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Towards an Itinerant Sinophone:

Transnational Literary Collaboration in the Writings of Xiao Hong, Zhang Ailing, and Lao She

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Asian Languages and Cultures

by

Clara Chiyoko Iwasaki

2015

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Towards an Itinerant Sinophone:

Transnational Literary Collaboration in the Writings of Xiao Hong, Zhang Ailing, and Lao She

by

Clara Chiyoko Iwasaki

Doctor of Philosophy in Asian Languages and Cultures

University of California, Los Angeles, 2015

Professor Shu-mei Shih, Chair

The increasing prevalence of literature which pushes the boundaries of national literatures as well as the difficulty that the methodology of comparative literature has with negotiating texts without a clear-cut national provenance has led to the increasing interest in reviving the term “world literature.” While most of the current theories of world literature are concerned with the migration of texts or authors unidirectionally, from the periphery to the center, this study is interested in tracing the migration of authors and texts along their itineraries. The benefit of this model is the way that it allows multidirectional movement, texts and authors move back and forth between countries, languages, and literatures in ways that current models of both comparative literature and world literature do not account for. The itineraries of the three writers and their texts also reveal the ways that the geopolitics of the time influenced literary movement: writers moved south to avoid Japanese conquest in the 1930s and 1940s and moved westward to the United States in the 1950s. Xiao Hong’s itinerary takes her ever southward, through the

shifting map of the Republic of China at the time. While she is most commonly identified as a Northeastern writer, Xiao Hong wrote most of her most famous works in exile in Shanghai. Her works must be understood in light of her self-imposed exile. Zhang Ailing's itinerary took her to the British colony of Hong Kong as a young woman. After returning to Shanghai, she earned literary fame writing tales of exotic colonial life for a Shanghai audience. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, Zhang returned to Hong Kong briefly before immigrating to the United States. She had hopes for an Anglophone career, introducing American audiences to China, but remained ultimately unsuccessful in retooling herself. Nevertheless, Zhang found lasting fame among Sinophone audiences in Hong Kong and Taiwan, styling herself as "the last aristocrat" of lost Shanghai. Lao She had a wide and varied itinerary, however one portion which remains relatively understudied is his sojourn in the United States shortly after the end of World War II. While there, Lao She played an active role in shaping his Anglophone career following the success of Evan King's translation of *Camel Xiangzi* (*Luotuo Xiangzi*) as *Rickshaw Boy*. Lao She collaborated in the translation of three of his other novels into Chinese, *The Yellow Storm*, *The Drum Singers*, and *The Loves of Lau Lee*. Eventually Lao She grew disillusioned with American publishing and returned to China, taking with him several unpublished manuscripts which were later lost. The Chinese translator Ma Xiaomi, later translated the English translations of these manuscripts and restored them to the original Chinese manuscripts. In charting the circulation of writers and texts along their itineraries, it is possible to see the way in which different writers of different languages and literatures intersect. Rather than looking at the movement of Chinese literature into the canon, I look at the globalized connections which have occurred through travel, collaboration, and contestation in several different languages and literatures.

The dissertation of Clara Chiyoko Iwasaki is approved.

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2015

In memory of George Tokunaga and Shirley Sakata

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Introduction

What happens when texts travel? What happens when writers travel? This study reexamines Sinophone literature and its connections with other world literatures by tracing the itineraries of texts and writers between the area we now know as China and literatures and literary networks around the world. By following the diverse routes of both writers and texts, I aim to trace the ways that these texts and writers connect with other literatures, thereby troubling the boundaries of Chinese literature. While the term “Chinese literature” assumes a national literature composed and consumed within the borders of the modern-day People’s Republic of China, an examination of the itineraries of several Chinese writers illustrates how Chinese literature has engaged in dialogue with other literatures around the world through the circulation of writers and texts. Rather than accepting the classic formulation of Western (modern) impact on a traditional China and the Chinese response to these alien concepts, I take the view that literary contact occurs dialogically through migration, adaptation, and translation. I reframe Chinese literature through the movement of writers in terms of their transnational literary networks and their texts, which travel between languages and translators. Following the itineraries of both texts and writers reveals their dialogic movement, not simply from the periphery to the center but between a number of different literary centers. The movement of writers between regions highlights the difficulty of categorizing places like Harbin and Hong Kong, whose status as Chinese territory has fluctuated throughout recent history. In addition, itineraries reveal the existence of literary communities in the United States and Japan that not only influenced literary movements in China but also served as intermediaries between Chinese writers and Japanese and American

literatures. Examining the itinerary of texts and writers also provides a new way of looking at world literature outside of the current focus on the world literary canon.

Recently the term “world literature” has experienced a resurgence of interest among literary critics stemming from dissatisfaction with the limits of the disciplinary framework of comparative literature, which makes it difficult to account for global trends and hybrid texts. For example, comparing English and French literary works to each other reaffirms the geopolitical boundaries of literary production. This comparison explicitly identifies the works as belonging to English or French literature, based on the unspoken assumption that each literary work has distinctive characteristics that identify it with its country of origin. With this method of comparison, how can one account for authors who participate in global literary movements that operate outside of national literature. The promise of world literature is to emphasize the global movements and discourses that elude the discourse of national literatures and to measure literary movements that affect literary production around the world.

The term “world literature” was first popularized by the writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. There was no consensus on what was meant by “world literature”; however, most of its proponents envisioned a model that represented the best literary works from Europe. Goethe saw the development of a world literature as an opportunity for greater understanding between the different nations of Europe and the rest of the world.

National literature means little now, the age of Weltliteratur has begun; and everyone should further its course. But this esteem for foreign productions should not stop with specific characteristics and declare them models. We should not think that the truth is in Chinese or Serbian literature, in Calderon or the Nibelungen. In our pursuit of models, we ought always to return to the Greeks of antiquity in whose works beautiful man is represented.¹

¹ Johann Wolfgang Goethe, “On World Literature,” in *World Literature: A Reader*, ed. Theo D’haen, Cesar Dominguez, and Mads Rosendahl Thomsen (London: Routledge, 2013), 11.

Although the term world literature is all-encompassing and Goethe mentions works from both Eastern Europe and Asian countries as possible additions to world literature, his remark at the end of the passage suggests that the aesthetic basis of determining good literature must return to the ideals of Western antiquity. While Goethe conceives of this new literary trend as global, his examples and concerns are Eurocentric. Serbia and China remain largely peripheral to the shape of *weltliteratur*, even if some of their works may be judged according to its criteria. For Goethe, even though world literature might draw from a diverse set of sources as distant as China, the works must be judged according to classical criteria based on Greek sources. The definition of world literature as the best of the world's literature and the question of how to judge all literatures have been persistent issues throughout the development of the concept.

The difficulty of making world literature representative of the diversity of literary production and at the same time adherent to a set of unified aesthetic principles remains a challenge that contemporary proponents of world literature struggle to address as the number of literatures vying to gain visibility grows larger. The sheer number of literary works ensures that those written in or translated into more common or more prestigious languages have a greater chance at gaining worldwide critical attention and popular acclaim. The hierarchy of languages and the marketplace of literary prestige lie at the heart of Pascale Casanova's study *The World Republic of Letters*, which conceives of a world literary market throughout history based around a number of "literary capitals" that anoint and promote certain literary tastes and movements. She defines a literary capital as a place "where literary prestige and belief converge in the highest degree," in terms of both the literary imagination and as a destination for migrant writers.² Her main focus is the phenomenon of émigré writers such as James Joyce, Henrik Ibsen, and Gao

² Pascale Casanova, *World Republic of Letters*, trans. M.B. Debevoise (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 24.

Xingjian, who were initially rejected by their own national literatures but gained widespread recognition from the international literary community after moving to a capital of literary production, such as Paris. Casanova suggests an opposition between “national writers’ (who embody a national or popular definition of literature) and ‘international’ writers (who uphold an autonomous conception of literature).”³ International writers belong to a more rarefied brotherhood united through their enjoyment of French literature and the myth of Paris. It is through their physical migration from their native land to a literary capital that these writers enter into a marketplace of world literature and a community of “international writers.” Although she paints an elegant picture of the literary world marketplace spanning multiple centuries, Casanova’s map of the world republic of letters focuses almost exclusively on one part of the world: Europe. In her chronology, she lists Renaissance Italy as the first literary center followed by France, Spain, and England, then North America and Latin America, and “[f]inally, with decolonization, countries in Africa, the Indian sub-continent, and Asia demanded access to literary legitimacy and existence as well.”⁴ Casanova’s history of world literature puts Europe, primarily the Francophone world, at the center, joined by the other European countries and eventually the rest of the world. The logic that leads Casanova to list China along with the Third World as joining the world republic of letters after World War II is based on the waves of decolonization that occurred among former European colonies in Africa, India, and Asia; however, China’s semicolonial status challenges the universality of this logic.

Casanova’s model of world literature is conceptualized with the underlying assumption that Europe is the only region where the author has to take responsibility for representing literary

³ Ibid., 108.

⁴ Ibid., 11.

life in all its complexities and historical specificities. It is only after decolonization that the Third World has literature and “existence.” Asia, according to her book, arrives belatedly and remains peripheral to the world republic, except for a few key figures. The region of East Asia was hardly without literature or its own world literary republic in which the cities of southern China—Hangzhou, Yangzhou, and later Shanghai—as well as the northern capital, Beijing, were centers of literary production. These Chinese cities, as well as the publishing centers of Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and other Sinographic regions in East and Southeast Asia, did not come into being after the 1950s when, according to Casanova’s history, the West “discovered” them, but had long engaged in their own literary market. While the call to “provincialize Europe” has been heard in postcolonial studies for more than a decade,⁵ Shu-mei Shih notes that outside of area studies “all manner of other theorists continue to produce Eurocentric universalistic theories without taking responsibility for that which is seemingly distant.”⁶ Her criticisms, which specifically address the arguments presented in Franco Morretti’s essay, “Conjectures on World Literature” speak to the larger issue of the “persistence of the tendency to provide ‘omnipotent definitions,’ or more modest-sounding ‘conjectures’ about non-Western literatures and give them the status of theory,”⁷ are easily applicable to Casanova’s treatment of Asian literatures.

There is a wealth of scholarship on about the literary world of Jiangnan, and the ways in which classical Chinese served as a vehicle for the literary sphere of East Asia. From 1910 to 1945, this role was usurped to some degree by Japanese in areas that lay within Japan’s sphere of influence. Casanova does not feel the need to take responsibility for ascertaining the

⁵ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, rev. ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

⁶ Shu-mei Shih, “Global Literature and Technologies of Recognition,” *PMLA* 119, no. 1 (January 2004): 260.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 263.

complexities of another literary republic so far from her own region of expertise. In *The World Republic of Letters*, Asian writers begin to exist only when they or their writings arrive in Europe, and once they are admitted into the canonical literature, they remain there. Casanova's model of world literature does not account for an international literature that develops from anywhere outside of European literary capitals; the only literatures that she envisions arising in Asia are national literatures. Yet literary itineraries at this time reveal texts and writers navigating between different literatures long before decolonization. Furthermore, the study of these itineraries reveals that in addition to the legitimizing power of the literary establishment, texts traveled through the development of transnational literary networks such as American leftist China hands or Shanghai émigrés in the United States and Taiwan. These networks facilitated literary collaboration and translation, encouraging the movement of writers and the translation and publication of their works.

The type of transnational circulation that Casanova describes flows only from countries on the periphery to the literary capitals in the center. Once migrant writers arrive at the center, they become part of this international literature. Such a model does not account for writers who move back and forth repeatedly between different languages such as English and Mandarin Chinese.

Casanova's study concentrates on the opposing movements of international literary works which are written in or invoke the literary capitals of Europe and what she envisions as national literatures which occur everywhere else. While addressing the important questions of the world literary canon, such as the circulation and canonization of texts, she does not devote as much attention to the primary means by which writers in other languages gain entry to other literatures: translation. In his book *What Is World Literature?* David Damrosch explicitly addresses the

question of how works of literature enter the Western literary canon and how they are transformed through successive translations. In his perceptive reading of texts and their translations, Damrosch explores how a text is shaped by the act of translation, taking on different aspects or even different forms based on what its new audience is looking for. He offers many insightful readings of texts that have entered the Western canon through the sometimes significant interventions of their translators. In doing so, he proposes a rethinking of translation as permanently bound to the original text. In his study, translations take on new life in their translated form when they enter the Western canon. These translations are often influenced by the cultural milieus of their translators and readerships.

Damrosch demonstrates that the same text can continue enter the Western canon repeatedly through new interpretations and translations. Nevertheless, the movement he describes between different literatures is also unidirectional, from the original source or different works by the same writer into a new language. Although he often mentions multiple translations, all the texts end up in the same place, the Western canon. His method for defining world literature is more fluid than Casanova's, focusing not on the centripetal force of Paris but on the dissemination of texts into the American, English, or French literary canons through translation. Nevertheless, his study is restricted to how literature from around the world enters the Western canon and is focused primarily on the movement of the Third World literatures into Europe.

David Porter offers an insightful review of the current models of world literature in his article "The Crisis of Comparison and World Literature Debates," in which he discusses the methodology of world literature and comparative literature including those put forward by Casanova and Damrosch. Porter places their work within the context of contemporary efforts to reclaim the term "world literature." He describes these two works as part of a trend in literary

criticism that “stresses the mobility of texts and permeability of literary traditions.”⁸ As an alternative to Damrosch’s and Casanova’s models, which focus on the circulation of texts into the Western canon, Porter proposes thinking of each text as a hybrid text from its inception, with its circulation from place to place and language to language being treated as a matter of course rather than an exception. He suggests the model of epidemiology, tracking the spread of literary “infection” as it traverses the world, as an alternative model for studying literature. Porter’s assumption of fluidity between language and texts is unlike Damrosch or Casanova’s models in that it is based on a decentered model for world literature in which entry into the Western canon is not an integral part of world literature. Rather than works from the Third World entering the world (European) canon. Porter argues for a literature that is already globalized. His theory does not take into account the transnational circulation of writers, which is a key catalyst for the circulation of Chinese texts into other literatures in Japan and the United States and vice versa.

Rather than exploring the formation of a world (Western) canon or focusing solely on the transnational circulation of texts, my study takes a closer, decentered look at the way that texts travel based on the circulation of both writers and texts. In doing so, it reveals the way that transnational literary networks connect in ways that lie beyond the scope of studies that emphasize the Western canon. My approach differs from Porter’s in looking at how writers’ itineraries facilitate textual travel. These literary networks reveal that migration results in unexpected ways of circulating literary texts. The connections between American, Japanese, and Chinese leftist writers fostered literary exchange and circulation that do not fall within the parameters of Damrosch’s study but played an extremely important role in fostering contact between the literatures in these three countries. An examination of writers’ destinations

⁸ David Porter, “The Crisis of Comparison and World Literature Debates,” *Profession* (2011): 249.

complicates Casanova's perception that China has only lately arrived at the gates of Western literature and belies her description of narrative of decolonization as the principal mover of Third World literature. Transnational literary friendships not only facilitated the passage of writers between different countries but also had significant impact on their styles, as their works reflected their itineraries through changes in subject matter, textual borrowing, and (self-)translation. These strategies cannot be entirely accounted for by considering all literature as hybrid texts. Tracing the movements of writers also reveals the way in which China during the Republican period was subject to rapidly changing borders and highlights the importance of looking at the interactions among regional literatures within China's borders.

The writer Xiao Hong, viewed from a contemporary perspective, spent most of her short life within the borders of China as it is *today*, but seen in the light of China's borders at the time, her itinerary was shaped by the fragmenting of the territory of the former Qing dynasty, whether this occurred in the Northeast, where she was born, or the British colony of Hong Kong, where she died. She was born and raised in the town of Hulan, in Manchuria, and later lived in the cosmopolitan city of Harbin, which had reverted to Chinese control in 1920, with the fall of the Romanov dynasty in Russia. The Japanese annexed Manchuria to be their puppet state Manchukuo eight years later. Xiao Hong fled Manchuria and "returned" to the Republic of China, residing in Qingdao and later Shanghai, where she became a celebrated writer. She died in Hong Kong on the eve of the Japanese invasion. Xiao Hong's itinerary illustrates the radical shifts in China's borders during this period of Western semicolonialism and Japanese aggression. Although Harbin and Hong Kong lie within the borders of the People's Republic of China now, when Xiao Hong lived and wrote in these cities, they operated under very different political systems and governments. Her itinerary reflects the fragmented and rapidly changing borders of

the Republic of China and the difficulty in characterizing all literature composed within the current political borders of China as being products of the same political and cultural conditions. Harbin, Qingdao, Shanghai, and Hong Kong were not only geographically distant, but also represent the rapidly shifting borders of the Sinophone world in the Republican period. Hong Kong had already been ceded to the British as part of the indemnity paid at the end of the Opium War. Harbin, Qingdao, and Shanghai were lost and then returned to the Republic of China at multiple points. An examination of the itineraries of modern Chinese writers clarifies the fact that regional literary centers played an important role in these itineraries and in the dissemination and reception of their writing. It also reveals the political pressures that forced writers first southward following the Japanese advance into China, and then westward following the end of World War II.

Examining these writers' itineraries through the regions that now comprise the People's Republic of China also reorients the traditional conceptualization of Chinese literature. The geography of modern Chinese literature has traditionally been oriented around two poles, Beijing (Beiping) and Shanghai. These cities are also home to eponymous schools of literature, the Beijing school (*jingpai*) and the Shanghai school (*haipai*). In *The Lure of the Modern*, Shu-mei Shih makes the important point that "the dichotomous reading of *jingpai* and *haipai* tends to reduce the question of Chinese modernity to a set of reified, simplistic, outdated categories."⁹ Beijing, the abandoned imperial capital, with its traditional walled appearance, came to represent a rejection of Westernization and modernity,¹⁰ and Shanghai, the commercial center of

⁹ Shu-mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 177.

¹⁰ In addition to Shih's work on the Beijing school, other recent scholarship on Beijing has challenged the notion of Republican Beijing as the regressive backwater it has previously been supposed, see Madeline Yue Dong, *Republican Beijing: The City and Its Histories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), and Hsiao-Chun

Republican China, with its Western-style buildings and foreign concessions, was seen as the center of modernity in China. These architectural and political images influenced the perceptions of the cities' corresponding literary schools. The *jingpai* writers were perceived as rejecting modernity in favor of traditional culture. In her study of the Beijing school, Shih demonstrates that this dichotomy is not as clear-cut as the neat configuration of diametrically opposed values supposes and instead reads *jingpai* and *haipai* as expressing alternative forms of modernity. Although recent scholarship has significantly undercut the symbolic opposition between the two cities, the polar model has been the only approach to mapping Chinese literature geographically. Nevertheless, the north-south dichotomy has obscured not only the literary activities that occurred outside of these two cities but also the ways that these secondary literary centers functioned in the formation of regional literary society. Mapping the itineraries of Chinese writers reveals the way in which regional literary centers such as Harbin and Qingdao functioned in relation to Beijing and Shanghai. Although they could not rival Shanghai in terms of literary output, regional centers nurtured networks of writers through newspapers and social organizations, which the writers would continue to draw on throughout their careers. Rather than viewing Shanghai and Beijing as opposing poles of literary and stylistic choices for modern Chinese literature, I consider both cities, but Shanghai in particular, as part of a linked network of regional literary centers.

Another important point that emerges when looking at the writers' itineraries is the relationship between the places they are writing about and where they are writing from. Xiao Hong, Zhang Ailing, and Lao She are associated with one place—the Northeast, Shanghai and Beijing respectively—but their most famous works were written after they had permanently left

Wu, "Ascending the Hall of Great Elegance: The Emergence of Drama Research in Modern China" (PhD dis s., University of California, Los Angeles, 2016).

the areas they are conventionally associated with. Rather than being seen simply as a “Northeastern writer,” a “Shanghai writer,” and a “Beijing writer,” they should be viewed as the authors of works conceived at a remove from their native place. There is a great deal of evidence that Xiao Hong’s identity was that of a displaced Northeasterner, and much of her work focuses on the theme of homelessness and displacement. Zhang Ailing made her career chronicling colonial life in Hong Kong and celebrating local life for a Shanghai audience, most notably in her famous collection *Wonder Tales (Chuanqi)*. After 1949, she positioned herself as the curator of lost Shanghai splendor. Her later works do not document her American surroundings but add to her authorial persona as a Shanghai expert. While Lao She’s absence from Beijing was largely due to economic rather than political reasons, his most famous works set in Beijing were written when he worked as a professor of literature in Jinan and Qingdao. At that time, Lao She had not lived in Beijing since leaving for England ten years before. Scholars have tended to take both writers at face value, assuming that they depicted local life in their hometowns; however, these works must be understood and read as life as each writer remembered it, separated by time and geography.

My dissertation also decenters Shanghai as the sole site of Chinese semicolonial modernity in the Republican period. Shanghai plays an unmistakable role in literary life during the Republican period and many studies of Chinese modernity focus exclusively on this exceptional city. There has been a flowering of scholarship on all aspects of modern culture, including the semicolonial nature of the city’s urban culture,¹¹ its prominent and multilingual

¹¹ See Shih, *Lure of the Modern* and Leo Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of an Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

printing industry,¹² its music and recording industries,¹³ its film industry,¹⁴ its migrant communities and their native place identities,¹⁵ and its literature.¹⁶ There is a wealth of exceptional scholarship on Republican literature and culture, as long as your interest is in Shanghai.

Recently, other scholars have questioned this emphasis on Shanghai in Chinese historical scholarship. In his history of Peking Opera as a form of knowledge production, Joshua Goldstein criticizes the tendency to center Chinese modernity in Shanghai, observing that “this idea of a Shanghai modern is problematic, for it typically entails describing the rest of China as more traditional and portraying modernity as a linear progressive development.”¹⁷ In addition to criticizing the field’s focus on a single city, scholars have also begun to look at the abundance of configurations of modernity and semicoloniality in other Chinese cities. As Ruth Rogaski has pointed out, to dwell solely on Shanghai erases the unique conditions in each of the treaty ports, and this critique can be applied to many modern Chinese cities. It is impossible, she suggests, for the history of one treaty port to stand in for the history of all treaty ports. Each city has its own

¹² See Shuang Shen, *Cosmopolitan Publics: Anglophone Print Culture in Semi-Colonial China* (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009).

