rather than hampered, by Chang's "flat" aesthetic. Indeed, Moon Scent's suspicion in the very midst of her wifely care accentuates this scene with a potent sense of unease.

This affective addition, in turn, happens to embody the heart of Chang's own style of "writing that is true to life." This is especially so in translation, where what she gained in translating Hemingway were techniques for equivocation. In other words, what Chang gained from Hemingway was not the knowledge of how to write in English, but how to translate effectively into it to purvey her own version of writing that was "true to life." Indeed, I contend that both Chang's writing and translating readily make use of the modernist hierarchy of experience over meaning, and her favorite inroad to the realm of experience lay in the interplay of likeness and contrast. Recall that on the subject of her own aesthetic, Chang compares colors, stating that

> The common, crudely simplified conception of contrast is red against green, while matching is green with green. But what most people do not realize is that the clash between two different shades of green is extraordinarily clear, and the more closely the two shades encroach upon one another, the more uneasy the viewer will become. (*WW* 6-7)

Chang emphasizes an emotional impact playing on the power of subtle differences rather than glaring distinctions: only the counter-intuitive contrast of "green with green" can make for this

thoroughly "uneasy" effect. Indeed, this sense of vague but growing discomfort "the more closely the two shades encroach upon one another" argues for a more sophisticated level of contrast that puts fundamentally *like* things together: equivocal, rather than direct, contrast. Chang goes on to state that "the technique of equivocal contrast is appropriate" for "provid[ing] to the reality that surrounds me a revelation," for while "Tragedy is a kind of closure… desolation is a form of revelation" (17).

Chang's theory of aesthetic form, thus rooted in the affect of "desolation" and "unease," cannot help but recall Freud's conception of the Uncanny, yet another emotional state resulting from indirect or oblique similarities and contrasts. Described as a "class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar," the Uncanny specifically evokes a sense of eeriness or unease from a scene that is simultaneously familiar and incongruous (1). Freud especially focuses on the Uncanny as it appears in literature. Like Chang's "green with green," which spurs the reader's unease "the more closely the two shades encroach upon one another," the Uncanny appears in texts that include elements of close similarity instead of obvious contrast: with the presence of unexpected doubles, involuntary repetitions, and déjà vu moments. For the Uncanny likewise leaves the reader with a specific affective effect: this tingling eeriness and uncertainty (typically described with such embodied phrases as "my hair stood on end" and "it sent a chill down her spine") where normal boundaries of order and reality dissolve. Indeed, the examination of the word Uncanny itself in Freud's native German, *unheimlich*, shows that the word is both like and unlike to itself. After listing varying definitions of both *heimlich* and *unheimlich,* Freud states that

> What interests us most… is to find that among its different shades of meaning the word heimlich exhibits one which is identical with its opposite, unheimlich… Thus heimlich is a word the meaning of which develops towards an ambivalence,

> until it finally coincides with its opposite, unheimlich. Unheimlich is in some way or other a sub-species of heimlich. (4)

Even the presumably clear opposition between *heimlich* – "familiar," "native," "belonging to the home" – and its opposite, *unheimlich*, thus fall apart in a closer analysis of their respective meanings. Unlike Chang's conception, in which fundamentally like things are placed in juxtaposition until the difference between them is startlingly clear, Freud's *unheimlich* finds clear differences "develop[ing] toward an ambivalence." Both processes, though, find a common affective effect of unease, terror, even desolation. They exist in the very fraught interplay between being both two and one.

Eileen Chang talks directly about how "truth" functions in her desolate narratives in much the same way: "I do not place truth and falseness in direct and unequivocal contrast; instead I utilize equivocal contrast as a means of writing the truth within the falseness of modern people... I only demand of myself that I write more truthfully (19, my translation)." Even such direct opposites as "truth" and "falsehood" follow the Uncanny's lead into one becoming "within" or a "subset of" the other; they intermingle and encroach. Chang's true writing thus relies on relations of difference that do not simply collapse but simply become uneven or misaligned: a potent mix of both like-yet-unlike. In essence, Chang's aesthetic truth asserts not just equivalencies, but inherent equivocations. It is a distinctly felt process: the reader's uneasy experience of "truth within falseness," rather than the takeaway of any particular meaning, seems to be the ultimate goal of her writing.

Translating Affect in **The Rice-Sprout Song**

The Chinese text,《秧歌》*yangge*, always had a wider reach than the English *Rice-Sprout Song*, and was the primary version intended for the millions of overseas Chinese

dispersed throughout Southeast Asia. But the two versions of Chang's novel are again not so much semantic equivalents but rather another carefully constructed equivocal comparison: that is, her translations seem more stylistically calculated to bring across the experience and affect of unease than an accurate representation of (anti-Communist) reality. Indeed, near-repetitions in Chang's self-translation of *The Rice-Sprout Song* make for a felt disorientation across languages, yielding another equivocal aesthetic that makes truth translingually relational, rather than merely relative in different cultural contexts.

We see the equivocating bias in Chang's translation even in the beginning scene of *The Rice-Sprout Song*. In the first few lines we enter the T'an's village, currently undergoing an intense food shortage:

> In this country town the first buildings in sight were a string of exactly identical thatched privies, about seven or eight of them. They had a deserted air despite the occasional whiff of faint odor in the wind. The afternoon sun shone palely on the bleached thatch. After the privies came the shops… A woman came out of one of the shops with a red enamel basin full of dirty water, crossed the street, and dashed the waste over the parapet. The action was somehow shocking, like pouring slops off the end of the world. (1-2)

This beginning scene, barring the appearance of the shop woman, is notable precisely for its lack of strong or notable characteristics. Not only is the line of privies an uncomfortable introduction to a country town, the "whiff of faint odor" around them contrasts but weakly with their "deserted air," such light, wispy terms emphasizing the bleak emptiness of the setting; even the afternoon sun shines but "palely" on the "bleached thatch," as if no color exists anywhere in this world to distinguish it. Chang's beginning sequence thus takes wan, pale materials and creates from them a completely barren setting. Their shared colorlessness makes for a paradoxically strong statement of general desolation from the start.

Out of this gray world the sudden appearance of a woman with "a red enamel basin" is understandably shocking; her forceful motion of "dashing" the contents of her waste could only serve to complete the incongruousness of her arrival. But what makes her appearance all the more interesting is the way that it has morphed in translation. In the original Chinese, this passage describes the woman's action by stating that it was as if she were "pouring a pan of water off the corner of the earth, the end of the world [天涯海角，世界的尽头]" (5, translation mine). The added phrase is a near repetition: while the English text has only "the end of the world," the Chinese original supplements the phrase *tianya haijiao* with a second one, *shijie de jintou*, which means virtually the same thing only in plainer language. Indeed, *tianya haijiao* is a common poetic phrase, evoking images similar to the English phrases "the depths of the sea" and "the corners of the earth," while *shijie de jintou* is a far more literal depiction of a world's end.

The original Chinese thus seems to feature even more geographical and existential disorientation. For saying "the end of the world" right after one has just said "the ends of the earth" fiddles with the finality of the original image; to wit, capping off the phrase "edge of the earth" *with another edge* leaves the reader hanging in a place of intensified uncertainty as the phrases suspend the reader between the world's-edge they uneasily share. This near repetition, like-yet-unlike, embodies the kind of equivocal contrast that Chang so advocates for "truthful" writing, precisely by creating that affect of narrative unease. And yet, putting that next to the English translation's comparatively simple "end of the world" makes the moment of near-redundancy in the Chinese not only the more "shocking" but verging on the uncanny: now there are three edges that do not exactly align. Ironically, it is because the English simplifies the double-ness of the Chinese original, rather than attempts to reproduce it, that it creates a further mis-match, yet another edge that does not map on to what was there before. Limits and edges

thus multiply and re-align in translation for a deepening discomfort and desolation, with all decisive finality utterly forsaken.

This opening passage becomes one among many of such "simplified," and yet more troubled, translational moments. Throughout the novel a general undertone of unease plagues situations, characters, and major conversations, and uncanny moments give way to a large-scale confusion between what is real and what is not. At the wedding ceremony of Gold Root's sister, for instance, the English text reads, "A single beam of the setting sun crossed the room. The young bride looked like a clay figure painted pink and white, seated in the dusty path of the sun. There was about her an air of unreality and also, oddly, of permanence" (13). The bride's likeness to clay, a comparison that would seem to link her materially to the earth, rather imbues her with a strong sense of "unreality." Later, even in the simple scene of Gold Root's wife, Moon Scent, crossing a courtyard, the text states, "She crossed the courtyard blue-white with moonlight. The long bamboo poles the family used to weave baskets had been left out in front of the house. They made a great hollow clatter when she kicked against them as she passed" (28). The Chinese original has another line following it, "*In the moonlight they seemed unreal*, and the bamboo poles sounded *guolanglang* as she kicked them."[49] That this line clearly questioning reality disappears in translation makes the translation process itself a deceptive and disorienting one. The Chinese text thus maps onto English in an increasingly lopsided way, intervened by ill-fitting equivalents and comparisons.

I suggest that Chang's English translation is aiming not for an accurate or faithful representation of the Chinese original, but rather a *truth*ful one. For if writing that is "relatively true to life" fundamentally relies upon a growing sense of unease for the reader, then the English

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[49]The original reads: "月影里看不真，竹竿又被她踢的豁朗朗响着。" (21)

version of *The Rice-Sprout Song* is aiming not for the successful translation of sense, but rather of that latent affect of unease. Indeed, the Chinese original continually arouses a sense of truth being in tension with reality. This theme permeates the entire novel about famine and how that reality is distorted as it is being reported. Somewhat unsurprisingly, the main character that embodies this tension is Comrade Ku, the writer-director sent to the countryside to document rural life in the T'an village. His mission requires him to live in various peasants' homes, and he eventually comes to lodge with Gold Root and Moon Scent's family. His personal experience of hunger is marked not just by displeasure but also by a pervasive disorientation:

> He did not find the farmers as naïve as they were pictured. And where were the sesame cakes? All they had here was a watery gruel with inch-long sections of grass floating in it. Of course he could not speak to anybody about the matter, and least of all to Comrade Wong. So he had no means of finding out whether the situation was only local or spread over a large area. He could find no mention in the newspapers of famine in this or any other part of the country. He had a curious sensation of having dropped out of time and space, living nowhere. (84)

Like the woman whose actions throw something off the "end of the world," Ku finds himself in a state of utter dislocation: "of having dropped out of time and space, living nowhere." But in a sense, the more potent Ku's disorientation, the more "truthful" the narrative becomes, at least in the sense of its purveying a sense of unease to the reader. This becomes more potent in comparing translations, where the Chinese version of the last line reads: "He had a curiously empty feeling, as if he had jumped out of time and space, living in a place which did not exist" [他有一种奇异的虚空之感，就像是他跳出了时间与空间，生活在一个不存在的地方]. Interestingly, the wordy Chinese phrase, "a place that does not exist," finds a convenient linguistic landing place in the English "nowhere." But juxtaposing the translations illuminates just how askew these respective displacements are: rather than using a Chinese "equivalent" like the phrase 无地 *wudi*, that Chang went instead from a Chinese clause to an English word

highlights just how small, equivocal contrasts convey not just a semantic meaning, but also an unease that accompanies translation with a difference. Read backwards, in Chinese there is no "nowhere" there. Comrade Ku's dislocation in translation thus pulls even further at that uneven dissonance between languages. That his English place hollows out his native Chinese, makes all the clearer how his unease grows in a translingual contrast, caught in a neither-here-nor-there of displacement.

Eventually, this interplay between what is real and how to represent it truthfully becomes the main theme of the novel. Finally, we arrive at a scene in which Comrade Ku and Comrade Wong discuss Ku's plans for his upcoming film based on the village. When Wong is unimpressed by Ku's "great idea" of building a story around a made-up dam, he asks:

> 'Why would you want to make [a story] up, when there is so much story material around, in this great age?'… At last he had Ku sized up as that kind of writer. He opened his mouth to laugh and checked himself just in time. But a great flock of ducks suddenly burst into sight and floated downstream incredibly fast, cackling madly with an elderly glee. It was as if, through a brilliant feat of ventriloquism, his laughter was transplanted borne swiftly downstream. It left him and Ku both somewhat out of countenance. (93)

The uncanny ventriloquism of this scene is only eerier in the original Chinese:

> 但是突然有一大群鸭子在上游出现，飞快在顺流而下，快到不可想象。一片‘呷呷呷呷’的叫声，就像老年人扁而尖的笑声。这在一刹那间，似乎产生一种错觉，就仿佛是王同志连用最奇妙的腹语术，把他的笑声移植到水面上，‘呷呷呷呷’顺流而下。王同志和顾冈两人都觉得有点窘，脸上颜色都变了。(62)
>
> But suddenly a great flock of ducks appeared over the water, flying downstream incredibly fast. A great '*ga ga ga ga*' sound, just like the flat and shrill laughter of the elderly, seemed to create the impression that Comrade Wong was throwing his laughter upon the water through a brilliant use of ventriloquism, so that it flowed '*ga ga ga ga*' downstream. Both Comrade Wong and Ku felt a bit awkward and their countenances changed.

Notably noisier than the English, the Chinese version's twice written "*ga ga ga ga*," mimics the birds' cries in the text itself. This "involuntary recurrence of the like" has more than a shade of

the Uncanny about it: a text that literally forces re-reading such that the Chinese-speaking reader goes through an involuntary déjà vu, unsettling reality.

Just like the line with Santiago's eyes in *The Old Man and the Sea*, this line simply repeats the subject to fulfill the requirements of syntax. But just as that example created a doubling effect that disturbed the straightforward simplicity of the original sentence, so too does this moment of loud doubling accentuate the scene's unease, precisely in the moment of comparison with its translation. Here, the ducks' derisive laughter forms an objective correlative evoking a sense of profound duplicity at the very moment that Ku and Wong are discussing alternative representations of reality. That neither Ku nor Wong seems to have a hold upon said reality, and are thus more like to each other than unlike, manifests most potently in unnatural bird laughter amplified by equivocating translations. Even more duplicitously, the Chinese word 呷 – here transliterated *ga* – has a second Chinese reading as *xia* (meaning 'to sip'): two readings at work in the same word. Various echoes in sound and meaning thus amplify the structural unease that the characters feel. Both in content and in form, the novel's language mocks the seeming inability of writers to match reality with the truth.

But yet another act of doubling and self-reflexivity occurs when we consider Comrade Ku as a literary avatar for Chang herself: a Shanghai writer sent down to the countryside to produce a narrative of rural life to champion a particular political ideology. Seen in this light, the exasperating, hapless figure of Ku is more than just a clown, and his un-original plotlines more than just fruits of a failed imagination. Chang's own position as a writer working under ideological constraint becomes even more evident as the novel winds down. But first, there is another character that shares the role of representing Chang in *The Rice-Sprout Song*, and that is Moon Scent. A peasant woman by birth, Moon Scent enters the novel by returning to the village

from her three-year stint in the city of Shanghai as a servant girl. Sharing these Shanghai roots, the female Moon Scent and writer Comrade Ku make up the two halves of Chang's persona in this novel – but neither comes to a particularly happy end.

The novel's climax hits when the peasants of the village revolt and storm the granary, where the confiscated fruit of their labor has been kept. Moon Scent's family flees the chaos in the ending turmoil, but it is only after Gold Root and Moon Scent make it out of the burning village and into the mountains that they discover that Beckon is dead. Gold Root has also been shot. Moon Scent volunteers to seek help with Gold Root's sister in the next village, but her trip proves fruitless. Upon her return to the mountains, however, she realizes that her husband has drowned himself in the river in order to allow her a better chance of escape without an injured partner. In a terrifying moment, she recalls the moment of parting:

> But now that she thought back, just before she left him under that tree, when she straightened up after seeing that he was comfortably settled, she had felt his fingers close around her ankle with what seemed then to be a childish impulsiveness, and he had held on to her as if he did not want her to go. She realized now that this was his moment of indecision. The feel of his fingers around her ankle was so real and solid, the moment was so close at hand and yet forever out of reach, it drove her nearly frantic. (161)
>
> 但是她现在回想着，刚才她正要走开的时候，先给他靠在树根上坐稳了，她刚站直了身子，忽然觉得他的手握住了她的脚踝，那时候仿佛觉得那是一种稚气的冲动，他紧紧地握住了不放手，就像不愿意让她走似的。现在她知道了，那是因为他在那一刹那间又觉得心里不能决定。他的手指箍在她的腿腕上，那感觉是那样真确，实在，那一霎那的时间仿佛近在眼前，然而已经是永远无法掌握了，使她简直难受得要发狂。(187)

Though there are not significant differences in this passage between the English and Chinese translation, there is a strange moment of almost-translation within the Chinese text again, one that is reminiscent of the earliest passage in which there were two types of "end of the world." The Chinese text writes that "she had felt his hand hang on to her ankle," where the word 脚踝

jiaohuai is used for ankle. But then when she describes "The feel of his fingers around her ankle" as a memory, the Chinese strangely chooses yet another phrase, 腿腕 *tuiwan*, to refer to the same part of the body. This minute detail seems significant precisely because Moon Scent's ankle is the very locus of reality in this scene: where past meets and overwhelms present in an unbearable memory of loss. Indeed, it is as if the split uses of "ankle" in the Chinese text splits her divided consciousness, torn between past and present, former reality and current bereavement, narrative temporality and the atemporality of affective experience. That equivocal contrast of *jiaohuai* and *tuiwan*, perceptible only in the Chinese text, ultimately envelops the reader in the "frantic" unease they engender, not beholden to time.

The ultimate impossibility of corroborating reality and the truth in writing becomes evident in the novel's ending, where there is also the most significant difference between the translations. The climax of the novel, after the peasants' revolt, is the fire set to the village granary. After the chaotic riot, an unknown villager sets the granary aflame to burn the grain confiscated by the village Comrades. Ku's reaction to this fire is telling:

> As he watched, the gongs and the soaring flames roused a wild, primitive exultation in Ku. 'But this is just what I am looking for,' he thought. 'A splendid and stirring spectacle for the climax of my film. Just move the story a few years back. Recount how the peasants under the old regime were driven by hunger to rob and burn the storehouse. (170)

Ku's "exultation" indeed plays out in the final outline of the film script he produces. While he writes, the English version of the novel relates, the villagers discover a body amid the charred remains of the building. They ultimately affirm that it was Moon Scent who committed arson in desperate protest and then threw herself into the flames:

> The day after the fire, when the villagers had been set to work clearing up the rubble, a body had been discovered in a cave made between two walls propped up by each other when they had caved in. It was in a sitting position and was a

> smooth, bright pinkish red all over. The color had stood out glaringly against the charred ruins. (175-6)

This scene cannot help but recall that earlier moment of "unreality, and also, oddly, of permanence" that characterized the opening wedding ceremony of Moon Scent's sister-in-law. As the earlier scene had the bride looking "like a clay figure painted pink and white," the "smooth, bright pinkish red" of Moon Scent's burned body stands out "glaringly against the charred ruins." But this discovery of her corpse makes for an uncanny ending to the novel, as well as a deepened sense of unreality. After all, how could this sense be otherwise when this entire passage is missing from the Chinese version? The Chinese original does not go through the steps of discovering a body at all – it simply jumps to Ku's distorted retelling of the granary incident without disclosing what happened to Moon Scent, and whether she lived. The Chinese ending thus embroils us in intense uncertainty by omission, whereby the chance to clarify the plot is eschewed in favor of silence. The Chinese version thus completely elides Moon Scent's death and end, going entirely with Ku's revised storyline instead. Indeed, Ku's film dominates the ending of the Chinese in a way that it does not in the English, re-writing the entire foregone series of events so that Moon Scent, the most well-rounded peasant character, disappears entirely under the force of his re-presentations of the truth.

How to understand this erasure of the woman at the end of the Chinese novel? It turns out that Chang was actually required by Scribner's to change the ending of her English manuscript before they would consent to publish it; the Chinese, in this sense, is thus the only place in which the "original," ambiguous ending survives.[50] The reasons for this change are

[50] See letter from Richard McCarthy to B. Franklin Steiner, July 12, 1954, GRUSIS RG 84, Box 1, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. McCarthy writes, "You might be interested to know that Scribner's has paid Chang Ai-ling $500 for an option for the RICE-SPROUT SONG and that the agent, Mrs. Rodell, is most confident that they will sign the actual publishing contract as soon as they get a revision of the final chapter."

never given in Chang's letters, but it does not seem like too far of a stretch to imagine that Chang was forced to clarify the death-by-conflagration of her protagonist so as to make a clearer point about Communism's oppressive evils to her American publishers. What this last mis-match in translation shows, then, are the extra-textual pressures upon this novel, in which an artist engaged in cultural production must do so under ideological constraint and a desire to stay alive. For Eileen Chang to make a living in English, Moon Scent had to die.

What was already disturbing in Chang's Chinese novel, then, specifically with regards to how narrative needs to bend reality to show the truth, becomes in translation to English all the more potent and discomfiting. Ultimately, none of the differences between the Chinese and English versions of *The Rice Sprout Song* are that glaring: the novel's plot stays the same, the characters are consistent, the desolate aesthetic still prevails. However, it is precisely the "weak," equivocal contrasts between her translations that make the novel such a cogent meta-commentary on the role of a writer under ideological constraint, even within the supposedly capacious, "meaning-less" freedom of modernism. For Chang, the demand for formal or stylistic conformity results inevitably in amplified equivocations, and striving to propagate an "absolute truth" ultimately creates an absolution from "truth" as an objective standard instead. What remains is a truth that is relational in its translingual purchase, where the moment of comparison between an original and its translation fundamentally illuminates the uneasy mismatch between ideological purpose and literary form, even as they accomplish a shared purpose.

Chapter III
Language Lessons: Translating Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* and the Making of an Ethnic American

In 1950, no woman in San Francisco was more famous than Jade Snow Wong. An American-born Chinese, the 26 year-old Wong had just published her autobiographical novel, *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, and it quickly became a national sensation. The novel offered a never-before-told account of growing up in San Francisco's Chinatown, and in it Wong describes her own successful assimilation into American culture while still valuing her Chinese heritage. Indeed, Wong said, "If I can be considered famous because I have succeeded in my life goals, which were different from most other Chinese Americans, I achieved [*sic*] because of my unique combination: American freedom of choice, Chinese discipline in responsibility, my integrity, and willingness to work."[1] With such wholesome, all-American values, and such a fresh Chinese perspective, she was the darling of the American reading public. Within a year, the USIS was writing to ask Wong for the rights to translate the novel for their cultural diplomacy efforts in East Asia. By 1951, *Fifth Chinese Daughter* had become a literary weapon in the fight to contain Communism abroad, translated either in whole or in part into Chinese, Urdu, Bengali, Arabic, Thai, Hindi, and Burmese. Japanese, Indonesian, Telugu, and Tamil would later follow, and in many cases, the text quickly became part of the general school curricula of the region.

The USIS' main target in translation was the Overseas Chinese in de-colonizing Malaya (now Malaysia), whose pro-Communist leanings and imminent independence from British colonial rule were linked to its controversial network of Chinese-language schools. These

[1] Interview with Chinese publisher Zhang Ziqing, 2002, Jade Snow Wong Papers, Library of Congress.

schools, funded entirely by the sizable Chinese communities in the Malayan colony, operated independently of the colonial schools taught in Malay or English. They were often dissident sites undermining the colonial authorities; even worse for the USIS, they were often suspected (rightly) of fomenting Communist sympathies. Jade Snow Wong was supposed to change all that. Soon after her book debuted in America, excerpts of *Fifth Chinese Daughter* were rapidly serialized in English in Malaya's widest-circulating youth magazine, *Young Malayans*, while the book in Chinese translation became prime reading material for Chinese middle school students. Both versions spread like wildfire throughout the Malayan Peninsula, with such success that Wong was subsequently sent on a goodwill tour to East Asia herself as part of the U.S. State Department's Leaders and Specialists Exchange Program.[2] When Wong arrived, she was told, "In Malaya, Jade Snow Wong has become a legendary figure like Franklin D. Roosevelt!"[3] It was like America's fifth Chinese daughter had returned home.