¹³ See Andrew F. Jones, *Yellow Music: Media Culture and Colonial Modernity in the Chinese Jazz Age*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

¹⁴ See Zhen Zhang, *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen: Shanghai Cinema, 1896-1937* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005) and Poshek Fu, *Between Shanghai and Hong Kong: The Politics of Chinese Cinemas* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

¹⁵ See Emily Honig, *Creating Chinese Ethnicity: Subei People in Shanghai, 1850-1980* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), and Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation: Regional Networks and Identities in Shanghai, 1883-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

¹⁶ See Shih, *Lure of the Modern*, Nicole Huang, *Women, War, and Domesticity: Shanghai Literature and Popular Culture of the 1940s* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), Poshek Fu, *Passivity, Resistance, and Collaboration: Intellectual Choices in Occupied Shanghai, 1937-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), and Alexander Des Forges, *Mediasphere Shanghai: The Aesthetics of Cultural Production* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007).

¹⁷ See Joshua Goldstein, *Drama Kings: Players and Publics in the Re-Creation of Peking Opera, 1870-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

history.¹⁸ In the discipline of history, there has been more attention paid to the urban history of a number of other Republican-era cities, such as Beijing,¹⁹ Guangzhou,²⁰ Harbin,²¹ and Qingdao.²² Nevertheless, Shanghai remains the most prominent locale in studies of modern Chinese urban life.

My examination of the literary production of these three writers builds on both research on semicolonialism in Shanghai and recent historical scholarship on other urban centers in modern China, not only expanding the geographic scope of modern Chinese literary knowledge but also problematizing the way in which we think about the representation of urban colonialism and semicolonialism in literature. My purpose in doing so is not to dispute the significance of Shanghai in Chinese literature but rather to show how other cities can extend and complicate the existing model of Chinese modernity.

Shanghai was central to many literary publishing networks and home to many competing schools of modern Chinese writers, yet it was not the sole site of Chinese literary production. Rather, it is better understood in the context of its links to regional literary networks such as those in Harbin and Qingdao (discussed above), and to international literary communities in British Hong Kong, the United States, and Japan. Shanghai and the literary center of the Uchiyama bookstore facilitated contacts between Chinese and Japanese avant-garde and leftist

¹⁸ See Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

¹⁹ See Dong, *Republican Beijing*, and Wu, “Ascending the Hall.”

²⁰ See Roanna Cheung, “Embodying Modernity: Humor, Gender Politics, and Popular Culture in Republican Guangzhou” (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2016).

²¹ See James H. Carter, *Creating a Chinese Harbin: Nationalism in an International City, 1916-1932* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2002).

²² See George Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

writers, which led to meaningful literary partnerships. Shanghai was also a chief gathering place for many leftist American China hands such as Agnes Smedley, who first became part of Lu Xun's circle there. These networks continued to function beyond Shanghai, when Smedley's relationship with Lu Xun's protégée Xiao Hong facilitated the translation of Xiao Hong's first short story into English by yet another leftist China hand, Peggy Snow (Nym Wales). Xiao Hong herself came from a close-knit literary community with whom she continued to maintain ties after achieving success in Shanghai. While Shanghai played a crucial part as the place where many writers came together, Xiao Hong wrote very much as a Northeastern exile addressing a Shanghai audience. Her regional identity, rather than ceasing to matter, became even more pronounced as she struggled to define herself. My dissertation's approach to writers' itineraries clarifies the way in which travel by writers facilitates the travel of their literature through the development of literary networks whether transnational or transregional which contribute to the spread of the "contagion," as Porter terms it, of certain texts.

In the first chapter, I examine the way in which Xiao Hong's Northeastern identity is a migrant identity formed and developed after her flight from Harbin in 1932. While Xiao Hong had produced fiction in Harbin, these works lack the painstakingly detailed sense of locality for which her later fiction written in Qingdao and Shanghai is celebrated. In the context of her itinerary, her works may be seen as written back to the Northeast she remembered, intent on reinscribing her memories on the lost landscape by mapping the city of Harbin and her home village of Hulan in her autobiographical fiction. During her time in Shanghai, the literary efforts of Lu Xun, Hu Feng, and other members of their circle promoted the literature of "weak and small" countries, among them, Korean and Eastern European peoples whose lands have been threatened by imperialism. At the same time, Xiao Hong became belatedly aware of Harbin as a

city of multiethnic refugees. Her fiction from this time explores themes of homelessness and statelessness through her narrator's encounters with Russian Jewish and Korean women in the city of Harbin. Xiao Hong also wrote several pieces that portray her own political exile and sense of homelessness after her homeland was annexed by Japan. After she fled to Hong Kong, she serialized a novel which explored the Northeast of her childhood, *Tales of the Hulan River* (*Hulanhe zhuan*) which was similarly dense with detailed description of the landscape of her memory.

In the second chapter, looks at Zhang Ailing, or Eileen Chang, who, like Lao She, had a varied itinerary, from her birthplace in the semicolonial city of Shanghai to the British colony of Hong Kong and finally to the United States. As part of her authorial persona, Zhang often cast herself as the cultural outsider and broker of alien cultures to her audiences. Many of her most famous stories are set in Hong Kong and are filled with explanatory passages regarding the un-Chinese society she found there. Zhang attempted to adopt a similar role after she arrived in the United States in the 1950s, styling herself as an expert on China for American audiences and a curator of the lost world of old Shanghai for Sinophone readers. She was able to translate her own novels into English, but despite her relative linguistic self-sufficiency her Anglophone career overlapped significantly with those of other writers, in particular, John Marquand (best known for the Mr. Moto detective stories); in particular, his novel, *H.M. Pulham Esquire*, from which her novel *Love of Half a Lifetime* (*Bansheng yuan*) evidences a high degree of textual borrowing. Although Zhang was successful in marketing her work to Sinophone audiences, she remained unsuccessful as an American writer, her penchant for desolation was antithetical to the kind of stories about China that Americans wanted to read.

The third chapter I examine an understudied portion of Lao She's itinerary, his sojourn in the United States between 1946 and 1949. Originally, his visit was intended as a diplomatic exercise, as he and Cao Yu were sent to the United States as visiting writers, but Lao She spent more than three years there, testing out an Anglophone publishing career and contesting existing literary representations of himself and his works in English. Although he was welcomed by both the United States government and the émigré Chinese community, his growing enthusiasm for the Communist regime made it difficult to be the writer and cultural broker many wished him to be. During this time, he began to define for himself his own American career. He succeeded in preempting the publication of an unauthorized translation of his novel *Divorce (Lihun)* and collaborated closely with his two handpicked translators Ida Pruitt and Helena Kuo in translating three of his novels into English. Lao She's itinerary and the itineraries of the texts diverge in significant ways after 1949, complicating ideas of what makes up Chinese literature as well as indicating the dialogic process by which a text is shaped and reshaped according to the needs and expectations of its audience in different places. Two of his works, *The Yellow Storm* and *The Drum Singers* were translated into English by Pruitt and Kuo respectively and then retranslated into Chinese by a contemporary translator, Ma Xiaomi. The passage of these works from China to the United States and back to China not only speaks to the way in which a text may return to its canon of origin, but also exemplifies the role that Lao She's social networks, American China hands and émigré Chinese Americans, played as intermediaries and collaborators in his Anglophone debut.

The three itineraries discussed in this study show the usefulness of examining the circulation of individual texts and writers. A closer look reveals unexpected connections with other literary communities and the ways in which writerly friendships facilitated the translation

and circulation of texts into other languages. While these relationships do not have the large-scale impact of world literature discussed as literary canon, they do reveal transnational connections between different literatures that trouble the unidirectional movement of literatures into the Western canon and easy narratives of Asia's belated arrival to Western literature after decolonization. The itineraries of these writers also disclose other political forces, such as Japanese colonization, which forced Xiao Hong and Lao She southward, and American soft power, which encouraged Lao She and Zhang Ailing to move westward. The reasons for their movements do not stand out from a Eurocentric perspective, but become clear when the multiple itineraries of these writers are viewed in the context of their lives and times. Studying global literature at the level of individual writers is admittedly a more laborious undertaking; however, the richness of overlooked transnational connections between literary communities signals the importance of looking at world literature from an individual, rather than a canonical, perspective, as I hope to demonstrate in the following chapters.

Chapter 1

Homeless in the Fatherland: Xiao Hong's Migrant Geographies

Xiao Hong's itinerary seems from a contemporary perspective the least transnational. She left the borders of what we call "China" today only once, a brief stay in Tokyo for less than a year during which she wrote very little and reported scant success in learning the language.

Contemporary scholarship characterizes her as a leftist, proto-feminist writer, focused primarily on the plight of women in northeastern China. When Xiao Hong's writing is not discussed in terms of larger nationalist, political, or gendered terms, she is grouped with other leftist writers of the Northeast as contributing to regional literature. How can such a writer speak to a transnational Chinese literature?

Xiao Hong's most famous works of fiction about the Northeast were written at various stages of remove from her homeland as a refugee and political exile. Her novel *Field of Life and Death* garnered the admiration of literary luminaries such as Lu Xun and Hu Feng, was written in Qingdao and Shanghai, shortly after Xiao Hong had left Manchuria with her partner Xiao Jun. *Tales of the Hulan River* was written at the end of her life in colonial Hong Kong, at the height of Japanese imperial expansion.

Xiao Hong was not the only Northeastern writer active in Republican China during the 1930s, although she and Xiao Jun are the only two who have entered the national literary canon; however, they were also part of a community of Northeastern writers who had become acquainted through leftist newspapers in Harbin (in Russian, Kharbin) and fled south after the Japanese took over Manchuria. Viewing these writers as a regional literary diaspora residing in other parts of China—primarily cities such as Qingdao, Shanghai, and Beijing—allows us to

problematize the way that Xiao Hong has been incorporated into the Chinese literary canon, both the national literary canon, as well as the local Northeastern literary canon.

Xiao Hong wrote a literature that was particular to her status as a migrant writer. She and her fellow Northeasterners had chosen to become Chinese national subjects at the cost of abandoning their homeland, which was no longer within the borders of the Chinese nation. Xiao Hong's works that touch on her lost homeland are an articulation of her regional identity, which became most defined during her stay in Shanghai. In addition, while her writings about her homeland have been evaluated uncritically in numerous literary studies as autobiographical anecdotes about her hometown, her identity as a writer from the Northeast obscures the fact that most of her best-known work was written at a distance of miles and years from her homeland. Although Xiao Hong drew upon her memories of growing up in Manchuria, her work needs to be examined not as simply autobiographical fiction but as part of the Northeastern diaspora's look backward towards its lost homeland.

In this chapter, I argue that Xiao Hong's identity as a Northeastern writer was formed after she left Manchuria, in response to her sojourn in Shanghai and the way in which she and other Northeastern writers were seen as patriotic writers who had actively chosen to affirm their identity as Chinese. Despite her sense of national loyalty, Xiao Hong's fiction reveals the multiplicity of ethnic groups that inhabit Harbin and Hulan, whether these arrivals predate the arrival of Chinese settlers, such as the Manchus and Mongols as well as those who came after, Korean and Jewish migrants. Xiao Hong's fiction about the Northeast was informed by her own sense of being a displaced person who could never go home again. In her fiction depicting life in Manchuria, whether in the villages or in the city of Harbin, Xiao Hong is attempting to resurrect

a deeply personal version of her homeland in defiance of Manchukuo, the nominally sovereign client state of Japan, which her homeland had become.

Mobile Flows: Towards a Northeastern Colonial Modernity

The area known today as Northeastern China and its most well-known metropolis, Harbin, have changed hands a number of times throughout the twentieth century. While there have been many excellent studies devoted to colonial and semicolonial China, most have focused on Shanghai as the model for all instances of semicolonial modernity in China. These studies have been extremely valuable in showing the ways in which postcolonial theory can be modified for the Chinese context²³ and in introducing ideas of Chinese cosmopolitanism.²⁴ However, as scholars have turned to other semicolonial cities in China, it has become clear that the Shanghai model cannot be applied to every semicolonial space in China.²⁵

Shanghai came into being as a treaty port fragmented by a number of foreign concessions and competing jurisdictions. In Manchuria and, in particular, the city of Harbin were just as multicultural, the population was more fluid. Hyun Ok Kim describes the Japanese model of colonization in Manchuria as a kind of “territorial osmosis”²⁶ in which the annexation of one area would lead to the successive takeover of neighboring places via the movement of colonial subjects across loosely defined borders. Park highlights, rather than outright annexation, the flow of Japanese colonial bodies through the porous border of Manchuria that justified Japan’s initial

²³ See Shih, *Lure of the Modern*.

²⁴ Lee, *Shanghai Modern*.

²⁵ Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity*.

²⁶ Hyun Ok Park, “Korean Manchuria: The Racial Politics of Territorial Osmosis,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 99 no. 1 (2000): 193-215.

informal claims over the region. The fluidity of migration into Manchuria was not confined to the Japanese colonial project. White Russian refugees, Shandong Chinese coolies, Russian Jews, Korean peasants, and many other ethnic groups moved to and away from the city in search of work, opportunity, or political refuge as it changed hands, beginning as a city under the control of the Russian Empire, returning to Chinese hands after the Bolshevik Revolution, and falling under the official rule of the Japanese with the establishment of Manchukuo.

Harbin was founded as a railroad company town in 1898. Although the Chinese Eastern Railway appeared to be a private company, it was owned and operated by the Russian government. The construction and operation of railroad tracks under Russian control enabled Russia to further extend its sphere of influence over Manchuria informally. In Harbin, Chinese coolies and Russian railroad workers lived in segregated quarters in the city. The Chinese quarter at some points was not even counted as part of Harbin proper. However, after the fall of the Romanov dynasty in 1917, Harbin came under the control of the Republic of China, leading to a perceived reversal in the established racial order, and became a city where a Chinese policeman could beat a white driver with impunity.²⁷ Under the Russian and Chinese regimes, Harbin became the cultural and economic center of Manchuria, known as the “Saint Petersburg of the East” and one of the oldest and most multicultural “railway cities”²⁸ built by the Russian-operated Chinese Eastern Railway and Shandong Chinese coolies. Mukden, Changchun, and Vladivostok had similar origins and ethnic makeup, but Harbin was known as a city of sophistication and beauty, as well as a city of sin, a reputation similar to that of Shanghai.

²⁷ Olive Gilbreath, “Where Yellow Rules White,” *Harper’s Monthly Magazine*, February 1929, 367.

²⁸ David D. Buck, “Railway City and National Capital: Two Faces of the Modern in Changchun,” in *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900-1950*, ed. Joseph Esherick (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2000), 65-89.

However, while Shanghai was a city of clear territorial divisions, the product of distinct claims by individual foreign powers, Harbin was a city where hierarchies of race and nation were constantly in the process of being re-formed and redefined. In 1932, it became part of the newly formed state of Manchukuo, a Japanese puppet state, which ostensibly embraced a pan-Asian modernity as a multicultural nation united in a shared East Asian culture.²⁹ Harbin lost its preeminent status as cultural capital when the major Manchurian city when Changchun (renamed Xinjing) became the capital of the new state.

Deleuze and Guattari, in their book *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, discuss the process by which organisms, signs, and symbols can be deterritorialized or decoded and then reterritorialized or overcoded, transforming previous configurations into something entirely new.³⁰ Deleuze and Guattari depict successive waves of decoding and overcoding in their description of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. In the field of Chinese history, James Hevia has discussed Deleuze and Guattari's twin concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization in terms of the interaction between British and Qing systems of political and diplomatic symbolism.³¹ Their concepts undergird a fluid and multivalent approach to the shifting meanings of national or colonial signs and in thinking through the way in which Manchuria is repeatedly transformed by the exercise of formal and informal colonialism and national sovereignty.

²⁹ See Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003).

³⁰ See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1987).

³¹ James Hevia, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

Harbin, in particular, grew because it was a Russian railway outpost, illustrating that the influence of informal colonialism on the economic and industrial development of the Northeast was markedly different from the impact of coastal treaty ports on other parts of China. During Harbin's early history, Russian subjects held the economic upper hand, living in the more desirable parts of the city, whereas the Chinese were largely restricted to their own quarter. However, these positions shifted when the Republic of China took possession of Manchuria, and the Chinese population sought to reterritorialize the city as always and forever Chinese. The Russian population of Harbin, or the *kharbintsy*, increasingly came to include problematic rejects from the new Soviet nation-state: White Russian aristocrats, commoners loyal to the Russian empire, and Russian Jews, who preserved the traditions and political discourse of their lost homeland, which were antithetical to the new Russian state.³² Regime change in Russia also led to a decoding of *kharbintsy* as Russian citizens. Most lost their citizenship and attendant privileges, becoming either second-class Soviet citizens or Chinese citizens. Manchuria was once again deterritorialized by waves of Korean and Japanese peasants who were encouraged to settle in Manchuria as a means of expanding Japan's informal empire in the region. Once the Japanese had established the state of Manchukuo, Harbin and its multiethnic population were once again deterritorialized and reterritorialized as part of a pan-East Asian nation-state. As a result, the Russian émigré population was written out of the picture as national subjects, as the Japanese began to stress the shared racial characteristics of their Manchu, Mongol, Korean, and Chinese compatriots. Eventually Harbin's influence faded as the newly christened Xinjing became the image of the progressive new capital for a modern nation.

³² See Olga Bakich, "Émigré Identity: The Case of Harbin," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 99 no. 1 (2000): 51-73.

The competing and overlapping national and colonial discourses at work in Manchuria, as well as the exercise of informal empire through puppet states and companies, suggests that the treaty port model cannot be applied to all iterations of colonialism and semicolonialism in China.

Shanghai's Northeasterners: The Northeastern Writers Group

Xiao Hong was born and grew to adulthood in the midst of these contentious codings, decodings, and recodings of her homeland. In 1932, she fled Harbin with her partner Xiao Jun. They took up residence with fellow Northeastern writer Shu Qun in Qingdao, before arriving in Shanghai to test their literary fortunes.

In the current literary canon, Xiao Hong, Xiao Jun, and the other émigré Northeastern writers are the most well-known writers from the Northeast. Although some other Northeastern writers have been recuperated in recent scholarship, the Northeastern Writers Group remains the best integrated into the mainstream Chinese literary canon. Unlike the writers who remained to write in Manchukuo, these leftist Northeastern writers had an unambiguous political stance that allows their works to be acceptable today. Writers who remained in Manchukuo had to abide by the censorship restrictions of the new state and have until recently been dismissed as collaborators, their works forgotten.³³

The émigré Northeastern writers have been grouped according to their native place by local literary historians and referred to as the Northeastern Writers Group. Pang Zengyu in his study of the group notes the ambiguity of the name; they are not a school (*pai*) or a society (*she*).³⁴ In fact, it is difficult for scholars to find an aesthetic or literary style that they all share. In

³³ For more information on the Sinophone literary scene in Manchukuo, see Norman Smith, *Resisting Manchukuo: Chinese Women Writers and the Japanese Occupation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007).

³⁴ Pang Zengyu, *Heitudi wenhua yu Dongbei zuojiaqun* (Changsha: Hunan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1995), 28.

addition, they had no recognizable leader, so rather than being called a school, they are known by the looser term “group,” their most important commonality being their native-place identity.³⁵ Several excellent studies have engaged with the concept of native-place identity, which can function somewhat like regional pride and ethnic identity among migrants.

The term “native-place identity” describes a kind of regional loyalty or affiliation that functions among migrant networks in ways that overlap but differ from ethnic or national affiliations. Native-place identity also shows in the importance of considering how different regional affiliations functioned in an increasingly mobile modern China. The Northeastern Writers Group had a native-place identity in common and also exhibited the strategies of other regional migrants, such as forming and maintaining networks with other people with the same identity: Xiao Hong’s and Xiao Jun’s first destination after leaving Harbin was Qingdao, where their friend and fellow member of the Northeastern Writers Group Shu Qun was already living.

After meeting Lu Xun, they also introduced him to the translations of their friend and fellow member of the Northeastern Writers Group, Jin Ren³⁶ demonstrating that these ties remained intact even after they were embedded within the larger literary world in Shanghai. After Xiao Hong became Lu Xun’s protégée, she also continued to maintain friendships with other Northeastern writers, such as Shu Qun, Luo Feng, and Bai Lang, who had also moved to Shanghai by this time. They were published and anthologized together as Northeastern Writers, indicating that their regional identity continued to persist as a way of defining them in relation to other writers in Shanghai.

³⁵ For more on the function of native-place identity among Chinese migrants, see Goodman, *Native Place* and Honig, *Creating Chinese Ethnicity*.

³⁶ See Xiao Jun, *Lu Xun gei Xiao Jun Xiao hong xinjian zhushi: shougaoben* (Beijing: Jincheng chubanshe, 2011).

It is important to remember that the large body of literature produced by the members of the Northeastern Writers Group were written at a remove from Manchuria, which was now the Japanese-controlled state, Manchukuo. To put it simply, the identity of the members of the Northeastern Writers Group was a migrant identity, coming into being through writings published outside the Northeast. Whether their works were set in their remembered pasts before Japanese rule or in imagined lives under the new regime, it is important to read these works as not simply direct reportage on life in the Northeast, past or present, but as texts mediated through their experiences since coming south.

The migration of the Northeastern writers also illustrates the ambivalent position that the Northeast occupied in the imaginary of Chinese national literature. This predicament is summed up in Xiao Hong's description of Xiao Jun's and her flight from Harbin. In her account, Xiao Hong refers to their decision to leave as *hui guo* (to return to their native country). The strange phrasing attempts to describe the predicament of Xiao Hong and her fellow writers who had essentially lost their nationalities twice, first by witnessing the deterritorialization of their homeland and its transformation into Manchukuo and then later by abandoning the Northeast and "returning" to the Republic of China. While this was a homecoming of sorts, they had to make their way and settle in unfamiliar, or rather, unhomey places.

The Northeastern writers stood out in Shanghai, set apart by their accents and their manners. Furthermore, their status carried with it the mystique of the political refugee and patriot. Several members of Xiao Hong's literary circle remembered encountering Xiao Hong and Xiao Jun for the first time and coupled this meeting with the significance of their unwillingness to live under Japanese oppression: belonging to China was something that they had been compelled to choose. Xu Guangping introduced them to her readers as "two

Northerners, unwilling to submit to slavery.”³⁷ Manchuria was also a region on the geographic and cultural periphery of China, and the couple’s frank manners and unfamiliar food were also seen as part of their belonging to the hinterland of the country. Their appearance was seen as exotic, showing a markedly different cultural background: their Shanghai friends noted their preference for Northeastern Chinese food and Russian dress.

Members of the Northeastern Writers Group continued to write stories set in or about their homeland as they rebuilt their lives and careers in other places, most often Shanghai or Beijing. Recent scholarship on Manchurian literature has attempted to reconstruct a model for their contributions as a kind of native place literature, reflective of their unique characteristics. In his study of the Northeastern Writers, Pang Zengyu attempts to link their literary production to a consistent aesthetic shared by the writers. Duanmu Hongliang, Xiao Jun, and Xiao Hong, as the three most prominent Northeastern writers, receive the bulk of his attention. Pang constructs Northeastern literature as a literature of pioneers, populated by stoic men of action and strong-willed, passionate women. One of the unusual qualities singled out by almost all scholars of Northeastern literature is the multiethnic configurations of the characters. In the grand sagas written by Xiao Jun, Duanmu Hongliang, and Luo Binji, men occasionally take Russian, Korean, or Japanese brides, a testament to the competing flows of migration and imperialism at work. In addition, the narratives constructed by these authors assert the characters’ right to the unspoiled Manchurian wilderness through the sense of rootedness gained by a family’s settlement on the frontier.³⁸

³⁷ Xu Guangping, “Yi Xiao Hong,” in *Yi Xiao Hong*, ed. Wang Guanquan (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 2011), 47.

³⁸ For studies of similar works written in Manchukuo and Korea, see Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity* and Hyun Ok Park, *Two Dreams in One Bed: Empire, Social Life and the Origins of North Korean Revolution in Manchuria* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

Although Pang attempts to fit Xiao Hong into this model, only selective quotation and a narrow interpretation of her works allows her to fit comfortably into this paradigm of Northeastern literature. He characterizes emphasizing the headstrong women which accord with his formulation of what constitutes a Northeastern literature. While Xiao Hong's work features many strong female characters, he has to ignore the mechanisms of subjugation and punishment that restrict female agency in her work. Rather than depicting the heroic settlement of the frontier, Xiao Hong turns an unsentimental eye towards the cost of endurance on an unforgiving landscape. Lydia Liu describes Xiao Hong's ambivalent approach to the anti-Japanese uprising in her novel *The Field of Life and Death*, remarking that Xiao Hong focuses on the bodies of her female characters, used by men and then discarded when no longer useful. Lydia Liu extends Meng Yue and Dai Jinhua's seminal feminist assertion that Xiao Hong was a woman writer first and a leftist writer second, emphasizing the ways in which Xiao Hong's depiction of the abuse of female bodies in both peace and war belies the promise of the national project. In the novel, women are abused by Japanese soldiers as Chinese national subjects but also victimized by the patriarchal and misogynist village society because they are female. Pang is able to apply his reading of a hearty frontier society to Xiao Hong's work only by glossing over the frontier's brutal cost to female bodies.³⁹

Xiao Hong's work has often been read as either supportive of the national project or about her native place, however, it stands apart from either of these positions. While she writes critically of Japanese imperialism, she does not glorify the pioneering spirit of the Han Chinese settlers of Manchuria; rather, she depicts the hard lot of village women at the hands of both

³⁹ Lydia Liu, "The Female Body and Nationalist Discourse: Manchuria in Xiao Hong's *Field of Life and Death*," in *Body, Subject, and Power in China*, ed. Angela Zito and Tani Barlow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 157-180.

invading soldiers and their own menfolk. Furthermore, her depictions of her homeland do not erase or obscure the presence of other ethnic groups on the landscape. In her later work, she shows particular interest in refugees who have arrived in the Northeast from other places, Jews from Russia or Koreans from colonized Korea who hold oppositional political views from the current government in their respective homelands. Although from the perspective of her location in Shanghai or Hong Kong, her writings on the homeland can be read as her own reterritorialization of the homeland, Xiao Hong never denies the contradictory promises of return to the homeland hold for minor peoples, the poor and particularly women.

Xiao Hong's concerns were not only focused on Manchuria in the Chinese Republican context. Her itinerary as a displaced person, beginning in Qingdao and ending in Hong Kong, seems to have given her a new awareness of the similarities between her own plight as an émigré Northeasterner and the status of members of "minor cultures," the *kharbintsy* and Korean migrants whom she had encountered in Harbin. Through encounters with other homeless women, Xiao Hong explores the way in which homeland is altered and refracted through exile and displacement. Shu-mei Shih and Françoise Lionnet's concept of minor transnationalism provides a useful means of thinking through Xiao Hong's process of conceptualizing these minor-to-minor connections. It eschews the conventional approach to studying the contributions of minority cultures (i.e., studying the margin in relation to the center). Instead, it calls for studies of "the relationships between different margins."⁴⁰ Rather than celebrating minor cultures as rootless or nomadic, minor transnationalism acknowledges the ways in which minor cultures continue to be affected by multiple or overlapping points of contact with nationalism or colonialism. Xiao Hong's imagined Manchuria, with its flows of refugees, colonial subjects, and

⁴⁰ Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih., ed. *Minor Transnationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

coolie labor drawn from a variety of different nations, is certainly a field where numerous margins intersect and come into contact with one another.

Manchuria through New Eyes: Xiao Hong's Minor Encounters

Xiao Hong's first written works were short stories written and published in Harbin in the early 1930s. While these stories contained some themes that were developed in her later work, there was very little that would have set them apart from leftist fiction written anywhere else in China at the time. These stories focused on the plight of factory workers or other members of the urban poor in Harbin; however, except for the occasional glimpse of a Russian on the street, there is little sense of specificity to the settings.

Xiao Hong's writing about Manchuria changed markedly after she left Harbin in 1932. Beginning with *The Field of Life and Death*, her works increasingly focus on the specifics of life in Manchuria. For the first time, she takes a more extensive look at the Russian and Korean populations of Harbin. Her participation in Lu Xun's literary circle is one explanation for this change of heart. Lu Xun and his protégés were interested in exploring the possibilities of internationalism and the unity of the struggles of oppressed peoples throughout the world. Lu Xun himself read and translated proletarian literature from other countries and occasionally collaborated on translation projects.⁴¹ The loss of her homeland may have made Xiao Hong more acutely aware in retrospect of the struggles of Russians and Koreans in her homeland, at least to the extent that their difficulties resonated with hers.

These connections also emphasize the unique ethnic makeup of Harbin, which allowed for such encounters. Scholars of the Northeastern Writers Group have noted the presence of non-

⁴¹ See Richard So, "Coolie Democracy: U.S.-China Political and Literary Exchange, 1925-1955," (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2010).

Chinese characters as a characteristic of these writers' fiction, a testament to the multicultural and contested terrain of their homeland. The prominence of Russian characters in Northeastern fiction has been noted not only for the frequency of their appearance, since Russian émigrés were a common sight in many Chinese cities such as Shanghai and Tianjin, but also for their integration into the Chinese family, as seen in the fiction of Luo Binji and Xiao Jun. The depiction of Chinese men marrying Russian women attests to the virility of the Chinese frontiersman. The seamless coding of their offspring as unproblematically Chinese also suggests that Russian women, often stateless wanderers, were being assimilated into the Chinese nation-state. Xiao Hong's fiction runs counter to the assimilating logic of other Northeastern writers by discussing the *kharbintsy* as a separate community in Harbin, living on their own terms, involved in their own struggle to determine their place in relation to Russia and China.

"Sophia's Distress" (Sufeiya de chouku) is an anecdote published in *Bridge (Qiao)*, a collection of short stories and nonfiction published three months after Xiao Hong's more famous short fiction collection *Market Street (Shangshi jie)*. In this story, she offers a nuanced depiction of the Russian population of Harbin through a series of conversations between the narrator and her Russian-language teacher, Sophia. Sophia and the narrator get to know each other on a professional basis through the narrator's lessons but gradually become friends, singing and dancing together and talking about the cultural differences between Russian and Chinese women.

The narrator inadvertently touches on a sore point when she asks about a term she has heard on the street in Harbin and is used to refer to some Russians, the "poor party." Although Sophia does not appear to belong to the "poor party," she identifies as such, although the narrator never dares to ask her why. She explains to the narrator that poor Russians, Gypsies, and Jews can all be called members of the "poor party."

In the course of their conversation, the topic of returning to Russia comes up.

“Gypsies can speak Russian; I have heard them speak it on the streets.”
“That’s right, many Jews can speak Russian too!” Sophia arched her eyebrows.
“The man with one eye who plays the accordion on the street, is he Russian too?”
“Yes, he’s a Russian.”
“Why doesn’t he go back?”
“Go back to Russia! You are asking why we don’t go back there?” Her eyebrows were like leaves frozen in the light of the dawn; they didn’t so much as twitch.
“I don’t know.” I was a bit flustered.
“Which country should the Jewish people go back to?”
I said: “I don’t know.”

“吉卜賽人也會講俄國話的，我在街上聽到過。”
“會的，猶太人也多半會俄國話！”索菲亞的眉毛動彈了一下。
“在街上拉手風琴的一個眼睛的人，他也是俄國人嗎？”
“是俄國人。”
“他為什麼不回國呢？”
“回國！那你說我們為什麼不回國？”她的眉毛好像在黎明時候靜止著的樹葉，一點也沒有搖動。
“我不知道。”我實在是慌亂了一刻。
“那麼猶太人會什麼過呢？”
我說：“我不知道。”⁴²

In this dialogue, the characters examine the commonalities and differences between three groups who have all been lumped together under the pejorative term “poor party.” It is clear that all the members of the “poor party” are essentially stateless people, deprived of citizenship when Russia changed hands. Interestingly, Xiao Hong chose to highlight the predicament of two groups who fit awkwardly into the discourse of nationalism. On the one hand, the Jews and the Gypsies have fallen outside the definitions of citizenship due to their second-class status, based on discriminatory laws and, in the case of the Gypsies, their nomadic lifestyle. White Russians, on the other hand, are exiles who have chosen to reject the current political ideology of their native land.

⁴² Xiao Hong, *Xiao Hong shinian ji 1932-1942* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2009), 294-95.

Whereas the Chinese denizens of Harbin might view the members of the “poor party” as all Russians, Xiao Hong’s narrator depicts the complexity of the situation from the White Russian perspective, which the narrator comes to appreciate through the conversation. Sophia’s incisive question of which country the Jews could return to if they could “go back” highlights the narrator’s thoughtless naïveté. Again, the Han Chinese perception of Russians as perpetual foreigners who will eventually return to their “home” is called into question. Xiao Hong has no answer for Sophia or for the reader. The predicament of the Jews and Gypsies is left as a problem forever deferred.

In their conversation, Sophia touches upon the predicament of people like herself who were born in China and find it difficult to have the same feelings towards their homeland as their parents do.

During last year’s Passover celebration, Papa got drunk. He was very sad...he danced for us, sang Caucasus songs...I think what he sang wasn’t really a song but rather the cry of his homesick longings, his voice was terribly loud! My little sister Mina asked him, “Papa, where is that song from?” He kept singing “hometown,” “hometown,” he sang of so many hometowns. We were born in China, the Caucasus, we don’t really know anything about it. Mama was also very sad. She cried! The Jew cried—the man who plays the accordion, when he cried, he held the gypsy girl. They were all thinking of home. But the gypsy girl didn’t cry, and I didn’t cry either. Mina laughed. She held up a wine bottle and danced the Caucasus dance with my father. She said, “This is a torch!” Papa said, “That’s right.” He said that the Caucasus dance uses a torch. Mina probably saw the torch in a movie.

去年”巴斯哈’節，爸爸喝多了酒，他傷心.....他給我們跳舞，唱高加索歌.....我想他唱的一定不是什麼歌曲，那是他想他家鄉的心情的嚎叫，他的聲音大得很厲害哩！我的妹妹米娜問他：‘爸爸唱的是哪裡的歌？’他接著就唱起‘家鄉’‘家鄉’來了，他唱著許多家鄉。我們生在中國地方，高加索，我們對它一點什麼也不知道。媽媽也許是傷心的，她哭了！猶太人哭了————拉手風琴的人，他哭的時候，把吉卜賽女孩爆了起來。也許他們都想著‘家鄉’。可是，吉卜賽女孩不哭，我也不哭。米娜還笑著，她舉起酒 瓶來跟著父親跳高加索舞，她一再說：‘這就是

火把！”爸爸說：‘對的。’他還是說高加索舞是有火把的。米娜一定是從電影上看到過火把。⁴³

Sophia’s account of their Passover and her feelings of exclusion further complicate the picture of the *kharbintsy*. As a second-generation émigré, she has a different perspective on the holiday, which is meant to serve as a focus of the Russians’ collective memory of their homeland. Instead the festival evokes vastly different memories in the different generations. Through Sophia, Xiao Hong suggests the evolving nature of *kharbintsy* identity. The festival is intended to unite all Russians; however, for the younger generation born in China, it serves only to emphasize their ambivalent relationship to their ostensible homeland. Sophia knows that her father’s songs are also intended for her, but she cannot respond in the way that she knows she should. Her sister Mina can act the right part; however, Sophia also knows that she is reconstructing it from pieces of their culture that she saw in a movie.

Half a year later, the narrator comes to visit Sophia, after they had fallen out of touch. Sophia is ill, but she announces that she intends to try to return to Russia to work. The next time the narrator comes to visit, Sophia’s mother tells her that Sophia is in the hospital with tuberculosis after she failed to get a reentry permit, which, her mother says, is very difficult for members of the “poor party.”

The ending of “Sophia’s Distress” suggests the constant predicament of displaced people, torn between making a home in a new land and attempting against all odds to return to their homeland. It is clear that Sophia is suffering from tuberculosis and her chances of returning to Russia are quite slim. The narrator leaves the question of Sophia’s homecoming unresolved.

⁴³ Xiao, *Shinian ji*, 296.

Xiao Hong revisited the topic of displaced persons several years later, in a short anecdote about an encounter with a Korean woman. There was a sizable Korean population in Manchuria that continued to grow throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In her study of Korean migration into Manchuria, Hyun Ok Park describes the precarious triangular relationship between Korean peasants, the Japanese colonial government, and Chinese officials in Manchuria. The migration of Korean bodies over the border into Manchuria allowed the Japanese to claim jurisdiction over the population in the name of protecting the interests of the Koreans who were by then their colonial subjects. This informal expansion of Japan's sphere of influence eventually led to the formation of Manchukuo. Although Koreans and Chinese both experienced oppression under the Japanese regime, they also competed for farmland, irrigation, and other resources.

Leftist Chinese writers were aware of the political situation in Korea and occasionally drew their readers' attention to the cause. In 1936, the same year that Xiao Hong published her story "Yali," two related publications on international literature appeared, including *Mountain Spirit: A Korean and Taiwanese Short Story Collection (Shanling: Chaoxian Taiwan duanpianji)*, edited by Xiao Hong's friend Hu Feng. Xiao Hong mentions reading *Mountain Spirit* in Tokyo in one of her short nonfiction pieces, "Lonely Life" (Gudu de shenghuo), written in 1936.

In the introduction to the collection, Hu Feng writes that the idea for the collection began with his translation of the eponymous story "Mountain Spirit" in a special issue of the magazine *Worldly Wisdom Magazine (Shijie zhishi zazhi)*. He notes that the reader response to his translation of a Taiwanese story led him to think of collecting enough Korean and Taiwanese short stories to make a book collection. However, since he could not read Korean and was unable to get hold of enough Taiwanese materials, he selected stories from Japanese periodicals and

then translated them. Hu Feng chose stories that reflect the parallel development of what he calls New Literature in all three places. In his introduction, he suggests that the Korean new literature movement began earlier than that in China, while Taiwanese new literature is just in its infancy, and that he is introducing these literatures to Chinese readers at a moment of crisis:

Somewhere in Japan, there seems to be a saying that means something like this: If you speak of your neighbor's doings, it's quite troublesome, so I have made a story set in a foreign land. However, the situation I am faced with here is just the opposite. For many years, we, the people, day by day have been moving ever closer to the point of no return, to the choice between life or death. Now, we have arrived at the moment when we must "ensure calm in the Orient." At this time, I have taken "foreign" stories and read them as our own doings. I believe my readers will sense the reason for this.

好像日本底什麼地方有一個這樣意思的諺語：如果說是鄰人底事情，就不方便了，所以我把那說成了外國底故事。我現在的處境恰恰相反。幾年以來，我們這民族一天一天走進了生死存亡的關頭前面，現在且已到了徹底地實行「保障東洋和平」的時期。在這樣的時候我把「外國」底故事讀成了自己們底事情，這原由我想讀者諸君一定體會得到。⁴⁴

Hu Feng also does not privilege the Chinese case over the Korean and Taiwanese cases, suggesting not that the Koreans and Taiwanese are foils of China but that they are peoples in similar situations and as such deserve their attention and sympathy.

Koreans are also present in the fiction of other Northeastern writers such as Shu Qun and Xiao Jun: the relationship between a Chinese boy and a Korean cattle herder is at the heart of Shu Qun's short story "Child without a Fatherland" (Meiyou zuguo de haizi) and the heroic Korean woman Anna is a main character in Xiao Jun's novel *Village in August* (*Bayue de xiangcun*), as well as Xiao Hong's anecdote, "Yali" discussed below. Unlike the *kharbintsy* that Xiao Hong describes in "Sophia's Distress," in all three stories, Korean identity seems shrouded in mystery. Each story hinges on the encounter between a Korean refugee and a Chinese person. Although the Korean characters appear to be in difficulty, their tragic stories are only belatedly

⁴⁴ Hu Feng, trans., *Shanling: Chaoxian Taiwan duanpianji* (Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo chubanshe, 1936), 11.

revealed to the narrator. In both cases, however, the Korean characters are able to pass for Chinese, or at least appear somewhat ambiguous, giving their identity a kind of fluidity that the Russians lack. Nevertheless, in Shu Qun and Xiao Jun's stories, the Korean characters' development is seamlessly associated with the cause of Chinese independence. Xiao Hong's depiction of a Korean woman differs markedly in terms of her depiction of Korean desire for *Korean* independence, rather than showing both Chinese and Korean characters united in their opposition to Japanese imperialism which often translates to a Sinocentric vision of anti-imperialism.

All three writers clearly view the plight of Korean refugees in China, particularly those who had fled Japanese-controlled territory because of their ties to the Korean resistance, as parallel to the plight of both the Chinese in Manchuria and, particularly as the war went on, the Chinese nation as a whole. In "Child without a Fatherland," one of the Chinese characters mocks the Korean boy, suggesting that the Koreans are "like rats" because they no longer have a flag or a nation. Shu Qun refutes that assessment in the story by depicting the heroism and patriotism of the Korean orphan Guoli.

In Xiao Jun's novel *Village in August*, Xiao Ming, one of the soldiers in the army of resistance against the Japanese, falls in love with Anna, the Korean assistant to the general. Anna is the daughter of an exiled member of the Korean resistance movement. Her father lives in Shanghai, assisting in the Chinese resistance against Japan. Anna was born in China after her father had fled Korea, which explains her fluency and literacy in Chinese. She serves as a model of a revolutionary woman, aiding the soldiers by writing letters and teaching them in their free time. Both Anna and her father have subordinated their own nationalistic impulses to the Chinese revolutionary cause. Anna believes that winning independence for China would be the first step

in regaining her homeland. Her love affair with a Chinese soldier and her membership in the army cause her to be integrated fairly seamlessly into the Chinese cause.

In “Yali,” Xiao Hong depicts the plight of a young Korean woman whom the narrator meets in Harbin. The narrator first makes Yali’s acquaintance when they are roommates for a short time. Although the narrator senses that there is something unusual about the Korean woman’s situation—Yali describes an “honest” father and an unnatural and shrewish mother—the narrator remains in the dark about her identity. Through a series of exchanges between the narrator and Yali, first as roommates and then later after both have moved, the narrator comes to know more about Yali’s story. Although she knows very little about Yali, the narrator constantly professes her love for the other woman, both because she admires her beauty and also because of their shared battle against melancholy.

When she asks where Yali’s hometown is, Yali does not answer and begins to cry. The answer is revealed only at the very end of the story in Yali’s farewell letter, in which she reveals that she is Korean and tells the story of how her father has been forced into exile in China and has had to marry her shrewish stepmother, who has now reported him to the police. The letter ends with Yali’s determination to return home and shed blood for her homeland.

Yali is established as a mysterious character; although the narrator occupies the same room, she barely knows anything about her. The innocuous question regarding Yali’s hometown is left unanswered. Yali’s response is only tearful silence. It is only after she has left that she reveals her true identity and tells her story, which involves the dissolution of her family and the loss of her homeland. However, unlike Sophia, who is barred from returning home by her ambiguous citizenship, Yali is still able to articulate her patriotism for her homeland, although she feels that her actions will lead to certain death. Nevertheless, Xiao Hong differs from her

contemporaries by stressing Yali's loyalty to her own homeland rather than becoming incorporated into the Chinese struggle for independence. As with her depiction of Sophia, Xiao Hong portrays the commonalities between the various minorities that inhabit the Northeast without putting these causes to work for Chinese nationalism.

Xiao Hong's internationalist interest in the plight of other stateless peoples can be seen as parallel to her own loss of a homeland and reflects an increased and broadened awareness made possible by her sojourns in other parts of China. "Yali" and "Sophia's Distress" can be read not only as an exploration of Xiao Hong's retrospective Harbin cosmopolitanism but also as introductions for wider readership of Shanghai periodicals to the multiplicity of political struggles in the north.

While Xiao Hong writes sympathetically about Sophia's and Yali's desire to return home, she also remains aware of the competing discourses that arise after a long absence. She wrote a short nonfiction piece, titled "Sleepless Night," about her own feelings towards her hometown in 1937. The story begins when she and Xiao Jun visit some friends who are also from the Northeast. Their conversation turns to their lost homeland, and they talk about how wonderful it would be to go home and eat sorghum porridge (*gaoliang mizhou*). Xiao Hong admits to herself that she doesn't really like sorghum porridge and normally wouldn't eat it, but after listening to Xiao Jun and their friends, it seemed that she should [可是經他們這一說，也學得非吃不可了]. Xiao Hong is aware that her fond memories of the Northeast differ from those of the other members of the group. However, rather than admit that her memory is different, she feels obligated to participate in this group camaraderie.