But what exactly underlay this strategic equivalence between a Chinese American and the millions of diasporic Chinese living in Southeast Asia? In other words, what feats of translation were required for Jade Snow Wong to connect a U.S. ethnic minority identity and Asian postcolonial one, both to each other and to American ideals and its way of life?[4] The assumptions that Wong's diplomacy rested upon require some deeper consideration. For the truth is that Wong's trip as a cultural ambassador capitalized upon more than an abstract notion of "Chinese-ness"; instead, it was made possible by linguistic performances that continually established her cultural authenticity. Wong later wrote that newspaper headlines throughout her

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[2] Other writers of color that were sent abroad as "cold warriors" include such notables as Langston Hughes, while musicians like Louis Armstrong and Dizzy Gillespie were also sent to parts of Africa and Asia as "jazz ambassadors" to ameliorate America's image. For further information on writers/travelers of color who served as cultural diplomats, see Lisa E. Davenport, Christina Klein, and Mary Helen Washington.
[3] See letter from Jade Snow Wong to People, March 1, 1953, Hamilton Basso Papers, Yale University.
[4] Jade Snow Wong to People, April 18, 1953, Hamilton Basso Papers, Yale University.

trip read, "A Chinese, born and educated in the United States, speaks Cantonese without an accent, in fact, speaks like one of ourselves!'"[5] And as she later wrote for her fans, Chinese everywhere were wowed by her fluency in Cantonese, the reward for "those ten tedious years of Chinese lessons [she had] suffered when other children were playing."[6] And yet, a tension exists between the insider-ness that Wong so cherished – that she "speaks just like one of us!" – and the hard work that it took for her to get there after ten years of language lessons. Put simply, Wong's purported linguistic *nativity* came to tug uneasily at her hard-won, and far from innate, linguistic *ability*. What is at stake at the intersection of both of these discourses? Why, in other words, might Wong have needed both to be an effective cultural diplomat to the Overseas Chinese?

In this chapter, I proceed from Wong's negotiations with and around language to examine the "natural" connection that developed between her and her audiences. I show that, by simultaneously flaunting her linguistic ability and obscuring her lack thereof, Wong was constructing a Chinese-American self that could play her audiences on both sides of the Pacific. I thus use translation – and how its processes were *disappeared* in Wong's novel and on Wong's tour – to analyze how race and ethnicity operated against each other in Cold War cultural diplomacy. What, after all, was the new category of "Chinese-American" accomplishing in Cold War propaganda battles, and what was it rendering invisible?

To previous work done on Jade Snow Wong's participation in the U.S. State Department's Exchange Program[7], I add the examination of Chinese-language sources, including the Chinese version of *Fifth Chinese Daughter* itself, to understand how Wong's story came

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[5] Ibid.
[6] From *No Chinese Stranger* (1975) by Jade Snow Wong, 59.
[7] In particular, my works builds off of that of Ellen D. Wu, who studied Jade Snow Wong's tour to East Asia on behalf of the State Department during the Cold War from the perspective of a historian. I will delve more into this scholarly discourse later in this introductory section.

across to the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia. I first lay out the context of USIS strategies in the region and the usefulness of Chinese-Americans to that strategy, specifically with regards to how "ethnicity" was replacing "race" in postwar American discourse. I then analyze Wong's in-person visit to the de-colonizing spaces of Malaya, including her efforts at blending in as a native speaker of the language of the colonized. Private records reveal just how much work she was doing to maintain a one-to-one commensurability between language and race, so that she could continue being an American expert on all things Chinese. Finally, I re-examine the text of *Fifth Chinese Daughter* itself in light of Wong's self-positioning overseas, asking how cultural diplomacy and linguistic self-stylization change the way we read her autobiographical novel. I focus on how Wong's text became part of the Chinese textbook trade in Malaya's struggle for independence. As such, it did not just become another novel for Malayan readers, but instead morphed into a model of good English writing for "good" Chinese students. How the language lessons of this text likewise erased the process of its own translation ultimately reveals what it took to become an ethnic American: to take the place of a translator one has displaced.

When *Fifth Chinese Daughter* first came out, it seemed like an answer to the USIS' prayers. Featuring one young woman's pursuit of education and success in American society, Jade Snow Wong's autobiographical novel is full of scenes of language learning. In fact, young Jade Snow's journey into adulthood is punctuated by a series of language lessons in which the protagonist achieves both mastery of Chinese and English as she moves from a childhood in Chinatown into American higher education. Her book thus seemed like a perfect fit for the kind of message the USIS wanted to broadcast in Asia: a how-to manual on becoming an ethnic American. Wong's personal message was always that "[t]o be an Asian American, to be an

ethnic American, is a unique combination which is a beginning."[8] As an "ethnic American," Wong was seeking to inscribe a new, more capacious category that allowed for both full political participation and ethnic distinction at one and the same time.

She was not alone in making this argument. Christina Klein has described how the postwar period saw substantial change in how "race" was perceived in America. Klein writes that the horrific excesses of Nazi Germany had readied Americans to step away from more rigid categories of "race" as something inalterable and biological. Instead, public discourse was slowly replacing race with "ethnicity," whose emphasis on culture and language offered more malleable categories to explain differences among people groups. These differences became not just accepted, but lauded as proof of the very antithesis of fascism in America: even as "official and unofficial propagandists celebrated America as a racially, religiously, and culturally diverse nation… in the process they transformed the ethnic immigrant from a marginal figure into the prototypical American" (224). Indeed, the new love for pluralism and diversity made the "ethnic" American the newest poster child of American freedom. As Klein writes, this logic somewhat went on to become the foundation for America's Cold War ascendancy into the leader of the Free World: "As a democratic nation of immigrants, this reasoning went, America alone possessed the ideals and the experiences to lead a multiracial world of independent nations in which imperialism had lost all legitimacy" (224). As mentioned in the Introduction, de-colonizing movements around the world in the 1950's and 60's were giving the lie to traditional imperialism's reliance on premises of Western superiority and natural right, and America could no longer use these outmoded structures to justify its new global era. It needed to create a self-image that was "non-imperial," but still expanding. Thus, as Klein writes, the U.S. "became the

[8] From "Introduction to the 1989 Edition" of *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, p. xi.

only Western nation that sought to legitimate its world-ordering ambitions by championing the idea (if not always the practice) of racial equality" (11).

This was where Jade Snow Wong's triumphant narrative came to be so useful. Wong was Chinese American, a successful ceramist and writer, and someone who embodied the spirit of a self-made entrepreneur. "Yes, being Chinese in America, I have had problems, but they have not stopped me," wrote Wong in 1953. On her travels abroad, she emphasized that "the fear of prejudice or the excuse it offers for personal failure, was usually more damaging to a person of a minority race" than the racial prejudice itself.[9] This attitude advocating personal responsibility and achievement formed the thru-line of *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, and of Wong's explicit message to the overseas Chinese community. "In Beijing or in Washington, D.C, I can find private doors open to welcome me," she wrote, affirming that while racial prejudice was a reality in America, it could not withstand the force of her own will and diligence (xi). The myth of the model minority – in which one is free to determine one's own destiny, provided one had enough pluck and willpower to work hard – thus arose out of the same period as the category of the "ethnic American," and Wong was at the center of both. In Cynthia Tolentino's words, Jade Snow Wong's "figure of the Chinese woman takes shape from the intersection of three geopolitical currents: the rise of the Asian American citizen, U.S. postwar political interests in Asia, and the postwar racialization of Asian Americans as 'not black' (in opposition to pathological conceptions of African Americans)" (71). Indeed, when it came to cultural diplomacy, Cold War strategies and the Asian American "model minority" myth came together in resplendent harmony. Jade Snow Wong would be the perfect symbol for anti-Communism abroad.

[9] Undated speech manuscript, "My Tour," Jade Snow Wong Collection, Library of Congress.

But what does the formation of ethnicity have to do with language? For starters, Wong's primary purpose as a cultural diplomat was to translate pro-democracy ideas into Chinese, that East Asians could also buy into America's potential. But Wong's translations of her story abroad were problematic at best. For despite her portrayal of her sacrifices, hard work, and successes on her diplomacy tour, the USIS' archives and media coverage of the same event reveal a different story. In particular, a deep disjunction lies in the competing accounts of Wong's linguistic ability itself: her ability to speak – and thus be recognized – as authentically Chinese. It is precisely at this disjuncture between Wong's narratives – of her being simultaneously a linguistic natural, a learned success, and an inadequate native speaker – that we can begin to tease apart what cultural work was being accomplished on Jade Snow's diplomatic journey.

This chapter argues that, far from instantiating the truthfulness of her all-American success story in *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, Wong's goodwill tour through Malaya ends up illuminating how race and language collude in the building of a new American Empire in the Cold War period. In particular, attending to the translators on Wong's tour and the translations of her book ultimately shows us the myriad strategies of performance that were always at work in *Fifth Chinese Daughter* in the first place, even when it was just an English-language novel gaining popularity in San Francisco. The translation of the novel abroad thus reveals the original's double-sided maneuvering to form a seamless discourse of not just cultural authenticity, but cultural authority – a space from which one could make truth claims about what constituted difference. *Fifth Chinese Daughter* in literary translation thus re-configures our understanding of an Asian American text based on Cold War logics and contingencies, allowing

us to tease apart the complex, but usually invisible, work done by notions of "race" and "ethnicity," especially in relation to one's "mother tongue."

This chapter thus re-situates a canonical piece of Asian American literature within a network of Transpacific linguistic communities and diaspora. This transnational frame is helpful, as a substantial majority of critics of Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* have approached the work through a resistance vs. accommodation paradigm, wherein they judge the book and its author for how well they did or didn't combat mainstream American expectations. In other words, mostly they have judged the book through a domestic U.S.-frame and race discourse. On the more critical side, Elaine H. Kim grants that the book "is valuable as a document of Asian American social history," but she considers the author herself "psychologically vulnerable" to the demands of her mainstream white audience: Wong is, she writes, "in light of today's changing attitudes, rather pathetic" (72). Frank Chin similarly disparages her as "obviously manipulated by white publishers to write to and from the stereotype" of Asian Americans (cited in Cleland, 13). On the other side, Jamie Cleland redeems Wong by showing how she simultaneously accommodated mainstream expectations of "Chinese-ness" while preserving space for her own career and personal life. My chapter does work between these interpretations, neither denouncing nor exonerating Wong, but using her overseas experiences and writings to showcase the significance of her linguistic performances of American English and Chinese-ness. These performances playing off of both American *and* Asian expectations end up revealing the difference paradoxically needed in order to establish authenticity, and ultimately to legitimate empire.

For in that Wong's own self-narrative emphasizes hard work and labor, what this chapter emphasizes is just how much linguistic labor is required for Wong to create the new category of

ethnic American-ness – labor that is then judiciously disappeared. While more recent critics like Theresa Kulbaga and Wendy S. Hesford have begun talking about Wong's portrayal of the labor of the female body, this chapter explores labor of a different kind: of translation, but specifically of translation effaced. I draw out the tensions that Wong experienced even while collaborating with the USIS overseas. Their disagreements, specifically on the necessity and function of translation, expose the rift that opens up between nativity and ethnicity. What mediates between them is the translation, both of Wong's speeches and her novel, that instantiate her authentic claims to cultural authority but then disappear from view. By examining translation and its processes, then, we begin to see how a burgeoning notion of "ethnicity" took shape in its original U.S. context, even as it was being exported overseas.

Finally, viewing *Fifth Chinese Daughter* as an instrument of U.S. cultural imperialism connects the fate of U.S. ethnic minority subjects to postcolonial ones in the Third World, even while questioning the efforts needed to bring about that connection. While Ellen D. Wu details the path that led to Wong's becoming a "cold warrior" for the U.S. government in *The Color of Success* (2014), she has not explored the larger USIS-managed literary battlefield in which Wong's book was to play a part. Nor does Wu give an account for how de-colonization deeply inflected Wong's journey overseas and her ability to represent the United States.[10] In this chapter, then, I explore how the ideas of hard work and self-determination that Wong came to instantiate begins to come apart at the seams when translated into a Malayan context. Wong's effectiveness as a diplomat thus comes into conversation with local politics also centered on

[10] Though, to be fair, Wu's work on the Cold War context in which Wong was writing, as well as Wong's ability to assimilate or resist assimilation, has helpfully informed many of my own readings of Wong's work. I see our main differences lying in the focus of our inquiry: while I enter this discourse via language and translation, especially in a non-American context, Wu was exploring the question of ethnic assimilation into the American sphere. Her arc traces how Asian Americans in the Cold War period transformed from "aliens ineligible for citizenship" into "assimilating others," and ends up being complementary to the conclusions and perspectives I derive, rather than contradictory to them (2).

language education, and the transformation of her text into a model language textbook reveals the full extent of Wong's linguistic performances. Ironically, it is as the labor of translation repeatedly vanishes from the narratives told of and by Wong, both at home and abroad, that the investments we make in notions of authenticity become increasingly visible. Whereas the other chapters of this dissertation have taken for granted writers that were bilingual and adept negotiators between English and Chinese, then, this chapter takes us into a story of disappeared translators and invisible feats of cultural labor. Young Jade Snow's language lessons, exported abroad, force us to reckon with the confluence of language politics, cultural authenticity, and translations of "ethnicity" that came to define it for audiences around the Pacific.

Malayan Maladies: Jade Snow Wong's Tour for the State Department

The story of U.S. cultural diplomacy to the Chinese diaspora begins within America's own borders. In the aftermath of the Second World War, Chinese Americans were in a precarious situation. While China had been the U.S.'s ally against Japan during WWII, the rise of Communist China in 1949 meant that Chinese Americans suddenly found themselves objects of suspicion.[11] The horrors of Japanese internment were only just fading from view in the national consciousness, and Chinese Americans were anxious to prove their loyalty to the United States. They needed to construct a new identity that simultaneously continued their wartime position as ally while also declaring a staunch position against Communism. Their solution was

[11] In the 1950's for instance, Chinese scientist Qian Xuesen, who had been in the U.S. for over 20 years as both a graduate student and researcher in aeronautics, was accused of being a Communist and summarily deported. To many Americans' chagrin, he eventually became the head of the Chinese missile program. See more in Iris Chang's *Thread of the Silkworm* (1996). Furthermore, due to Japan's new role as a containment buffer against China, cultural impressions of Japanese culture rose sharply in the public discourse after the war ended, a shift largely due to the U.S. government's efforts to fund the translation of Japanese literature.

to brand themselves – while also being branded[12] – the "Overseas Chinese" of America, a diasporic community still connected to Chinese culture and language but without any political affiliation with Maoist ideology. It was a risky move that emphasized their own otherness while declaring their global importance to the U.S. and its new foreign policy objectives of containment. As "Overseas Chinese," then, Chinese Americans were transnational, but in the right kind of way that benefited the U.S.'s new position as world superpower.

Their fundamental Otherness, however, was a double-edged sword for Chinese Americans when it came to consolidating their place in the racial hierarchy of the U.S. A crucial development of the war was the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act, the only nationality-based immigration sanction in America's history that had excluded Chinese from America since 1882.[13] The success of the repeal was due in large part to the wartime activism of liberal intellectuals, such as Pearl Buck and Lin Yutang; and that of entire Chinese American communities, who had not only held massive fundraisers for the Chinese and American war effort in Chinatowns, but had also actively enlisted in all branches of the armed forces.[14] By the time the Exclusion Act was repealed, it had long been a source of embarrassment for the U.S. as an indicator of racism and its poor treatment of China, its wartime ally. But the repeal did not

[12] For further information on how Chinese-Americans were labeled by the U.S. government as "Overseas" citizens, and the consequences thereof, see Wu (2013), Ch. 3; Ngai (2007); and Hsu (2015). As Wu explains, the term "Overseas Chinese" is a direct translation from the Chinese phrase *huaqiao*, and is commonly used by Chinese communities outside of Mainland China (PRC) and Taiwan (ROC). Although originally used to refer specifically to Chinese citizens residing outside of either iteration of modern China, whose loyalty and foreign investment in the motherland were both sought after and appreciated; the term quickly began to be adopted more generally for Chinese communities writ large. For further reading on the use of the term since the 19th century, see Gungwu Wang (1994).

[13] There were especially devastating effects for Chinese women, who had been nearly universally excluded earlier based on the Page Law of 1875. For more information on Chinese exclusion, and especially how it prevented the formation of families that Wong had in the U.S., see Leti Volpp's "Divesting Citizenship: On Asian American History and the Loss of Citizenship through Marriage" (2005) and Mae Ngai's Ngai, Mae. "Birthright Citizenship and the Alien Citizen" (2007).

[14] In *The Good Immigrants: From Yellow Peril to Model Minority*, Madeline Y. Hsu makes the case for the model minority to have emerged from selective American immigration policy, in addition to domestic surveillance within Chinese communities in the U.S. Records show that San Francisco Chinatown raised as much as $93,000 in one event for wartime efforts, and these events were far from uncommon.

immediately remove the popular notion that "peoples of Asian ancestry were wholly incapable of assimilation, because they were racially and culturally too different from white Americans" (Wu 2). As Mae Ngai puts it, Chinese American citizenship of the postwar period was premised on the oxymoron of "alien citizenship," where it was dubious that Asians could ever integrate into the American national polity (2007). Wu has argued that it was negotiating the contradictory terms of inclusion for "Overseas Chinese" that led to the increasing pressure for

> them to behave as praiseworthy citizens. Some [Asian Americans] gladly complied, others inadvertently went along, and not a few refused to succumb to these demands. All found their lives conscripted into the manufacture of a certain narrative of national racial progress premised on the distinction between 'good' and 'bad' minorities. (3)

Indeed, Chinese in America eventually found themselves labeled not just a 'good' minority, but a "model" minority that was distinctly *not* black. They became the third term in an otherwise polarized American racial discourse, providing a useful Other to justify white American norms, expectations, and the promise of opportunity. Their inclusion tacitly excluded other variations of "bad" minority behavior, quashing both nonconforming Asians and other minorities for their inability to perform.

It was only a matter of time before Chinese Americans' usefulness became apparent to America's foreign policy objectives as well: to foreign service agents, they were the obvious cultural diplomats to reach the actually overseas "Overseas Chinese" in Southeast Asia. As mentioned in Chapter 2, these "Overseas Chinese" numbered 10-15 million strong and referred to the Chinese diaspora not living in either Mainland China or Taiwan, and were instead scattered throughout countries like Thailand, Burma, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaya. They often spoke the language of their host countries, and their undecided stance regarding the new Communist regime in Beijing made them an especially strategic "swing" demographic in

the global showdown between Communism and the Free World. After WWII, USIS posts in East Asia focused all their energies on containing the spread of Communism to this diaspora, putting out pro-American propaganda to sway their loyalties. In particular, these foreign posts recognized the asset of Chinese American communities to their propaganda outreaches, and asked regularly for photographs of Chinatown celebrations to feature in their photo journals as evidence of America's friendliness to Asians.[15]

In 1951, the recently published autobiography of a young, bright Chinese American from San Francisco could not have been more perfect for U.S. objectives. Richard McCarthy, heading the same USIS Hong Kong Book Translation Program that delivered Eileen Chang out of poverty, also sought Jade Snow Wong's book for translation as well. East Asian readers were fascinated by its unusual story and at first protested that the piece was pure propaganda and could not possibly be true, at which point the USIS was only too happy to request that Wong come in person herself to quell their doubts. As Wong herself later wrote, the "Chinese translation [of *Fifth Chinese Daughter*] brought a request from Chinese in Asia for the State Department to produce me there, for it was incredible to those readers that a minority on four counts: (1) Chinese (2) A woman (3) a poor one, and (4) a young one at that, could succeed in America."[16] Called overseas to prove that contradictions did and could exist in the same English-speaking, Asian body, Jade Snow Wong went on the trip personally believing in the patriotic mission to represent her country well.

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[15] See Manila to Secretary of State, January 2, 1953; and "Far East Reproduction Center Manila Monthly Report, May 1953." From the latter: "RPC is still short on pictures… particularly pictures of Chinese-Americans. Would it not be possible for the Department to make an arrangement with a San Francisco and a New York Chinese newspaper to buy a certain number of such pictures per month?" National Archive and Records Administration, Box 1, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
[16] Unpublished speech, "My Father's Prayer," by Jade Snow Wong. Jade Snow Wong Papers, Asian American Pacific Islander Collection, Library of Congress.

Wong knew how much her Chinese American background – and especially her Chinese language fluency – was going to be crucial for USIS efforts in Malaya: "America's interest is to have Malaya emerge a strong nation, divorced from Communist China, somehow with Malays and Chinese cooperating," she wrote after her briefing at the U.S. Consulate in Malaya. Brimming with anti-colonial sentiment, Malaya (consisting of both modern Malaysia and Singapore) stood out in USIS policy due to its imminent independence from Britain and strategic central location in Southeast Asia. It was also seen as a stronghold for residual Communist influence, a fact tied strongly to the Chinese immigrant population's pride in its local network of Chinese schools. In fact, in the early 1950's, the Chinese minority stood at a sizable 38% of the local population (the majority Malays only slightly edged them out at 51%). Together with the Indian segment of the population (11%), the Chinese were agitating for a mother-tongue based multilingual education system – Malay for Malay schools, Chinese for Chinese, Tamil for the Indians. This meant that the volatile colony was virtually split in half (49% to 51%) in terms of favoring mother-tongue based education or not. At stake was nothing less than the future makeup of Malayan citizenship, and as these debates raged on in newspapers, journals, and pamphlets, they increasingly took on the character of cultural and linguistic rights: which languages would be recognized as the "national" languages of Malaya? And to whom would be granted the privilege of mother-language education, full political participation, and the power to shape a future nation? With British power waning in Southeast Asia and independence becoming an imminent likelihood for Malaya, all involved parties were bent on ensuring that they had a say, in their own language, in the future Malayan nation.

Indeed, language education was thus one of the most contentious political issues in Malaya when Jade Snow Wong arrived. Wong was "told that the Chinese language school

teachers are the hardest audiences for an American to reach, inasmuch as they are the least exposed to Western influences. But they are most important": "Communist infiltration and terrorism has been working here," she wrote home to her friends, "especially directed toward high school level students and teachers."[17] Indeed, as I explore more in depth later, the students and teachers in the Chinese language school system were one of the USIS' most coveted target populations. Reaching and convincing them, ostensibly by speaking and being Chinese, was thus Wong's primary objective.

But the disjunctive language dynamics of Wong's tour ended up revealing the complex mechanics underlying this entire diplomatic endeavor, giving the lie to Wong's "natural" affinity with the Chinese she was sent to persuade. Wong's tour took her all the way from Japan to Pakistan, cutting a wide swath through East and Southeast Asia. Though some at her stop in Hong Kong had accused her of being a "white Chinese," or someone so Americanized that they could not relate to her, her overall impressions of Hong Kong were nevertheless very favorable. "It was a relief to be able to speak Cantonese and get what we wanted," she wrote, after difficult stops in Japan and the Philippines, and she even felt that she "was able to cut across the layers of HongKong's [sic] social structure vertically, because of the fusion of Chinese and American in me."[18] In fact, nearly all of Wong's personal accounts of her tour emphasize the fluency with which she could relate to the Chinese communities overseas.[19] Her narratives of the tour, presented both in speeches for the American public and in the report for the State Department, betray nothing but sheer linguistic competence: "Every day, I met visitors and school children. I

[17] See letter from Jade Snow Wong to People, March 1, 1953, Hamilton Basso Papers, Yale University.
[18]Jade Snow Wong to People, February 28, 1953. Hamilton Basso Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.
[19] The one exception was her discovery of dialect diversity in Malaya. Wong stated that she "was discovering now that Malaya Chinese vary considerably in their dialects, and include principally Fukien, Swatow, Teochow, Hainan, and Hakka." Jade Snow Wong to People, March 1, 1953. Hamilton Basso Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

talked to them in Chinese, tracing for them the Chinese great development in ceramics… Second I conducted another series of evening lectures to reach English speaking people."[20] All this was, by her own account, also a result of her own hard-won labor. Years of hard work in Chinese school had earned Jade Snow her right to succeed.