Xiao Hong and Xiao Jun return home and continue their discussion of what the Northeast was like. But as they both reminisce about different details, such as what their homes looked

like, each interrupts the other. Xiao Hong notes, “We told stories, but each of us seemed to be telling the story for ourselves, not for the other.” [我們講的故事，彼此都好像是將給自己聽，而不是為著對方.] Xiao Hong once again feels alienated by Xiao Jun’s version of their homeland. Although she feels compelled to play along in front of their friends, their memories of their homeland, rather than bringing them together, alienates them from each other. Xiao Hong observes that they both need to tell their stories; however, they are each really telling their stories for themselves, not for the other. Memory for Xiao Hong is something profoundly personal and individual. An attempt to experience the memories of another person, even one as close to her as her own partner, causes her to feel alienated.

Apparently oblivious to Xiao Hong’s growing hostility, Xiao Jun gets out a map of the natural resources of the Northeast and locates his hometown. He continues to talk at length about how wonderful it would be if they could go back together. He takes Xiao Hong on a verbal tour of his hometown and imagines going from house to house in his village with her, calling on all of his relatives. Although this story gives him a great deal of pleasure, Xiao Hong remains skeptical about how wonderful it would really be.

As for myself, I thought: “Would your family be so kind to an unfamiliar so-called wife?” I wanted to say this. However, this most likely wasn’t the cause of my insomnia. But all of this buying a donkey and eating *xianyan dou*, what about me? I would be riding on a donkey, but the place I would be going to would be unknown to me, and where I stopped would be another person’s hometown. Hometown, this idea was not ingrained too deeply in my mind. But when other people brought it up, I could feel my heart pound too! But before that patch of land had become part of Japan, I had already lost my “home.” My insomnia lasted until just before dawn, when among the sounds of the shots, I could make out a sound like the startled cry of a rooster in the fields in my hometown.

而我，我想：“你們家對於外來的所謂的‘媳婦’也一樣嗎？我想著這樣說了。”這失眠大概也許不是因為這個賣馱子的賣馱子，吃咸鹽豆的吃鹹鹽豆，而我呢？坐在馱子上，所去的仍是生疏的地方，我停著的仍然是別人的家鄉。家鄉這個觀念，在我本不甚切的，但當別人說起來的時候，我也就心慌了！雖然那塊土地在沒有成為日本

的之前，“家”在我就等於沒有了。這失眠一直繼續到黎明之前，在高射炮的炮聲中，我也聽到一聲聲和家鄉一樣的震抖在原野上的雞鳴。⁴⁵

Xiao Hong's reaction to Xiao Jun's joyous reunion is one of even greater alienation. Although she is being dragged along for this happy occasion, she feels more homeless than ever. As she points out, even if she were there, she would be received as an outsider, and one with a very precarious place as Xiao Jun's "so-called 'wife.'" When Xiao Jun surveys the map of their former homeland, he inscribes it with a fantasy of a joyful reunion with his relatives. Xiao Hong, in contrast, is beset with an even keener sense of personal loss. She recognizes that this sense of loss is more specific to her own situation rather than the geopolitical loss of Manchuria. As she points out, she was already estranged from her family by the time Manchuria became Manchukuo. Although Xiao Jun can still entertain fantasies of reuniting with his family in the future, for Xiao Hong this is impossible. Despite her knowledge of the hopelessness of her situation, she is haunted by homesickness. The sleepless nights that make up the title of the piece are caused by the sound of a rooster. Xiao Hong cannot sleep because the rooster's cry continually takes her back to the fields of her hometown. For her, one's hometown is intermittently and immediately present, conjured up by sounds and other sensory experiences. It is not something that can be experienced with others.

When read together with "Sleepless Night," "Yali" and "Sophia's Distress" reveal how the plight of other stateless peoples can be viewed alongside Xiao Hong's own sense of homelessness. Rather than advocating an appropriation of their struggles to further the Chinese resistance, she regards the longings of Sophia and Yali to return home as separate causes. Rather than seeing these two characters united under the banner of a Northeast under Chinese rule, each

⁴⁵ Xiao, *Shinian ji*, 317.

woman pursues her own desire to define her homeland and her relation to it for herself. There is little in her literary production from the time when she was a resident of Harbin to suggest that she was aware of the plight of the Russians and Koreans around her. It was her sojourns in other cities such as Shanghai and Qingdao, as well as the act of being uprooted from her homeland, that increased her interest in the multiethnic community of her homeland. However, for Sophia, Yali, and Xiao Hong herself, the possibility of really returning home is slim. Sophia faces religious persecution if she returns to her homeland, and her sense of her family's home in the Caucasus is not strong. Yali faces persecution and risks death to be a Korean revolutionary. Xiao Hong depicts her own predicament with more nuance. She recognizes her longing for a home where she belongs but also remains unwilling to romanticize factors such as the repressive attitude towards women that caused her to forsake her home in the first place. However, the desire to return home is inescapable and seems to be instinctual for all three women. Home continues to haunt Xiao Hong in particular, even when she knows that the place is no longer open to her.

Xiao Hong's Rhizomatic Novels of the Northeast

One defining characteristic of the Northeastern writers is their preoccupation with their native land. Xiao Hong is an excellent example: only a few of her major works, such as her final unfinished novel, *Ma Bole*, deal with parts of China outside the Northeast. Several Northeastern writers, such as Luo Binji and Duanmu Hongliang, chart the stories of Chinese families who have settled on the land. These stories depict the way that the characters become rooted in the land through settlement and the establishment of families. To refuse to take root in a new land can mean a life of isolation and a lonely death. Luo Binji's story "Fellow Villager Kang

Tiangang” (Xiangqin: Kang Tiangang) tells the tragic story of a migrant to the Northeast, whose refusal to give up the memory of the girl waiting for him in his hometown and his desire to earn enough money to win her hand make it impossible to put down roots in his new home. After he dies twenty years later, his bones are finally returned to his hometown. Kang’s choices are contrasted with an acquaintance who also hails from the same village but chooses to settle down with a crude Russian widow and her two children. Despite his dubious choice of bride, he prospers, siring many children who in turn marry and continue to better themselves on the frontier. Luo’s story depicts a way of relating to his homeland that hinges on the bloodline of the pioneer ancestors of modern Han Chinese Northeasterners, who abandoned their native place and chose to carve out a precarious living on the frontier among strange peoples. It is these settlers’ rootedness in their new home and their assimilation of foreign women as brides that creates the Han Northeasterners. Missing from the story are Mongols and Manchus who had inhabited this land for generations, rather in Luo’s depiction, the land appears to be empty before the Han settlers arrive.

The majority of these stories were written in the 1930s after Manchuria had become part of Manchukuo. These works should be read, at least in part, as an attempt to reinforce a Han Chinese claim to land which had belonged to many different peoples. Originally part of the Manchu Qing empire, much of the region fell under Russian imperial rule after Russia won the right to construct a railroad through it. Upon the Bolshevik revolution, the area reverted to Republican Chinese control before being annexed as part of the new Manchukuo state. Luo Binji, Duanmu Hongliang, and Xiao Jun all rely on the logic of birth and settlement to make these claims. Chinese coolies had settled the land, and as they did so, the land had become an integral part of China and the Han Chinese.

Xiao Hong also wrote several long works about life in the Northeast that reveal a different perspective on the issues of native place and belonging: *The Field of Life and Death*, *Market Street*, and *Tales of Hulan River*. Rather than examining the settlement of Manchuria over time, she depicts both rural villages and Harbin in a fundamentally different way. Instead of structuring a narrative around a main character, she strings together loosely connected chapters that gradually make up a narrative. All three works function rhizomatically: tangentially and horizontally connecting a disparate variety of anecdotes, characters, and places. Instead of asserting a claim to her homeland through vertical lines of settlement and familial descent, Xiao Hong attempts to resurrect the homeland of her memories through a detailed and patient unfolding of anecdotes. Unlike the familial model of rootedness to the land, she maps out the landscape and depicts the community as a collective entity. Like her fellow Northeastern writers, Xiao Hong is staking a claim to her native place; however, rather than relying on familial ties, which in her fiction she regards as a mechanism of oppression for women, Xiao Hong's imagined geographies serve as a counterweight to the reality of Manchurian occupation as well as the linear narratives of settlement of her fellow Northeastern writers that continued to shape the Northeast in the nationalist imaginary. Rather her invocation of the landscape is disconnected from lines of descent or the boundaries of property, but rather offers a decentered, composite picture of a place and a comprehensive survey of the lives of all of its inhabitants. In her portrayals of the Northeast, Manchus, Russians, Koreans and other ethnic groups are not erased, but populate the landscape through Xiao Hong's broad and expansive focus.

In "Sleepless Night" (discussed above), Xiao Jun surveys a map of Manchuria and conceives of his joyful return in relation to his family. His idea of a true return would be to visit all of his relatives, recoding himself as part of his extended family. For Xiao Jun, his claim to

Manchuria is based on lineage, his excitement to go home is based on familial ties that continue to persist even in exile. Xiao Hong is painfully aware that as someone who has broken with her own family she forsaken this sense of being rooted in the Northeast, leading her to drift first through the Northeast and later to leave it. Xiao Hong resists this lineage-based way of relating to their native place in part because accepting it would cause her to occupy a low position as Xiao Jun's "so-called wife" and having to take part in his own family's lineage. Instead, she chooses to relate to her homeland in a different way, through the intrusion of a sound very similar to the cry of a rooster in her hometown. It is the intrusion of the rooster's cry that causes Xiao Hong to remember her hometown.

In her longer works set in Manchuria, Xiao Hong follows a similar logic in negotiating her relationship to her homeland. I will examine two works, *Market Street*, completed in 1935 in Shanghai, and *Tales of Hulan River*, written in Hong Kong. Each work possesses a similar rhizomatic structure but focuses on the city and the country respectively. Both are also distinguished by some stylistic differences that reflect the changes in Xiao Hong's style.

Vagabonds in the City: Market Street

Market Street is one of Xiao Hong's lesser-known works, conventionally considered one of her collections of short pieces published in Shanghai in 1936. However, unlike her other collections, these stories make up a single narrative, from the beginning of the narrator's and her lover Langhua's life together to their departure from Harbin. Some pieces in the collection had been published earlier in magazines, but Xiao Hong added some new pieces to link the previously published segments for the collection. *Market Street*, like much of Xiao Hong's autobiographical writing, has been used primarily to enrich biographers' anecdotes. However, *Market Street*

functions, like many of Xiao Hong's other works as a composite novel, with interlocking anecdotes featuring recurring characters and sense of progression as the narrator and her lover move from place to place, eventually finding a more permanent home and a community before having to abandon it.

Market Street begins when the narrator and Langhua move into the Europa Hotel. In the first piece, "Hunger" (E), neither has enough money to eat regularly. While Langhua goes out to find work, the narrator remains in the hotel room, as they have only one set of warm clothes between them. To assuage her hunger, she contemplates stealing the *lieba*, the black bread left on the doorsteps of the neighboring rooms in the hotel. However, each time she thinks about it, she can't overcome her shame at stealing, even as she attempts to convince herself that it is not stealing because she is hungry. When Langhua leaves for work, her hunger is so great that "her four limbs are feeling rubbery, her stomach is like a ball with the air kicked out of it" (四肢軟弱一點, 肚子好像被踢打放了氣的皮球) (200). The narrator looks out of the hotel window onto the streets below:

The window was placed in the center of the wall, almost like a skylight. I opened the window and climbed up, stark naked, approaching the light. Market Street lay at my feet in a straight line, cluttered with buildings at all angles. The pillar-like chimneys of the factory, the criss-crossing streets, the bare trees lining the boulevard. The white clouds in the sky made all manner of shapes. A high and lonely wind ruffled my hair and tugged at my clothes. Market Street was laid out like a murky map of many colors laid out before our eyes. A thin layer of white frost lay on roofs and tips of the trees. The whole city sparkled under the sun, casting a layer of silver. My collar flapped in the breeze. I felt a chill. It seemed as if I was standing all alone on an uninhabited mountain. The white frost on every roof for one moment wasn't all silver, but snowflakes and rime. It was as if some terribly cold thing was breathing on me, as if my whole body was bathed in frozen water.

窗子在牆壁中央, 天窗似的, 我從窗口升了出去, 赤裸裸, 完全和日光接近; 市街臨在我的腳下, 直線的, 錯綜著許多角度的樓房, 大柱子一般工廠的煙囪, 街道橫順交織着, 禿光的街樹。白雲在天空作出各樣的曲線, 高空的風吹亂我的頭髮, 飄蕩我的衣襟。市街像一張繁繁雜雜顏色不清晰的地圖, 掛在我們眼前。樓頂和樹

稍都掛住一層稀薄的白霜，整個城市在陽光下閃閃煉煉撒了一層銀片。我的衣襟被風拍著作響，我冷了，我孤孤獨獨的好像站在無人的山頂。每家樓頂的白霜，一刻不是銀片了，而是些雪花、冰花，或是什麼更嚴寒的東西在吸我，像全身浴在冰水裡一般。⁴⁶

Inside the hotel, the narrator is alone all day, yet her time in the hotel is very carefully observed and described. The view from the hotel room encompasses all of Market Street and the entire city. The city is laid out at the narrator's feet, sparkling in the light. Xiao Hong refers to the view of Market Street from her window as a map, foreshadowing the exploration that the narrator will do both in Market Street and in the rest of Harbin.

After taking in the cityscape from her window, Xiao Hong turns her attention to the people below her. She notices a beggar woman on the street.

A woman is standing in the doorway of a chemist's shop begging. She had a child at her side, and in her coat she carried an even younger child. In the chemist's shop, no one paid her any mind; the passers-by didn't pay her any mind either, as if to say that it wasn't right that she had children, if you were poor you shouldn't have children, and if you had them, you all deserved to starve to death. I could only see half of the road, but this woman must have walked under my window, because I could hear the sound of the child crying very close by. "Sir, madam, have a heart, have a heart..." I couldn't see who she was pursuing. Although it was the third floor, I could hear quite clearly; she was definitely running and raggedly calling out, "Sir, sir...have a heart!" That woman was indeed just like me; she certainly had not eaten breakfast, and hadn't eaten dinner last night. Her voice, carried up to me from downstairs, infected me with its urgency. My stomach suddenly made a sound, and my guts ceaselessly called out....

一個女人站在一家藥店門口討錢，手下牽著孩子，衣襟裡著更小的孩子。藥店沒有人出來理她，過路人也不理她，都像說她有孩子不對，窮就不該有孩子，有也應該餓死。我只能看到街路的半面，那女人大概向我的窗下走來，因為我聽見那孩子的哭聲很近。“老爺，太太，可憐可憐...”可是看不見她在追逐誰，雖然是三層樓，也聽得這般清楚，她一定是跑得顛顛斷斷地呼喘：“老爺老爺...可憐吧！”那女人一定正像我，一定早飯還沒有吃，也許昨晚的也沒有吃。她在樓下急迫地來回的呼聲傳染了我，肚子立刻響起來，腸子不斷地呼叫...⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Ibid., 200.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

The narrator pays attention not only to the beggar woman's plight but to the reaction she perceives in the people on the street. These people are not the subject of her gaze in the same way as the beggar woman, but she imagines what their thoughts might be. However, her strongest interest is in the beggar woman's state of mind. The beggar woman's cries from the street elicit a response from the narrator's body. The desperation of the woman's voice causes the narrator's suppressed hunger to erupt within her. The narrator imagines that their bodies resonate as one. The beggar's body is overlaid on the narrators and elicits the same response in her. The narrator projects herself out of the hotel room and onto the woman on the street.

Shortly after she has this imagined encounter with the beggar woman, her middle school art teacher comes to call on her. This is one of the few mentions of the narrator's life before she began living in the Europa Hotel. The teacher is a kind man who seems concerned about the narrator's welfare. However, the narrator's attention becomes focused on his daughter,

His daughter, this little lady in a red flowered *qipao* under a fine black coat, sat on the wicker chair, very prettily. But she looked slightly annoyed: "Papa, we should go." What does the little lady know about life! She knows only beauty, how could she possibly understand life?

他的女兒，那個穿紅花旗袍的小姑娘，又加了一件黑絨上衣，她在藤椅上，怪美麗的。但她有點不耐煩的樣子：“爸爸，我們走吧。”小姑娘哪裡懂得人生！小姑娘只知道美，哪裡懂得人生？⁴⁸

Xiao Hong repeats the last sentiment several times in the piece. What seems to irritate the narrator most is that the daughter is incapable of understanding her situation. She assumes from the daughter's fashionable clothing and "pretty" manner that she cares only about beautiful things. The narrator's dissatisfaction with a fashionable modern lifestyle and her insistence on

⁴⁸ Ibid., 201.

focusing on the poor, whose lives she deems both terribly sad but also more truthful than the life of the “little lady,” will recur throughout the rest of *Market Street*.

Xiao Hong’s depiction of Harbin is limited to the narrator’s viewpoint and is also restricted by the short, sketch-like chapters of *Market Street*. However, these two passages exemplify the narrative structure most often at work. The narrator will depict the urban landscape of Harbin and then retreat into a narrower focus, most often concentrating on a specific figure. What often arises in the juxtaposition of the vastness of Harbin and the interior thoughts of the narrator is a sense of alienation. Xiao Hong not only describes Harbin in intimate detail but also presents the reader with the thoughts of the people around her. The narrator perceives or, in this case, imagines these thoughts to be at odds with her own.

As *Market Street* progresses, Xiao Hong introduces other locations around the city, giving the impression that the narrator’s world is growing larger, as she and Langhua are able to go out to eat and to shop. Eventually they make friends and become part of a group of intellectuals who meet in the “Cowbarn,” an affectionate nickname for the home of one of the group’s members. However, although the narrator has the freedom to wander about the city, she still feels the same periodic alienation.

In another anecdote, “Spring Is Hanging from the Treetops,” the narrator returns to Market Street at the beginning of spring. Since the long winter has ended, there is a celebratory feeling in the air.

Spring had arrived. The white poplars lining the street had sent out new growth. The horses pulling the carriage were more spirited. The carriage drivers’ *valenki* [felt boots] had disappeared. The feet of the foreign women on the sidewalk came out of their high boots. Laughter, the sounds of greeting on the street brought the sidewalk back to life. The stores quickly began to spread the spring mood. The flowers in the display windows had already opened and the grass was green, set up just like summer in the park.

春是來了，街頭的白楊樹躡著芽，拖馬車的馬冒著氣，馬車夫們的大氈靴也不見了，行人道上外國女人的腳又從長統套鞋裡顯現出來。笑聲，見面打招呼聲，又復活在行人道上。商店為著快快地傳播春天的感覺，櫥窗裡的花已經開了，草也綠了，那是佈置著公園的夏景。⁴⁹

The narrator observes many foreigners and upper-class Chinese walking along Market Street enjoying the fine weather. In contrast to her view of the street from the hotel room, which she had described as a bewildering map that lay spread out before her, Market Street in springtime is a place of great activity and increasing openness. People and horses move in a lively fashion. The shops have refreshed their displays in an attempt to capitalize on the festive atmosphere. The people have emerged from their heavy winter clothes. But the narrator is unable to participate in the gaiety once she catches a glimpse of the beggars on Market Street. Once again, her description of the vastness of urban space narrows to focus on the ignored destitute on its streets. Once she has seen them, she is unable to pay attention to anything else.

“Sir, madam, spare a little!” What song was this? Coming from behind me. It was not a song for spring! The beggar was chewing on a piece of rotten pear. One of his legs and one of his feet were so swollen that it seemed like the other one wasn’t there. “My leg was crippled by frostbite! Sir, spare a little! Oh! Oh!” Who still remembers winter? The sun was so warm! The trees on the boulevard had sprouted! A harmonica sang out on the next street over. It wasn’t a tune for spring. I only had to look at the blind man pulling on the harmonica’s head, and I immediately found it difficult to bear. The blind man could not grasp the spring; he didn’t have the eyes. The man with the hurt leg could not walk into spring. For him, having a leg was just as bad as having no leg.

“大爺，大奶奶……幫幫吧！……”這是什麼歌呢，從背後來的？這不是春天的歌吧！那個叫化子嘴裡吃著個爛梨，一條腿和一隻腳腫得把另一隻顯得好像不存在的。“我的腿凍壞啦！大爺，幫幫吧！唉唉……！”有記得冬天？陽光這樣暖了！街樹躡著芽！手風琴在隔道唱起來，這也不是春天的調，只要一看那個瞎子為著拉琴兒扭歪的頭，就覺得很殘忍。瞎人他摸不到春天，他沒有眼睛。壞了腿的人，他走不到春天，他有腿也等於無腿。⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Ibid., 248.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

In contrast to the lively street scene that has sprung up due to the warm spring weather, the beggar is taking the opportunity of people crowding onto Market Street to beg for change. Xiao Hong perceives the “songs” of the blind man and the injured man to be out of season, suggesting that it is difficult to be mindful of the suffering of others when the weather is so nice and the city looks so beautiful. These pleasant sights obscure the desperate poverty also present in the same scene. Like the display of a beautiful summer day in a store window, Market Street in springtime is equally fictional. This knowledge makes it impossible for the narrator to fully enter into the spring mood. Once again, the sight of street beggars makes her aware of a different side to the city; while “foreigners” and wealthy Chinese talk and laugh in the streets, wearing beautiful clothes, the plight of the poor continues.

Throughout *Market Street*, Xiao Hong presents the reader with two images of Harbin. In one, the expansive topography of a cosmopolitan city is enchanting, overwhelming, and beautiful, but the Harbin that captures her attention is different, a city of beggars and the urban poor who exist side by side amidst all this beauty. Xiao Hong’s narrator identifies with the beggar woman to the point that her own body shares the hunger pangs that she imagines the woman also feels. While she doesn’t identify as strongly with the beggars on the street in the spring, their presence makes her aware that the attractive shop fronts and the merriment are superficial markers of the arrival of spring and that not all denizens of Harbin can share in it.

Harbin seems to overwhelm the narrator, causing her to focus on a few individuals to sympathize with. As a result, the reader gains a sense of the topography of Harbin only when the narrator ventures out of her hotel room or lodgings for a brief time. Our vision of the city is a restricted one, confined and fragmented through the anecdotes that make up *Market Street*. As a

result, the Harbin that Xiao Hong conjures up is a limited and idiosyncratic vision of the city, punctuated by a few encounters between acquaintances or strangers. Just as the narrator and Langhua gain a community, they are wrenched away from it after Manchuria becomes Manchukuo. Rather than suggesting a national claim to the land, Xiao Hong's depiction of Harbin is personal, focusing on the minor-to-minor connections with her friends and the beggars whose plight reminds her of her own. Rather than presenting a settler's claim of ownership or a relationship to Harbin based on vertical familial ties, Xiao Hong's depiction of the landscape suggests a horizontal approach to relating to the land, based on tenuous friendships, glimpses of recognition, and chance encounters. These fragmented connections and the anecdotal structure of *Market Street* represent a radically different way of relating to the homeland focusing the breadth of human experience in the city rather than the length of Han settlement there.