But in fact, the language dynamics of Wong's tour in 1953 were anything but straightforward. The fact is that Wong's speeches delivered abroad were not in Chinese at all! Rather, a fact that she omits in all her own reports of her tour is that she needed a translator for nearly *all* her diplomatic functions, including the speeches that she gave at the Chinese schools in Malaya. Her letters home say nothing about how her own Cantonese was not always equal to the task of public speaking. State Department records, however, indicate that language disjunctions plagued her entire trip, from creating small social faux pas to forcing major changes in scheduling and programming.[21] Part of the great shocks for USIS Malaya upon Wong's arrival was that she could not speak Cantonese as well as had been advertised by the State Department, and she was not fluent enough to do a formal lecture in Chinese. Wong had to explain on site that "she could converse passably in Cantonese, but she did not have the command of the formal idiom which was required for lectures."[22] In Bangkok, USIS representatives were nearly beside themselves when she even

> objected to the use of an interpreter on the grounds that she could not completely depend on one to accurately present her thoughts. Her lectures on Chinese-

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[20]Speech at Vallejo College, October 9, 1956, "My Far Eastern Tour for the State Department," by Jade Snow Wong. Jade Snow Wong Papers, Asian American Pacific Islander Collection, Library of Congress.

[21]It was only after Wong was in-country that USIS Penang discovered she was not fluent enough to deliver speeches in Chinese. "Kuala Lumpur informed this post that Miss Wong could not lecture in Chinese. This directly refuted a reply to a similar inquiry from Hong Kong which stated that she could lecture in Chinese, but preferred English. In light of this, further alterations in the schedule were made, again to the embarrassment of this office." Foreign service dispatch to the Department of State, Washington, April 2, 1953. RG 59, Box 2508, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

[22] Foreign service dispatch from USIS Bangkok to Department of State, Washington D.C., April 8, 1953. RG 59, Box 2508, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

> American life, she said, were of necessity couched in the complicated vocabulary of Sociology [sic] and it was doubtful if the interpreter or the audience could grasp the ideas, which demanded a university-level audience to comprehend them.[23]

The reality is that Wong nearly couldn't lecture in schools because much of her prepared materials had to be adjusted to the reading/learning level of children. And in the end, all of Wong's public speeches were given in English and translated with the help of local English-speakers. Indeed, there are indications in USIS reports on Wong's trip throughout the Orient that she was saved multiple times by her various interpreters.[24]

In Malaya, Wong could do a few radio shows and interviews in Cantonese, but again her formal lectures had to be delivered in English. Chinese-language newspapers covering her trip gregariously commended a Mr. Chan Yik King, whose translation in the Chinese schools so perfectly matched Wong's moving speech that "their harmony was visible as none of the audience budged from their seats."[25] Others, however, lamented that the lectures could not have been delivered in Cantonese, especially given the struggle for Chinese autonomy then taking place in Malaya's struggle for independence. In fact, the Malayan crowd's reaction to Wong's Chinese was quite mixed. Many questioned her eagerly for her opinion on Chinese-language schooling because it was related to their movement for independence, and they were disappointed both by her limited language ability, *and* her lack of interest in their de-colonizing efforts. On more than one occasion in Malaya, Wong was jeered and scorned for her "objectivity" on issues of colonial language education. Far from being a streamlined success

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Miss Sadako Tsuchiya, her interpreter in Japan, was essential; the USIS report there states that Wong's interactions with craftsmen and local officials were not exactly "gra[c]ious or tactful… It is believed that only because of the extremely capable job of translating and smoothing-over done by Miss Sadako Tsuchiya was the day saved." Office memorandum from American Consulate Nagoya to American Consulate Tokyo, February 2, 1953. RG 59, Box 2508, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

[25] My translation, "Jade Snow Wong's Pottery Exhibition Opening Today at USIS." RG 59, Box 2508, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

story, then, Jade Snow Wong's linguistic ability in Chinese – or deficiency thereof – emerges as a site of multiple contestations regarding linguistic performance, racial expectation, and cultural authenticity. Even though in itself, Wong's need for an interpreter is understandable, that does not explain how hard Wong herself worked to *appear* fluent to the American audiences she later regaled with the details of her trip. In all the speeches she later delivered, Wong was comfortable mentioning the interpreters she needed in Japan, but all the translators she needed for operating within the Chinese diaspora were uniformly deleted.

What is at stake here in this need to preserve a seamless image of linguistic ability? For whom was Wong exercising these efforts and purporting these narratives? And what effects could these significant elisions have in the cultural and political sphere in which Wong was operating? The selective disappearance of translators in Wong's cultural diplomacy journey demands an account, as it raises questions regarding cultural authenticity and the work required to maintain a one-to-one relationship between one's racial identification and one's "mother tongue."[26] We essentially have two narratives for Wong: the successful one that she crafted and propagated back in America after her trip abroad; and the one that exists in the archives, a record including numerous instances of linguistic miscommunication and failure. In order to understand the relationship between the two, we need to see the double vision in Wong's own account of her trip. For even as she interacted with Asian audiences abroad, Wong was writing extensive letters, preparing speeches, and laying the ground for a second autobiographical novel (tellingly titled *No Chinese Stranger*) in English. That is, Wong's official diplomacy trip abroad

[26] Though this chapter on disappeared translators seems to parallel Lawrence Venuti's famous argument about the "invisibility of the translator," our accounts differ in that while Venuti is drawing out the "domesticating practices" that create an illusion of transparency and fluency, I am talking about the literal and intentional erasure of translators from official records. Moreover, my account emphasizes the cultural performances required to maintain commensurability between race and language, which is something Venuti only touches on tangentially as he describes how different registers and dialects are flattened in translation. See Venuti (1995).

"selling" America's land of opportunity was very much conducted with an eager American reading public in mind. Understanding Wong's cultural diplomacy maneuvers abroad thus necessitates seeing the *two* audiences for whom she was always simultaneously performing: both the ideologically undecided Asians abroad and the American readers and citizens funding her international overtures on their behalf.

This double vision and its effects show up most clearly in debates on Chinese language education, a subject on which Wong had elaborated on some length in her own autobiographical novel.[27] On more than one occasion, Wong got into altercations with her Malayan audience. Indeed, her Singaporean visit soured almost immediately due to Wong's ignorance of the debates around language education in a colonial context:

> I was plunged into a press conference upon arrival. The Chinese reporters tried to decide if I was Chinese, and therefore one of their kind, or American, and therefore not one of their kind. They tried to draw me into their heated controversy as to whether or not local Chinese have a right to build their own University not controlled by the British who rule this country as a colony. When I chose to be questioningly objective rather than unquestioningly Chinese, I enraged them and they denounced me.[28]

Records show that the situation in Singapore was significantly more complicated than this one encounter suggests, but Wong's reaction to it is still telling.[29] Her self-description as "questioningly objective" utterly ignores the political valences of the "benevolently Colonial"

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[27] Though I will talk more about Wong's language lessons in my reading of *Fifth Chinese Daughter* later, it is worth mentioning here that later in life Wong's personal letterhead explicitly claimed that she was a "Specialist in the Pacific Area"

[28]Speech at Vallejo College, October 9, 1956, "My Far Eastern Tour for the State Department," by Jade Snow Wong. Jade Snow Wong Papers, Asian American Pacific Islander Collection, Library of Congress.

[29] USIS records indicate that Wong was already on the brink of exhaustion when she arrived in Singapore, and that she was clearly unsettled by this press conference and a number of other interactions she had with the Singaporean press. The prospect of a Chinese university had also been a hot topic in Singapore for years (it would eventually open in 1956, with Lin Yutang as one of its first chancellors), and Wong's ignorance of and lack of interest in the Chinese community's struggle against colonialism devolved to the crowd's general chagrin.

perspective with which she was entering the situation.[30] It was only later that Wong discovered the exigency of the language situation in Malaya, and how weighted her opinion was as another minority Chinese-speaker who had attained success in an English-speaking world.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, Wong's personal record of her impressions in Malaya ended up revolving around their systems of Chinese language learning. But the opinion that she developed, both of the schools and the struggle they represented, was anything but favorable. It is in Wong's experiences here that we can most clearly see the intricate, parallel workings of language and racialization in her practice of diasporic cultural diplomacy. The Chinese schools both impressed her with their reach and appalled her with their methodology: "I had not known before that here is [sic] the highest educational standards to be found in secondary schools, and Chinese students come from Burma, Thailand, all over Southeast Asia."[31] Indeed, she wrote, marveling at the strategic placement of Malaya's schools, "Think what an opportunity is here for indoctrination, for or against Communism. Yet, how are these children taught?," she asked in consternation.[32] With trepidation, she commented on her experience speaking in the Chinese schools of Malaya, where "future citizens are being educated":

> In the auditorium where I spoke were such mottoes on the walls, 'I am careful according to the time and place – observing and using my heart to study,' 'I go punctually to my teachers and quietly do my duties,' etc. I tried to tell in my talks that I fully appreciate Chinese discipline, but that conformity and obedience, watchdogs of Chinese education, are only a foundation, and will not produce the thinking future Chinese leaders Malaya needs so desperately.[33]

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[30] Earlier, Wong had remarked that "The books we had read on Malaya, written as they were by British authors with a benevolent Colonial [sic] spirit, did not prepare us for the physical or psychological impact which was Singapore." Jade Snow Wong to People, March 1, 1953. Hamilton Basso Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

[31] Speech at Vallejo College, October 9, 1956, "My Far Eastern Tour for the State Department," by Jade Snow Wong. Jade Snow Wong Papers, Asian American Pacific Islander Collection, Library of Congress.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Jade Snow Wong to People, March 22, 1953. Hamilton Basso Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Wong intuited that language learning was inherently tied to issues of political participation and developing the leaders of tomorrow; and yet, the Chinese language education for which the Chinese Malayans were lobbying so fiercely, only struck her as rendering their "mental climate" backwards and primitive.[34] "For more reasons than I could uncover on this trip, the people of Malaya who are supposed to be the future thinkers of the nation are still in the Victorian era of thinking (in time lapse, I mean)… I cannot tell all the little signs which pointed to retardation." That classic trope of the colonial officer standing at the edge of modern history while looking back at an indigenous population trapped in a prehistoric past thus emerges here with neither explanation nor apology. Indeed, if any explanation is offered, it is a linguistic one: the literal writing on the wall in Chinese is what is holding the students back.

The honest impressions that Wong writes home must be contextualized with Wong's own self-image and linguistic positioning in this scene. In these youngsters' Chinese lessons, Wong confronts a challenge to her own narrative of progress and expert authority; after all, Wong's speeches to them necessitated her dropping her role as Chinese authority to speak in English instead, through a translator, becoming in their midst an emblem of language loss rather than the all-seeing bilingual proficient she usually presented to the world. The "Chinese foundation" that she overtly dismisses in these Chinese-language schools thus doubles to simultaneously mirror Wong's own incapacity to bear the fruits of that education. Indeed, the school auditorium functions in Wong's retrospective narrative as a thick space of overlapping discourses, melding skin color, language, and ideology:

> I looked at these audiences, always in crisp fresh uniforms, and was thrilled at their clean brown skins, bright eager eyes, and flawlessly combed hair, all hungry for knowledge or for a glimpse of the outside world. At the same time, I was infinitely depressed that they could not have the type of excellent individualized

[34]Jade Snow Wong to People, March 1, 1953. Hamilton Basso Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

> education which was my good fortune in America. I was frightened to think what will happen in another ten years, when these countless thousands of eager, disciplined, intelligent, and above all, obedient young men and women are turned loose in Malaya, without having learned to think for themselves. These youths, compared to all the rest I have seen on this trip… are the greatest free-spirited Chinese mass in Southeast Asia. They can be our friends – or could be made our enemies.[35]

Wong's portentous pronouncement allows no distinguishing features among the student body; their physical features *become* a uniform in their "uniformly clean brown skin" and "flawlessly combed hair." Impeccably groomed, these Malayan Chinese students' very perfection is what conveys a sense of imminent threat. Indeed, Wong's view of her audience cannot help but recall 19th century American fears of Chinese coolies as an unstoppable "yellow peril."[36] Unlike herself, these children are not going to have the opportunity to be socialized into their full potential.

Wong's glimpse of Southeast Asia thus accords all too well with an American terror of Asian hordes, but it is fortified by an insider perspective. Indeed, her Asian-Americanness is important, especially when keeping her future American audiences in mind. As Lydia Liu has written, "the translator is… able to manipulate difference, to dispense or withhold the reciprocity of meaning-value among the languages to make war or make peace" (37). By instantiating

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Malaya's "countless thousands" who will be "turned loose" mimic literary depictions of Chinese coolies as multitudes of inscrutable faces. In *America's Asia*, Colleen Lye elucidates the literary trope of the coolie mob as an operative part of the discourse of Asian Exclusion. Lye cites a passage from Arthur Stout's *Chinese Immigration and the Physiological Causes of the Decay of Nation* (1862) to prove her point, and the passage merits repeating here in comparison to Wong's words above:

> Better would it be for our country that the hordes of Genghis Khan should overflow the land, and with armed hostility devastate our vallies [sic] with the sabre and fire-brand, than that these more pernicious hosts, in the garb of friends, should insidiously poison the well-springs of life, and spreading far and wide, gradually undermine and corrode the vitals of our strength and prosperity. (Lye 55)

Stout's remarks specifically names those Chinese who seemed friendly as being more dangerous than those that were anonymous. Indeed, his characterization of the undesirable Asiatic "in the garb of friends" elucidates the double bind around the Asian American figure: either they are a menacing, faceless mob or they are individual agents "insidiously" masked behind conniving innocence.

herself as a cross-cultural mediator and linguistic insider, Wong not only replicates what a dominant white ideology can see in an Asian school; she creates and defines what difference *is* in Southeast Asia. Her native informant status, so assiduously maintained through re-scripting her own narrative abroad, delineate what differences matter and what do not between her individualized, American self and the hordes she had been sent to reach with the beacon of democracy.

It is thus within the confines of purported equivalence that Wong defines her view of Overseas Others. Her American-Chinese perspective in Malaya did anything but translate well when it came into contact with diasporic Chinese-ness as part of Cold War cultural diplomacy maneuvers; rather, Wong's State Department tour and the many roles she placed within it can help us to re-conceive what it means to broker difference and constitute meaning across a cultural and linguistic divide. That translation as such disappeared, and that she felt the need to obfuscate her own need for translators in the first place, speaks to the undeniable role that language played in establishing her as a cultural authority. It would seem that even as Wong was trying to translate her American experiences for these Malayan audiences, she was also deeply interested in preserving an image in America that could best be gotten by going overseas. In the end, she came home to San Francisco with as much, if not more, cultural authority as when she left it.

What made it possible for her to do so, and why does it matter that she did? Rey Chow argues, specifically of language, "Might it not become possible to see the native speaker for the first time as a personification of the safeguards of unity and continuity that are lodged at critical epistemic boundaries – the boundaries between languages, to be exact – and endowed with a primacy or originariness that does not really exist and cannot endure?" (58). In other words, can

the category of the "native speaker" point to something that is not "native" or natural at all? Instead, could this category reveal what is at stake in one's need to maintain an "original"? The fact is, the linguistic nativity that Wong was trying so hard to present was doing more than allowing her to sell copies of her book; it was also connecting language, ideology, and identity, authorizing her with a kind of expertise that she did not want reality to assail. That split in her narrative – between the successful one later celebrated in speeches and presentations, and the archival one filed away into obscurity – points to the uneasy space smoothed over by an originary "authenticity." In a very real sense, Wong's trip abroad comes to instantiate the logics of Cold War cultural diplomacy: of maintaining a self-projection that operates and succeeds within its own terms while eliminating all trace of contradictory pieces of information. In the end, Chow asks, can we not understand "such discontinuities as constitutive of history itself?" Could history, in other words, comprise many moving discourses rather than fixed categories, and be maintained more by strenuous navigation than seamless natural-ness? What could such a view of history teach us if we didn't deny it or even try to overcome it, but seek to learn from it instead?

To get at these questions, I turn in the next section to Wong's "original" self-narrativization in her bestseller, *Fifth Chinese Daughter*. Rather curiously, the book's translation into Southeast Asia as USIS-sponsored material also ends up exhibiting a process that deletes translation as much as Wong's international tour did. To re-examine the book in light of Wong's cultural diplomacy abroad is thus to explore how its linguistic discontinuities are also operative in a discursive way to create the illusion of an authentic, cultural nativity. I argue that reading *Fifth Chinese Daughter* through its own translation ends up revealing how much the original was also arrogating authority to itself through linguistic performance. Indeed, first I examine how

Fifth Chinese Daughter was mobilized not just as a novel translated by the USIS' Book Translation Program, but had the unique distinction of becoming a classroom exemplar of American ideals for language learners around the globe. In this novel-turned-textbook, copious scenes of language-learning and self-translation get excised as it travels abroad. The question then becomes: how did translation engage with pedagogy as the book and its scenes of language learning were portrayed in a different tongue? What, in the end, was such a text teaching through the authoritative cultural position it was simultaneously creating? And how was translation – or the disappearance thereof – helping it to maintain performances of Chinese American-ness across the Pacific?

The 'Textbook Effect' of Cultural Authenticity

The issue of textbooks was a particularly touchy one in Southeast Asia. As various countries and colonies in the region took sides for or against Communism, local textbook bans and censors – especially against textbooks written in Chinese – became commonplace. British colonial spaces like Hong Kong, Singapore, and the Federation of Malaya all banned Chinese textbooks originating from Mainland China, most of which painted an unsavory picture of Western imperialist history in Asia.[37] In response, the big Chinese publishing houses in Shanghai issued orders to their subsidiaries in Singapore to desist publishing British-authorized material that was slanted towards Free World ideals.[38] Local governments thus had their hands

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[37] While not every textbook became ideologically suspect, a USIS memo records the majority of them to be considered so: "Textbooks [in Malaya] must have official approval before they can be sold. Of new trade books entering the market, about 30% are USIS sponsored and 30% more are known to be ideologically unexceptionable. Most of the remainder are evidently apolitical." American Consulate General to the Department of State, December 15th, 1952.

[38] On the pro-Communist side, publishers like Shanghai Book Company, Chung Hua Book Company, Commercial Press were operating under the close scrutiny of the Chinese Mainland, while USIS-supported publishers in southeast Asia included the United Book Company, Szu Hai (Four Seas), and various publications like *Tung Feng*, *Youth*, and *World Today*. GRUSIS Box 1, RG 84, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

full screening as many textbook editions as they could, even occasionally raiding pro-/anti-Communist schools to weed out curricula pushing an undesirable version of history.[39] Through it all, the factor of linguistic opacity was a constant source of anxiety for the USIS: what *were* the Chinese student populations reading, especially in the Communist-leaning countryside of Malaya, and would the English-speaking authorities even know what books to stop until it was too late?

In response, the USIS began their own "Chinese Textbook Project," a program employing intellectual talent from Hong Kong and Taiwan to develop Free World-leaning Chinese-language materials.[40] The USIS list of candidates for writing their own version of Chinese history textbooks included college professors, former government officials, and noteworthy poets/playwrights such as Wang Shu-lin 王書林, Yang Tsung-han 楊宗漢, and Stephen Soong 宋奇. Most of these names were already known to the USIS because they were translators on the USIS payroll. But, the USIS officials were soon dismayed to find, materials produced in intellectual centers like Hong Kong and Taiwan, to which nearly all the fleeing

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Furthermore, records from the privately run Asia Foundation reveal the anxiety felt by U.S. organizations regarding translations from Soviet texts: "During the 1952-1953 period," one report reads, several "professor-translators will concentrate on translating Soviet textbooks for freshman and sophomore years and other text books urgently needed by Chinese Communist universities." "Information and Reference Section, Radio Free Asia," December 29, 1952. Committee for a Free Asia Collection, Hoover Institution Archives.

[39] In an operations memorandum to Washington D.C. from USIS Hong Kong July 13, 1954: "The ideological controversy between leftist and rightist schools is pretty much past in history at this point. While the leftists outwardly use textbooks approved by the HongkongGovernment [sic], it is believed that they surreptitiously introduce others to their own liking. For instance, the Hsiang Tao School had been raided at least on two occasions by the HongKong [sic] Police and a few teachers have been deported." GRUSIS Box 1, RG 84, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

[40] This project was begun in tandem with another textbook project spearheaded by the Asia Foundation to produce Chinese textbooks for secondary schools in Malaysia and Singapore. "This project is expected to provide the Chinese schools, where Chinese Communists have exercised a great influence, with teaching material presenting the free-world outlook and promoting Malaynization." The Asia Foundation's strategy was also to have the Chinese cooperate with the majority Malays, and eventually claim national citizenship there. There is no indication of overlap between the Asia Foundation's textbook efforts and those of the USIS. "Monthly Report to the Board of Trustees," March 3, 1958. C. Martin Wilbur Papers. Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

literati of China (like Eileen Chang) had fled after 1949, simply did not fit the reading profile of the average Chinese student in Southeast Asia. Official memos remarked that

> the standard of literacy in Chinese is very much lower among Overseas Chinese than it is among the population of Hong Kong and Formosa… Current restrictions on Chinese schools in several countries makes this particularly true among students, our priority target…The implication of this would seem to be that we are going to have to regard the Overseas Chinese reader as an almost entirely different sort of animal than the reader in Hong Kong or Formosa.[41]

Creating standardized educational material for the region was thus difficult, if not impossible for educated Hong Kong/Taiwanese scholars who ran the risk of not hitting the appropriate reading level for Chinese students, much less getting past the government censors. Nevertheless, the USIS was very invested in its self-image of reciprocity, in which it was trying to help de-colonizing nations with their political and economic problems. Improving the quality of education was thus one of the ways it sought to do that; that these overtures were also tinged with extracting pro-US political loyalties was an issue that they never figured out how to address.[42]

In the meantime, the U.S.'s cultural and linguistic alignment with the history of British colonialism proved hard to dispel not only for the USIS. Malayan youth were turning in droves to the Maoist ideology emanating from China, despite – perhaps even because of – the colonial government's ban on China-based textbooks: "The Communists have a distinct advantage over us, in reaching the target audience of Chinese students, in that – partly because it's forbidden – it is considered 'progress' and not reprehensible among students for a student to want to get hold of

[41] Foreign Service Dispatch from Hong Kong to USIA Washington, September 9th 1954.

[42] Christina Klein cites Mary Louise Pratt's term "narratives of anti-conquest" to describe America's Cold War politicking in the postwar period. Because the U.S. was trying hard to prove that it was *not* imperial like the British, and so could be trusted by de-colonizing nations, American narratives "legitimated U.S. expansion while denying its coercive or imperial nature." As mentioned in the Introduction, the U.S.'s self-image served its own purposes more than allowing it to be self-critical: "they envisioned U.S. global expansion as taking place within a system of reciprocity. In their view America did not pursue its naked self-interest through the coercion and subjugation of others, but engaged in exchanges that benefited all parties" (13).

Communist materials."[43] In other words, Chinese Malayan students were not buying into the American literature that was being translated for them, preferring instead contraband Communist material issuing from Mainland China. It did not help that the Chinese schools still lacked recognition and support from the local British colonial government. Lumped in with the British, the USIS felt that they were at a serious linguistic, cultural, and ethnic disadvantage. The Communists had both the allure of taboos and linguistic accessibility on their side, while the USIS was still struggling to break out of an imperial cultural history and into a Chinese-speaking student population.

Here was where *Fifth Chinese Daughter* came in. Because Jade Snow Wong's book started out as a piece of literature, it managed to escape many of the censors enacted toward textbooks of that period. Teachers could bring it in as mere fiction, supplemental reading material that did not have to be as rigorously checked. Wong's autobiography thus partook of a particular brand of bookish infiltration: simple enough in content to be used and recommended for language instruction, yet literary enough to dodge the sanctions upon formal curricula. It was also furtive in another way: the book's protagonist was highly advertised *as Chinese*, and so could speak to the Chinese Malayan student population in a way that other translated American novels, like Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, simply couldn't. *Fifth Chinese Daughter* recast American "rugged individualism" as the shifting fortunes of a young Chinese girl brought up in a majority English-speaking society. That "unique combination" of being both Chinese and American, neither fully one nor the other, thus made its story hard to pin down and reject outright.

[43] Robert J. Boylan, American Consul, in "Book Translation Program: A proposal for a revised Chinese-language network," May 25, 1954, GRUSIS RG 84, Box 1, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

But the necessity of translating the book for Malayan audiences also crucially shaped its narrative. The USIS' Book Translation Program rendered Wong's coming-of-age autobiography into Chinese first, before any other language, and submitted the manuscript to Wong for approval before its publication.[44] The Chinese version was produced by USIS Hong Kong, perhaps in contract with translator Tang Jun 湯君, though the details therein are unclear.[45] That lack of clarity was no accident: USIS officers worked hard to keep the book and its Chinese translation free from USIS attribution, knowing full well that their involvement was often a red flag to Chinese-language teachers as evidence of propagandistic intent. No translator's name appears on the version published by the Union Press in 1951, or the version reprinted in 1953. In the meantime, a USIS office memo from February 9th, 1953 detailed that "One of the chief virtues of the Book Translation Program is that it makes available – through cooperation between USIS and local publishers – free world materials with *local* attribution" (emphasis mine). After it was accidentally broadcast at a press conference that the "USIS was stated to have 'translated' Fifth Chinese Daughter," all agents were reprimanded and reminded of the importance of secrecy: "The minute that the name 'USIS' enters the picture, credibility goes down," the memo states, and "A local publisher who is sincerely cooperating in the program may not feel inclined to do so when he is laid open, by USIS itself, to the charge of disseminating American propaganda."[46] Therefore, on the specific mission of reaching the hard-to-penetrate Chinese-language schools of Malaya, Wong's text *had* to appear as neutral and authentically Chinese as possible, with traces

[44] This was a stipulation that Wong herself put into place when the USIS approached her with their request. She talks in detail about the experience of checking the manuscript in her second autobiographical novel, *No Chinese Stranger* (1975), a notable scene I read later in this chapter.

[45] Part of the failure apparatus around Wong's text, I will argue, is that the identity of the translator is effaced nearly as much as the translations he did. While there is a preface to the Chinese version produced by USIS Hong Kong that mentions that one Tang Jun translated the originally English introduction, there is no mention of the translator of the text on either title page or cover. This practice was in fact common procedure for the USIS, who typically sought to downplay the fact of translation so that they could present the books as Chinese originals, and thus more authentic.

[46] Ibid.

of its USIS origins and intent removed. Jade Snow Wong thus came across in Malaya simply as *Wong yuxue* 黃玉雪, a fluent little Chinese girl with an American upbringing, but one that still spoke, acted, and thought just like these student-readers.

But this was only the beginning of erasing all vestiges of translation from the literary text. If we take into account Wong's linguistic negotiations on her in-person trip through the Far East, we begin to see that moments of translation likewise disappear throughout *Fifth Chinese Daughter* as well. Indeed, we begin to see how translation (and its disappearance) is not just a process, but a performance. For this book, originally written by Wong "to creat[e] better American understanding of the Chinese culture on the part of Americans," constructed Chinese-ness specifically with American readers in mind.[47] That meant that it featured numerous scenes of Chinese Other-ness, most of them related in some way to language and culture. Scenes of shopping in Chinese markets, learning in Chinese schools, and navigating Chinese family life are made real in Wong's original English text through calques and scenes that directly depict translation in action. But many of these scenes vanished when the book was translated into Chinese by the USIS. Indeed, this erasure not only becomes part of constructing Wong's "Chinese" self for her Malayan audiences; ultimately, they reveal just how performative many of those scenes were in their original American context as well. By the end, the excisions attending Wong's text in translation ends up giving the lie to even the idea of an "original," disturbing the premises upon which one could lay claim to cultural or ethnic authenticity altogether.

Many of the text's discussions of translation take place in the context of language learning. Indeed, the original English version of *Fifth Chinese Daughter* is full of language lessons that constitute the basis for Jade Snow Wong's self-authentication as a Chinese subject.

[47] From "Introduction to the 1898 Edition" of *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, p. vii.

As a child, Jade Snow "talked above the din of a factory full of motors and machines in operation, and practically breathed in rhythm to the running stitches" (52). As she grew older,

> Armed with her newly assigned [Chinese school] lesson and all the Chinese and Chinese-English dictionaries in the house, she would trail Daddy around the factory as he went about his work, the way she had when she was five. Some of these advanced words were new even to Daddy, who had had only five years of formal tutoring; the rest of his considerable vocabulary and his knowledge of Chinese literature he had acquired by himself. Together, father and daughter now studied new words and discussed their interpretations, so that Jade Snow arrived at school fortified with the knowledge of two minds instead of one. This study drew them together in a bond of formal and mutual respect. (95, 96HK)

Here, the "din" of "running stitches," or the actual physical context of the factory, provides the sensory backdrop of labor to that of language learning and translation. Jade Snow comes into her own learning self, so to speak, in relation to and alongside her father's coming into his. Translation permeates this process, even if obliquely: the mention of "Chinese-English dictionaries" underscores the extent to which even Jade Snow's Chinese language lessons had to be understood through the lens of English. A consummate Chinese American, Jade Snow makes progress in either language by referencing the other. She is a "unique combination" of both.

These Chinese lessons continue and take on a particularly American viewpoint as the narrative progresses. Take, for instance, a pivotal scene in which Wong describes the work involved in learning how to write Chinese characters from her father:

> Daddy emphasized, 'Once you learn how to brush a character correctly and beautifully, it will always be yours, no matter how old you grow to be. You may not remember the pronunciation of a word, or the lines of a poem memorized, but you can never brush a character off-balance once you have learned to brush it right.' (16)

In this Chinese lesson, what matters is the method Jade Snow learns in writing Chinese, rather than the meaning of the words themselves. While those can be forgotten, the practiced muscle – rather than mental – memory nevertheless confers a sense of lifelong ownership and command.

And yet, this scene involving both craft and practice becomes quite uncomfortable in translation, as the crucial verb in this passage, "brush," seems an oddity of purely English forms of thought. The Chinese word for "brush" – 刷 *shua* – only works for things like toothbrushes and scrubbers, while the word used in calligraphy is 寫 *xie* (lit. to write), or at most 畫 *hua* (to draw), to denote the action involved in writing calligraphy.[48] But "brush" in English brings up specific connotations of artistry and craft while maintaining a visceral hold on cultural difference; after all, even a painter does not, in English, "brush" a painting. The appearance of this word here for Chinese calligraphy constitutes an example of viewing Chinese-ness through an English vocabulary: an instance of ethnicity in motion, "brushed" onto the page one stroke at a time.

One then wonders how such a scene fared in actual translation: how did the Chinese iteration of this scene deal with the word "brush"? The fact is, we will never know: this entire scene of learning is excised entirely in the USIS' translation of *Fifth Chinese Daughter*. The reasoning for this might seem rather simple – that Chinese people don't need to be taught how Chinese characters should be written – but my point is that skipping this scene reveals just how much performance work it was doing in its original English context: it was a scene written entirely as a language lesson for *American* readers, not just for young Jade Snow. In the end, the omission of this scene from the translation reveals how much it was a scene *of* translation from the beginning.

This process of elision – and elision as a process of revelation – is a pattern that continues throughout the novel. For as we follow Jade Snow's journey into adulthood, it becomes clear that nearly all of her pivotal life moments are given in linguistic terms, as moments of

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[48] By and large, Chinese forms of writing (and even painting) are all done through 寫 *xie*, while the verb *hua* only appears in noun phrases like 字畫.

translation. See this other instance in which the family goes out to dinner in a rare celebration of one of Jade Snow's accomplishments. The young protagonist writes,

> It was a day filled to overflowing with happiness. Not one dissonant note occurred to mar the harmony. Although there was no Chinese word in her vocabulary which corresponded to the American word 'proud,' this was the first occasion when the entire Wong family was assembled in pride of the fifth daughter. (198)

In Chinese, however, the scene skips mulling about the Chinese word that "corresponded to the American word 'proud'" entirely, such that the final sentence simply reads, "This was the first occasion when the entire Wong family was assembled in pride of the fifth daughter."[49] That moment of translating thought, whereby the protagonist meanders between languages to process her experience, is once again deleted. Instead, the Chinese translation simply *happens* in translation, dispensing with any linguistic uncertainty. And yet again, what the Chinese translation's omission reveals is just how much work that English phrase was doing in the original novel. That translational moment in which the protagonist ponders between words served to help authenticate Jade Snow in English and in America; it emphasized her Chinese-ness at the exact moment that she was breaking out of it. It is also quite ironically the same moment that becomes the "dissonant note" of this scene, one that is removed to preserve Chinese authenticity in Chinese.

What can we learn from these competing demands created by Jade Snow's original and newfound, Chinese-speaking audiences? The consistent erasure in Chinese of Jade Snow's in-text translations had a particular purpose of authentication: eliminating them allowed Jade Snow to seem even more like she always was acting, thinking, and speaking like the average Chinese

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[49] The Chinese translation is as follows: "這是洋溢著幸福的一天。沒有一個不調和的音符損害它的和諧。這是黃家人第一次集在一起，並且以他們的五小姐為榮" (195 HK). It uses the phrase 為榮 *weirong* to translate that tricky English phrase, "proud of," and reads quite smoothly, making no mention or allowance about the sentence that has been excised.

Malayan student. And yet, these excised scenes, when carried over in translation, also reveal the extent to which the original was always already a performance of authenticity: that its constructions of difference – where there might be "no Chinese word in her vocabulary which corresponded to the American word 'proud'" – were always imbuing the original's text with definable limits of otherness and similitude. In fact, the fact that the Chinese translator experienced none of Jade Snow's personal difficulties – whereby the word 'proud' was rendered 為榮 *weirong* without a fuss – highlights the original limits in linguistic ability that Jade Snow was always trying to hide: that, as became visible on her tour, her Chinese vocabulary might not be entirely up to par with the narrative she was telling. Unlike the tour and speeches, however, that sought simply to elide the reality of linguistic inadequacy, here Jade Snow's limited vocabulary is explicitly *included* in the narrative to show just how Chinese she was even in her proud moment of American triumph. Both linguistic ability and debility were thus mobilized in *Fifth Chinese Daughter*'s English text to construct a consummate "in between".

In her reading of Wong's (original English) novel, Yoon Sun Lee has praised its realist attention to patterns that embed historical contradictions, where the "realistic narration is itself a powerful, exemplary act of mediation, forging intensive pathways of connection" (422). Wong's attention to her own subject formation, specifically the matrix of her own bilingual language makeup, thus attends to the dense nexus of worlds in conflict that produce her story. In Lee's words, Wong's novel succeeds in using realism to "settle the concreteness of a world whose immediate experience… [is] inexplicable and incoherent." Her life in translation ultimately "disclose[s] a powerful longing for totality: a world single though far-flung, intimate and complete, materially and meaningfully connected" (424). *Fifth Chinese Daughter*'s scenes of translation were thus always *performing* something: building connections, embodying

movement, defining ethnicity – that is, defining a self through difference. Especially when seen through the lens of an excising translation, Wong's original text was always taking what seemed fragmentary and placing it into a narrative. *Fifth Chinese Daughter* was thus Wong's method of reconstituting her self: a racial stereotype becoming instead a Lukacs-ian, "realist" type that "is the opposite of a singular, isolated instance," one that can "exhibit… social contradictions" (420, 27).

Lee's account is compelling, but the mechanics behind how Wong's narrative worked as a tool of self-authentication is where she and I part ways. For if we examine *Fifth Chinese Daughter* not just in English, but also in translation, we see not a moving "totality," but a narrative whose partiality and fragmentary-ness become increasingly apparent. As soon as Wong's text went overseas, its representations of Chinese-American life could not help but take on the resonances of the other cultural and political contexts it entered, especially in de-colonizing Southeast Asia. We see this especially in how the book was marketed abroad as an English language "textbook." In both Singapore and the Federation of Malaya, colonial history had ensured that "to be educated" was virtually synonymous with "being fluent in English." Indeed, for many of the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia, English was – as in many colonial contexts – the language of prestige. When *Fifth Chinese Daughter* arrived in Malaya in 1952, then, it did so first in English excerpts on the front page of *Young Malayans*, a colonial government-sponsored magazine. The magazine's explicit mission was to increase basic literacy in English and so train Malayan youngsters for a future in political affairs, serving the colonial government.[50] Portions of Wong's autobiography thus first appeared alongside pop quizzes ("A

[50] *Young Malayans* magazine was hardly the only publication trying to do so during the 1950's. Timothy N. Harper has noted a number of other notable primers of that era, including Thelma Hale, *Speech Training for Malayans* (London, 1957); P.M. Clements and L.I. Lewis *Now We Can Read* (Macmillan's Standard Course for Malaya,

Quiz on Queen Elizabeth") that taught the basic tenets of British government to colonial subjects. It was recommended alongside such instructive titles as *Stories from Shakespeare, The King's English, Civics for Young Malayans,* and *Good English: How to write it*.

But what is ironic about this marketing is that even as Wong's originally English book was coming out in America, both author and editor acknowledged that it was far from a "good" example of English writing. Original Harper editor Elizabeth Lawrence assured Wong that her story should still be published in America even if it had "some awkwardnesses of various kinds" including "some rather heavy sentences and bookish phrases," as "the substance of this book is vastly more important than the technique" (29). Lawrence's assurances drew on the exoticism of the book's content rather than its literary sophistication. Indeed, Jamie Cleland has pointed out that Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* underwent a substantial "exoticization" process in its publication through Harper's: a number of the book's chapters had in fact appeared in the magazine *Common Ground* in 1945 and 1948, and in those earlier versions, Cleland shows, Wong's story of her family upbringing is much less "Chinese." All of her siblings are referred to by their English names, for example, whereas in *Fifth Chinese Daughter* they all become the literally translated "Big Brother" and "Second Sister"); what is more, the earlier short stories all use "I" instead of the third-person "Jade Snow," on which I will elaborate more momentarily. This ethnicization process also meant that instances of inelegant writing could be forgiven. In fact, the occasional overwrought sentence might have even helped *Fifth Chinese Daughter* to settle into its niche as an authentic cultural Other. After all, it wouldn't do for Wong's English to be *too* fluent while she portrayed her upbringing as fundamentally Chinese. And as the passages

London, 1953); and Michael West and H.R. Cheeseman, *The New Method Malaya Readers* (London, 1947 and 1957).

from the original novel above attest, instances of linguistic *debility* could be as performative as ability or fluency.

These linguistic infelicities in English, however, did little to stop its worldwide circulation. When Wong's book appeared in *Young Malayans*, it was pages from the formative first two chapters of young Jade Snow's life that made the front page. They document a "Chinatown in San Francisco teem[ing] with haunting memories, for it is wrapped in the atmosphere, customs, and manners of a land across the sea. The same Pacific Ocean laves the shores of both worlds, a tangible link between old and new, past and present, Orient and Occident" (1). The first excerpt records Jade Snow's early primer lessons in Chinese, which "usually served as a text for a moral lesson too": "'Come, come, come. Come and read books. If you do not study your books, you will not know written words. If you do not know written words, you will have a life of sorrow'" (5, 15). One of the adjacent articles in *Young Malayans* encourages its young readers that "this is the first lesson that we would ask of all of you – *that you consciously begin your attempt to write better English by trying to copy someone whose style you admire*."[51] Implicit in the injunction is to start with the front-page excerpt from *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, whose "awkwardnesses of various kinds" in describing a Chinese life were now being touted across the world as model English.

In *Sound and Script*, Jing Tsu describes something called "the textbook effect", in which an 18th century Chinese novel, *Haoqiu zhuan*, was translated by a Chinese language-learner into English as an exercise, only to have that translation be mistaken for the example par excellence of Chinese literature in Europe. In other words, the translated novel's European audience mistakenly believed that only the best literature would have been selected for translation into

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[51] "Hints for Better English – 1" in *Young Malayans*, May 7th, 1952, pp. 158-160. Later, a Chinese edition of *Young Malayans* also came out to wide circulation, but even that publication was dedicated to improve English literacy over Chinese whenever possible.

another tongue in the first place, thus incorrectly deducing from the very fact of translation the novel's (virtually nonexistent) literary merit. In that situation, a novel chosen for its prosaic simplicity to be one learner's language practice ironically became a cultural icon overseas. Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* is not too dissimilar in its ironies of linguistic practice: its simplistic narrative of success in American society were what made it a great candidate for exportation overseas, where its uncomplicated lessons could be accessible to all. And yet, its "accidental fame" turned it into a model of English-language writing as well, imbuing it with automatic literary and stylistic value. The common denominator here is not necessarily literary mediocrity, but cultural and linguistic difference. Tsu's "textbook effect" illuminates the way that pedagogical value gets transmuted into literary value through mediated difference: that the sheer experience of learning through a translated text makes it into a literary artifact. But in doing so, the text also re-defines "self" and "Other." For instance, *Fifth Chinese Daughter* performed Chinese-ness to Americans so successfully that, ironically, it became a worldwide exemplar of English-language, American writing. Wong's cultural difference from the American norm thus became the norm it was seeking to translate for, on the international stage.

Through translation, we can thus see the concept of an "original" American – or even original Chinese – culture coming apart in *Fifth Chinese Daughter*'s circuit of transmission as a Cold War representative. Neither fully obtains in the face of the cultural work that the novel actually performs. This process only deepens if we consider how Jade Snow's *English* language lessons in *Fifth Chinese Daughter* are presented in translation as well, especially as they also present the conundrum of literary merit and ethnic value. Consider, for instance, this scene in which Jade Snow describes a creative writing class she took in college: it was

> an English course which used literature as a basis for stimulating individual expression through theme writing. At this time Jade Snow still thought in

> Chinese, although she was acquiring an English vocabulary… She discovered very soon that her grades were consistently higher when she wrote about Chinatown and the people she had known all her life. (132)

In this classroom, Jade Snow is explicitly rewarded for her ethnographic explorations, such that she comes into being as an English writing subject that is indelibly Other to the English writing tradition. This kind of institutional grooming that rewarded writing "about Chinatown" meant that Jade Snow's creative writing lessons were also instructing her in creative ethnography and what mattered to the English-speaking world, its values and hierarchies.

Wong's self-authorization was thus always an others-authorization, an authenticity that she developed in response to a teacher's feedback about what was interesting or desirable. In particular, Wong's status as a writer was always already predicated upon her identity as a translator: someone capable of performing up to certain expectations as to what constituted an authentic cultural experience. Seen in this light, even the uniqueness of the novel's form becomes its own kind of equivocal performance. Though an English-language autobiography, Wong's text is told from the third-person, as if someone is watching while "Jade Snow's world expanded beyond her family life" (12). Rather than attribute her use of the third person to aesthetic choice, however, Jade Snow clearly states in her original English introduction that the work wound up as an autobiographical novel for cultural reasons: "Although a 'first person singular' book, this story is written in the third person from Chinese habit. The submergence of the individual is literally practiced… Even written in English, an 'I' book by a Chinese would seem outrageously immodest to anyone raised in the spirit of Chinese propriety" (xiii).[52] Wong's American readers were thus given to understand that the book's real-world protagonist was so

[52] Wong also lists that the "I" could be redundant in normal Chinese sentence construction, stating that "In written Chinese, prose or poetry, the word 'I' almost never appears, but is understood." However, as stated earlier, the fact that Wong's earlier publications (including the chapters that ended up forming parts of *Fifth Chinese Daughter*) used the typical autobiographical "I" without much difficulty suggest that something other than overall cultural umbrage was conditioning her deliberate deferral of the first person pronoun.

Chinese that it manifested in her writing style. Indeed, even in the sentence quoted above "The submergence of the individual" subsumes the "I" twice over in a passive construction, matching form and content. Wong had thus transformed the autobiographical novel[53] in America into cultural authenticity on display, conscripting the in-between genre itself into the project of constructing ethnicity: in English, "Jade Snow" was always already "in translation".

One wonders how the Chinese translation fared, then, in dealing with this issue of deixis and literary form. On the one hand, the uniqueness of Wong's performance in English arguably loses its exoticizing force in Chinese – young Jade Snow's story simply reads as a novel, and no one is the wiser about its generic negotiations or innovations.[54] Rendering the story into Chinese thus eliminated even this aspect of translation latent in the original's very form; yet again, what disappears in translation is the original act of translation that Jade Snow was performing herself. And in doing so, the strangeness of Wong's original narrative, such as characters called "Big Brother," "Forgiveness from Heaven," and "Jade Snow" herself, simply disappear into the "original" medium of the Chinese language.

But as just a novel, as opposed to a "true story," or a textbook, the third person point of view in Chinese also relegates the work to mere fiction. To wit, it loses the original's undercurrents of objectivity or authority. The very same device that authorized Wong as an "outsider" to American norms *and* allowed her book to slip in undetected into Malaya, thus also de-authorized her at the same time when it finally arrived there. In fact, returning the work to the Chinese language in which it was, in a sense, "originally" conceived ultimately questions the

[53] The autobiographical novel has a long and robust lineage in English letters, including examples from Dickens, Joyce, all the way up to Wong's contemporary in Ralph Ellison, whose *Invisible Man* (1952) fits a similar literary genre. That Wong felt the need to use "Chinese habit" to explain the genre emphasizes just how much performance work the novel was doing towards authenticating her Chinese-ness.

[54] Though experimentation in the May 4th period meant that the autobiographic "I" had become a literary trope in early modern Chinese literature, it was still far more common to see a third-person novel simply as a novel, rather than a hidden autobiography.

original's claims to and performances of objectivity, or of cultural difference. As Lydia Liu writes, Chinese pronouns are absent in sentences only "retroactively from a translator's point of view," and that not out of "social etiquette, but because the subject-verb construct, among other things, is not the norm of the Chinese language, but one of many syntactical options" (153). Interestingly, the introduction Jade Snow had appended to the Chinese version announces that the book is an autobiography, but it does so only obliquely: "Chinese people do not often write autobiographies, and the author never thought that this book would be translated into Chinese" [中國人是不大寫自傳的，作者從沒想到這本書會譯成中文。]. Neither a common occurrence nor an expected translation, the book's status as autobiography is only affirmed in a double negative. The English introduction's double submergence of the self thus becomes, in Chinese, a double negation, whereby Chinese "propriety" is created anew by structural concessions. But the Chinese introduction's absence of explanation for the autobiography, and why it's written without an "I" or a 我 *wo*, is not neutral. It too is claiming a kinship with Chinese-speaking readers; it is demonstrating and performing cultural familiarity ("Chinese people do not often write autobiographies…"). Taken together, English original and Chinese translation both question the status of either's ability to be "authoritative," and makes one wonder as to what constitutes authenticity in the first place.

In the end, the translational omissions in *Fifth Chinese Daughter* are always performing some form of authentication. They are as encoded with cultural messages as the words are. To read the English original of Wong's text through its Chinese translation is thus to uncover what is lost in translation, but not in some general, abstract way lamenting the diminished poetics of a nice turn of phrase; rather, it is to discover the performances latent in the original but that are not always visible in the original alone. Reading "in translation" is thus to see what *might have*

been, rather than just what the text *became* – an alternative line of diplomatic history that we are only be able to see in translation just as it disappears from view. The Malayan context conditioning this reading of Wong's novel undermines its easy categories of "Chinese", "American", or even "ethnic American." What it reveals instead are the processes that make such categories operational and ideological. Even as I have used translation to show that those categories are malleable and relational, the logics upon which they were predicated, as we saw in Wong's own words regarding the hordes of Malayan students, did not mean that they were open to redefinition by all. Instead, it was the translators – disappeared along every stop of the diplomatic journey that Jade Snow Wong took with the USIS – that were setting the terms of exclusion and omission.

Years later, Wong would go back to write about the process of translating *Fifth Chinese Daughter* with her father. After the USIS commissioned a translation from a contract translator in Hong Kong, the manuscript was sent to Wong's home in San Francisco for her final approval. The father-daughter moment as they examine the translation together, dictionaries in hand, returns us to the earlier father-daughter dialectic with which Wong began her language lessons:

> It had been nearly fifteen years since they had pored together over Chinese textbooks, and Jade Snow enjoyed the familiarity of listening to Daddy as he read explanations from his two enormous abridged dictionary volumes. As long as Jade Snow could remember, thrifty Daddy never invested in scratch paper: he used backs of envelopes or margins of the newspaper. As they worked on the manuscript, he might suggest a change in words, which he would write on a newspaper margin, then consider it carefully before correcting or leaving the translator's text alone. Sometimes it was content, not nuance, that was in question, and this brought uncomfortable moments for them both. The paragraphs about Daddy's indulging his sons or his refusal to support her through college – these too were read aloud in Chinese. Deliberate silence replaced discussion. The Chinese habit of not expressing inner feelings was most convenient. (*No Chinese Stranger,* 54)

This deceptively simple paragraph allows translation to be the subtle process by which unsaid and invisible history becomes visible, with virtually no intent to do so from the translators themselves. After all, Jade Snow is remarkably passive in the passage, simply "listening" and "enjoying" while Daddy writes, suggests, and revises. The passive voice even extends to those difficult passages that "too were read aloud in Chinese," demonstrating translation as a process that happens *to* someone: a situation in which Daddy's learning of his own past is happening with or without his desire to do so. Indeed, translation comes across in this passage as something with a life of its own: a process that works upon the practitioners even as they translate. What results is an unsolicited and uncomfortable path to self-reflection, where silence gains its own breadth of agency. Even if this silence is once again attributed to "Chinese habit," making it into a "deliberate" subject here affords it its own intentionality, something that speaks in the absence of speech.