Like the work of other Northeastern writers, Xiao Hong's writings demonstrate her familiarity with and connection to the land. But rather than conceiving of this relationship through the formation of families and lineage, her novels move horizontally between different characters, depicting the community in its entirety, the layout of streets, the network of village acquaintances, and the appearance of the buildings. These connections, like her encounters with Sophia and Yali, form a different way of relating to land and place. The narrator's fleeting sense of kinship with beggars and other poor people causes her to relate to the city and access it in a new way. Her way of accessing the city is also fleeting, her ways of relating to the city change as her economic status changes and eventually come to an end all together when she and Langhua are forced to leave Harbin.

Visions of Home: The Resurrection of Hulan

After Shanghai fell to the Japanese, Xiao Hong and Xiao Jun fled Shanghai. While on the road, they ended their relationship. Xiao Jun joined the army, and Xiao Hong entered into a relationship with another Northeastern writer, Duanmu Hongliang. They traveled to the British colony of Hong Kong, where Xiao Hong would spend the last two years of her life. Both Duanmu and Xiao Hong were active in the literary sphere set up by artists, journalists, and writers displaced from Shanghai, the former publishing center of China. For the next few years, Hong Kong became one of the centers of Chinese publication in exile.⁵¹

The first part of Xiao Hong's last complete novel, *Tales of Hulan River* was serialized in *Singtao Daily (Xingdao ribao)*, edited by another recent refugee writer, Dai Wangshu. The complete version was finally collected and published in book form in 1942, a year after Xiao Hong's death.⁵² Hailed as one of her greatest novels, *Tales of Hulan River*, in particular the final portion which deals with a landowning family with a young daughter, has been viewed as a work of autobiographical fiction in which Xiao Hong records the local lore of her hometown. Many biographers will closely recount anecdotes from the novel as illustration of Xiao Hong's family life. Certainly the novel accords closely with what we know of her hometown and her family background; however, while most literary critics have read her novel as depicting her native place, I read *Tales of Hulan River* as a work that writes back towards her memory of the Northeast from her location in Hong Kong. In contrast to her claustrophobic vision of Harbin in *Market Street*, Xiao Hong's vision of Hulan River is expansive and methodical, moving slowly from the center of town farther out to her family's estate. This approach is similar to her work in

⁵¹ While restrictions on free speech were not as harsh as under Japanese rule, during this period, the British censored negative mentions of Japanese imperialism because they wanted to avoid provoking a Japanese attack on their Asian colonies.

⁵² Luo Binji asserts in *Xiao Hong xiaozhuan* that Xiao Hong indicated on her deathbed that both *Hulan he zhuan* and *Ma Bole* were not complete. See Luo Binji, *Xiao Hong xiaozhuan* (Xianggang: Tiandi tushu youxian gongsi, 1991).

The Field of Life and Death, which also portrays a village as an organism; both works have no main character and very little in the way of an overarching narrative. Both are attempts to portray a rural Manchurian village as a community in which numerous characters interact with one another. *Tales of Hulan River* differs in Xiao Hong's way of writing about the village. Rather than moving fitfully from character to character, she maps out a community in the novel.

In Hong Kong, Xiao Hong also wrote several short pieces that portray life in Manchuria under Japanese rule. While they generally are unremarkable as fiction, they are indicative of her relationship to the Northeast at the time. As discussed above, Xiao Hong's literary identity was as a Northeastern writer, but over time and distance, her relationship to the current state of affairs in Manchuria had become quite tenuous. Rather than attempting to imagine the Manchuria of her present-day, Xiao Hong attempts to invoke her Manchuria of the past, however she remains suspicious of claims of rootedness or ownership, choosing to continue her horizontal exploration of the town through fragmented memories and descriptions of space and geography. Rather than a map of natural resources which shows which areas are exploitable, Xiao Hong recreates a geography resonant with personal and private significance.

Xiao Hong opens the novel from the point of view of someone arriving in the town.

Hulan River was that sort of small town. This little town wasn't a particularly bustling one. There were only two streets, one that ran north to south and one that ran west to east. The most well-known was Cross Road. The whole town's essence was concentrated at the heart of it. Cross Road had a jewelry store, a cloth store, oil and salt store, a tea shop, and a medicine shop. There was even a tooth-pulling Western doctor.

呼蘭河就是這樣的小城，這小城並不怎樣繁華，只有兩條大街，一條從南到北，一條從東到西，而最有名的算是十字街了。十字街口集中了全城的精華。十字街上有金銀首飾店、布庄、油鹽店、茶庄、藥店，也有拔牙的洋醫生。⁵³

⁵³ Xiao, *Shinian ji*, 660.

Xiao Hong's description turns from the main street of the town to each of the individual stores. The narrator describes the stores and what people use them for. Occasionally she describes the people who work at the stores and their eventual fates, whether they go out of business or endure. In doing so, the reader gains insight into the character of the community, the residents' distrust of both the Western-educated doctor and the female doctor, both of whom eventually go out of business. However, this is communicated not through gossip between villagers but through the disembodied voice of the narrator. In this way, the community of Hulan River becomes its own character. After describing the heart of the town, the narrator branches off into the side streets.

In the town, besides Cross Road there were two other streets, one called East Second Street and the other called West Second Street. These two streets ran north to south. They were about two miles long. There wasn't anything particularly worth talking about on these two streets. There were a few temples, a few *shaobing* stands, a few grain sheds.

城裡除了十字街之外，還有兩條街，一條叫做東二道街，一條叫做西二道街。這兩條是從南到北的，大概有五六里長。這兩條街上沒有什麼好記載的，有幾座廟，有幾家燒餅鋪，有幾家糧棧。⁵⁴

Xiao Hong's description of Hulan River moves deliberately from the center of the town outward, towards the smaller streets and alleys. Her description is seemingly objective, describing the stores and vendors that populate the town center. Yet at the same time, in her meticulous description of the alignment of the streets and the different character of the stores, she creates a map of the heart of the town that is visible and easy to navigate for the reader. From this description of the city, Xiao Hong moves methodically to describing the schools and temples. From the description of these organizations, to the practices and amusements of the townspeople who gather to see plays, as well as the bittersweet meetings between married sisters who rarely

⁵⁴ Ibid.

get to see each other, Xiao Hong's description is almost anthropological in its distance from her characters, and yet she is intimately familiar with the customs that she is describing. The detachment comes from the narrator's position of introducing the town and its customs to the reader.

The first three sections of *Tales of Hulan River* are devoted to mapping the geography of the town and explaining the activities and annual celebrations of its residents. In these sections, Xiao Hong's tone is dispassionate as she introduces the material to the reader.

Besides these trivial bits of mundane and material existence, Hulan River had not a few grand events of a spiritual nature, such as the dance of the great god, singing harvest songs, setting river lanterns, outdoor operas, and the festival at the Great Lady Temple on the eighteenth day of the fourth month.

呼蘭河除了這些卑瑣平凡的實際生活之外，在精神上，也還有不少的盛舉，如：跳大神；唱秧歌；放河燈；野台子戲；四月十八月娘娘廟大會……⁵⁵

Xiao Hong enumerates a list of social and religious gatherings at the beginning of the chapter. Then she methodically examines each of them. The order of her treatment of these events differs slightly from the order of the list that she lays out above, placing them in chronological order. While Xiao Hong provides an imagined map of the village of Hulan River in the first section, in this section she reorders the village chronologically, creating a calendar of significant festivals and events that the village or at least large numbers of villagers participate in. Although she covers "bits of mundane and material existence" in the previous section, she turns her attention to instances of the carnivalesque, when the villagers live more fully.

Xiao Hong's intensely detailed descriptions of local customs have been read as evidence of her native expertise; to put it simply, she is assumed to be describing these things as they are. The detachment and the structured approach that she takes in her descriptions of Hulan River

⁵⁵ Ibid., 683.

suggest that she is aware that she is introducing her readers to the village and the region for the first time. Occasionally the narrator's limited perspective wavers slightly, and her awareness of other regions and other peoples slips through. In describing the audiences at the outdoor plays, she compares the listeners to Western concertgoers.

It was as if the next time when there was a beating drum, they would not have even wanted to listen. But that wasn't the case, as soon as the drum sounded, the wall climbers climbed over the walls, and the ear strainers strained their ears to listen. They were more enthusiastic than Westerners going to a concert.

似乎下回再有打鼓的連聽也不要聽了。其實不然，鼓一響就又是上牆頭的 上牆頭，側著耳朵聽的側著耳朵聽，比西洋人赴音樂會更熱心。⁵⁶

This passage describes the way that the villagers are attracted to the performance, drawn to it almost involuntarily. However, Xiao Hong also emphasizes their passion for the performance by contrasting their behavior to that of Western audiences. While the scope of *Tales of Hulan River* remains almost stubbornly limited to the village, in a few instances, such as the one above, the narrator betrays the perspective of someone who has left Hulan River and seen other peoples and parts of the country. This is what enables the narrator to make a judgment about what makes this village noteworthy and unusual. It also subtly positions Hulan River within the broader context of the world.

From these general descriptions of the village community, the novel then turns to the narrator's household. The family described is similar to Xiao Hong's depiction of her own family and her situation within it. She was the eldest daughter of a cruel and distant father and an impatient mother. Her paternal grandparents were still living. Her grandmother was also cruel to her, but her grandfather loved her and was the only one in the family who nurtured her. Xiao

⁵⁶ Ibid., 685.

Hong begins with her narrator's memories of the household and particularly of the back garden, where the narrator and her grandfather found refuge from persecution by other family members.

After discussing the household, Xiao Hong turns her attention to the nearby neighbors. She discusses their lives and their tragedies through her child narrator's observations of the community and what she overhears from servants and her grandfather about the goings-on in the village. As with her discussion of the businesses in the center of town, Xiao Hong repeats the disembodied rumors passed around within the community to give the reader a sense of what it was like to live in such a town. Most of the rumors that Xiao Hong repeats in *Tales of Hulan River* tend to be fairly mean-spirited, but employing rumors also allows her to show the way in which the village functions as a single entity, forming its own opinions and judgments of some of its more unfortunate members. These opinions often run counter to the narrator's opinions. She feels sympathy for many of the villagers that the others dismiss and condemn. In later sections of *Tales of Hulan River*, Xiao Hong refers to these collective opinions held by the majority of villagers in parentheses while continuing with the main narrative between the parenthetical sentences.

(When Feng the Hairlip's wife died, everyone thought that he was done for. She had left behind two children, one four or five years old, and the other just born.) Look at him! Let's see what he will do! The cook said, "Come and see, Feng the Hairlip is probably drinking again and sitting on the millstone and crying."

(馮歪嘴子的女人一死，大家學得這回馮歪嘴子算完了。扔下兩個孩子，一個四五歲，一個剛生下來。) 看吧，看他可怎樣辦！老廚子說：“看熱鬧吧，馮歪嘴子又該喝酒了，又該坐在磨盤上哭了。”⁵⁷

The discussions of the different villagers and the rumors surrounding them present a different way of mapping the village. Rather than depicting the village through the layout of its streets or

⁵⁷ Ibid., 807.

the calendar of its celebrations, the later sections link the village through a network of gossip and rumor. In the narrator's household, rumor is passed from the cook or the narrator's grandfather and is overheard by the child narrator. These stories also come from the villagers' attempts to fill in the missing pieces after witnessing a major spectacle, such as Feng the Hairlip weeping by the mill or the beating, exorcism, and death of the young daughter-in-law of one of the neighbors. These public occasions in which the narrator's neighbors are seen and judged is another way that the village functions together.

In the afterword, Xiao Hong takes one final look at the village of Hulan River. For most of the narrative, the scope has been confined to the village, and Xiao Hong now makes it clear that the novel was written at a remove of many years.

In the little town of Hulan River once lived my grandfather; now it holds his grave. When I was born, my grandfather was already more than sixty. When I was four or five, grandfather was almost seventy. I wasn't yet twenty when grandpa was eighty or so. He died shortly after he turned eighty. The former masters of the back garden have now vanished. The old master had died and the little master had fled. The butterflies, grasshoppers, and dragonflies of the garden might still appear year after year, but it could be utterly desolate. The little cucumbers and big pumpkins might still grow in the garden year after year. But it is possible that they are completely gone. At dawn, are the dewdrops still clustering on the racks of flower pots? Does the noon sun still shine down on the big sunflowers? At dusk, do the evening clouds little by little shape themselves into a horse, and after a short time little by little change into the shape of a dog? But all of that is difficult to call to mind now. I heard about Second Uncle You's death. If the cook lives, he must be very old by now. As for all of the neighbors, I don't know what they are doing now. As for the miller in the mill and what became of him, I have no idea. What I have recorded here are not beautiful stories, but they fill my memories of my childhood. Since it is difficult for me to completely forget these stories, I have recorded them here.

呼蘭河這小城裡邊，以前住著我的祖父，現在埋著我的祖父。我生的時候，祖父已經六十多歲，我長到四五歲，祖父就快七十了。我還沒有長到二十歲，祖父就七八十歲了。祖父一過了八十，祖父就死了。從前那後花園的主人，而今不見了。老主人死了，小主人逃荒去了。那園裡的蝴蝶，螞蚱，蜻蜓，也許還是年年仍舊，也許現在完全荒涼了。小黃瓜，大倭瓜，也許還是年年地種著，也許現在根本沒有了。那早晨的露珠是不是還落在花盆架上，那午間的太陽是不是還照著那大向日葵，那黃昏時候的紅霞是不是還會一會功夫便出來一匹馬來，一會功夫會變出來一匹狗

來，那麼變著。這一些不能想像了。聽說有二伯死了。老廚子就是活著年紀也不小了。東鄰西捨也都不知道怎樣了。至於那磨坊裡的磨倌，至今究竟如何，則完全不曉得了。以上我所寫的並沒有什麼優美的故事，只因他們充滿我幼年的記憶，忘卻不了，難以忘卻，就記在這裡。⁵⁸

Xiao Hong connects her loss of Hulan River primarily with the loss of her grandfather.

Throughout the first part of the afterword, she presents a series of contrasting images: her grandfather living and then dead, the insects and vegetables of the garden. For each one, Xiao Hong portrays a kind of double vision imposed on the back garden, acknowledging the possibility that her memories no longer conform to the garden's current reality. The insects may be there, but they may have all gone. Someone may still grow vegetables in the garden, but it may lie desolate, the only indirect reference to the political situation in Manchuria. The strength of her vision is a testament to the power of her memories of the place. She acknowledges the fallibility of memory and in doing so undercuts the possibility of an exile's nostalgic tendencies. Rather than insisting on the authenticity of her memories, Xiao Hong accepts the fact that she will never know what has happened to her old home. Things may be as she imagines them, but she is aware that all may not be well in the village.

In the afterword, she turns to the single fact that she does know and describes the passing of Second Uncle You, which she has heard about. She then speculates on the ages and fates of the other servants and neighbors. They may still be there if they are alive, or they may have scattered. She, and by extension the reader, will never know the fate of the people she describes. Second Uncle You survives only in her memories.

At the conclusion of the afterword, Xiao Hong describes the anecdotes characterized in the novel as almost burdensome. She is unable to forget them, and these anecdotes compose a

⁵⁸ Ibid., 810.

large part of her memories of her childhood. It is because she cannot forget these stories that she has written them down. For Xiao Hong, the insects and vegetables of the back garden continue to exist because they appear in her memory. She is unable to remember them in any other way, but she can still acknowledge the likelihood that her home has experienced great changes under the new regime.

Xiao Hong's structured and methodical manner of outlining the village—cataloging its layout, the major festivals, and the fabric of everyday life before moving closer to the narrator's household and the tenants and farmers in the surrounding area—suggests that she was attempting to establish the village of Hulan River as a physical place and describe the character of its inhabitants. Rather than focusing on family or ownership of land, although a landowning family resembling her own appears in the story her focus remains elsewhere. Even within the family, her focus remains on its most disenfranchised members, the aging grandfather, Uncle You, and the forgotten little girl. Rather than reconfiguring the village in the service of the Chinese national project, Xiao Hong presents a personal geography based on the tenuous relations between the different villagers. Rather than the romantic or familial ties that are often deployed to signify a national community, the gossip, rumor, and sympathetic connection through which Xiao Hong links the village represent a different way of configuring a homeland, using a broad focus on the village as a whole, depicting all of its aspects for a short period of time. By offering a composite picture of the village, Xiao Hong puts forward an alternative way of laying claim to the land, not through personal claim, but by charting the myriad ways that the disenfranchised exist on it and gain pleasure from it.

Conclusion

Xiao Hong was never able to return to her native land. She died in 1942 in Hong Kong, shortly after the Japanese invaded Hong Kong. During her time in Hong Kong, she had been remarkably productive, producing two novels, *Tales of the Hulan River* and *Ma Bole*. Although *Ma Bole* remained unfinished after her health became too poor to continue to write. While in Hong Kong, her path once again crossed with the American socialist writer, Agnes Smedley, who had also fled the war in mainland China and was on her way back to the United States.

Smedley had met Xiao Hong in Shanghai when they were both part of Lu Xun's circle, but they renewed their acquaintance in Hong Kong. Smedley found her very ill and neglected by her husband, Duanmu Hongliang. She gave Xiao Hong some money and arranged for her to see a doctor before she left. Their encounter also fueled a literary exchange between the two. Smedley left some of her articles, later incorporated into her book *The Battle Hymn of China* with Xiao Hong. These were later translated into Chinese and published in the literary journal that Duanmu edited with his associate Zhou Jingwen.

Smedley also put Xiao Hong in touch with her friend Peggy Foster Snow, who later translated one of her short stories, "A Night in a Stable," into English and published it in the magazine she edited, *Asia*. Unfortunately Xiao Hong's royalties, which she sorely needed, and the news of its publication came shortly after her death. This translation marked the entry of Xiao Hong into American literature, and it came through the transnational literary community formed by Lu Xun and his circle, but which continued to have long lasting effects, not only on Chinese writers like Xiao Hong, who formed relationships with writers from other countries but these relationships also facilitated the circulation of their work leading to new dialogues and partnerships.

Xiao Hong's early death precluded the possibility of any of these relationships continuing past the end of the war, but Snow's translation suggests the ways in which these connections could have continued to develop if she had survived. American, Japanese, and Chinese leftist writers had already formed strong literary ties to one another before relations between the two countries were complicated by World War II and Cold War hostilities. While Xiao Hong's relationship to these writers was relatively brief, her writing and the circulation of her work through translation suggests the way that the possibilities of collaboration and literary circulation that existed even at the height of the Japanese invasion.

Tracing Xiao Hong's itinerary from the Northeast to Shanghai and finally to Hong Kong prompts a reevaluation of how we define the literature that we call Chinese literature, and in particular how the writer's movement between different regions within China today enables us to rethink how literature functions within what we might assume to be a national literature, particularly within the particularly volatile shifts in the borders of the Republic of China during this period. As Xiao Hong moved southward, the areas that the Nationalist regime in China controlled were shifting in sometimes unpredictable ways. Xiao Hong's interest in writing between places reveals the uneven literary landscape that existed at the time and allowing us to rethink how we conceive of world literary geography and how we account for the particularly turbulent period during World War II when the borders of many nations and colonial possessions shifted wildly. Rather than viewing Chinese literature and the borders of the Chinese nation-state as static, Xiao Hong's itinerary reveals the importance of looking at how writers and literature travels is written between regions and the nuances and insights that result from these travels, particularly how her views and portrayal of her native land have shifted throughout her career.

Chapter 2

Working Both Sides: Zhang Ailing's Dual Literary Careers

Zhang Ailing has had the most extensive bilingual writing career of the three writers examined in this dissertation. From the beginning of her career, she wrote between different languages and communities. In her early writings, she kept one foot in both the Sinophone and Anglophone worlds of Shanghai letters, in which she adopted a knowing voice that explains the behavior or perspective of one community of readers to another. In her later writings, particularly after her relocation to the United States, she attempted a similar authorial persona to act as a cultural broker, introducing China to the United States, however her stories about China did not find much favor with Anglophone audiences in the United States or England. She also bridged the Iron Curtain, transforming one of her few attempts at a socialist novel into a more desolate condemnation of cannibalistic families as well as her employment by the United States Information Service to write anti-Communist novels after she left mainland China in 1952. Zhang found lasting fame as the “last aristocrat” of semicolonial Shanghai, adopting this pose for Sinophone audiences in Hong Kong and Taiwan, while remaining conspicuously silent of her life in the United States.

Zhang's literary career which spans two languages have already been the subject of a number of studies in both Asian and Asian American studies. The renewed critical interest in Zhang's English novel *Rice Sprout Song* and the recent publication of two unpublished manuscripts, *Fall of the Pagoda* and *Book of Change*, have sparked a reexamination of her English-language career, particularly of those works written in the United States.⁵⁹ Although

⁵⁹ For discussion of Zhang's English-language career in Shanghai, see Shuang Shen's excellent study *Cosmopolitan Publics*. For studies of her United States career from an ethnic studies perspective, see Christopher Lee, *The*

Zhang has generally been considered politically disinterested, her career after leaving mainland China in 1952 was deeply embedded in the geopolitics of the Cold War, as was the beginning of the American discipline of area studies. She wrote anti-Communist novels for the United States government and worked at the University of California, Berkeley, to compile information on the Communist regime. Her employment in the United States came from the government's newfound Cold War need to compile information on China from reliable informants.

Despite her own lack of political participation, politics have been one of the main reasons that Zhang remains a problematic figure within the canon of Chinese literature. Her association with Hu Lancheng caused her to be labeled a traitor to Chinese national literature⁶⁰, someone whose personal history and lack of political conviction and patriotism make her unsuitable for inclusion in the canon.

In this chapter, I examine two intersections of Zhang Ailing's Anglophone and Sinophone careers and discuss her approach to navigating between multiple literary audiences, Anglophone and Sinophone, Shanghainese or Hong Konger, Communist or anti-Communist, and the ways in which she modified and adapted her work in order to do so. In doing so, Zhang functions as a cultural broker between different audiences, adapting to the geopolitical situations of her time throughout her long career.

Between Two Worlds: Literary Cultural Brokers

Semblance of Identity: Aesthetic Mediation in Asian American Literature (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012) and Wang Yin, "Transnational Assimilations: Literary Practices and the Racial Regime of Cold War America," (PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 2012).

⁶⁰ See Shuang Shen, "The Ends of Betrayal: Diaspora and Historical Representations in the Late Works of Zhang Ailing," *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 24 no. 1 (Spring 2012): 112-148.

In this section, I examine Zhang Ailing's writing between audiences in terms of her role as a cultural broker. Discussed primarily in anthropological and historical studies of the frontier and borderlands, where racially and culturally hybrid individuals move back and forth between cultures as mediators, cultural brokers not only act as mediators and translators but often push their own agendas. Their insight into one or more cultures enables them to interpret, mediate, and advocate for different linguistic and ethnic communities. In literary and film scholarship, directors have also been seen as cultural brokers who maneuver among a variety of film markets, making movies that move between different cultures and responding to the expectations of diverse audiences.

In North American studies, social scientists and historians have examined cultural brokers as men and women of various heritages who were able to traverse cultural borderlands through their knowledge of different languages and cultures. They describe a wide variety of people who took on the role of broker, from sympathetic missionaries to the Cherokee, who learned to speak the language and adapted their doctrines to the circumstances of the people they served, to Chinese Canadian immigration translators, who used their rare knowledge of both Cantonese dialects and Canadian law to reshape and win legal cases and carve out a social place for themselves.⁶¹

Several scholars focus on the way artists and writers in particular feel the need to record, document, and preserve specific cultural realities in their works; however, the works they produced should not be taken as simply exact reflections of the historical reality. These scholars also show how cultural productions by brokers engage with and attempt, whether successfully or

⁶¹ See Margaret Szasz, *Between Indian and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), Mae Ngai, *The Lucky Ones: One Family and the Extraordinary Invention of Chinese America*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010), and Lisa Mar, *Brokering Belonging: Chinese in Canada's Exclusion Era, 1885-1945*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

unsuccessfully, to shape the prevailing discourse on the communities they claim to represent. However, cultural brokers face a dilemma in that while they claim a kind of cultural authority from their communities of origin, they generally possess a cultural hybridity that tends to set them apart from both cultures. This position often gives them access to mainstream audiences but also can marginalize them in their original communities, although in Zhang's case her participation in Anglophone literary life remained largely separate from that of her Sinophone literary persona.

Cultural brokers have often been subjects of study in the disciplines of history and anthropology. No group is likelier than others to produce cultural brokers. Generally, a cultural broker can be any individual who possesses linguistic and/or cultural competence in two cultures, such as missionaries, traders, translators, and government workers. Cultural brokers often engage in linguistic negotiations, changing their positions and rhetoric to suit their audience. They move into the contact zones that develop between two cultures with the assumed intention of interpreting or translating one culture for the other.⁶² Cultural brokers can become unofficial representatives of the other culture, which gives them both a heavy responsibility and an authority that many attempt to use to their own advantage. The scholarship of Mae Ngai and Lisa Mar on Chinese American and Chinese Canadian government translators and interpreters as cultural brokers details the ways in which these brokers could use their cultural and linguistic ability to claim authority and influence in the Chinese immigrant community.⁶³ These cultural brokers had more privileged access to mainstream society, due to their knowledge of English and familiarity with the workings of the United States or Canadian government. This occasionally

⁶² See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

⁶³ See Ngai, *The Lucky Ones*, and Mar, *Brokering Belonging*.

allowed them to influence the North American discourse on the Chinese immigrant population by acting either as unofficial immigration lawyers and whistle-blowers or as translators and power brokers.

Scholars of Chinese cultural studies have also used the figure of the cultural broker to examine artists and writers who operate in the contact zones between different literary or cinematic markets.⁶⁴ Kenny Ng, in “The Screenwriter as Cultural Broker: Travels of Zhang Ailing’s *Comedy of Love*,” discusses the ways in which Zhang navigates between different markets in her screenwriting work. He defines the cultural broker as “a creative agent who mediates between differing cultural regions, media, and languages in the context of mass culture and commercial cinema.”⁶⁵ The cultural broker in the field of cultural production looks to the market for an opportunity to adapt his or her work so that it appeals to a new audience. Successful cultural brokers seek crossover hits such as Zhang Yimou’s *Hero* and Ang Lee’s *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

Zhang navigates the culturally fractured semicolonial borderland of Shanghai in the 1930s and 1940s, writing between a number of different Sinophone and Anglophone communities. After she fled mainland China in 1952, however, she embarked, largely out of necessity, on a more ambitious role as cultural broker between different nations. She was employed by the United States government to write anti-Communist fiction and later continued to broker the perceived reality of Communist China. At the same time, she also attempted to repack and market herself to Sinophone audiences in both Taiwan and Hong Kong, where her

⁶⁴ See Yomi Braester’s study of contemporary Chinese and Taiwanese directors as cultural brokers, “Chinese Cinema in the Age of Advertisement: The Filmmaker as a Cultural Broker,” *China Quarterly* 183 (2005): 549-67.

⁶⁵ See Kenny Ng, “The Screenwriter as Cultural Broker: Travels of Zhang Ailing’s *Comedy of Love*,” *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 20 no. 2 (October 2008): 135.

literary reputation grew rapidly, and also, though less successfully, to an Anglophone readership in the United States and England.

Zhang had several writing careers—as a Sinophone writer, an Anglophone writer, a screenwriter, and a translator. In these careers, she always tried to position herself as a cultural broker, someone who could introduce novel scenes of local color and serve as a mediator between two different cultures. The writing she did in Shanghai, which reflects the fragmentary and semicolonial community she was writing to, often presents different points of view to different audiences, C.T. Hsia notes that Zhang’s fiction draws from both highbrow and lowbrow, Chinese and Western cultures, “jazz music and Hollywood are of as much importance as Bach and Shakespeare; the tawdry passions of Shanghai Opera as useful as the exquisite sentiments of Chinese poetry. Miss Chang [Zhang Ailing] attends at once to vulgarity and refinement; her fiction is the richer for its range of sensibilities.”⁶⁶ Hsia portrays Zhang as a product of a semicolonial Shanghai sensibility, drawing from the vernacular traditions of Chinese and English literary traditions and using both to create a particularly rich literary landscape rife with symbolism recognizable to readers from each. Zhang also writes between different Sinophone communities, describing Hong Kong to Shanghai people. In her tales, Hong Kong is a colonial metropolis, corrupted and corrupting.

After leaving the People’s Republic of China for Hong Kong in 1952, Zhang began a new phase of her career as an Anglophone writer. Her first Anglophone novel, *Rice Sprout Song* enjoyed a fair amount of popularity in the United States, which gave Zhang some hope for an English-language career. She eventually moved to the United States and attempted to carve out a new role as a different kind of cultural broker, not as a writer navigating between Sinophone and

⁶⁶ C.T. Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, 3rd ed. (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1999).

Anglophone communities in Shanghai but as an expert on China behind the Iron Curtain. Zhang's novels had "the strange scent of truth,"⁶⁷ a whiff of authenticity, but after this first wave of success, she was unsuccessful in winning more recognition. As her fame in the Sinophone regions of Hong Kong and Taiwan grew, her Anglophone career was increasingly unsuccessful. Her later works are translations or rewrites of earlier work, and she was much less successful in terms of selling these novels to an Anglophone public.

Zhang then turned to literary scholarship, researching Qing dynasty literature such as *Dream of Red Mansions* and using her regional expertise to translate the Wu-dialect novel *Flowers of Shanghai* into Mandarin Chinese. Rather than relying on her educational background or other kinds of expertise, she found she had to base her authority on her reputation as a prominent Shanghainese, capable of both understanding and translating the traditional Chinese sensibility, and on her local knowledge of the Shanghainese dialect.

Zhang proved ultimately unsuccessful as a cultural broker bridging the Cold War divide between the People's Republic of China and the United States, but she did enjoy an increasingly successful literary career in Taiwan and Hong Kong. For her Sinophone readers, Zhang was a symbol of a society many perceived as lost. Her knowledge of Shanghai sophistication and her aristocratic lineage were perceived as reasons for her writing's authenticity. In addition, her ornate and classically influenced prose became a touchstone for many Sinophone writers, as David Der-wei Wang chronicles in his description of the "Zhang School" (Zhang pai) writers from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China for whom the ancestral matriarch (zushi nainai) Zhang Ailing has made her influence felt in the style of their prose.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ See Lee, *Semblance of Identity*.

⁶⁸ David Der-wei Wang, "'Zushi nainai' de gongguo." "In *Zaidu Zhang Ailing*, ed. Liu Shaoming, Liang Bingjun, and Xu Zidong, 303–6. (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2002).

From Shanghai to Hong Kong: Sinophone Communities across the Strait

Zhang Ailing embraced her role as a cultural broker both in Shanghai and in the United States; however, the act of repositioning and repackaging one's work between two languages, cultures, and communities often meant different things, depending on the stop on her itinerary. In Shanghai, she moved primarily between two different Sinophone communities, Shanghai and Hong Kong. Despite their similarities as multiethnic treaty ports, Hong Kong and Shanghai are frequently represented as divergent ideas of what an Asian port city could be. Zhang's representation of Hong Kong in many of her early works clearly demonstrates her simultaneous juxtaposition of Shanghai and Hong Kong as modern, cosmopolitan cities, but while she celebrates Shanghai's worldly incorporation of Western ideas and their ability to fuse them with Chinese sensibilities, she depicts Hong Kong a city with a rigid racial hierarchy, where Hong Kong Eurasians, rich Shanghai transplants, and Indian princesses vie for their place within high society, while the British silently monopolize the highest echelon of the social order.⁶⁹ In his discussion of Shanghai modernity, Leo Lee discusses the historical relationship between Hong Kong and Shanghai. Hong Kong is often constructed as the other Shanghai, a colonial city whose ethnically Chinese residents are depicted as "mimic men" who ape their British masters to a slavish degree. Lee suggests that "[c]olonial Hong Kong had always been a reminder of the 'semi-colonial' anxieties of Shanghai's residents."⁷⁰ Zhang's itinerary, which led her to move between Shanghai and Hong Kong multiple times throughout her life, is testament to the fact that both cities are deeply implicated in the development of the other; in both her stories and her life,

⁶⁹ It is interesting to note that Zhang's portrayal of Hong Kong softens somewhat over time, particularly in her autobiographical novels *Xiao Tuanyuan* and *The Book of Change*.

⁷⁰ Lee, *Shanghai Modern*, 333.

people and goods move back and forth between the British colony and the semicolonial metropolis, although Zhang's sympathies clearly lay with Shanghai. In her early fiction, her views of Hong Kong characterize her primarily as an outsider, transmitting Hong Kong idiosyncrasies for the amusement of a Shanghai audience.

On the one hand, her loving depictions of the native Wu dialect and her evocation of the Shanghainese accent demonstrate her familiarity with Shanghai's local culture. Hong Kong, on the other hand, is depicted in a very different way. While the Wu dialect adds texture and familiarity to Zhang's depictions of Shanghai, Cantonese is almost completely absent from her wonder tales (*chuanqi*) about Hong Kong. Rather, she has described her strategy for depicting Hong Kong as putting classical vernacular language, found in such late imperial classics as *Plum in the Golden Vase* (*Jinping mei*) and *Dream of Red Mansions* (*Honglou meng*), in the mouths of Hong Kong colonials. Zhang's desire for the incongruous effect of Cantonese concubines and Eurasians expressing themselves in classical language effectively removes the Cantonese dialect from the Hong Kong landscape. Unlike English, the language of the colonizers, the appearance of which is usually noted in the story, Cantonese remains absent, effaced by the literary language, reminiscent of late imperial vernacular fiction, in which her characters speak. This linguistic strategy also further others Hong Kong, depicting it as a place that follows the tempo of life in the Qing dynasty. As Zhang moves between the two Sinophone spheres of Shanghai and Hong Kong, her own itinerary parallels that of several of her characters, who similarly move to Hong Kong in search of new opportunities. However, her role as a cultural broker in this case is unidirectional. She uses Hong Kong and its residents as material for constructing her wonder tales for the entertainment of Shanghai residents.

In addition to the two Sinophone communities of Hong Kong and Shanghai, Zhang also moved between the Anglophone publishing world of Shanghai. In her superb study of the Anglophone literary sphere of Shanghai, Shuang Shen explores the difficult question of whether Anglophone literature published in Shanghai can be classified as Chinese literature. Although they wrote in a language other than Chinese, the authors of these works are often bilingual Chinese writers who were engaged with the literary debates taking place in the extensive Shanghai publishing community. However, Anglophone literature written and published in China does not fit easily into the contemporary model of a national literature, which is often limited to literature written in a language agreed upon as the national one, in this case, Mandarin Chinese. Shen's discussion of the rich Anglophone literary tradition in China is unsettling, revealing the limitations of such a definition.

Zhang's Anglophone career is dogged by a similar sense of ambiguity. She was a Chinese writer who was fluent in English and at many points in her life, wrote and published successfully in an Anglophone environment. The process by which her name "Zhang Ailing" became "Eileen Chang" is an excellent illustration of the way in which the cosmopolitan and linguistically diverse atmosphere of Shanghai nurtured her dual linguistic identities. Zhang's childhood name was Zhang Ying, but when her mother enrolled her in English-language school, she quickly chose an English-language name for her, Eileen. "Eileen" was then phoneticized in Chinese as "Ailing." While acknowledging that the name was strange, Zhang kept it when she reached adulthood, reveling in its unusual quality. This anecdote demonstrates the complexity of her relationship to both Chinese and English. The bilingual versions of her works are similarly polyglot, referencing a number of different perspectives and moving seamlessly between them. Zhang is unique among modern Chinese writers for being a near-native English speaker who

acquired her English-language ability in Shanghai. Her bilingual works written there attest to the fact that Shanghai was not only a multiethnic but a polyglot city with literary publications written in a variety of languages.

Cold War Divides: Writing across the Pacific

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Zhang briefly attempted to write fiction acceptable to the new socialist regime. Her two most well-known socialist works are "Little Ai" (Xiao Ai) and *Eighteen Springs* (*Shiba chun*). These stories generally have been classed as lesser works and, until recently, received less scholarly attention. Zhang would later rewrite *Eighteen Springs* as the novel *Love of Half a Lifetime*, removing the portions that celebrate the new socialist society and substantially changing the ending.

Zhang left mainland China in 1952 and worked for a few years in Hong Kong for the United States Information Service, translating American literature and writing anti-Communist novels. During this time she wrote her most famous English-language work, the anti-Communist novel *Rice Sprout Song*. As Asian American studies scholar Christopher Lee points out, *Rice Sprout Song* became well known because of the perception that Zhang's work had an eyewitness realism that could come only from having "been there." Her two works of anti-Communist fiction, *Rice Sprout Song* and *Naked Earth*, position her as a cultural broker of a different kind, a native informant for the United States government. In these works, Zhang presents the struggles of the peasants against an uncaring party-state.

Zhang immigrated in 1952 to the United States, where she continued her Anglophone and Sinophone writing careers. Her arrival coincided with an unprecedented rise in interest in East Asia in the United States, which resulted in increased depiction of countries such as China,

Japan, Korea, and Thailand in American literature and film. American historian Christina Klein attributes this trend to the United States' growing geopolitical interest in Asia. As their country increased its contact with these places through wars, occupations, or aid, Americans began to take an interest in their spheres of neocolonial influence. Klein terms this newfound interest in the East "Cold War Orientalism." Zhang's anti-Communist works were certainly an attempt to follow up on the success of more successful cultural brokers such as Pearl Buck and Lin Yutang, whose depictions of Chinese society brought them lasting fame in the United States. However, Zhang failed to achieve the same level of success as either of these authors in her Anglophone career as a cultural broker.

None of her other English-language works met with much success except for *Rice Sprout Song*. After *Naked Earth* failed to win any acclaim, Zhang abandoned anti-Communist fiction and turned instead to her past work. Many of her later Anglophone and Sinophone works are self-translations and rewritings of her earlier works. The last English-language novel published in her lifetime, *The Rouge of the North*, was an expansion and reexploration of her seminal work "The Golden Cangue" (Jinsuo ji). Unlike "The Golden Cangue," which is widely recognized in the Sinophone world as one of her finest works, *The Rouge of the North*, with its depiction of a young and increasingly bitter woman's eventual corruption by the rich family she joins through marriage, did not achieve recognition or acclaim. Zhang was unable to find a publisher for it in the United States, and the book was published in England. In her letters, she notes ruefully that Anglophone audiences found the characters and, by extension, the traditional Chinese culture unappealing. These remarks indicate that her attempts to establish herself as a cultural broker within the Anglophone literary world were unsuccessful. American audiences were not interested in tales of old Shanghai, preferring less morally ambiguous works. There was widespread and

heightened interest on China, but Zhang was not telling the stories Americans wanted to hear and failed to capitalize on this interest, although not for want of trying.

Scholars of Zhang's English-language works often explain her lack of success by suggesting that her writing was simply not good enough. Several prominent Chinese literature scholars such as C.T. Hsia and Joseph S.M. Lau collaborated with her in publishing English translations of her work. While Hsia and Lau admired her work in Chinese, both were less enthusiastic about her English-language work. Her word choice in particular comes under the greatest scrutiny. Lau discusses the words she uses in her English-language work:

The dust that has settled over the *strife and strain* of lives, 我用斜體標出來的“詞組”，不是英文慣用詞，讀起來不大通順。但英文不是我的母語，因就此請教了我在嶺南大學的同事歐陽楨（Eugene Eoyang）教授。他回郵說：You're right: “Strife and Strain”[sic] is not idiomatic English。接著他提供了幾種說法：wear and tear (connoting tiredness)；the pains and strains 或 the stress and strains。

The dust that has settled over the strife and strain of lives, I have used italics to label the phrase. It is not commonly used in the English language. When you read it, it doesn't sound natural. However, English is not my native language, so I called upon my colleague at Lingnan University, Eugene Eoyang. He replied to me: You're right, “strife and strain” is not idiomatic English. He provided several alternatives: Wear and tear (connoting tiredness); the pains and strains or the stress and strains.⁷¹

In Lau's analysis, Zhang's language is measured against that of a native speaker and found wanting. While her English was acceptable for publication in Shanghai, in the American academy, it was parsed word by word and examined for signs of foreignness. Zhang's struggle suggests the difficulty she experienced in moving between Anglophone Shanghai to the wider English-speaking community of the United States. Although she had learned English at a young age and written extensively in English, Lau and Eoyang approach her language as less than natural or not what a native speaker would use. Nevertheless, Zhang's long-standing connection

⁷¹ Liu Shaoming, *Daodi shi Zhang Ailing* (Xianggang: Sanlian shudian, 2007), 111.

with the Anglophone community in Shanghai belies the idea that she is anything less than a native speaker, although it does indicate Lau and Eoyang's discomfort with the idea of treating her as one.

The Last Aristocrat of Shanghai: Zhang Ailing's Transnational Sinophone Career

While Zhang's Anglophone career foundered, her fame in the Sinophone world grew. Zhang had established herself in the Shanghai literary world during the Japanese Occupation, when Shanghai was a "lonely island."⁷² After leaving mainland China, she had an eclectic writing career. Through her friendship with Song Qi, she was able to support herself in part by writing screenplays for Mandarin-language films produced in Hong Kong. Some of her later works, such as *Love of Half a Lifetime* and *Bitter Woman*, were serialized in newspapers in Hong Kong and Taiwan. In 1967, Zhang began to reprint her older works through Crown Press in Taiwan. Throughout her life, her fame continued to grow in Sinophone regions where her books were available, primarily in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Zhang continued to write short pieces in which she attempted to mediate between Taiwanese audiences and American culture, a role much like the one she had played in Shanghai. However, the tone of her work was necessarily more explanatory; rather than being able to talk to an audience who, she could assume, knew as much as she did, Zhang was speaking to Sinophone populations that were more unknown to her. Few of these later pieces are very well thought of, although her work evoking Shanghai remained popular with these new audiences.

In these works, Zhang invoked a privileged position as a member of the lost world of semicolonial Shanghai. One of her translation projects, which she began with more enthusiasm,

⁷² For an excellent study of the literary climate in wartime Shanghai, see Huang. *Women, War, Domesticity*.

was translating Han Bangqing's *Flowers of Shanghai* (*Haishang hua liezhuan*), written in Wu dialect, first into Mandarin and later into English. Zhang was certainly one of the few people in the United States who had the linguistic knowledge required to effect this translation. This project established her as an authority on Shanghai and confirmed her affinity for the tradition of late imperial fiction.

These works, along with Zhang's writing about her upbringing in Shanghai, helped build her reputation. Her lineage as Li Hongzhang's granddaughter contributed to many scholars' conception of her as one of the last vestiges of late imperial China, a fallen aristocrat. Her work was also seen as a window into the old, true Shanghai, a world that no longer existed for many diasporic Shanghainese scholars. Her work was still perceived as written for Shanghainese people; however, in this case, it had become a record of what this community had lost. Shanghai was no longer available after the establishment of the People's Republic of China, and many exiles. Especially her readers in Taiwan and Hong Kong, imagined that their familiar way of life was lost forever.

Zhang herself continued to build on her formidable literary reputation which in Shanghai had established her as a young prodigy. Her finely crafted short stories and polished prose pieces as well as her youth gave her a kind of glamour that was not exceptional⁷³, but was certainly unusual. In "A Dream of Genius" (*Tiancai meng*) she describes her early reputation as a genius and her hunger to continue to be recognized as such. *On Contrast* (*Duizhao ji*), published in 1993, is a collection of autobiographical anecdotes, photographs from her early years, and pictures of her and her family, interspersed with her remembrances. Many of these stories would have been familiar to loyal readers, and many are rewritten or culled from earlier pieces about

⁷³ For an in-depth study of Zhang Ailing's self-fashioning in relation to other female writers in Shanghai, see Huang, *Women, War, and Domesticity*.

her childhood. Some of these anecdotes would be recycled again in Zhang's posthumously published novels *A Little Reunion* (*Xiao tuanyuan*), *Fall of the Pagoda*, and *The Book of Change*. Yet despite this revelation of personal details from a by then famously reclusive author, *On Contrast* and most of her other autobiographical works remain silent on a number of topics. There are very few mentions of her life in Hong Kong after she left mainland China or her life in the United States where she lived and worked for almost forty years. Although her marriage to Hu Lancheng is explored in great detail in *A Little Reunion* and has been a subject of interest by many scholars, her second marriage to an American writer, Ferdinand Reyher is never mentioned in any of her works and despite feverish scholarly interest in her life and work, this period remains relatively understudied and Zhang herself never discusses it. Zhang chose to write about her early Shanghai life in *On Contrast* because it accords with her newfound role from the 1960s onward as a different sort of cultural broker. Her writings were intended to mediate between Sinophone audiences on what she believed to be the "frontier" and in the lost center of modern China, cosmopolitan Shanghai.