But the question arises again: what exactly is the silence saying? Even as this narrativization of the actual translation process of *Fifth Chinese Daughter* becomes something less celebratory, there are still stories that the translation tells. It is not that the translators are silenced by their past; rather, it is that "Chinese habit" yet again performs valuable work despite the author's elision of herself out of this scene. For even while the shared translation project stalls, the narrator is the one controlling the conveyance and "convenience" of meaning, a fact that the scene itself proves true simply by its very existence. After her diplomacy trip, Jade Snow Wong eventually returned to America to continue her role as a cultural commentator, especially on issues of race and prejudice. In 1961, in Time-Life magazine, Wong had a column that specifically detailed the "Complex Nature of Prejudice," in which she espoused many of the same views of self-reliance and personal success that she had championed during her State

Department tour. Except now, she could conscript her overseas experiences into support of her position: "Not by dramatic protests, but by self-application in education and industriousness, Chinese found keys to a better life and a degree of equal acceptance by the larger white community" in America, she wrote. To substantiate this, she continues:

> Throughout the Orient, natives have asked me frankly curious questions about my adjustment problems in the United States – had I experienced race prejudice? My personal answers were 'no' in the fields of education, employment, business or social circles. The answer was 'yes' concerning attempts to rent residential real estate. Those abroad who asked the question have felt the brunt of prejudicial treatment from white colonial administrators. (1)

That was all. The line about "white colonial administrators" encapsulates and neatly moves past the postcolonial perspective, but the weight that it gives to Jade Snow's ethnic American perspective is much more multifaceted. Including that statement instantiates the validity of Wong's own position as a social commentator; it re-inscribes her cultural authority "throughout the Orient"; it enlarges her perspective on prejudice to include the world. In the end, Wong's cultural diplomacy shaped the translator she became as much as her translations shaped the diplomatic conversation. Disappearing herself through modesty and Chinese habit in the U.S., while disappearing the translators who helped her overseas, ultimately meant that she gained a truly equivocal authority: one that did not seem like power, and that had to be continually maintained through feats of authenticity.

Chapter IV
Converting Conversations: Hua-ling Nieh Engle and Co-Translation at Iowa's International Writing Program

When Hua-ling Nieh first came to the Iowa Writers' Workshop in 1964, she was already a published novelist, accomplished translator, and pioneering professor of creative writing in the Chinese-speaking world. She came for the MFA program and stayed for a lifetime. After all, soon after her arrival she became Hua-ling Nieh Engle, the wife of Paul Engle, then director of the flourishing Iowa Workshop. Paul was elated to have Nieh[1] come as a creative writing student,[2] but the fact is that Nieh had her own reasons for leaving Taiwan: just as WWII concluded around the world, the Chinese civil war was breaking out. Nieh was part of the last generation of writers to live through the splitting of China into the Communist Mainland (PRC) and Nationalist Taiwan (ROC). Both governments were then claiming to be the "true" China, and despite U.S. support for Taiwan's nominal democracy, both also ruled with harsh, repressive strategies that regularly imprisoned writers and censored their work. Most of Nieh's colleagues in Taiwan during the mid-60's were already in jail by the time she accepted Engle's offer to come to Iowa – and, eventually, the offer of his hand in marriage.

The couple's partnership once Nieh arrived is legendary in local Iowa history: in 1967, at Nieh's behest, the two started a separate International Writing Program (IWP) that ran parallel to the domestic Iowa Writers' Workshop, this international version devoted to bringing together seasoned writers from around the world. The foreign writers would be granted housing, a stipend, and a community in which to work on their current writing projects. Discussion among

[1] Throughout this chapter, I will mostly refer to Hua-ling Nieh Engle by her Chinese maiden name, Nieh, while "Engle" in the singular will be shorthand for Paul Engle. "Engles" in plural will refer to both together.
[2] Paul met Nieh through his friend Richard McCarthy, U.S. Foreign Service officer in East Asia. This is the same Richard McCarthy that recruited Eileen Chang to translate Hemingway, as discussed in Chapter 2. See McCarthy's introduction letter to Paul Engle quoted in Eric Bennet's *Workshops of Empire*, p. 103.

them would take place in halting, fragmented English, often with heavy accents of every lisp, twang, and stripe lacing their words. In describing this new program to donors, Paul boasted, "We are making the name Iowa as distinguished internationally as it long ago became nationally for writers."[3] And in many ways, Engle was right: the IWP thrived in the 1960's and 70's. It managed to secure exorbitant amounts of funding from the U.S. federal government as Engle made his case year after year by appealing to Cold War geo-politics; he called time spent in Iowa "the most compelling argument we can offer any foreigner" of democracy's advantage over socialism, and the single best tool for improving "the image of the USA abroad."[4] Soon, writers from all over the world, including Asia, South America, the Middle East, and Africa, were coming to be part of the IWP. Eric Bennet has thus named this program one of America's "Workshops of Empire" in the postwar period, and Paul Engle an unusually zealous "cold warrior." Mark McGurl has further written that the IWP took "the institution of creative writing about as far as it could go": an extension of "the rule of Iowa… for the entire globe" (178-9).

But while some have begun to shed light on the latent imperialist, Cold War ideology of Paul Engle's IWP, far less explored has been Hua-ling Nieh Engle's founding role in the institution, and the groundbreaking work that she did in promoting co-translation therein as a new form of cultural diplomacy. "Co-translation" was the system by which an international writer collaborated with an American to translate a literary text, usually the international writer's own poem or novel. The one writer would thus speak the source language of the original (whether it be French, Polish, Amharic, or Chinese), and the other the target language, English. Nieh demonstrated this idea herself by translating Chinese poetry in dialogue with her husband

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[3] Letter from Paul Engle to Willard L. Boyd, President of the University of Iowa, February 7, 1979, Paul Engle Papers, box 29, University of Iowa Archives.
[4] Letter from Paul Engle to Gardner Cowles, March 17, 1966, Paul Engle Papers, box 29, University of Iowa Archives.

and recording their efforts for posterity in "Co-translation: The Writer's View." The essay features an extended dialogue between husband and wife:

> Nieh: Third line literally: Cannot help cold rain coming in the morning, wind coming in the evening (無奈朝來寒而晚來風).
>
> Engle: That will be too long a line in English. Besides, I see that if we made shorter lines we could have a balance which would be attractive, a parallelism.
>
> Nieh: I dare you to try it. If it's no good, I'll tell you.
>
> Engle: Nieh Hualing is really a tough character! How about putting it this way:
> 'No help for it: morning the cold rain came,
> evening, the wind came."
>
> Nieh: Read it aloud… Not good. Too many words. (14)

Such interchange continues for pages. The idea was that one writer would be "controlling the sense" of the original while the other would "control the English" of the translation, "in an effort to make the poem sound like poetry" even after it underwent linguistic mediation.[5] The plenitude of young American writers matriculated in the adjacent Iowa Writer's Workshop was crucial to this endeavor; indeed, it was what allowed the Engles to insist that Nieh's brand of translation would succeed where others had failed. "Some argue that translation is impossible, that it gives only a lifeless shadow of the original," Paul and Hua-ling wrote in the same essay. "We believe that translation can make blood flow through that shadow and make its mouth speak. We believe this because here we have *writers translating writers*, not linguists translating language."[6]

Nieh's co-translation worked by a process of "constant dialogue and close criticism,"[7] whereby it forced writers of different cultures and languages to cooperate and dialogue, rather than having a lone, bilingual individual produce a translation on their own. In Richard So's

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[5] From "Co-Translation: The Writer's View" by Paul and Hua-ling Nieh Engle, p. 8.
[6] See *Iowa Review* 7, 1976: pp. 1-2, emphasis original.
[7] From "Co-Translation: The Writer's View" by Paul and Hua-ling Nieh Engle, p. 10.

words, Nieh's "[c]o-translation exemplifies a new kind of communication" that acted almost as a technology, through which two writers could "become… better socialized to understand different kinds of people" (12). Translation in the IWP thus transformed from a mere means into something of an end in itself, since co-translation practiced the kind of inter-lingual conversation that it was ultimately supposed to promote. Indeed, this conversation seemed a direct counter-measure to the then national policy of containment that racked Sino-U.S. relations in the 1960's and '70s. From Mainland China's turn to Communism in 1949, U.S. policy toward the PRC Mainland had consisted of total and uncompromising non-engagement while they dealt solely with the ROC in Taiwan. Years of funneling funds and resources into Taiwan's small island economy had turned it into one of the rising economic powerhouses of the region, and, like Japan, it had become a key element of the U.S.'s containment policy in East Asia in the postwar period.[8]

Then came President Richard Nixon's shocking announcement in July 1971 that he would dignify the PRC on the Mainland with a presidential visit. Nixon's announcement could not have come as more of a surprise, given his disdain for Communist China in the 1950's.[9] It was largely the Vietnam War that changed his mind. Dragging on through the 1960's with no end in sight by the early 70's, the increasingly unpopular war in Vietnam became so problematic that it prompted Nixon to switch the direction of his containment strategies: as historian Walter Lefeber remarked, "Instead of using Vietnam to contain China, Nixon concluded that he had

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[8] See Bruce Cumings for more on Taiwan's meteoric rise in the postwar period, along with Singapore, South Korea, and Japan. In the postwar period, private foundations such as the Asia Foundation, as well as the U.S. State Department, poured millions into Taiwan's higher education institutions (such as National Taiwan University) in order to make them more attractive to scholars in the Chinese diaspora. See, in particular, Asia Foundation's "Monthly Report for the Board of Trustees," March 8. 1953, C. Martin Wilbur Central Files, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York.

[9] For a methodical overview of Nixon's eventual decision to reverse the policies toward China, see Denise Bostdorff's "The Evolution of A Democratic Surprise: Richard M. Nixon's Rhetoric on China, 1952-July 15, 1961."

better use China to contain Vietnam."[10] Nixon also wanted to drive a wedge for the first time between the Socialist bloc of Mainland China and the USSR, thus shifting the balance of power in favor of a Sino-American alliance against the Soviet Union. For the first time since the start of the Cold War, then, an American President was going to "shake the Chinese hand" – the one proffered from "Red China."[11]

Nixon's new tune sought to support "the eventual place of Communist China in the community of nations, recognizing that nearly a billion of the world's most dynamic people cannot be allowed to live forever in angry isolation, there to brandish their weapons and threaten their neighbors."[12] His speeches at the time repeatedly emphasized the need to "normalize" relations with China, conveniently eliding his own contribution to this "abnormal" state of affairs. There was just one minor hiccup: Taiwan. Nixon's desire to "free" the millions on Mainland China from isolation, as he called it, meant that the now-displaced ROC was abandoned by its strongest ally, its former purpose of containment now obsolete. Within months after Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972, Taiwan was officially demoted out of the UN. By 1979, the U.S. formalized its recognition of Mainland China and the demotion of Taiwan into a state of diplomatic limbo. Taiwan was summarily ousted from all Sino-U.S. conversations. The "China" that the U.S. had backed and shaped in its own capitalist image was now orphaned: "stranded in the midst of history."[13]

From her state of exile in Iowa, Nieh helped to orchestrate the zigzagging conversations between the U.S. and both China's in these decades, not least by innovating modes of literary translation and writerly communication through the IWP. She took over as director in 1977,

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[10] LaFeber, *The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad since 1750*, p. 613.
[11] See Hugh Sidey's April 30th, 1971 article in *Life* magazine.
[12] See Bostdorff. p. 42.
[13] From *Mulberry and Peach*, p. 40.

after her husband Paul retired, and the program's ostensibly cultural bent shielded it from many of the political suspicions of both Chinese governments. At the helm of the program, Nieh organized co-translation projects like that of her own novel, *Mulberry and Peach*, and an anthology, *Literature of the Hundred Flowers*, that brought together writers from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Iowa Writers' Workshop in the American heartland. Furthermore, as U.S. relations with Taiwan worsened, she even hosted "Chinese Weekends" that brought together diasporic Chinese writers from around the world, including from Mainland China, who no longer had any means of talking to each other. Such a meeting was unprecedented since the start of the Cold War. The purpose, again, was conversation: "We are writers, we are friends… we want to talk, face to face, heart to heart," Nieh wrote, of the 1980 gathering.[14]

But in what language would such a Chinese conversation in America take place, what written script would it use, and why would these questions even matter? By the 1970's, diasporic writers held widely disparate political views, had undergone numerous revolutions, and were even utilizing different Chinese scripts (a Simplified version had emerged on the Mainland, as opposed to Taiwan's Traditional characters). This chapter does not just show that Sino-U.S. conversations about literature were taking place in the 60's and 70's, but that the language in which these conversations were conducted determined what portrayals of the Self and the Other were possible in Chinese-American discourse. I argue that one of the key things shaping the Sino-U.S. conversations in this period was not just the Chinese writers' divergent Chinese, but the particular type of "minimalist, high-modernist" English writing then dominant in the

[14] "Opening Remarks" by Hua-ling Nieh Engle, Paul Engle Papers, box 24, University of Iowa Archives.

domestic Iowa Workshop, into which their Chinese was translated.[15] In what follows, I show that this English writing style used by Paul Engle and other English-speaking co-translators for the IWP essentially converted the Chinese texts into not just English-language versions of those texts, but *Americanized* versions thereof. These translated texts had national, cultural, and ideological values built into their prose. Co-translation's dependence on American writers in the IWP thus led inexorably to a conversion of the Chinese Other into an image of the Self.

Nieh's work co-translating Chinese texts into English thus could not avoid the stylistic ascendancy of the original Iowa Writer's Workshop. Indeed, what was taught in English, to American writers, intervened in the Chinese-American conversations that Nieh set in place. This was as true in literary translation as it was in the "Chinese Weekend" she set up, in which diasporic Chinese writers gathered for literary debate; the reality was that a Chinese conversation now had to happen through the mediation of an American milieu, an English-language frame. What are the consequences of such a mediation, whereby an American setting was the only way for Chinese conversations to occur? One of the aims of this chapter is to show that the two-way, dialogic process that the Engles envisioned translation to be, could not ultimately remain an open conversation in the structured Cold War geo-politics between China(s) and the U.S. More fundamentally, it argues that though conversation and containment seemed in theory like diametrically opposed policies, in practice at Iowa they were far more alike than not. On the one hand, co-translation as taught at the IWP certainly put writers and poets in conversation that otherwise may never have talked to each other. And yet, alongside this celebratory, borderless narrative that the Engles presented to the world, there also emerged an alternative model of translation that was fundamentally a-dialogic and alienating to its participants. Indeed, if we

[15] See McGurl, p. 66. In particular, McGurl called this writing (based off of Hemingway's style) a form of "painstaking understatement" (29), while Hemingway's own influence on the creative writing program cannot be underestimated.

examine how literary conversations were structured in the triangulation between the U.S., Taiwan, and Mainland China, we see that translation became less a conversation and more a space of conversion. Texts taken across a linguistic divide ended up reinforcing existing logics of containment and separation rather than transcending them. As I will show, Mainland China and Taiwan's national divide split the Chinese language, script, and reading practices. Even as the English at Iowa was flattened into a standard modernist invention, then, the Chinese they were translating from and into was also going through its own revisions and divergences. The conversion of texts, in this milieu, led to people and texts talking past each other, engaging in one-sided conversation that not only did not improve relations, but obfuscated the very containment they were trying to displace.

This chapter seeks to add to work done by Richard J. So, Eric Bennet, and Mark McGurl, all of whom have written on the importance of the creative writing institution to postwar American literature. But whereas So mostly describes the Engles' partnership through examining Paul's history with the USIS, I take the angle of focusing on Hua-ling Nieh Engle's translation contributions to the geo-political repositioning of the U.S. versus two Chinas. The effects, as I've indicated, are quite ambivalent. My work also adds to Transpacific Cold War studies such as Christina Klein's *Cold War Orientalism* and Jodi Kim's *Ends of Empire*, which have focused on alternatives to containment but not through the metric of linguistic exchange. Even as translation opened some doors and started conversations, it also foreclosed others – worse still, it stilted conversations through stylistic conformity to *seem* like they were taking place while actually deepening lines of containment and isolation.

I focus on three of Nieh's most ambitious projects while she co-directed the IWP: first is the *Literature of the Hundred Flowers*, a two-tome set of Chinese critical writings from the

1950's that Nieh edited with a team of co-translators from the IWP and the Iowa Writer's Workshop. Not only are these texts translated into English from Chinese, but they are done so through a particular style of English writing that the American co-translators learned at Iowa. Second is the media conversation that took place around the "Chinese Weekend" hosted by the IWP in 1980, a watershed moment in which Mainland Chinese writers were hosted at the University of Iowa for the first time. And the third is Nieh's novel, *Mulberry and Peach*, written during her MFA at Iowa and co-translated into English by graduate students Linda Lappin and Jane Parish Yang. The novel's near-simultaneous publication in America and Beijing provides a particularly potent example of what happens when the "same" text is presented in different languages to different audiences across the Pacific. Ultimately, the co-translation of Nieh's novel occasioned not just the conversion of the text itself, but also of the co-translators who participated in its creation.

What is at stake in the language one uses to speak about – even speak *to* – that which is foreign? The central argument of this chapter is that Nieh's co-translation processes allow us to see how easy it is for conversation to turn into conversion, whereby the Other simply becomes another image of the Self. Indeed, how much foreignness can one tolerate without absorbing and domesticating the Other into something that it never was? Conversely, where is the elusive boundary determining how much the Other must become like the Self simply in order to become legible, but before it loses its own shape? The implications of Nieh's work for those in Area Studies and Asian American Studies are profound, for if the language in which one carries on a conversation matters to representation and understanding, then much more attention needs to be paid to the linguistic as not just a corollary, but a controller of the literary and the ideological. Buried within the legacy of co-translation, then, is an exhortation for Asian American scholars to

join the conversation *about* language and conversation, as it were: to examine the medium of language itself as a fraught space of exchange. We see this most in the divergent interpretations of Nieh's novel, *Mulberry and Peach*. While Asian scholars have tended to read it as a national allegory for a fractured China[16], and Asian American scholars have seen in it a racialization narrative[17] and/or a feminist resistance text[18], I take it as a commentary on what is at stake in understanding the Other only in the terms of the Self.

Contention and Craft

It is helpful to begin with a look at what co-translation looked like in action – and to understand the ways in which a conversational translation dynamic was delimited by specific kinds of Chinese- and English-language writing practices. Much of this took place on the deceptively surface level of style. In Nieh and Engle's model essay, "Co-translation: The Writer's View," they write, "It is the translator's power over his own language which makes translation good or bad. He [in this case, Paul] strives always for that clear and direct American English (or British) which avoids the easy rhetoric which disfigures so many translations by those who know the original language but are not fluent in their own." They mean that a good English translation of a text makes use of "clear and direct" English; and yet this very sentence is anything but clear or direct. The double "which" here subordinates clauses and continually deflects the flow of the sentence until one has lost the subject by the time we get to the preposition "by." That last clause impugning those who are "not fluent in their own" language takes a deictic position without a clear referent, making it even harder to make out just what the authors are saying. In all likelihood, given Nieh's comparative discomfort with the English

[16] See, for instance, Bai Xianyong, Leo O. Lee, and Yu-fang Cho
[17] See Serena Fusco, Monica Chiu, and Sau-ling Wong
[18] See Cho, Wong, Carolyn Fitzgerald, and Tina Chen

language, the piece was penned by Paul Engle himself. And yet, Engle's very insistence on clarifying the essence of style couldn't help but compromise it. It is also telling to note just how easily that adjective "American" slips in front of his description of "good" English, while the parenthetical "(or British)" jumps on as a confusing afterthought.

As all-American as they come, Paul Engle never could separate the particular style of his prose from national affiliation. Mark McGurl has written at length about how the postwar creative writing workshop sought to institutionalize the high modernist techniques developed at the end of the 19th and turn of the 20th century. McGurl writes that this Hemingway-ian prose conceives of "writing as painstaking understatement," in which the "poetics' of 'show don't tell' would gradually evolve into a more general understanding of good fiction as founded on discipline, restraint, and the impersonal exercise of hard-won technique" (29, 99). Further, Eric Bennet's work has shown that this style took on nationalistic and ideological significance as an American counterpoint to Communism during the Cold War. As Asian American author Viet Thanh Nguyen has stated, "American writer-teachers" fearing the specter of socialism "promoted the idea of creative writing as a defense of the individual and his humanistic expression."[19] Experimentation with narrative form, different points of view, and the effacement of the author were thus coalesced into a specifically American aesthetic pedagogy featuring concise, unembellished prose. This was, McGurl adds, *the* added value of the creative writing workshop: writer-teachers who could help you hone the practice of craft, "also called 'technique'" – to "[add] the elements of acquired skill and mental effort" to discipline your innate creativity (23).

[19] From *The New York Times,* "Viet Thanh Nguyen Reveals how Writing Workshops Can Be Hostile," April 26, 2017.

This mattered because all the American writers at the Iowa Workshop were subscribing to this kind of English-language writing, or the subsumption of content to craft. Speaking on the Iowa Workshop's emphasis on style, Nguyen goes on to say that

> As an institution, the workshop reproduces its ideology, which pretends that "Show, don't tell" is universal when it is, in fact, the expression of a particular population, the white majority, typically at least middle-class and often, but not exclusively, male.[20]

This state of affairs could not help but influence Nieh's translation practice as she – and all her other co-translators – were indelibly marked by Iowa's brand of "good," "American" English, no matter what they were seeking to translate into it. The consequences thereof become clear if we examine Hua-ling Nieh Engle's passion project, a massive anthology called the *Literature of the Hundred Flowers*. This project translated writings from the "Hundred Flowers" period (1956-7), a rare year in which Chairman Mao directly encouraged intellectual freedom in Mainland China. The name of the period comes from Mao's use of a classical Chinese aphorism to inaugurate it: "In the arts 'let a hundred flowers bloom,' and in scholarship 'let a hundred schools of thought contend.'" He meant to let there be freedom to speak one's mind, be it creatively or in criticism, about the Communist Party and its policies. Thousands responded with stories, essays, and articles theorizing the role of literature in society, and how writers should create in China's turbulent process of modernization. But the period was cut short when there was an "unexpected outburst of bitter grievances against the Communists in May 1957, particularly on university campuses" (xiii). What ensued was harsh reprisal for the scholars and writers who spoke out, and many were made to recant their views in public forums. Others were silenced, exiled, beaten, or worse.[21]

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[20] Ibid.

[21] For example, Ding Ling 丁玲, one of China's great female modernist writers, was sentenced to re-education in the countryside for 12 years and then suffered solitary confinement for five more. Hsia Yen 夏衍, a famous playwright,

In the 1970's, with the IWP in full swing, Hua-ling Nieh Engle began assembling writings from this exceptional period of modern Chinese history so that she could translate them into English. It was thus that a glimmer of China's postwar creative writing development came into conversation with and through America's most famous creative writing institution at Iowa. This conversation could have been deeply generative, even confrontational, for the viewpoints presented in this collection of Chinese writings could not have been more polarized from the individual-centered, modernist bastion of Paul Engle's Iowa. Most of the Chinese essays in the anthology explored the relationship between literature and politics; indeed, the Hundred Flowers period approached creative writing from another angle – another Engels, in fact, in Friedrich Engels – entirely. Nieh herself framed the anthology thus in the Preface:

> The Chinese way of literary criticism may be difficult for American readers who are observers of their society, or artists apart from their society. The Chinese writer is a fighter, a social worker, trying to help bring about a drastic transition from the old feudal system to a socialist system… The opposite sides [of debate] may have different opinions on the particulars of style and content, but they always have a few things in common: social awareness, a desire to serve their society, and a belief in socialism. (10)

The very socialist collectivism that American writing workshops developed their pedagogy against, then, was now being translated through the Iowa Workshop's bevy of modernist-trained co-translators. That aspect of Chinese "social awareness" is one of the most crucial elements of these writings. For while American writers were subscribing to the high poetics tradition championed by Paul Engle and his colleagues, Chinese writers in the '50s were mostly preoccupied with what literature in the tradition of Friedrich Engels should look like in the contemporary moment. Indeed, modern Chinese writers never considered literature as apart from politics. As one of the writers of the anthology, Ch'in Chao-yang, put it, "there has never

had both his legs broken. Ai Qing 艾青 was forced to do menial labor for five years and was banned from publishing for another 15.

been any literature which has not been tendentious; people always want literature for their own purposes" (I.43).