Hong Kong Fairy Tales for Shanghai People

Zhang Ailing took her place on the literary stage in the 1940s, when she began publishing in both Anglophone and Sinophone journals in Shanghai. She had just returned from Hong Kong in 1942, where she had been attending Hong Kong University. During her time in Hong Kong, she wrote only in English. When she first returned to Shanghai, she was out of practice thinking and writing in Mandarin or Shanghainese so her first publications were in the Anglophone magazine *The XXth Century* where she discussed aspects of "exotic" Chinese culture for an English-speaking readership. Although her Chinese-language skills eventually recovered, she retained the

same writerly position as a cultural outsider. Although she switched languages, her initial Chinese-language pieces spin exotic tales of Hong Kong colonial life, told from the perspective of a Shanghai person who sees Shanghai with new eyes after her return, and stories set in Hong Kong, in which she presents herself as an insider introducing Hong Kong society to her Shanghai readers. Zhang plays the role of the insider interpreting and presenting different points of view to the other party, showing each side in an ironic light.

In discussing her first and most famous short story collection, *Wonder Tales*, Zhang refers to Shanghainese as her audience for her “Hong Kong wonder tales” (香港傳奇). She remarks, “When I wrote them, there was never a moment when I wasn’t thinking of Shanghai, because I was attempting to use the Shanghainese viewpoint to observe Hong Kong” (寫它的時候，無時無刻不想到上海人，因為我是試著用上海人的觀點來察看香港的).⁷⁴ The collection *Wonder Tales* indeed moves between the two urban centers much as Zhang herself had done.

In the collection, the stories “Sandalwood Incense: First Brasier” (Chenxiangxie: Diyi lu xiang), “Sandalwood Incense:” (Chenxiangxie: Di’er lu xiang)⁷⁵, and “Jasmine Tea” (Moli xiangpian) all take Hong Kong as their subject. “First Brasier of Incense” and “Second Brasier of Incense” are clearly linked, presenting first the Hong Kong Chinese side of elite society and then the British side of colonial life. “Jasmine Tea” is not explicitly linked to the other two stories, but all three use the same opening strategy, with Zhang setting herself up as a teller of tales. The titles specify the amount of time that it would take to tell or consume the stories.

⁷⁴ Zhang Ailing, “Daodi shi Shanghaisen,” in *Huali yuan* (Xianggang: Huangguan chubanshe, 2010), 12.

⁷⁵ Hereafter referred to as “First Brasier” (Diyi lu xiang) and “Second Brasier” (Di’er lu xiang) respectively.

While all three stories are fairly well known and frequently analyzed, their opening monologues are not often discussed and bear examination, as each frames and comments on the story that follows.

In both “First Brasier” and “Second Brasier,” Zhang measures the tale’s length by the time it takes to burn a stick of sandalwood incense. In doing so, Zhang heightens the impression that these stories are being told, by one person to another, and also manages to work in some subtle comments on Hong Kong. In the first few sentences of “First Brasier,” Zhang establishes the narrator as a storyteller, relating a tale of times past to a wealthy and possibly intimate friend:

Please dig out your heirloom patinaed bronze incense burner. Light a stick of sandalwood incense. Hear my tale of Hong Kong before the war. When this stick of sandalwood incense has burned away, my story shall be finished too.

請您尋出家傳的霉綠斑斕的銅香爐，點上沉香屑，聽我說一支戰前的香港的故事，您這一爐沉香屑點完了，我的故事也該完了。⁷⁶

At this point, prewar Hong Kong has already ceased to exist. At the end of the story, she returns to the image of the burning incense stick:

“This Hong Kong story comes to an end here. Weilong’s stick of incense has almost burned out”

這一段香港故事，就在這裡結束了……薇龍的一爐香，也就快燒完了。⁷⁷

In these framing passages, Zhang draws attention to the link between the reader’s consumption of the story and the telling of the tale. Oral transmission of the tale, much like burning incense, can happen in the same way only once. In addition, in the final lines, Zhang describes Weilong as a commodity, like the tale that has just been consumed. The incense stick also comes to represent Weilong’s life of brief happiness, which reaches an end here.

⁷⁶ Zhang Ailing, “Diyi lu xiang,” in *Diyi lu xiang* (Taipei: Huangguan chubanshe, 1991), 32.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 82.

The opening of “Jasmine Tea” is similarly short but offers more commentary on the locale.

I’ve made a pot of jasmine tea for you, but it’s quite bitter. The story that I will tell you is a Hong Kong wonder tale. I’m afraid it’s just as bitter. Hong Kong is that kind of gorgeous but tragic place. Pour yourself a cup, careful not to burn yourself! Blow on it a little first. Through the steam from the tea, you can see a Hong Kong bus descending the paved mountain road.

我給你沏了這一壺茉莉香片，也許是太苦了一點。我將要說給您聽得一段香港傳奇，恐怕也是一樣的苦，香港是一個華美的但是悲哀的城。你先倒了一杯茶，當心燙！你尖著嘴輕輕吹著它。在茶煙繚繞中，您可以看見香港的公共汽車順著柏油山道徐徐的駛下山來。⁷⁸

Once again, Zhang frames the main part of her story as one told over a cup of tea. In this case, however, she equates the tea’s bitter taste to Hong Kong’s inherent tragedy. In this passage, Zhang also explicitly defines this story as a Hong Kong wonder tale, one in which strange meetings and coincidences lead to a tragic confrontation.

“First Brasier” and “Second Brasier” both discuss different aspects of Hong Kong society, the world of Shanghainese abroad, Eurasians, and Hong Kong colonial high society, as well as the more segregated world of the British in Hong Kong. “Second Brasier” has the most elaborate frame of any of Zhang’s Hong Kong stories. In it, she describes a meeting between the narrator and an Irish student named Clementine in their university library. The narrator has just been reading about Lord Macartney’s visit to the Qianlong emperor’s court during the Qing dynasty and from this historical scene enters into a conversation with Clementine about her newly discovered knowledge about sex. While Clementine seems shocked and disgusted by what she has learned, the narrator is detached and scornful.

I maintained an unconcerned expression. “Strange. How did it take you this long?” She was nineteen. I said, “Most Chinese girls learn about such things much earlier. It’s not at

⁷⁸ Zhang Ailing, “Moli xiangpian,” in *Diyi lu xiang* (Taipei: Huangguan chubanshe, 1991), 6.

all mysterious. Our novels are much more explicit, and we have more chances than you to get a look at them.”

我做出漠然的樣子說：“我很奇怪，你知道得這麼晚！”她是十九歲。我又說：“多數的中國女孩子們很早就曉得了，也就無所謂神秘。我們的小說書比你們的直爽，我們看到這類書的機會也比你們多些。”⁷⁹

In this passage, Zhang presents herself as an outsider in relation to certain Western mores. While she clearly understands Clementine’s disbelief after listening to her sister’s educational lecture on sex, she makes a point of saying that the Chinese have an entirely different way of dealing with learning about such matters. Zhang presents the idea that discussion of the facts of life is not such a taboo and that while girls may not be officially told about such things, they have their own ways of finding out.

Speaking of dirty stories, Clementine had one she wanted to tell me about. But I knew that it wouldn’t necessarily be a dirty story but might simply be a tragic story. Life is often like this, not thorough. Clementine calmed herself, adopting the manner of a purely objective, mature observer. But beneath her many livid pimples, her face was slightly flushed. She placed her elbows on Macartney’s *Mission to China* and said, “There’s a story that set all of Hong Kong society talking. I didn’t understand it at the time, but now I realize...” It was a filthy story, but people are always filthy. To be among humans is to become filthy. In this corner of the library at dusk, surrounded by books hundreds of years old, I realized all of them contained human stories, but were told without any humanity. The long stretch of months and years had given them a kind of bookish fragrance. This was an icehouse of feeling. It seemed inappropriate to listen to Clementine’s story here. Like watching a desperate skirmish from high in the clouds. It seems a bit cruel, but light your incense if you please. Just a little bit of sandalwood. Because Clementine’s story is a bit shorter.

說到穢褻的故事，克荔門婷似乎正有一個要告訴我，但是我知道結果那一定不是穢褻的，而是一個悲哀的故事。人生往往是如此——不徹底。克荔門婷採取了冷靜的，純粹的客觀的，中年人的態度，但是在那萬紫千紅的粉刺底下，她的臉微紅了。她把胳膊支在【馬卡德耐使華記】上面，說：【有一件事，香港社交圈裡談論得很厲害的。我先是不大懂，現在我悟出來了。】……一個髒的故事，可是人總是髒的；沾著髒。在這圖書館的昏黃的一角，堆著幾百年的書——都是人的故事，可是沒有人的氣味，悠長，給的年月它們薰上了書卷的寒香；這裡是感情的冷臟室。在這裡聽克荔門婷的故事，我有一種不應當的感覺，放佛雲端裡看廝殺的，有

⁷⁹ Zhang Ailing, *Di'er lu xiang*, in *Diyi lu xiang* (Taipei: Huangguan chubanshe, 1991), 89.

點殘酷。但是無論如何，請你點上你的香，少少上一的撮點沈香屑；因為克荔門婷的故事是比較短的。⁸⁰

Clementine's story is presented as a British Hong Kong wonder tale passed between the two students. Zhang juxtaposes this encounter between a Chinese and an English schoolgirl with the narrator's imagination of Lord Macartney's mission to Qianlong's court. Clementine also offers something, which the narrator in turn finds slightly quaint and tiresome but not entirely without interest.

In *Wonder Tales*, Zhang presents stories of colonial Hong Kong, focusing on a series of "innocents" who are slowly led to their downfall by the society they encounter and the choices they make. Zhang is clearly aware of tales of colonial corruption in other British colonies, written by W. Somerset Maugham among others, but she is ahead of her time in acknowledging that her stories of colonial Hong Kong's corruption are fantasies. Rather than the clear-cut relationship between European imperialist and colonial subject, Zhang's main characters are culturally related, not through a colonial relationship, but rather as members of different Sinophone communities traveling across the currently drawn national boundaries.

Furthermore, Zhang's Shanghainese characters are rarely completely innocent and are often at least partially complicit in their own fall from grace. One of the major themes of Zhang's Hong Kong stories is the perception of Shanghainese by overseas and Hong Kong Chinese as culturally "authentic" because they live in the Republic of China. Certain markers of authenticity are ascribed to them that Zhang regularly calls into question. She also acknowledges the semicolonial nature of Shanghai society, although she generally characterizes it as quite different from that of Hong Kong. However, her strength is her ability to navigate between a multiplicity

⁸⁰ Ibid.

of viewpoints, to see Shanghai as the Shanghainese viewed it while taking note of the way foreigners, overseas Chinese, and Hong Kong Chinese viewed it.

Zhang acknowledges the effect modern life has had on Shanghai and demonstrates an awareness that in China Shanghainese are seen as more Westernized and less authentically Chinese. She describes Shanghai people as “traditional Chinese who have been tempered by high-pressure modern life. Old and new cultures come together and a myriad of irregular outcomes are the result; the end-product is not terribly healthy, but it also possesses a kind of peculiar wisdom” (傳統的中國人加上近代高壓生活的磨練。新舊文化種種畸形產物的交流，結果也許是不甚健康的，但是這裡有一種奇異的智慧).⁸¹

In Hong Kong, the perception of a Shanghainese person changes dramatically. In Zhang’s story “First Brasier,” the main character, Ge Weilong, comes to realize that in comparison to her Hong Kong Chinese classmates, she gives the impression of a more traditional Chinese woman. Surrounded by these classmates, she begins to evaluate herself on the basis of the physical attributes that make her unusual, such as her white skin. Weilong originally wished to get a bit of a tan, which would accord with the modern fashion, but her “air of ancient China” (古中國情調) gains her many admirers, and she rapidly transitions from “an ordinary Shanghainese girl” to a popular school beauty.

In keeping with her appraisal of the market value of her appearance, Weilong becomes one of the many valuable objects on display in her aunt’s mansion.

On the mantelpiece were displayed a jade snuff bottle and an ivory Guanyin statue. In front of the sofa, a speckled bamboo screen was placed. But the existence of this little bit of Eastern color obviously was meant to be seen from a foreign friend’s perspective. English people had come so far to take a look at China, you had to give them a little bit of China to peer at. But the China shown here was the China that lay in Westerners’ hearts, marvelous, quaint, amusing. Ge Weilong peered at her reflection in the glass door. She

⁸¹ Zhang, “Daodi shi Shanghai ren,” 12.

herself was a part of the special Eastern color of the colony. She was wearing the Nanying Middle School's unusual uniform, turquoise cotton cloth with a high-necked collar, and underneath the skirt had a narrow hem. This outfit was in the style of the last days of the Manchu dynasty, dressing up schoolgirls as the famous courtesan Sai Jinhua was one of the ways Hong Kongers ingratiated themselves to white travelers.

爐台上陳列著翡翠鼻煙壺與象牙觀音像，沙發前圍著斑竹小屏風，可是這一點東方色彩的存在，顯然是看在外國朋友們的面上。英國人老遠的來看看中國，不能不給點中國給他們瞧瞧。但是這裡的中國，是西方人心目中的中國，荒誕、精巧、滑稽。葛薇龍在玻璃門裡瞥見她自己的影子——她自身也是殖民地所特有的東方色彩的一部分，她穿著南英中學的別致的制服，翠藍竹布衫，長齊膝蓋，下面是窄窄褲腳管，還是滿清末年的款式；把女學生打扮得像賽金花模樣，那也是香港當局取悅於歐美遊客的種種設施之一。⁸²

Zhang moves between a number of different perspectives in this passage. Weilong is aware of both the Hong Kong Chinese and English imperial perspectives on China, but the passage hints at the fallacies of both. From the perspective of the English, Hong Kong reflects an idea of China that already exists in their minds. In addition, their desire to “know” China is largely on a cosmetic level and stems from a desire to possess a little bit of eastern color. Zhang also critiques Hong Kong Chinese, in this case, Ge Weilong's aunt, for catering to Western tastes by showing Westerners exactly what they want, an item in a collection of objects which represents a precious and exotic China. In addition, Weilong's assessment of herself in the mirror locates her squarely at the heart of this exchange between Western imperialism and Hong Kong colonial society. Although she begins as a rare mainland commodity, by the time she looks at herself in the mirror, she has placed herself in the midst of this collection of objects. In this passage, Weilong focuses on her Hong Kong school uniform, which also seems curiously anachronistic in terms of its style. Zhang describes it in late Qing terms and suggests that the school is dressing its students as Sai Jinhua, the famous courtesan who became a diplomat's concubine. Zhang sets up the

⁸² Zhang, “Diyi lu xiang,” 32.

female students of Nanyang Middle School as such controversial and culture-bridging figures. As she narrates Weilong's journey through her aunt's house, Zhang describes the schoolgirl's slow integration into her aunt's collection of objects but keeps her distance from the three perspectives that she addresses in this passage.

In her Hong Kong wonder tales, Zhang maintains an awareness of both the Hong Kong colonial consciousness and the English imperial gaze, while preserving her Shanghai protagonist's distance from this orientalist interaction between the colonizer and the colonized. Shanghainese were forged by the pressures of modern life, but they are not as immediately subject to the pressure to conform to the white man's version of China as the Hong Kong Chinese are. When Shanghainese people enter Hong Kong, however, they also become valued prizes, since they represent more authentically traditional China to the British or Hong Kong colonial eye. Weilong, like Zhang's other Shanghainese heroine Bai Liusu, is misidentified by outsiders, whether Hong Kong colonials or British Chinese, as the epitome of a traditional Chinese woman.

At the same time, both Hong Kong natives and Shanghainese dwell under the shadow of their inferiority in relation to the British. Despite Weilong's comfortable lifestyle as a star of Hong Kong Chinese high society, she is always aware that there is a limit to how far she can go.

Weilong laughed dryly. "Who among my aunt's friends? If they aren't shifty dancehall men, then they are a bunch of rich men with three mansions and six concubines. If not them, then there are the English soldiers. Anyone higher than a colonel is unwilling to associate with an Asian person. This is Hong Kong!"

薇龍冷笑道：『姑媽這一幫朋友裡，有什麼人？不是浮滑的舞男似的年輕人，就是三宮六嬪的老爺。再不然，就是英國兵。中尉以上的軍官，也還不願意同黃種人打交道呢！這就是香港！』⁸³

⁸³ Ibid., 53.

Several times in the story, Zhang mentions the social segregation of Hong Kong, in which the colonial masters and their subjects do not associate with each other. Such passages also communicate the resentment of people like Weilong who know that they possess limited marital and social options in a colonial society such as Hong Kong.

Zhang's portrayals of the British are not limited to faceless soldiers or aloof colonial masters; in the second part of the "Sandalwood Incense" series, she depicts the pitfalls of British colonial society in Hong Kong. In "Second Brasier," the subject is the downfall of college professor Roger Anderson shortly after his marriage. His wife, Susie, has never been educated as to the lives of married couples and accuses Roger of beastly conduct. Disgraced by the rumors that she has spread, Roger does not attempt to dispute her accusations but hangs himself instead.

In "Second Brasier," Roger teaches at a university in Hong Kong, but most of the principal characters are British and interact solely with British students and characters. Roger, like Weilong, comes to a ruin partly of his own making. The small size of the British expatriate community means that rumors spread quickly and are easily remembered. While Weilong slips slowly down the rungs of the social ladder, Roger's fall is more precipitous.

Zhang's Hong Kong wonder tales written for Shanghai people offer a glimpse into a multicultural, polyglot, but rigidly stratified colonial world. While Shanghainese are not necessarily colonized subjects in Hong Kong, Zhang depicts the way in which they are affected by their environment, becoming embedded and eventually indistinguishable from the colonized subjects around them. Hong Kong affects her British characters somewhat differently. The British clearly stand on the top rung of the social ladder, but their racial segregation also isolates them. The framing anecdote around Roger's demise mocks the British for their unrealistic image of female morality. Susie's expectations of married life are so unrealistic that they destroy her

marriage, but in doing so, she remains true to the feminine ideal of a virginal damsel in distress. Ironically, this only increases the likelihood of Roger's downfall, as the male students in his dormitory are moved by Susie's perceived plight and rush to her aid without first verifying her accusations. It is easier to just believe the story of a lustful and perverse man terrorizing an innocent girl.

In all of her Hong Kong stories, Zhang assumes an air of knowing detachment. Her detailed descriptions of Hong Kong high society certainly establish her as an expert on life in Hong Kong, yet the framing of these stories establishes a narrator who tells the stories that she has heard. "Second Brasier" is ostensibly a true story, based on a rumor that had traveled throughout the British expatriate community. In the other stories, it is not clear if the narrator is spinning a tale or relating a true story; however, in each case, Zhang places the narrator at the critical juncture between the story and the audience. The narrator curates and frames the story, suggesting themes, such as Hong Kong's bitter quality or the idea that British sexual mores are silly foibles.

Writing between Communities

Zhang engages with Shanghai's fractured semicoloniality in her Sinophone pieces, "Occidentals at the Peking Opera" (Yangren kan jingxi) and "Chinese Religions" (Zhongguoren de zongjiao) and their Anglophone counterparts, "Chinese Life and Fashions" and "Demons and Fairies." As the difference between these titles suggests, these pieces despite their similarity in overall subject are framed and rewritten radically for different audiences. In these pieces, she acts as a cultural broker, presenting and mediating between Western and Chinese culture. In these pieces, Zhang ends up defining or explaining Western culture or Chinese traditional culture. While she engages

in making essentialized generalizations about each culture, there is a certain amount of irony in her definitions.

Zhang often explains how Westerners interpret Chinese culture, always in an orientalist search for the mysterious East, while also telling her Shanghainese readers how traditional Chinese culture interprets or misinterprets Western behavior. She adopts an authoritative and explanatory tone that is nevertheless accompanied by a sense of humor. As Shu-mei Shih details in her account of Shanghai's fractured semicoloniality, Shanghai residents experienced modernity in a fragmented and multicentered way,⁸⁴ navigating a number of different points of view simultaneously. Zhang's writing on traditional Chinese culture reflects Shanghai's multicultural, polyglot nature, often addressing and speaking for a number of different subject positions in the same piece. This type of position switching is quite evident in Zhang's two prose pieces "Shanghainese After All" (Daodi shi Shanghairen) and "Occidentals at the Peking Opera" (Yangren kan jingxi).

Zhang opens "Shanghainese After All" with her return to Shanghai from Hong Kong. Her time away has allowed her to examine Shanghai with fresh eyes. She compares Shanghainese to the multicultural populations of Hong Kong, finding them "white and fat" in comparison to the Cantonese, Malaysians, and Indians whom she encountered in Hong Kong.

However, that first look gives way to Zhang's realization that she is "a Shanghainese after all," and, with it, a rush of recognition of the place that she has been away from for so long. It is her time away from Shanghai that gives her the ability and the authority to point out what is particular and unique about her hometown. It allows her to appreciate the flavor of the place because, as she demonstrates in the first paragraph, she is able to see her native place as new.

⁸⁴ On the uneven nature of Shanghai's modernity, see Shih, *Lure of the Modern*.

Zhang's perspective offers an intimate view of Shanghai, but it is characteristic of a prodigal daughter and not a native informant.

Zhang then turns to her understanding of Shanghainese as complicated and not completely good people. Shanghai, she gives us to understand, is not a place that appreciates fairy stories, and so, she claims, *chuanqi* are Shanghai fairy tales, tales about Hong Kong told for Shanghai audiences. In her famous first short story collection *Wonder Tales*, Zhang sets Hong Kong as the stage on which she creates a series of fantasies for Shanghai audiences, but her time away from Shanghai allows her to reintroduce Shanghainese to themselves. In this way, Zhang establishes her ability to be a cultural broker, one who can mediate between tales of Shanghainese men and women lost in the Hong Kong wilderness as well as tell stories about British colonial society. She acquires authority on Hong Kong because she has been there, and she claims equally to understand Shanghainese tastes because she has an innate understanding of the Shanghainese mentality.