But it is how these essays were co-translated that shaped the very conversation in which they could take part. Nieh took on the *Hundred Flowers* project with all the furor and funding that institutional support could provide. She brought her own considerable translating experience: she had cut her teeth on translation in Taiwan in the 1950's by translating such American modernist heavyweights as Henry James, William Faulkner, and F. Scott Fitzgerald into Chinese.[22] Her own commitment to a modernist style, especially in translation, had deep roots.[23] Still, for this project she mostly took on an editorial role, relying instead on a team of co-translators comprising a spread of IWP and Iowa Workshop talent: Dominic Cheung and Stewart Yuen, writers from Hong Kong, were the Chinese-speaking IWP participants; while Denis Johnson (getting his MFA at the Iowa Workshop) and Peter Nazareth (a Ugandan IWP writer who was interested in modern China) were English-speakers who, like Paul Engle, worked on polishing the literary style of the English.

The *Hundred Flowers* collection was by and for scholars, and its coming into being has been thoroughly institutionalized as multiple drafts of the translated essays, stories, and poems still remain in the Special Collections of the University of Iowa. These drafts, with their editorial emendations, slashes, annotations, and replacements, lay bare co-translation's iterative process of co-writing and re-writing in the aims of attaining a particular English style. Nieh describes this process in detail:

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[22] Indeed, in her interview with Peter Nazareth, Nieh remarked, "I don't know if I have been influenced by any one [Western] author. I have been influenced by *all* of them… because of [Henry James'] psychological depiction, I was influenced by him. I translated Faulkner; I like F. Scott Fitzgerald very much, and Hemingway… So I was influenced by Western literature, like Katherine Mansfield and D.H. Lawrence."

[23] For more information on Taiwanese modernism as a movement and Nieh's role within that movement, see So, "The Invention of the Global MFA," pp. 9-10.

> In translating this anthology, three people worked together at one time. A Chinese and an American made the first draft. The Chinese explained the cultural, political, historical, and literary background of the original text, and gave the literal translation of each sentence. The American rephrased the initial translation of each sentence in English. Then he worked on the entire first draft, reading each sentence, revising and polishing, trying to produce a second draft in clear and idiomatic English… After the second draft was completed, I read it and checked it with the original Chinese. Every line was questioned and read again and again, in a state of mixed delight and despair… The second draft of the translation is attacked, prodded, pinched, forced to accept meanings the American had not appreciated or understood, or to give up meanings the Chinese had cherished too much but no Westerner could understand. (liii)

It was a thus a dynamic tripartite process, including Nieh as final editor, with all manner of back and forth between the three parties. To make matters even more complicated, Nieh in her translator's note describes why the criticism was especially difficult to translate:

> It has been the concern of literary people to write in a direct, simple, but artistic language… But the language of the criticism included in this anthology is not direct and clear, and may be difficult even for the Chinese reader. Criticism was made in a roundabout way so that it would not vulnerable to countercriticism… It is like playing chess, attacking and defending at the same time. (li)

In Nieh's account, the socialist context had not entirely stymied the growth of a "direct, simple, but artistic language" in Mainland China, but it had made the prose of criticism nearly impenetrable. That analogy to chess, moreover, makes these essays replete with a sense of inherent circumspection: hedges and counter-measures, correctives and qualifications.

Examining how this "roundabout" criticism was translated into English – "attacked, prodded, pinched, forced to accept meanings," etc. – ultimately reveals translation as its own form of political critique. Take, for instance, this passage from Ch'in Chao-yang's essay, "The Broad Road of Realism", where he writes on the importance of institutions to creative writing: "I do not advocate the cancellation of organization in literature. It would not be good to have no administrative organization," the translation reads. But after this sentence, the editorial drafts of the translation begin to diverge. Below I have imaged the second draft (of how many, it is

unclear) of this text from within Hua-ling Nieh Engle's archived work. In it, one can see the changes made by a reader aiming to simplify style.

> I do not advocate the cancellation of organization in literature. It would not be good to have no adminstrative organization. However, I feel that as there aren't enough people, while there is too much work to be done, we have to make a choice and decide what is most important. It is creative writing. Let more writers have free time for writing. If we don't pay attention to creative writing, our literary endeavors will deviate from reality.

What's fascinating is that many – though not all – of these changes were then reversed by a later editor – presumably Nieh herself. The final published version of the essay reads as follows, and I have underlined the places of significant difference:

> However, I feel that <u>because</u> there aren't enough people, and because there is so much work to be done, we have to make a choice and decide what is most important. <u>It is creative writing; let more writers have the time to write.</u> If we do not pay attention to creative writing, our literary endeavors will deviate from reality.[24]

One can see that some of the first editor's changes, particularly for style, held: "as" and "while" become "because," and "too much work" becomes the more qualified "so much work." These seem exemplary of that Iowa Workshop style that sought to simplify and reduce. They help with the flow and sound of the sentences, and simply seem part of the "smoothing out" process of editorial co-translation. And yet, as the other emendations make clear, sometimes the changes were more substantial. The first editor made creative writing an open question ("*If* it is creative writing…"), but the final edited version returns to the original emphatic endorsement ("It is creative writing"). At the same time, the final version re-inserts the "more" in "let more writers

[24] From p. 143-4 in the Volume I of the anthology, and from Hua-ling Nieh Engle Papers, box 1, University of Iowa Archives.

have the time to write." Indeed, in that one line, one can see co-translation as an ongoing conversation, with one editorial voice finally winning out. Without the original Chinese essay,[25] it is hard to tell what exactly was the basis for these back and forth changes, whether they were semantic or stylistic: whether the first editor just got the meaning wrong, or whether she was simply trying to make the sentence into clearer, smoother English. After all, according to many standards of good writing in English, a polemical essay should be clear when it is making a stand. This reading would suggest that the original Chinese words, once shorn of the qualifications and dangers of the criticism/counter-criticism context, could be set "free" in English to simply state their case.

And yet, that loss of cultural/linguistic/political context, even if simply done on the level and for the purpose of style, is a significant one, for it alters social implications while tinkering with prose. It suggests the real untranslatability of the Chinese context into the English after all: that the give-and-take of hidden opposition could only be considered "good writing" in English if it did away with the effects of that opposition entirely. Literary and aesthetic technique, in other words, would then act as a technology for political and cultural erasure. Ironically, by becoming more direct and forcefully polemical in English, the essays were losing their indirect, chess-like style reflecting their polemical origins in China. In fact, in the numerous editorial drafts, the co-translation process itself is what becomes like chess: "attacking and defending at the same time," the co-translators find their way to a final English version. It's just a final version that by necessity erases the context and process by which it came to be.

Another significant example arises from the translation of an essay by Mao Dun, the PRC's Minister of Culture appointed by Chairman Mao himself (though the two have no familial

[25] Most of the Chinese originals are difficult to locate, and so assess; Nieh herself had the help of various research institutes and organizations (such as the Asia Foundation and the Union Research Institute in Hong Kong) to track down all the essays she wanted to include.

relation). Mao Dun was assailing the then-popular bourgeois dictum to "write the truth," for he averred that "writing the truth" in the manner of Sinclair's muckraking was inappropriate for times of rebuilding.[26] The following passages again show significant emendations from the draft stage to the final product, where the first is the draft translation, the latter the published English:

> In our new society, the situation is changed. We have done away with oppression. Socialism is being established… if an author means only to uncover the less happy side of our new history, then he not only distorts the image of our society, but also deframes our social system.
>
> The situation is different in our new society. We have rid ourselves of oppression, and the socialist system is being established… if it is the intention of an author to reveal only the negative aspects of our recent history, he will not only denigrate our social system but will also present a distorted image of our society as a whole.[27]

It seems almost ironic that "different" situation in the final version should take precedence over being "changed," as if the process of linguistic change literally edits out its own signifier. Turning the qualified "less happy" into the outright "negative" also makes Mao Dun's statements more forceful in English. But most noteworthy is how the Chinese "image of society" changes in translation. The earlier draft's "distorts the image of our society" becomes the much wordier "present a distorted image of our society as a whole." This rare instance in which the final version exceeds the word count of the original translation (most of the other edits are simplifications), also ironically carries out exactly what Mao Dun's words warn against. The much more direct "image of our society" becomes distorted here – specifically in a co-translation process of not just linguistic transfer but stylistic revision. This is especially so considering that final change from the word "deframe" to "denigrate."

[26] One can also see echoes here for why Hemingway's and Chang's collaboration in "truthful writing" was formally so distinct from the socialist writing they were supposed to combat. The discourse of truth-telling was, at least on the individual level, class-oriented and inherently bourgeois.

[27] From p. 172 in the Volume I of the anthology, and from Hua-ling Nieh Engle Papers, box 3, University of Iowa Archives.

The word "deframe" seems a coinage typical of the kind found in translation, when a writer working with a Chinese word has not yet found a clear English equivalent to put it into, and so makes one up on the spot. The word gets passed along to snag the co-translator's eyes and pen. It is circled in the draft, imaged below, pleading "fix me." Indeed, there is a way in which that hand-drawn circle makes that problematic piece of text into an image – that circular frame, the iconic red of editors' revisions, becomes its own frame drawing a reader's attention to the word and the new linguistic context with which it no longer fits. That word "deframe" itself is ironically framed so neatly as the ungrammatical, outlying culprit of an otherwise

to the fantasy world of non-conflict. But if an author means only to uncover the less happy side of our new history, then he not only distorts the image of our society, but also deframes our social system.

Thus, the point is not that the darker side of things must never be portrayed, but that the writer must de-

well-formed sentence. It signals linguistic and cultural disjunction, a framed "deframing" that suggests larger contextual splits. In a sense, the word points also to the framing of this entire anthology: a translation project not just bringing a Chinese context into an American one, but a piece of the past into the present. For the editors here had the benefit of knowing how the Hundred Flowers Movement was going to end. Their careful selection and revision process for Nieh's anthology was thus as much about refiguring the past as it was revealing it, making it readable and useful for the needs of an American present. They were seeking to make clear a period of contention and controversy – a hard task in one language, let alone in two. The translators' solution, at least here, was to "denigrate" the word itself. The editors ultimately

change not only diction, but syntax as well, inverting the clauses of that final sentence until "deframing our social system" became subordinate to distorting its image. That strong warning against de-contextualization thus dampens in translation. In the end, that encircled word "deframe" perfectly encapsulates the paradoxes involved in the (co-)translation process: how it notices and eliminates, elided off of the visible page, the process of its own existence. What remains is streamlined stylistic fluidity, in another tongue.

Ironically, what comes across most clearly when we look at the co-translation process is not the Chinese writers' voices, but the American writers' need for a "clear, direct" style. As mentioned above, co-translation originated at Iowa out of a concern for works "that were not just true translations, but imaginative ones" – that is, for their concern over the literariness of the translations produced. This emphasis on an "idiomatic" literary style ultimately constrained and put limits upon the type of conversation that it could foster. The *Hundred Flowers* anthology did ultimately bring into conversation disparate parts of modern American and Chinese literary past. And yet, in doing so it literally set the terms of the conversation within a particular stylistic that tended toward ideological conversion, or at least qualification, whereby English-speaking readers get a simultaneously weaker and stronger – weaker *because made stronger* – version of the original Chinese essays. In the end, it seems no surprise that Nieh would use extremely martial language in describing their co-translating process:

> Sometimes, the three of us fought a cultural war, or a literary war, or an ideological war, or a nationalistic war… It was an intense and lively confrontation of languages, cultures, imaginations and egos. Always the confrontation. Always the compromise. In desperation, we agreed to make a third version and let it stand with half the life of the original in English. (liii)

"Half the life" – and yet with twice the impact, having been transported across the Pacific, with results ambivalent indeed.

All told, this was the most ambitious co-translation project the IWP ever put together; the final two-volume compendium of Chinese criticism, fiction, and poetry spanned nearly a thousand pages and involved eight translators in total, including Nieh herself. Translating the anthology took six years to complete, and it was published by Columbia Press in 1981, nearly concurrently with the English translation of Nieh's novel, *Mulberry and Peach*. What the *Hundred Flowers* anthology begins to suggest is that co-translation – the back and forth of dialogue – does as much to curtail and distort communication as it does to enhance it. The pre-eminence of a certain English style made it difficult to understand a Chinese text's message even as it made it accessible; indeed, its subtle changes are all the more insidious because they glossed over their presentation of accessibility. Texts could thus convert out of their original intention and context without any sign that they had done so.

But it was not just texts and their ideological message that could be converted or subverted in translation; there were also the far more long-standing effects that co-translation had on its participants. Indeed, the institutional backing behind co-translation was such that this new form of literary cooperation had direct pedagogical effects in addition to political consequences. By 1976, the Engles had succeeded in adding a Translation Workshop to the International Writing Program that specifically taught and aided translators in improving their craft, one that Nieh would run with poet/translator Daniel Weissbort. Co-translation was their in-house theoretical pedagogy, one put daily into practice with a steady stream of visiting foreign writers and the poets and writers in training at the Iowa Workshop. This third workshop formalized the co-translation method into another MFA-worthy institutional practice. And yet, even while co-translation may have started as a means for foreign writers to gain an English publication/audience, the fact is that co-translation did not simply operate unilaterally for the

foreign writers' benefit. In 1977, Iowa Workshop instructor Donald Justice revealed that translation was often prescribed *to English-speaking, American writers* as a unique method to relieve writers' block: "One practical suggestion that I do make is, if the person knows a foreign language, to do some translations. It's a way you practice your craft or art without having to be so personally involved that you get all screwed up with whatever neuroses are bothering you at the time."[28]

To "practice your craft" – Justice's words suggest that writing the words of another in translation could uniquely isolate a writer's technique from all other aspects of writing. As contemporary translator/scholar Elizabeth Harris puts it, translation can be understood as a kind of "pure writing, where the writers are not distracted by what their characters might do next, where to place a scene, or how in the world to end, begin, or transition."[29] Translation, in other words, could set writers free from the other elements of content, paring the entire process down until writers could hone in on diction and style. If translation could isolate and make visible this elusive quality of craft, then its value to the beginning writer would be great indeed. Conversations with actual co-translators at the IWP affirms this hypothesis: for all of her translation experience, Nieh refused to do the translation of her own novel, *Mulberry and Peach*. Her words form a perfect rationale for the whole co-translation system: "I cannot write in English although I do translation. I don't think a writer can translate her own work, because you are not as good as you are in your own language… I do translation of other people's work, but I can't write in English."[30]

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[28] See Steve Wilbers' interview of Donald Justice, Marvin Bell, and Vance Bourjaily (1977).
[29] See panel descriptions for American Writers' and Writing Programs conference, 2014, available at https://www.awpwriter.org/awp_conference/event_detail/763.
[30] Ibid. p. 17.

So Nieh took herself out of the co-translation process altogether, foregoing the method she developed and relying on two graduate students instead: Jane Parish Yang and Linda Lappin, the latter of which was an American student of poetry at the Iowa Writer's Workshop. Nieh found Jane Parish Yang through a recommendation from a longtime friend and colleague, Liu Shaoming. Yang, then a graduate student pursuing a doctorate in Chinese at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, agreed to the job before she had even read Nieh's book. She had done exceedingly well as a student in Liu's translation workshop, and this book translation project promised a welcome opportunity to test her skills. She was paired in co-translation with Linda Lappin, one of the many young writers to flock to Iowa in the 1970's. Lappin was initially interested in poetry but eventually took part in both the fiction and translation workshops. Thus it was two student writers who took on this project to give Nieh's novel a life for an English-speaking readership.

Lappin's career felt the effects of her stint in translation deeply. She writes that she was "fascinated by the approach to translation that developed at the workshop: team translation with writers at the IWP... I was too young really to see myself as any particular kind of writer, but my experiences with translation there mapped out some major railway lines in my career."[31] Lappin writes that she "was supposed to smooth over and shape [the novel] into very contemporary sounding literary prose"; it was not her own style, Lappin was quick to assert, nor did she ultimately find the translation to have deeply impacted how she herself wrote in English. But what the translation did do was identify to Lappin just what style *was*. She called her translating days at the IWP "quite an apprenticeship," and the specific experience of translating *Mulberry and Peach* "challenging" because she was still learning "to maintain the right tone throughout

[31] Personal interview with Linda Lappin. Notes are in the author's possession.

and keep up a certain stylistic consistency." "For such a very young writer as myself," she states, *Mulberry and Peach* was the training ground for some very useful skills indeed. At the same time, Lappin had been selected to co-translate Nieh's book because of other translations she had already done in the past at the IWP, a project for Dutch writer Vita Andersen that "had a very strong, young, sexy, contemporary feminist voice to it." Lappin writes that "I must have managed that [feel] in the Vita Andersen translations, so I guess [Hua-ling] was confident I would succeed with her Mulberry and Peach [sic], too." A translational style is thus what drew Nieh to select Lappin's skills. But if this sounds somewhat problematic, it is: as Spivak writes,

> In the act of wholesale translation into English there can be a betrayal of the democratic ideal into the law of the strongest. This happens when all the literature of the Third World gets translated into a sort of with-it translatese, so that the literature by a woman in Palestine begins to resemble, in the feel of its prose, something by a man in Taiwan. (314)

There is thus something subtly but significantly amiss when a common translator's pen makes writers from around the world sound virtually the same. Edgy and feminist though Lappin's style might have been, it also did make short work of different prose styles from distinct literary traditions.

But this space of translation was also a training ground that inclined toward personal conversion as well. Jane Parish Yang was the co-translator on the Chinese side who took the place of Nieh herself, who had recused herself from the co-translation of her own, nearly autobiographical novel. Perhaps the story of a woman in exile, fleeing oppressive state forces in both Mainland China and Taiwan simply hit too close to home for Nieh. But for the much younger Yang, the translation process shaped her own reading and writing style in English. She would translate sections of the text from Chinese into English, and those sections would then be sent to Lappin in Iowa for editing and revision. Yang would cross-check those revisions,

occasionally finding errors in Lappin's emendations that changed the meaning too much, and would then suggest further revisions. All final edits were left to Hua-ling Nieh. In the meantime, Yang was gradually learning the overall style of Lappin's editorial pen. In Yang's words, Lappin was "simplifying [the translation] into a strong, direct language," one characteristic of the "very muscular prose" of the Iowa Writer's Workshop.[32] After carefully reviewing enough of Lappin's work, Yang began to translate that way herself. By the time she reached the second half of the book, she had begun writing her English translation in Lappin's editorial style, such that Lappin "edited very little in the second half" of *Mulberry and Peach*. Consciously and carefully, Yang thus adopted an Iowa Workshop style into her own translation practice herself. She states that "when I figured out what they really wanted I became a much better translator or writer. It really did help me." Her words are quite reminiscent of Spivak's pithy phrase about translation: a process by which "[t]he writer is written by her language" (313).

Perhaps what is most fascinating in this shared process of conversion is that both co-translators said that the co-translation process helped them. That is, it affirmed their own ideas of what they thought good writing and good translating was about, and this ran strongly along the axis of gender. After all, it is intriguing that Lappin characterized this style as "strong, young, sexy, contemporary feminist" while Yang declared it a very "direct" and "muscular" prose. Their two perspectives on the same prose style constitute two takes on gender bifurcating along lines of a revolutionary feminist present as opposed to a very masculine, Hemingway-ian past. Translation thus begets translation in an expanding circle of interpretive diversity and institutional fecundity, where the very color and quality of one's prose, and not one's language skills, could determine whether one fit the bill for a new project. Lappin moved to Italy after the

[32] Personal interview with Jane Parish Yang. Notes are in the author's possession.

Workshop, where she left creative writing altogether for a season while translation became her main mode of writing practice. The translation history of Nieh's novel, then, features Lappin's writer who turned into a translator while Yang's translator became a better writer. Together, they form a chiasmus of conversion that bespeaks the permeability of the translation process, and the abiding tension within Iowa's writing programs: that the clarity of style one could learn and achieve was fundamentally inseparable from conformity to that style as more and more people were brought into its institutional fold.

Cultural diplomacy modeled after this type of conversation thus could not help being a particularly a-dialogic one. The wonderful energy of the IWP, in which the world's languages could be brought together under one roof, also had the world's writers working from the same mold of writing development – and translation was one of the closest tools to hand for fostering their creative growth. Indeed, even selection into the IWP followed Nieh's selection of Lappin's style: a foreign publication writing about the IWP wrote that "The[ir] only criterion for selecting people… is the quality of their books, or better the translations of their books in languages other than their own."[33] This perspective, albeit external, suggests that translation was not merely a product of the program, but also a main criterion for selection into it: as if the translatability of a writer's prose into another language constituted its own affirmation of literary quality. This makes even more of a case for the IWP's self-selecting lens, where the people who made it onto the IWP's radar were those whose prose was already fundamentally alike in being translatable. In the end, what seemed like an open, conversational dynamic in the IWP's co-translation methodology, resulted in a widespread self-affirmation rather than genuine mutuality, whereby foreign and linguistic Others simply became more and more reflections of Iowa's influence.

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[33] "Poets and Corn," by Grozdana Olujic in *Politika*, May 27, 1972, translated by Tomaz Salamun, Paul Engle Papers, box 22, University of Iowa Archives.

Chinese Weekend

The start of the 1980's were pivotal for Nieh, for not only were these hefty literary translations coming to fruition; she was also busy setting up the physical event of the "Chinese Weekend," a three-day gathering meant to orchestrate in-person conversations between Chinese writers and others hosted by the IWP. By the time that event came around in September of 1980, the IWP had already been in existence for more than a decade, and writers of many countries and origins made the effort to attend. Proceedings were mostly conducted in Chinese, with translators on hand to do simultaneous translations into English for other guest speakers or curious attendees from the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

This gathering of writers from Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and many more from within the U.S., took place as a special event hosted by the IWP to debate the future of Chinese literature. Its importance can hardly be overstated: improving relations between the U.S. and Mainland China since the early 70's meant that by 1980 Mainland Chinese writers were, for the first time, allowed to join the Engles' International Writing Program. Meanwhile, worsening conditions in Taiwan meant that fewer and fewer Taiwanese writers (who had attended the IWP from its inception, like Nieh herself) were allowed to leave their country. Many were thus concerned with the political ramifications of such a "Chinese Weekend", held especially in the increasingly high-profile venue of the University of Iowa. Nieh worked hard, however, to dismiss any charges of ideological persuasion. Indeed, Nieh's opening remarks averred that rather than setting any political agenda, the conversation itself was the point: "We are not here to fight, not to argue about the past, but to communicate, to understand, to know each other. Our meeting cannot come to a precise conclusion because our being together IS the

conclusion, because it has never happened before."[34] Attendees that weekend included Chinese American academics like C.T. Hsia and Leo Ou-fan Lee, Mainland Chinese writers Ai Qing and Bi Shuowang, and members of the Chinese diaspora from around the world like Dominic Cheung, Wai-lim Yip, Mary Go, and Linda Chao.

Much like the *Hundred Flowers* anthology, the writers at this weekend conference explored endlessly the question of how literature should relate to politics, and many could not help but make reference to the fact that, a few weeks before the event, the Taiwanese government had refused the two invited Taiwanese writers, Ya Hsueh and Wang To, the right to attend. Speaker and San Francisco State Professor Hsu Kai-yu put it best when he called for an end to isolation strategies in cross-Strait relations: "any perpetuation of isolation between Taiwan and mainland China, keeping the writers and their works apart, would be detrimental" (47). And by all appearances, the Chinese Weekend hosted by the IWP seemed to be exactly the opposite. Debate was lively and intimate, with ample opportunity for Chinese writers to speak to each other with a freedom that they had not known in decades.

What stands out about this conversation-generating conference, however, were the conversations that people had about it. In particular, the media coverage of the event differed quite substantially across the linguistic divide. Both Chinese- and English-language publications covered the Chinese Weekend, and while local American publications such as the *Iowa City Press-Citizen* and *The Daily Iowan* all focused on getting multiple perspectives from the attendees; Chinese-language periodicals like *The United Press* [聯合報] in Taiwan instead published just one long interview with Nieh herself. This interview was then translated into English (most likely by Asian American poet Marilyn Chin, then in training at the Iowa

[34] Ibid.

Workshop) and published as part of the conference proceedings. This difference in media coverage makes for a situation in which the Chinese-language face of the event is both messier and more familiar: the extended interview with Nieh includes questions that she does not know how to answer (like "Does X attending Chinese writer have children?", and even prints her explicitly voiced confusion: "I don't know. Again, I don't know him very well").[35] The result is a clearer sense of the personal motivation behind the event, including its uncertainties and hoped-for outcomes, than its detailed or factual logistics. The English-language coverage in America, however, is both more balanced and "objective": the *Press-Citizen's* article does little more than list the names and writerly qualifications of all the attendees that year,[36] and the *Daily Iowan* includes quotes from various participants of the conference, including both Engles, several of the Chinese speakers, and even a cynical IWP participant from the Netherlands.[37]

Even the translation of the Chinese articles about the event, accomplished by Chin, demonstrates the lines demarcated by this linguistic divide along different norms of journalistic reporting. Nieh's original Chinese interview emphasizes the informality of the writers' activities that weekend, even using a very colloquial verb doubling process to present her thoughts. She asserted that the writers would "吃吃、玩玩、喝喝酒," translating to "The English department head will invite us over to his house, where we will eat, play, drink some wine." All the verbs are doubled into "eat-eat," "play-play," and "drink-drink," in accordance with Mandarin Chinese's verb reduplication process that lowers the register of the sentence into something more conversational than official. But the English translation simply renders that sentence, "The

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[35] All translations are from Marilyn Chin's translation of the interview, which was originally published in Taiwan's United Daily News 聯合報, August 22, 1979, as "An Interview with Hua-ling Nieh – About the Chinese Weekend in Iowa" 訪聶華苓 – 談愛荷華中國文學前途討論會. In Paul Engle Papers, box 24, University of Iowa Archives.
[36] See article "A Chinese Weekend" by Starla Smith, *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, September 13, 1980.
[37] See article "Cultures Shared in 'Chinese Weekend,'" Christianne Balk, *The Daily Iowan,* September 17, 1980. In Paul Engle Papers, box 24, University of Iowa Archives. Sjoerd Kuyper, the Netherlands writer, commented: "Sure, it's been nice, but it's going to take more than a fancy dinner to bridge the gap between socialism and capitalism."

English department head will invite the writers to an informal party." It's not a huge change of content, but again it is one of style: the English coverage of the event, even in direct translation from the Chinese, simply seems incapable of – and perhaps uninterested in – capturing Nieh's familiar, casual tone. What results instead is something more deadpan and "objective."

The implications of this difference are fascinating if we consider these media publications and translations the conversation *about the conversation* that was going on at the Chinese Weekend in Iowa. For involved in those differences in tone, format, and purpose is the image of the event – and of Iowa's writing programs – as viewed through divergent linguistic and cultural lens. The Chinese publication's looser format, organized around a single interview, allowed Chinese-speaking readers across the Pacific to view the Chinese Weekend as a literally already-ongoing conversation; interviewer Ya-Hsuen's conversation with Nieh, in other words, was the propped-open door to what transpacific Chinese conversations could sound and feel like. It also specifically ended on a statement about the politics of the event: after the interviewer sums up with, "In other words, this will be a literary meeting and not a political one," Nieh responds in the affirmative: "Yes, it will be purely a literary event." On the other hand, English-speaking readers in America had no such conversational vibe to latch onto when they learned of the event in English. Rather, Christianne Balk's article in *The Daily Iowan* explicitly stated that the event demonstrated that "Iowa's China policy, which seems better established, at times, than that of the U.S. government, proved itself once again" with the Chinese Weekend. The tone was unabashedly self-affirming and celebratory: Iowa was the saving grace of U.S.-China relations, exceeding even the functions of the national government itself. The article's political bent would continue as it stated even more bald-facedly that "Participants celebrated increasingly open relations with mainland China by sharing work and ideas in informal meetings." The entire

event was thus framed in English-language discourse as a political event, explicitly diplomatic. That the selfsame "purely literary event" would get painted with such disparate brushes for its different language audiences speaks volumes to the fact that even the way a conversation is talked *about* could easily result in significant ideological shifts or outright conversions of meaning. The celebratory narrative in the American publications regarding the U.S.'s relations with Mainland China spun the English conversation entirely one way, while the (specifically Taiwanese) publication spun the event in quite another. To wit, it was as if the two newspapers covering the same event were not even talking about the same thing.

Even more to this point, the conference proceedings were then translated into English and published for interested American readers. Among these proceedings was one of Paul Engle's essays, "Chinese Weekend – Chinese Eternity." This essay, used as the framing lens for the publication, effectively gave him the final say as he ran down the importance of what had taken place that weekend. His speech included a paean to the Chinese language and the collection of Chinese writers in the room:

> The "Chinese Weekend" was the first meeting of writers using language which seems, to an outsider such as I, so intricate, so subtle and at the same time deeply rooted in reality – as "radical" as a radish pulled freshly out of the ground. They came from China mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and from countries where Chinese is not the common language, such as the Philippines, Singapore and the United States. But for a writer, the real geography is not rivers, mountains, fields, but the language within which ideas, emotions, food, pain, and pleasure are expressed on the written page.[38]

Engle's admiration for the Chinese language is reminiscent of a Pound-ian, modernist fascination with the Chinese ideogram, and it cannot help sounding ridiculous with some English wordplay. But the idea of Chinese being as "'radical' as a radish" is not only absurd: it is just one of the nearly endless agricultural metaphors that Engle used to express native Iowan sentiment – one of

[38] Speech "Chinese Weekend – Chinese Eternity," Paul Engle Papers, Box 24, University of Iowa Archives.

the key facets of imagery, in other words, that he would impress upon writers who had left Iowa to return to their home countries. "Poets, like corn, grow by themselves," he would proclaim, "but both of them need a lot of attention to mature and bear fruit!"[39] The "realism" of Chinese is thus not firmly rooted in a general, neutral Reality, but in reality as experienced in Iowa, amidst farms and corn and toil. In other words, a reality rooted and formed in the shape and ways of Iowa's style of English. Paul's dismissal of earthy, geographic features thus rings somewhat hollow: can language, "expressed on the written page," replace the "less real" geography of "rivers, mountains, fields"? How could it, when language itself is understood and described in radical/radish metaphors?[40]

Paul Engle's words help us to consider the real-time consequences that co-translation had on Chinese-to-Chinese conversations as well, mediated as they now had to be through the hosting space of Iowa. His words for the Chinese writers gathered that weekend could be said of IWP writers writ large: "As artists, their land is their language."[41] But Engle was not interested in modesty when it came to Iowa's influence on the writers that came into its programs. Paul would concede of his visiting foreign writers that "although we cannot, of course, affect their actual style in their own language, we can substantially affect their subject matter, their attitudes, their imagery, and their grasp of the varieties of form."[42] When it was initially established in 1967, the IWP was structured like a nine-month writer's retreat without classes or a degree. It offered writers a seven-month reprieve from their other responsibilities, running for two

[39] IWP Report, April 6, 1981, by Paul and Hua-ling Nieh Engle, Paul Engle Papers, box 29, University of Iowa Archives.
[40] An astounding amount of foreign writers did in fact end up paying tribute to Iowa's cornfields and rolling plains, their image of America cemented in the language of lakes and rivers. More to come on this later.
[41] Speech "Chinese Weekend – Chinese Eternity," Paul Engle Papers, Box 24, University of Iowa Archives.
[42] Ibid.

semesters from fall to spring.[43] The structure of the Program once writers arrived at Iowa rarely varied. They were required to meet only once a week for discussion of their projects, and were invited to participate in any of the other workshops (poetry, fiction, or translation). They could give talks at the University of Iowa or neighboring colleges, and could even travel within the U.S. if time allowed. Indeed, travel – by which foreign writers would gain a glimpse of the rolling American landscape – was an integral part of the program, structured in by the Engles themselves. In a fervent letter to the President of the University of Iowa, Paul Engle laid out his faith in Iowa's scenery as part of the program's efficacy: "They have got to see us as we are: not New York, but a small town, Iowa City, with its university and the industrial, agricultural and artistic scenery of the American Midwest – that is, <u>American life on its average.</u>"[44] Apparently, Iowa's unique blend of sweeping cornfields and creative arts made it more thoroughly American – and more thoroughly convincing – than any teeming metropolis could be.[45]

It was just such language (in English) that framed the 1980 Chinese Weekend hosted by the IWP. And yet, Engle's overweening predilection for agricultural metaphors and imagery, as it rubbed off on IWP participants, seemed to do little more than make these writers into various self-affirming versions of Iowan ascendancy. What, then, were the effects that an Iowa milieu had on the Chinese writers gathered there for the weekend, and for the conversations that they started? In a moment of self-awareness after the Chinese Weekend, Engle wrote the following:

> I was impressed, listening to the talks, with how little they mentioned the individual, the special needs and actions of the writer practicing his craft not really outside of society but at a distance from it, so often concerned with his own subjective reaction to the social scene, to nature, to people around him. It may be

[43] By 1974, it had been shortened to just three and a half months, which is still the duration of the Program today.
[44] Transcript, interview with Paul Engle, translated from the Hungarian, Paul Engle Papers, box 22, University of Iowa Archives. Emphasis original.
[45] Local industrial companies, in particular Deere & Co., are also mentioned in virtually every single memo and itinerary of the IWP; indeed, Deere & Co. CEO even blatantly stated, "Both art and industry can meet here" in the balanced world of the IWP, one supposedly existing outside the divisive purview of politics.

> that there is a profound cultural difference here between the artist as a member of the group, in Asia, and with the artist as individual anarchist in the West, free to ignore social realities if he wishes and equally free to write about them.[46]

It was a painfully belated realization of cultural difference, given that Engle had been traveling through East Asia since 1963 on U.S. State Department money. But the freedom that Paul maintained as American – and that he felt he was then promulgating to all his visiting writers, Chinese or otherwise – sadly engendered mostly the freedom to be the same: to write in similar ways as he did, utilizing the same images and forms that they saw on display in their American hosts. In *The World Comes to Iowa*, an anthology collected of past IWP members, no fewer than 63 out of the 82 writers explicitly wax poetic about some feature of Iowa's geography, whether it be the Iowa River, cornfields, or the charms of Iowa's autumn. In the end, Iowa's freedom did at least as much to standardize as it did to liberate.

In the end, for all the good that it did, the conversation at the Chinese Weekend actually reached far more people as a one-sided event celebrating completely different narratives: the American readers appreciating progress in Sino-U.S. relations, Taiwanese readers seeing the need to avoid precarious politics, and Mainland Chinese readers not hearing of it at all. The mediation of language, then, became in very real ways the arbiter of which conversation one could even access or be a part of. So much for interlingual conversations and an ascendant "community of the imagination."[47] But the responsibility for this state of stilted conversation is far from one-sided. For even as co-translation at Iowa was shaping Chinese-language material for American readers, conversion was happening just as subtly and with as profound effects across the Pacific through the medium of censorship and language change within Chinese itself.

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[46] Speech "Chinese Weekend – Chinese Eternity," Paul Engle Papers, Box 24, University of Iowa Archives.
[47] This phrase appears frequently in both Engles' account of constituted the IWP. As Richard So has mentioned, its implication of a transcendent literary community eventually became part of the program's "formal 'branding' with the making of the film *Community of the Imagination*, a documentary made about the IWP, funded by the CIA." See "The Invention of the Global MFA," fn. 2.

How did the divergence of Chinese scripts – both in response to and in resistance against Western hegemony – also shape the cultural diplomacy that was emanating from Iowa? In order to answer these questions, I turn in the final section of this chapter to examining the multiple versions of Nieh's own novel, *Mulberry and Peach*.

Customizing Containment: **Mulberry and Peach** ***in America, Beijing, and Taiwan***

The best entry point for exploring the other side of Nieh's cultural diplomacy is by examining the multiple versions of her novel, *Mulberry and Peach*, which was published in several different versions in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Mainland China, and America. As such, it affords us a unique look into how the Chinese side of the conversation was also in flux, and what effects the Chinese split also had on the Sino-U.S. conversation during Cold War de-containment. By far Nieh's most well-known literary contribution, *Mulberry and Peach* was not only a 1990 winner of the American Book Award, but also of countless accolades in the Chinese-speaking world. It is widely considered one of the best literary works to emerge regarding China's harrowing split into Taiwan and the Mainland at mid-century. The novel tells the story of a Chinese woman fleeing persecution – first from Japanese and Communist soldiers on Mainland China, then from the Nationalist government in Taiwan, and finally from immigration agents in the U.S. Over the course of this persecution, the protagonist suffers a mental break and eventually becomes a paranoid schizophrenic. Her two personalities are the eponymous Mulberry and Peach: while Mulberry is timid, cautious, and laden with guilt regarding her own traumatic past; Peach is carefree, licentious, and lives off of creating mayhem and tormenting her other self. Indeed, the novel opens with Peach's claim that "Mulberry is dead," and Peach's crowning achievement is that she has killed her (3).

Mulberry and Peach was written originally in Chinese and was meant for Chinese audiences who would understand the protagonist's, in critic Yu-fang Cho's memorable words, "confinement within the trajectory of forced flight" (160). Indeed, in many ways the novel's protagonist follows Nieh's own trajectory, fleeing from China to Taiwan until her final escape to America and a landscape dominated by English. And inasmuch as the novel is about perpetual flight and escape, it also features a dizzying array of types of confinement: Mulberry's life is permeated by literal and figurative walls – city walls that hem Mulberry in, walls covered with images absurd and ornate, symbolic walls made of both image and text. These walls disappear, re-appear, and transform throughout the narrative, especially through the process of translation. As such, they come to stand as a rich motif of containment and its processes: seemingly dissolved through translation but actually resurrected in subtler forms. In the end, the reality of Chinese and U.S. opposition that so determined Nieh's life was also imprinted upon the book's psychological makeup. By the end, even the near confrontation of Mulberry's two personalities uses language that is clearly evocative of contemporary Sino-U.S. geopoliticking: "You and I threaten each other like the world's two superpowers," Peach crows to a submissive Mulberry. "Sometimes you are stronger; sometimes I am" (183). The novel thus reads like an exploration of dichotomous Cold War relations personified: a psychic split driving a wedge between what is contained and what escapes.

We see this as Mulberry's personality splits against a backdrop of historic fracture, spanning a time period from 1945 to 1970. Nieh once said that each of the four sections of the text "is the story of a shock."[48] The first section takes place during the Japanese occupation of China during WWII, and the second finds Mulberry in Beijing while it is under siege by the

[48] Transcript, Interview with Hua-ling Nieh Engle (translated into English from the Hungarian), July 1, 1972, Paul Engle Papers, Box 22, University of Iowa Archives.

Communist army during the Chinese Civil War. Section three takes place in Taiwan, to which Mulberry has fled with her husband and where they now hide from the Nationalist government. Finally, the last section takes place in America, where Mulberry now lives alone, trying to gain permanent residence. She is investigated intrusively by the National Immigration Service, an excerpt of which we saw in the Introduction to this dissertation, and it is this final persecution that ultimately results in her psychotic break. Her alter ego Peach then takes over and goes on a wild journey hitchhiking across America, sending teasing reports to the hapless NIS agent while she is on the run. It is these letters – and the parts of Mulberry's diary that Peach includes with them – that form the text of all four sections of the novel.

And yet, as numerous critics have pointed out[49], it would be far too simplistic to say that Mulberry represents a fractured China while Peach is her cathartic, sadistic, all-American avatar. For the versions of the text published in Taiwan, Mainland China, and America differed greatly, and even that last line about "Cold War superpowers" only made it into some of the versions. The publication history of this novel threads through a gauntlet of postwar Chinese fears and American institutions that got in the way of actual communication even as they enabled them. *Mulberry and Peach* was originally published as a serial in the Taiwanese newspaper *United News Daily* 聯合新聞網 in 1970 until its third section, which was read as an unflattering critique of the ROC government's stifling policies; the serial was subsequently banned without ever finishing its run. It only became a fully intact novel in relatively liberal Hong Kong, still under British rule, in 1976. These two editions share the same language and book formatting.[50] Only

[49] See Leo O. Lee and Carolyn Fitzgerald. Both have shown that reading Mulberry's "liberation" into Peach after she arrives in America is reductive if it tries to presume that Peach, in emerging as a splintered alter ego, is actually free.

[50] Chinese characters were simplified by the Communist government in 1956. Hong Kong and Taiwan, not under the purview of Communist rule, thus maintained (and still do, to this day) the more complex traditional Chinese

later was a separate, much excised, edition released on the Chinese Mainland via Beijing Youth Publishing House 北京青年出版社 in 1980. This Beijing edition not only used Simplified Chinese characters, it also reversed the very reading direction of the Chinese script and pagination. Book formatting in Chinese thus diverged at mid-century so that, in a very real way, the version of the text published in Beijing was also going through a certain process of translation: a Chinese-to-Chinese shift that, as we will see, was mediated by Western reading practices and standards of modernity. More significantly, the Beijing edition also abrogated nearly the entire fourth section of the book. All portions of the text set in America, then, never even made it to readers in Beijing; their *Mulberry and Peach* only took place on the Mainland and Taiwan, making it an in-house Chinese affair. It was a year after the book came out in Beijing that its English translation was completed from the original Taiwanese version and released in the U.S. by Beacon Press.[51]

We thus have two derivative texts from the Taiwanese/Hong Kong original: an English version produced by co-translation, and a Beijing one marked by changes in writing systems and censorship. Juxtaposing them allows us to explore how they separately played out the logics of containment even as they seemed to promote conversation. In what follows, my readings show that the American and the Beijing versions of the text differ in how they translated key passages, and this not always intentionally but through the basic exigencies of changes in script. No matter the motive, these changes ended up yielding vast changes that affected the self-image they came to present. Nieh's literary work thus becomes a literal manifestation of how Cold War containment policies drew lines in the sand regarding self-representation. These subtle

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characters in daily usage. However, Hong Kong and Taiwan now often have divergences of other kinds (such as of reading direction, in certain fields) that distinguish between them.

[51] A later edition of the same English translation was released in 1998 by The Feminist Press

transformations are so tailored that even though the novel seemed to be promoting conversation across the Straits, and across the Pacific, it was in fact doing neither. Rather, it was producing echo chambers in which each version spoke its own reality to its own audience, with only the semblance of connection occurring through the text's various iterations.

There are many examples of translation shifting self-image in *Mulberry and Peach*, and they almost all have to do with shifting walls, borders, or frames of reference. Take, for instance, this moment from Section 2 of the novel, when Mulberry is taking a long, hard look at the Wall of Nine Dragons, a historical edifice in the Imperial City. She is trapped in Beijing with a fiancée and his addled mother who warns day and night of the wall's collapse:

> I approach the Wall of Nine Dragons. Nine colourful dragons are prancing between the blue heavens and the green waters, playing with their golden dragon pearls and their tongues of fire. The dragons, the sky, the water, the pearls, the tongues of fire are a mosaic of glittering glazed tile. The Wall of Nine Dragons stands more than twenty feet high. It has been standing here for seven or eight hundred years, since the Yuan dynasty. (84)

The resplendent timelessness of the image, where mythic dragons play between heaven and waters, contrasts sharply with the overt timeliness of the piece ("seven or eight hundred years") as Beijing is under siege. But this passage also modulates in translation. Both Chinese versions include a sentence after "their golden dragon pearls and their tongues of fire": they write, "Its four sides were bordered by golden frames."[52] The English translation of the text omits that sentence, and so conspicuously denudes the image of its borders. The image thus stands on its own in the English: a "mosaic of glittering glazed tile" without edge or end. In a sense, it is released to speak for itself in the English context, and English-speaking readers never even know that they have lost a literal frame. This "lack" in translation suggests an openness of the image to re-interpretation. Indeed, just as Mulberry remains silent in this scene as to what she makes of

[52] The original passage reads: "四周镶着金黄框子。"

this resplendent imagery, translation nudges the reader through omission to establish their own frames of reference for what they see.

In contrast, the Chinese versions have their own routes of divergence from each other. The Beijing version took some liberties when it came to certain sections, most notably the ones taking place in Beijing itself. While Mulberry is trapped in Beijing, the walls of the city itself are imaged on the page. As the lone passenger on a plane ride into the surrounded city, Mulberry writes,

> My past disappears under the clouds.
> The only thing I've brought with me is the broken jade griffin.
> Peking is a square inside a square, shaped like the Chinese character: 回.
> The Forbidden City.
> The Inner City.
> The Outer City. (67)[53]

The passage above is from the English version of the text, translating from the original Taiwanese/Hong Kong version. The Chinese character here signifies as both image and text, the en-squared square of the character "回" *hui* becoming a visible emblem of the city's concentric walls. At the same time, the semantic meaning of the word 回 *hui,* "to return," evokes a sense of entrapment within itself: a mise-en-abyme of inward enclosure. But this textual moment morphs in the Beijing version of the text, which changes the character used to represent the city: "北平是个大吕字", wherein the character 回 *hui* has been replaced by the character 吕 *lü*. This linguistic change, so subtle and yet so central to this passage, suggests a claustrophobia to *hui*'s

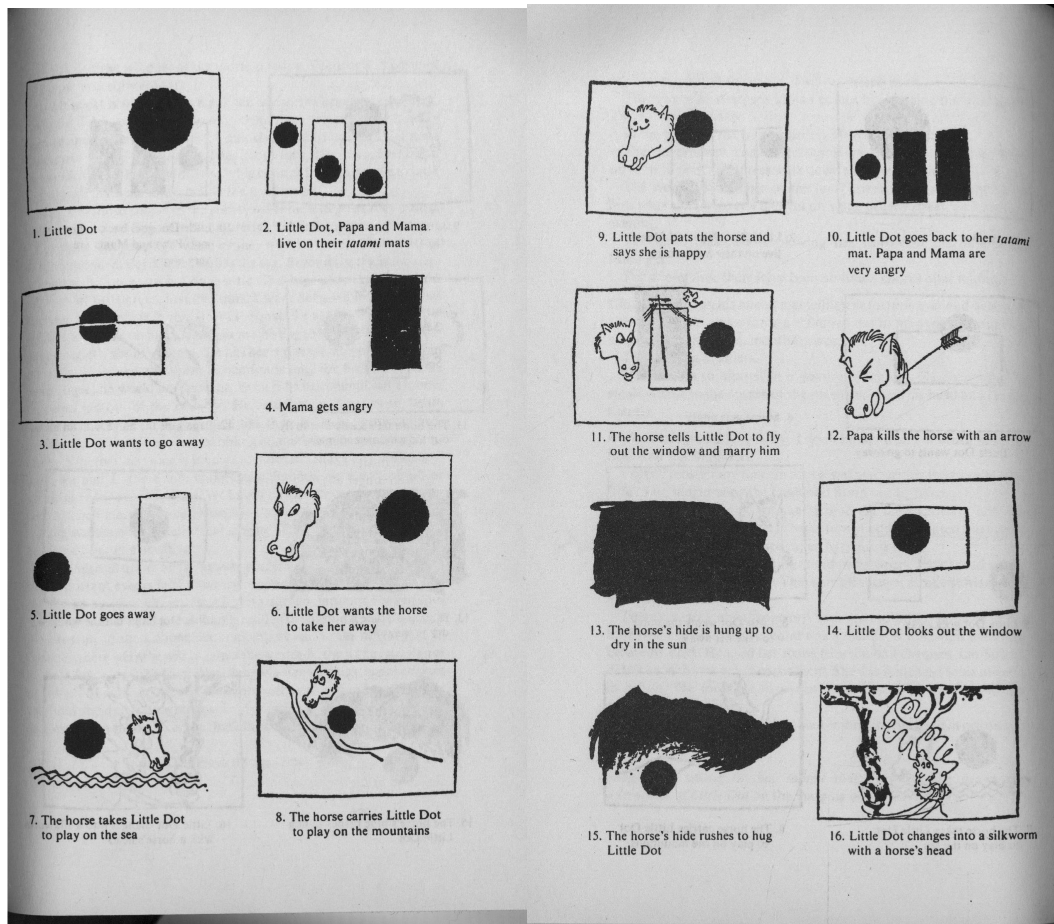
[53] The text in the Taiwanese original already has broken lines:
我的過去也挪在白雲下面了。
我只帶了半邊玉辟邪。
北平是個大回字。
皇城。
內城。
外城。(110-111)

walls within walls, at least for the Mainland publishers. Indeed, 吕 imaginatively re-structures Beijing's city walls to reinforce a preferred vision of itself: one square rising above another, building up to something new rather than "contained" by policies and problems.

This re-visioning of Beijing, however, is far from an outlier with regards to linguistic change. For the very Simplified script used in the Beijing version ends up bearing the traces of Western mediation in Chinese writing practices during the 1950's; in particular, the competing scripts make visible on the material page of literary production the shifting politics of Nixon abruptly switching from supporting one China to acknowledging the other. We see this most clearly if we compare the translations of the novel's lone comic strip, a visual break from the rest of the novel's prose. In Section 3 of the text, Mulberry's husband Chia-Kang has committed embezzlement and made the family into fugitives, and so they have imprisoned themselves within a friend's attic. Day in, day out, they never leave, and have even adapted themselves to living in virtual silence. Mundane noises like the sound of rats within the building grow increasingly disturbing as we observe the beginning of Mulberry's degeneration into psychosis. Ensconced within Mulberry's increasingly troubling diary entries is her daughter Sang-wa's comic strip, titled "Adventures of Little Dot." It is the sad creation of a lonely child, imagining a fantasy life outside of the confinement she has always known.

Sang-wa's comic in translation reveals its images to be a contentious site of competing semiotic fields and national histories. The English co-translation completed by Linda Lappin and Jane Parish Yang was done from the original Taiwan/Hong Kong version published in 1976, and the comic in English is imaged below:

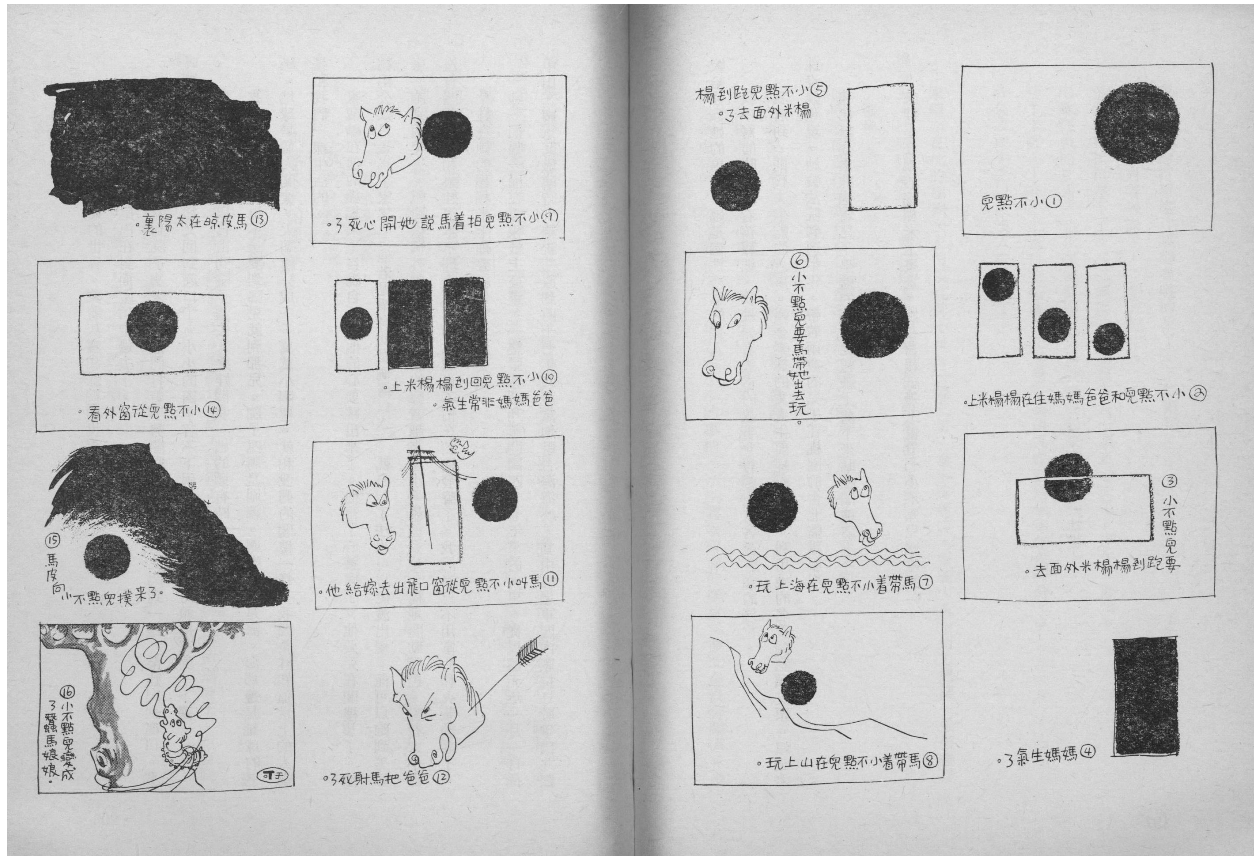
Fig. 1: 1980 version by Beacon Press



The comic is fairly straightforward, proceeding from its first panel to the last in a dramatic movement of 16 parts. But comparing the text to the original Chinese reveals just how much the comic had to adapt in translation. The English version in Fig. 1 is consistent with American publishing patterns, so it privileges horizontal eye movement in a reverse direction: all the English panels move first from left to right, then top to bottom (like many small Z's down the page). But in Fig. 2 (below), the Taiwanese version displays a book published in traditional Chinese format: Panel 1 starts in the upper right hand corner and proceeds from top to bottom, right to left (down and up, like a big backwards "W"). It follows the larger format of the novel, whose text proceeds from right to left. Furthermore, in Chinese, the text is very flexible compared to the English, interacting with the pictures rather than simply standing outside them

as marginalized captions.

Fig. 2, Hong Kong/Taiwan version, 1976

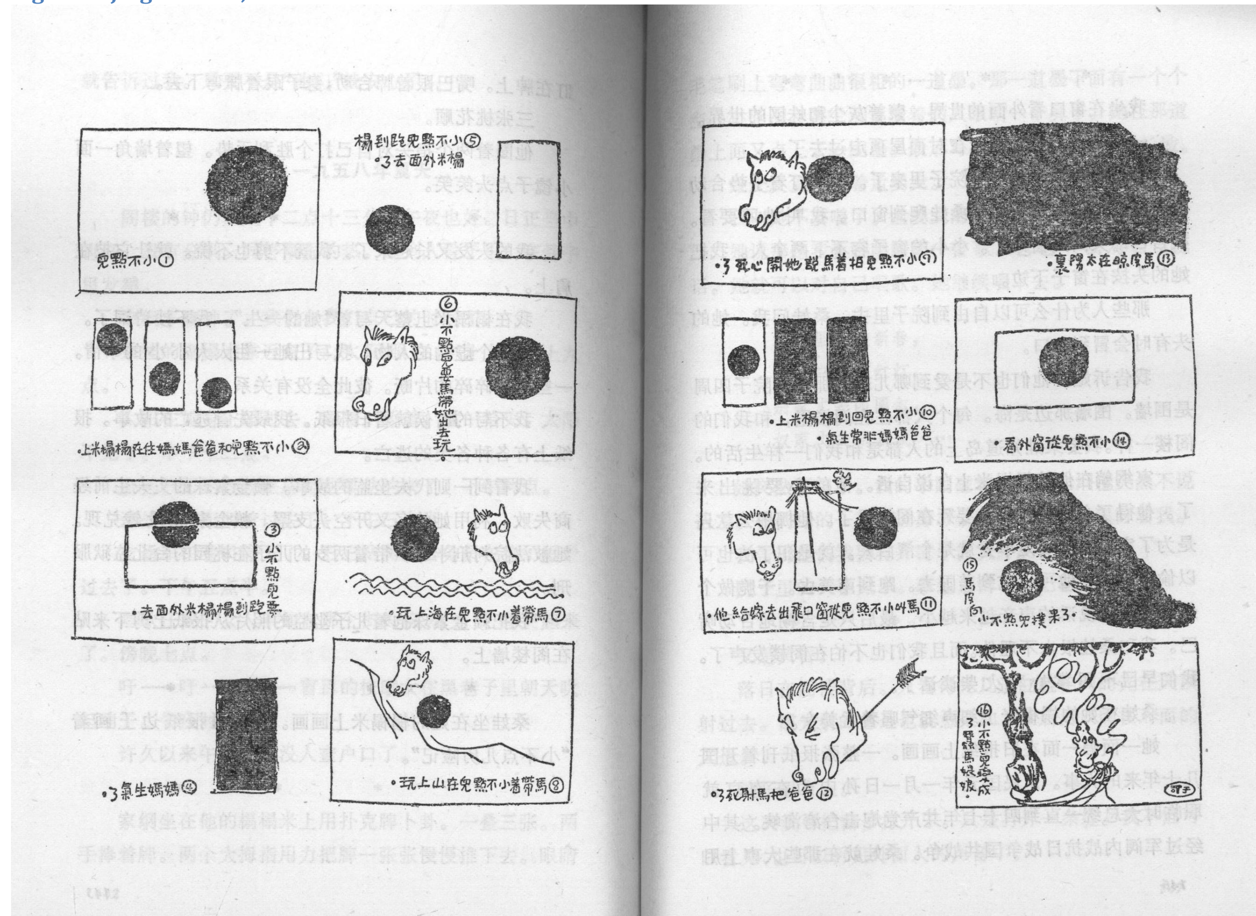


However, the Mainland Chinese text published in Beijing (Fig. 3) is intriguingly mixed: the panels go left to right like the English, but only after going top to bottom, like the Taiwanese (so it's another W-shaped line of reading, just in the opposite direction). Though horizontal reading and writing had gained popularity in China in the 1920's, it wasn't until 1956 that the PRC decided to officially change the reading direction of Chinese printed text from a vertical to a horizontal orientation on the Mainland, and for reading direction to change also to left-to-right.[54] Directionally, the Beijing version is thus caught in between the traditional Chinese

[54] Indeed, experiments were run by Chinese government officials to determine which was faster: horizontal or vertical eye movement in following newspaper text. Horizontal reading was faster by 1.345 seconds, so the switch became a matter of national policy for increased modernization. This change in reading direction thus constitutes

publishing formats of Taiwan that it is trying to supersede and the Western publishing formats it

Fig. 3 Beijing version, 1980



to emulate in a bid for modernization.[55] Thus, even though both the Taiwanese and Beijing versions were published before the English, in a very real way the English text mediates between the two Chinese-language versions; in other words, the Beijing text is always-already in translation due to the influence of Western reading and printing practices upon its layout format.

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something of a mini-narrative of its own for "speeding up" reading to catch up with the vanishing line of modernity. For more info, see website below.

[55] See Jerry Norman's *Chinese* (1998) DD Premaratne's "Reforming Chinese Characters in the PRC and Japan: New Directions" (2012) for further detail on how written Chinese layout was modernized under the Communist government on the Mainland. The actual quote is on this website: http://www.laoren.com/lrbmw/ls/2011-04-29/118865.html. Chinese linguists even ran experiments to test the relative reading speed of vertical or horizontal formats, and after concluding that the latter was "objectively" faster, made the switch based on their test results.

The minutiae of book formatting then points directly to a much larger socio-political history in which the U.S. and its cultural mores and literary standards formed part of the wedge between a fractured China.

In this sense, the shifting walls of the comic strip – as the panels are re-arranged as either W's or backward/forward Z's through translation – become the literally imaged emblems of shifting containment directions and policies. Confinement simply could not remain the same across different languages, nor could the story that these texts were trying to tell. Indeed, these differences in reading direction exemplify a Chinese nation not only fractured, but at narrative odds with each other: forward motion in one literally lists and drags against the narrative flow of the other. In the end, Sang-wa's comic makes glaringly visible a turning point in history in which the Beijing and Taiwanese texts still maintained the same script, but now had divergent writing systems and norms.[56] This split suggests that we rethink any simplistic paradigm of literary progress in cross-cultural communication, especially when "one" Chinese culture is being split in two. The act of literary translation is no simple, linear narrative that simply pushes the reach of a text further outwards, enabling more linguistic communities to come within its creative reach; rather, more often than not, a text in translation operates circuitously, enmeshing itself further and further into the whorls and eddies of historicized language systems and hermeneutics. In a very real way, the translation of a text does not simply release it into a foreign context but rather acts as a meta-poetic moment of transgression, revealing its own existing set of scars.

[56] In "Scripts in Motion: Writing as Imperial Technology" (2015), Lydia Liu asserts about the importance of distinguishing between writing systems and scripts, as the political value of the latter is often "hiding in plain sight" (379). In other words, switching from one script to another in the name of "science" or "progress" belies the deeply political and historical baggage that comes with the Roman script's seemingly universal fit for the modern reader. Though this chapter touches on reading direction rather than Romanization, the same point still applies: the material history of a change in writing system and reading direction, due to influence from the Roman script, carries specific political valences.

These material details suggest just how much the same book translated across the Pacific had varying effects with regards to the conversation that it could generate. Indeed, readers in different locales were reading different narratives of nationhood, heading in divergent directions, pursuing different norms of culture and tradition. This is especially paramount as only Taiwanese and American readers got the entire last section, in which Mulberry dissolves into schizophrenia. Nearly the entire fourth section is excised in the Beijing text until all that remains is the beginning letter that Peach sends to the NIS agent. Critics speculate that that last section was cut not because it featured China's ideological nemesis, the U.S., but because the Beijing publisher felt that Mulberry's psychological split in this section reflected badly on China.[57] In this sense, China's sensitivity towards its *own* situation with Taiwan is what kept America out of its (retooled) narrative.

One last scene suffices to show the perils of putting the same book in motion across the Pacific. In the fourth and last section, Mulberry in America is rapidly losing a coherent sense of self. Her diary records increasingly fragmented and paranoid moments of consciousness:

> Suddenly I find myself walking between two rows of grey buildings on Wall Street. A strip of sky above. I don't know how I got here and I don't know where I'm going. Wall Street is crowded with men, most of them dressed in dark blue suits and carrying attaché cases. The man in dark glasses is hidden among them as soon as I see him I run away. (195)

Mulberry is once again hemmed in by towering structures, lost and confused. That narrow "strip of sky above" orients the reader to a sense of vertigo, while the earlier shifting walls throughout the text have now transmuted into the metaphorical name of "Wall Street" itself. Language, metaphor – these are what hem her in now that she's in America. But Mulberry is no longer able to tell what is imagined and what is real. The stilted structure of her sentences in this passage

[57] See especially Bai Xianyong and Leo Lee for more on how *Mulberry and Peach* was situated through banning and censorship on both sides of Straits relations.

emphasizes her psychic fracture, offering a poetics of paranoia. "I don't know how I got here and I don't know where I'm going… as soon as I see him I run away" creates a repeated "I" that borders on nonsense, as if saying the word "I" over and over again will somehow clarify who or where one is. Instead, this repetition splits the "I" into a series of selves, dis-locating it and perpetuating it onward. Indeed, one can read the I's as not just a fracturing of the self, but a disappearance of the Other: by the end of Mulberry's psychic deterioration, the numerous I's have obliterated any possibility of meaningful interaction. Ironically, her personal splitting into two is a sinking deeper into the singularity of the individual: someone no longer able to converse with an Other at all.

No matter how co-translation was meant to deliver writers from their imprisonment in entrenched cultural and ideological spaces, the actual result of Nieh's widely-censored, then widely-acclaimed work was quite the opposite: writers and readers alike remain trapped within their linguistic contexts, the language they speak and read pre-determining the conversation of which they get to be a part. While the IWP is still extant today, it is almost entirely silo-ed off from the Iowa Writers' Workshop; in like manner, the Translation Workshop that the Engle's appended to the IWP transformed into a separate program entirely, operating apart from the foreign writers who still come to gather at Iowa. This end for the three programs – where each ended up diverging into each – seems far too timely with the lowering of Cold War tensions to be coincidental; it would seem as if the easing up of extreme, dichotomous divisions made translation less necessary – and with it, international relations in the arts, as well. The vision that the Engles brought to imagining a community of the imagination thus could not sustain itself without the Cold War containment that it sought to cure. Bereft of both need and desire to

communicate with each other, the IWP, the domestic Iowa Writers' Workshop, and the Translation Workshop ended up going on divergent paths of history. They are no longer seeking to convert each other, but nor are they even trying to communicate to each other at all.

Conclusion

In the foregoing chapters, translation in the midst of ideological struggle has emerged as an epistemological phenomenon, a weapon of war, a medium of communication, and a technology of disappearance. Translation, in short, is its own constellation of political possibilities, one that marshals and reveals cultural forces at work. And as the Cold War drew to an ostensible close in the 1980's, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the gradually normalizing relationship between the U.S. and Mainland China, the immediate need for such translational labor slowly declined. Indeed, new communications technologies made the state role of mediating or propagating information increasingly obsolete. Even the landmark event of the Tiananmen Square protests only increased censorship within Mainland China; the U.S., besides momentarily proffering some economic sanctions, seemingly did not feel the need to focus its efforts on anticommunist propaganda any longer. China had, by then, increasingly turned toward liberalist economic policies, even despite the hiccup of Tiananmen. As Nicholas Cull's history, *The Decline and Fall of the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1989-2001*, states, "the USIA had always sold itself to Congress as a necessity of the Cold War. The end of the Cold War threatened the accepted logic for maintaining the agency" (13). The extreme ideological currents that had justified the need for state-organized and -funded translation projects were thus quieting down. By the late 1990's, the USIA was officially dissolved.

And yet, at the same time the turn away from state actors to a more "normalized" cultural field brought with it new translational needs, ones that still could not escape the space opened up

between languages. The 1980's also saw a marked increase of Asian immigration to the U.S., with figures rising 70% from 1980 to 1988. This rise reflected the post-1965 lift on national quotas in immigration from Asian countries, and was also helped by continued U.S. presence in the Philippines, the influx of refugees from Vietnam, and normalizing relations with Mainland China. More and more, then, the Overseas Chinese were growing in numbers as "domestic" immigrant subjects, no longer mostly people in far-off lands in Southeast Asia, but neighbors next door in American cities.

It was Gayatri Spivak who once said that translation "is a simple miming of the responsibility to the trace of the other in the self."[1] Ethical translation, in other words, seeks not so much to resolve or tidy away the messiness of difference, but rather to respond to it. One's capacity to do so then becomes a reflection of one's own capacity to relate to a holistic self at all. Significantly, translation is not itself a responsibility, but a "simple miming" thereof: a mirrored act through which one recognizes the disparate parts of self as self. Indeed, Spivak's use of the word "miming" asserts translation's nature as mimicry – as a kind of copycat activity, in which words from one language are simply substituted with those from another. In light of this, let us return for a moment to the scene from Hua-ling Nieh Engle's novel with which this dissertation began. It is a scene with an Immigration Service agent interrogating the scantily clad Peach as to the whereabouts of her alter ego, Mulberry. His attitude is one of suspicion, aggression. In that scene, translation is precisely what does not happen. But Peach's jabbering in Chinese is far from meaningless: it is what keeps the Immigration Service agent, as a representative of the U.S. government, at bay, and it is what ensures Mulberry/Peach's continued residence in the United States.

[1]From "The Politics of Translation," in *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, p. 179.

But perhaps the real surprise of this scene is the appearance of linguistic difference itself: it is only when the Chinese "appears" in Peach's ramblings that one notices the conversation was taking place in English in the first place. In other words, it is only when the narrative explicitly states that Peach is speaking in Chinese and that the agent can't understand her, that the reader feels the lack of translation at all. Even in the original Chinese novel, it is only when Peach has switched to Chinese, and the agent "不懂," or doesn't understand, that it becomes clear that they had been speaking in English all along (9). The Chinese original thus always carried within it implicit translation of the scene's English dialogue, while the English translation makes it easy to forget that it is a translation until Peach stops translating for the agent altogether.

I raise this point in order to ask how much about Cold War relations has remained unnoticed for us simply because language has been too easy or too transparent for us in the absence of reckoning with difference. Nieh Engle's scene brings out just how much translation was required for the conversation with the Immigration Service agent to carry on. It was not until that translation work disappeared that communications broke down – and, it would seem, for readers to notice that translation had been happening all along. In the context of now post-Cold War U.S. cultural diplomacy, we might ask who is always already translating for the story and the conversation to function at all. As the various translators in this dissertation show, there is no one way to grapple with the reality of linguistic difference. In fact, there is a very real way in which Nieh Engle's scene of a woman refugee/immigrant points suggestively to the new waves of contact and settings that require translation in the post-Cold War period: not across oceans or colonial settings, but through peoples – heritage speakers translating for parents, ESL learners flooding America's cities, English-language schools that have promulgated through every major city in Mainland China even as Mandarin-elective schools have also become a rising

fad in U.S. metropoles.[2] In a sense, the post-1980's boom in Asian immigration to America requires and demands translation more readily than ever: rather than a few adept bilingual translators, now nearly everyone is encouraged to be their own cultural broker, an agent in the field negotiating a new geopolitical reality. Indeed, given China's rise since the early 2000's into superpower status economically, the early 21st century hails a new kind of Asian American: one for whom the reality of China is not just some distant ancestral homeland or traditional heritage, but a competitive global force whose international reach (more often than not still construed as a threat, at least to the U.S.) remains to be seen.

How then does this change the way we view Asian American Studies? What should it study, how should it study it, and how does the past opened up in translation prepare us to deal with the politics of the present? In the introduction to this dissertation, I mentioned the excess of forms, methodologies, and potentials that translation developed as a result of Cold War antinomies. Now, in the Information Age, we are dealing with a new excess of information, one not directly managed by state powers but regulated along digital flows coursing through social media, online commercial distributors, and endless entertainment streaming. What limitations the Cold War imposed seem largely nonexistent. And yet, even these seemingly wild, untamable pathways have their limitations, and in these limitations there is potential for rich linguistic analysis of political issues. Linguistic difference arises in comparing digital support for script technologies, for instance, as programmers regularly disagree as to what Chinese characters can be put into Unicode – the distinction between Simplified and Traditional characters still obtain along political lines where Mainland China and a few Overseas Chinese communities, such as Singapore, use the Simplified; while other entities like Hong Kong and Taiwan maintain a

[2] This fact is attested by the mere existence of a Mandarin Immersion Parents Council in the U.S. (origin date unknown) which boasts that, as of 2018, there are over 250 Mandarin-immersion school programs in over 31 states. That number is currently on the rise and is unlikely to slow down.

staunch hold on the Traditional. These distinctions see no easy resolution. In the meantime, language use on the Internet plays into the conflict between China's policies of censorship, and America's liberal tradition of free speech and free information. Finally, China's economic rise has created a massive wave of college students from China coming to the U.S. for higher education, where language learning and translation are now more than ever a daily part of life, pedagogy, and learning. How are these language gaps – digitally, ideologically, and scholarly – being negotiated in the post-Cold War period? Could the alternative histories of modernism and translation sketched out in this dissertation have something to say to the new forms of transnationalism that have become more and more the norm, rather than the exception, of Sino-U.S. conversation?

These questions require further research and study. One thing is clear: the "Overseas Chinese" are no longer just the overseas target of U.S. government machinations, but they have become a normalized view of the world. Indeed the contemporary awareness of China within the U.S. – one as a truly viable global competitor, at least in terms of economics and influence – can fundamentally shift how we view "Asian-American-ness": not from an Asian past into an American present, but into a dual vision that keeps the entire Transpacific in view. In the new global landscape, translation ability is the new norm. What we need to be wary of in the new age of machine translation, then, is another simplistic understanding of translation as a mere means to an end: a reduction of translation into just another requirement to be ticked off for communication to occur. Rather, in the digital age, we must endeavor to remember that translation is as much a technology as the platforms that enable us to perform it. And as Chinese-American conversation takes to digital platforms, de-centered from physical locations and bounds, there is a sense in which nearly everyone is "overseas." Perhaps that is the way we

can think through the new requirements of Asian American Studies: not just along a dyad or a hyphen, but as a sense of general displacement, an elsewhere from a home or tongue that is isolated, intact, and purely one's own.

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