The Right Place at the Right Time

While the connection and commerce between Shanghai and Hong Kong drive Zhang's short stories, the bilingual versions of her nonfiction pieces, published in Shanghai's *Sinophone* and *Anglophone* magazines, reflect her negotiations between a different set of literary communities. However, unlike her *chuanqi*, which depict the differences between Hong Kong and Shanghai, her nonfiction articles allow her to examine certain aspects of Chinese culture while mediating between "foreigners" in Shanghai and native Shanghainese. Her English-language and Chinese-language versions vary markedly, often including different passages or extended discussions of other topics. In general, while her English-language versions adopt a more unequivocally

anthropological standpoint in terms of introducing the “Chinese way,” her Chinese-language versions express a more complex perspective in which she not only turns an observant eye toward traditional and historical Chinese behavior but also includes the slightly naïve Western infatuation with the exotic East.

In the English-language versions of her articles, Zhang offers an ostensible introduction to Chinese culture and ways, as well as insight into the historical and cultural underpinnings of Chinese society. In his introduction to her article “Demons and Fairies,”⁸⁵ Klaus Meinert describes the article’s virtue in “conveying to us a great deal of information on the mentality of the Chinese masses.”⁸⁶ Of her article “Chinese Life and Fashions,” he notes “for the benefit of our male readers that the following pages contain more than just an essay on fashions. Indeed they offer an amusing psychoanalysis of modern China.”⁸⁷ Both of these comments suggest that Meinert values Zhang’s ability to act as a native informant, someone who can write in English and transmit entertaining information about the Chinese. In doing so, she gives her readers insight into the workings of the “Chinese mentality.”

In the Chinese-language version of these articles, however, Zhang occupies the more complicated position of providing her Shanghai readers with information on the customs of traditional China and how Westerners perceive China. Both perspectives are examined for the reader’s amusement. In her articles for Sinophone readers, Zhang plays the double agent, acting as a native informant for Anglophone Shanghailanders residents while parodying their point of

⁸⁵ Klaus Meinert, introduction to “Demons and Fairies,” by Eileen Chang *The XXth Century* 5 no.6 (December 1943): 421.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Klaus Meinert, introduction to “Chinese Life and Fashions,” by Eileen Chang *The XXth Century* 4 no. 1 (January 1942): 54.

view for the amusement of her Sinophone readers. Her articles move rapidly between these two positions, offering a dizzying array of perspectives on the same topic. Zhang's rapid switches between perspectives in her Chinese-language articles suggests that she expects her readers to adopt these perspectives as easily as she does.

In "Occidentals at the Peking Opera," which views Peking opera as Westerners see it, Zhang delves into a complex set of perspectives. She opens with a Westerner's perspective on China, constructed through, she presumes, fragmentary glimpses of local color and sounds heard on the gramophone and the radio.

Balancing bamboo poles on their head, drying a small child's split trousers; the glass bowl on the cupboard full of ginseng liquor, this house's gramophone playing Mei Lanfang, that house's wireless advertising leprosy and scabies medication, walking under the *Taibai yifeng* street sign to buy a little cooking wine. This was China.

頭上搭了竹竿，晾著小孩的開襠褲；櫃台上的玻璃缸中盛著「參鬚露酒」；這一家的擴音機裡唱著梅蘭芳；那一家的無線電裡賣者癩癬瘡藥；走到「太白遺風」的招牌底下打點料酒……這都是中國。⁸⁸

Zhang presents China imagined through the most superficial glimpses of surfaces. These sights and sounds are by nature incomplete, momentary snippets of sound or a quick glance. The sights of split trousers or the sight of ginseng are arresting images divorced from any larger context. Zhang Ailing imagines this disconnected point of view as that of the foreigners who live in Shanghai and claim to know it. These images occur as quick and incidental sights of Chinese people or Chinese homes as seen by a passerby. At the end of the passage she proclaims ironically, "This is China." The same view of the surfaces of Chinese peoples' lives is the perspective she claims to undertake in her piece "Occidentals at the Peking Opera."

⁸⁸ Zhang, "Yangren kan jingxi ji qita," in *Huali yuan* (Xianggang: Huangguan chubanshe, 2010), 13.

She wryly mocks those young people who blindly worship China without really understanding it and hints at the shock they may feel when their “unconditional love collides with reality.” In this passage, Zhang conjures up an idea of Western Sinophiles feeding their obsession with superficial encounters with certain colorful fragments of Chinese culture. In doing so, they construct a China of their own imagining. Zhang gently mocks these Westerners, characterizing their imagination of China as rather deluded. She makes a distinction between *their* China, the China dreamed up from advertisements and opera recordings, and the one that she and her readers know.

She then brings another perspective to bear on the question of Chinese opera:

Unfortunately we live among the Chinese, unlike overseas Chinese who can spend a lifetime at a safe distance worshipping the hallowed ground of their motherland. So let’s take a closer look. Let’s take a look at Peking opera through the eyes of Westerners for a moment.

我們不幸生活於中國人之間，比不得華僑，可以一輩子安全地隔著適當的距離崇拜著聖神的祖國。那麼，索性看個仔細罷！用洋人看京劇的眼光來觀光一番罷。⁸⁹

Zhang’s perspective shifts in this passage between a number of different positions, from the naïve and deluded perspective of Western Sinophiles to “our” perspective, presumably hers and that of her perceived readership. While she steers clear of any marker of ethnicity, she identifies her readers as those who live among Chinese. There is some indication that she also means ethnic Chinese, as she immediately contrasts them with overseas Chinese who can understand and revere the culture of their homeland from a distance. Zhang moves between Western, Shanghainese, and overseas Chinese perspectives in short order, considering each and then moving on. She proposes viewing Peking opera from a Western perspective as a fun exercise. The reader stands somewhere between the completely unreflective traditional Chinese

⁸⁹ Ibid.

perspective and the ignorant and uncritical Western or overseas Chinese perspective. Zhang distinguishes between the two, mocking both for their ignorance. She suggests that while Westerners are attracted to the mysterious and colorful Orient, overseas Chinese, in their distance from Chinese culture, are uncritical because they place it on a pedestal as part of their sacred motherland. The discerning reader, however, living among the Chinese and yet not entirely of them, is in a position to be more informed than a Westerner or an overseas Chinese but without losing critical distance. It is this critical distance that Zhang maintains throughout the piece.

Trying out a Western perspective is not meant to add new wisdom to the reader's experience of Peking opera; Zhang has already dismissed Western Sinophiles as hopelessly naïve and ignorant. In offering this perspective to Shanghainese residents, however, she implies not that it will increase their enjoyment of opera but, rather, that it will allow them to see how opera and, by extension, Chinese culture, are seen by outsiders. Zhang emphasizes her own ignorance of Peking opera, regarding this as a qualification for writing about the opera's more superficial pleasures, as she lacks specific knowledge regarding the actor's proper costume or the significance of the various gestures. Zhang describes herself as perfectly placed, sophisticated but ignorant, yet also knowledgeable of what makes China attractive to outsiders.

Throughout the piece, she walks the reader through a number of lessons that an outsider might learn about Chinese opera, Chinese culture, and literary and cultural conventions. She also explains why her piece, while taking as its subject the Western perspective on China, spends most of its time focused on Chinese opera.

The world of Peking opera is not present-day China, but it's not one of the many stages of progression in China's past. Its beauty, its narrow and pristine value system, is far from today's reality, but at the same time, it is not a romantic escape. Coming to one point of view from another has always been mistaken for escapism. Personal experience,

because one can't get the objective distance from it, must be tied to a clear reality in order to be seen in all its complexity.

京劇的世界既不是目前的中國，也不是古中國在它的過程中的任何一階段。它的美，它狹小整潔的道德系統，都是離現實很遠的，然而它絕不是羅曼蒂克的逃避——從某一觀點引渡的現實聯繫起來方才看得清楚。⁹⁰

The world of Peking opera, Zhang suggests, is not made up of a pure reflection of contemporary Chinese culture or any other specific time period in China's past. Rather Peking opera constitutes an emotional bricolage of various stories or themes in Chinese culture, and while it does not possess documentary fidelity, it has a kind of detached insight into Chinese culture as a whole, precisely because it is removed from actual events.

Zhang once again claims a similar detached perspective as the narrator and impresario of the operas and operatic traditions that she discusses. Claiming that she knows so little about the opera allows her to write about it as Westerners would see it—superficially, and yet somehow seeking a hint of China's true nature in it.

In these pieces, Zhang explores a different kind of society, revealing a number of different perspectives and linguistic communities. In her prose pieces, she demonstrates her ability to understand and repackage the views of outsiders such as Westerners or overseas Chinese for the amusement and edification of Shanghainese readers. At the same time, she was publishing explanatory articles on Chinese culture in Anglophone newspapers in Shanghai. Zhang shows her ability to navigate between a number of different cultural positions within the semicolonial landscape of Shanghai. She also presents herself as a cultural broker, detached from all the communities she writes about and for: more familiar with Western ways than the average

⁹⁰ Ibid., 18.

Shanghai resident, but at the same time, more conversant in Chinese customs than the Westerners and overseas Chinese that she claims to know so well.

In both her Hong Kong stories and her Shanghai essays, Zhang Ailing navigates between a number of different literary and linguistic communities. She is able to describe the polyglot and multicultural social strata of Hong Kong and the fragmented semicolonial communities of Shanghai because she claims expert knowledge of them and yet remains detached. The “we” of “Occidentals at the Peking Opera” is not positively defined, so the identity of her readerly community is not entirely clear. To be sure, she writes for Shanghai people, but these are people who are able to remain separate from the Shanghainese community. Zhang defines “we” as those who live among Chinese. She describes the Shanghainese as a whole as playing the role of cultural broker; as Chinese who have experienced the pressures of modern living, they are in the unique position of navigating and mediating between the two. It is to this cosmopolitan audience that Zhang Ailing addresses her articles.

Crossovers: Zhang Ailing's Overseas Careers

Zhang Ailing left Shanghai and migrated to what was then the British colony of Hong Kong. While there, she was employed by the United States government translating various Anglophone classics into Chinese and writing anti-Communist English-language fiction. Zhang did not enjoy her job as a translator, particularly of Washington Irving, describing the experience to be “like having a conversation with someone you don’t like, there’s nothing to be done and nowhere to run.” (好像同你不喜歡的人說話，無可奈何地，逃又逃不掉).⁹¹ When her first English-language novel, *Rice Sprout Song*, enjoyed some favorable critical reception in the United States,

⁹¹ Song Qi and Song Kuang Wenmei, *Zhang Ailing siyu lu* (Xianggang, Huangguan chubanshe, 2010), 48.

Zhang moved to the United States, where she hoped to start an English-language career. After publication of her next anti-Communist novel, *Naked Earth*, Zhang's writing career often involved repurposing or recycling earlier work, rewriting or translating them into either English or Chinese. She wrote a novel eventually titled *The Rouge of the North*, a longer English-language retelling of her famous novella "The Golden Cangu". The novel was rejected by many American publishers and was eventually published in England but received very little notice and it marked the end of Zhang's hopes of a English-language writing career. However, she later translated *The Rouge of the North* into Mandarin and published it in Taiwan as *Bitter Woman*. This example of interlinguistic borrowing and self-translation is characteristic of her later career, her unpublished autobiographical novels show similar tendencies to rewrite and reframe her earlier work and revisit familiar topics.

Zhang's work of socialist fiction, *Eighteen Springs*, was serialized under the pen name Liang Jing in 1950 and published in its entirety in 1951. Zhang left mainland China for Hong Kong the next year. Sixteen years later, in 1966, she returned to the novel and made significant changes to the plot and the characters, including completely rewriting the ending. The new version, retitled *Love of Half a Lifetime*, was serialized in Hong Kong in *Singtao Daily* and in Taiwan in *Crown Magazine (Huangguan zazhi)* in 1967. It was published as a novel one year later by Crown Press in Taiwan.

Love of Half a Lifetime stands as a unique example of how Zhang's fiction straddled, often uncomfortably, Cold War politics and literary aesthetics. Its transformation from *Eighteen Springs* to *Love of Half a Lifetime* was a process of adaptation that differed significantly from her earlier attempts to act as a cultural broker. Zhang spent a significant portion of her later literary career attempting to adapt her earlier stories to new audiences. Her later works are often

translations, revisions, or both translated and revised versions of earlier work. When these variant versions are read against one another, they provide a record of her efforts to adapt and transmit different versions of her work to different audiences.

Love of Half a Lifetime is a unique example of Zhang's later penchant for revision and rewriting because not only does she write between languages in this case, but across the boundaries of the Cold War. Zhang went rapidly from a writer known for her studious avoidance of the political during the Japanese occupation to a writer of anti-Communist fiction employed by the United States government. *Love of Half a Lifetime* and its origin as *Eighteen Springs*, a novel published under the new Chinese Communist regime before her departure to Hong Kong, offer some insight into Zhang's attempt to accommodate Communist literary values and then remove them when she rewrote the story in the United States.

Like many of her later works,⁹² *Love of Half a Lifetime* is a product of transformation and revision, as she prepared the text for a new literary market. In this case, she studiously removed all mentions of a happy life under the Communist regime: while the principal characters of *Eighteen Springs* meet in Manchuria for a bittersweet but amicable reunion, Zhang ends *Love of Half a Lifetime* with the two main characters, both filled with regret, living unfulfilling lives. This ending is consistent with Zhang's penchant for desolation and fulfills both characters' potential for tragedy of various kinds, Manzhi through her constant self-sacrifice on behalf of her family and Shijun through his weakness in succumbing to bourgeois mediocrity.

Love of Half a Lifetime is similar to other later works by Zhang, such as *A Little Reunion*, *Book of Change*, *On Contrast* and *The Fall of the Pagoda*, which she adapted and rewrote in the United States, appropriating and piecing together anecdotes and passages from her earlier

⁹² Including Zhang Ailing, *Yuannü* (Xianggang, Huangguan chubanshe, 2010) mentioned above.

writings. Although in this case, the two main sources are *Eighteen Springs* and *H.M. Pulham, Esquire*. In *Love of Half a Lifetime*, Zhang borrows heavily from *H.M. Pulham, Esquire*, a novel by the American author John P. Marquand. Zhang had become acquainted with Marquand when he visited Shanghai and admired him very much.⁹³ She had met him when he was passing through Hong Kong, and he corresponded with her when she moved to the United States. She had initially hoped that he would prove helpful to her writing career in the United States, but their friendship petered out a few years after she immigrated.

Zhang's use of some of the plot devices of *H.M. Pulham, Esquire* in both novels suggests that she is attempting to adapt elements Marquand's novel for her own readers and for her own purposes. While *Pulham* is a novel which attempts to expose the shallow life of the American middleclass, Zhang incorporates many elements of his novel of manners into her own gothic story of rape and imprisonment, transforming it into a novel about the destructive power of self-sacrifice and self-deception. One of the things which may have appealed to Zhang about *Pulham* is the characters' desolate lives, trapped into marrying the "correct" spouse in order to attain a socially correct ideal for their class, however Zhang deepens the narrative by depicting the ways in which family members can cannibalize and sacrifice one another for their own interest. This darker note lends a horrific quality to *Love of Half a Lifetime* which does not exist in *Pulham*.

Love of Half a Lifetime is divided into two narratives. Each narrative is devoted to one half of a pair of lovers, Shijun and Manzhi. Zhang borrowed much of Shijun's half of the novel from Marquand's account of his main character in *H.M. Pulham, Esquire*. Harry Pulham and Shijun follow similar trajectories. After an unconventional love affair, the protagonist settles down with a woman of his own class and leads a mediocre life, unaware of his unhappiness.

⁹³ Marquand is best known in American literature for writing the Mr. Moto detective series.

Shijun similarly forsakes his desire to be an engineer and takes up his father's business. He eventually marries his sister-in-law's cousin, fulfilling his mother's hopes that he marry within their social set. Many of the passages describing Shijun's life in Shanghai and his hometown of Nanjing are often direct translations from Marquand's novel. The opening lines of *Love of Half a Lifetime* correspond very closely to a passage in *H.M. Pulham, Esquire*.

Once Marvin Myles asked me when I first loved her, which I imagine is a question that a good many people have asked each other, and I told her that I had loved her from the first minute I had seen her. I was in a state that makes you believe such things. As a matter of fact, it must have been quite a while before I even noticed Marvin Myles.⁹⁴

曼植曾經問過他，他是甚麼時候起開始喜歡她的。他當然回答說「第一次看見你的時候。」說那個話的時候是在那樣的一種心醉的情形下，簡直那麼都可以相信，自己當然絕對相信那不是謊話。其實他到底是甚麼時候第一次看見她的，根本就記不清楚了。

Manzhi had once asked him when he had started to have feelings for her. Naturally he had replied, "The first time I saw you." When he said that phrase, he was totally infatuated. She accepted his words implicitly, and he himself certainly did not believe that that sentence was a lie. However he could not remember clearly when he had first seen her.⁹⁵

While the passages are not identical, they certainly contain very similar elements and express the same sentiments sentence by sentence. However, the novels are also rather different in some places. On the one hand, *H.M. Pulham, Esquire* is written from the perspective of Harry Pulham himself on the eve of his Harvard class reunion, an event that has prompted him to reflect on his life. On the other hand, *Love of Half a Lifetime* is narrated in the third person and moves between a number of different perspectives, those of the main characters, Shijun and Manzhi, as well as the points of view of more minor characters such as Shuhui, Manlu, Cuizhi, and Manzhi's and

⁹⁴ J.P. Marquand, *H.M. Pulham Esquire* (Chicago: Academy Chicago Publishers, 1986), 142.

⁹⁵ Zhang Ailing, *Bansheng yuan* (Xianggang, Huangguan chubanshe, 2012), 3.

Manlu's mother. In addition, Zhang chose to begin her novel with the passage quoted above, but the quote from *H.M. Pulham, Esquire* is from the middle of the novel.

In *H.M. Pulham, Esquire*, Marvin Myles, Harry's lover, disappears from the story after Harry leaves New York, only to reappear many years later at his college reunion. The novel is silent about her life after Harry ended their affair, although her husband is said to bear a close resemblance to Harry. Zhang, however, chronicles Manzhi's trials after Manzhi and Shijun quarrel and separate. Compared to Shijun's life of relatively bland desolation, Manzhi's life is a tragic sequence of events, beginning with betrayal by her older sister, who helps her husband lure Manzhi to their house so that he can rape her. In an attempt to coerce her into becoming his concubine, they imprison her in their house for a year. Manzhi escapes from the hospital after giving birth to a son, the product of her rape, and begins a new life for herself. However, in order to provide for her child, she eventually succumbs to societal pressure and marries her rapist after her sister dies. Like many other Zhang Ailing heroines, Manzhi eventually falls into a prison of her own making, believing that marrying Zhu Hongcai will give her son a better life and cherishing a foolish hope that he really will treat her more kindly than his other women.

Rather than a condemnation of middle-class mediocrity, which *H.M. Pulham, Esquire* levels at the upper-class of American society, *Love of Half a Lifetime* and its previous incarnation, *Eighteen Springs*, are an exploration of unconsummated and futile love. This portion of the novel bears no resemblance to *H.M. Pulham, Esquire*, but in exploring the lives of the two lovers after they are separated, Zhang adapts and incorporates certain aspects of Marquand's novel of the middle class and combines them with a gothic tale of rape and imprisonment. Interestingly, these aspects are also present in *Eighteen Springs*, Zhang's earlier version of the novel. Marquand's influence in this version of the story is more remarkable in that Zhang seems

to be attempting to adapt his critique of the American middle class to a socialist novel. *Eighteen Springs* shows the strong influence of Marquand's novel, although *Love of Half a Lifetime* features more passages that are directly influenced by Marquand, with Shijun's trajectory into middle-aged misery remaining almost identical in both versions. The greatest obstacle for Zhang Ailing in writing a novel that adheres to socialist values for fiction was the required happy ending. In discussing her own writing, Zhang often mentioned her preference for "desolation" (*canliang*). The conflict between Zhang's penchant for writing desolate endings for her characters and the changing literary expectations of the times defines the limits of her ability to negotiate the conventions of different literatures. The divergent endings of *Eighteen Springs* and *Love of Half a Lifetime* articulate the different literary conventions that Zhang was working with as she revised these texts. The ending of *Eighteen Springs* seems like an ideal socialist conclusion on the surface, as the principal characters are harmoniously paired off and have forgotten their past disagreements. However, the novel contains a hint of the pessimistic endings that Zhang is known for. For all her characters, passion and revolution cannot coexist. Although the characters form pairs, this development is couched in the language of duty and the common good. In *Love of Half a Lifetime*, Zhang removes most of the references to the Communist Party. All the unconsummated loves in the novel come to equally desolate ends, as the characters find themselves in appropriately bland and miserable lives that are almost completely of their own making. Zhang also moves the story backward in time, replacing references to the civil war with references to the Japanese. The characters exist in an indeterminate time, after the defeat of the Japanese but before the founding of the People's Republic of China. These changes make clear that *Love of Half a Lifetime* is also the story of an exile looking back at a city and life that no longer exist.

In *H.M. Pulham, Esquire*, Marvin vanishes and then reappears in Harry's life as if she had never left, but in both novels, more than half of each novel is devoted to what happens to Manzhi after she and Shijun separate. Manzhi's story ends more hopefully than those of some of Zhang's other heroines. She obtains a divorce from Zhu Hongcai and gains custody of her son. However, she is confronted with the hopes of her youth when she encounters Shijun by chance. This is the beginning of the greatest divergence between the two novels. In *Shiba chun*, Manzhi and Shijun's reunion is a catalyst for Shijun, who decides to change his life and go to Manchuria to finally work as an engineer. He is encouraged by Manzhi and Shuhui, who has gone away to become a Communist cadre and recently returned to Shanghai. Shijun's wife, Cuizhi, first attempts to express her love to Shuhui, who gently rejects it and says that he hoped to use their friendship to encourage her to better her consciousness. Shijun then tells Cuizhi that he intends to go to Manchuria, assuming that she won't want to come with him, but, chastened by her recent experience with Shuhui, she agrees to accompany him.

The final scene of *Eighteen Springs* suggests that one cannot have revolution and love at the same time. Shijun and Cuizhi encounter Mujin, Shijun's formal rival for Manzhi, in Manchuria. Shijun reintroduces Manzhi to Mujin, and the four characters face one another in harmonious accord. While the ending is one of the most optimistic in Zhang Ailing's fiction, it also demonstrates that the combination of love plus revolution is not possible. This is similar to the fate of the protagonist of the socialist novel *Youthful Song* (*Qingchun zhi ge*), who, after many travails, marries a longtime comrade for whom she seems to have little feeling as an expression of her dedication to the revolutionary struggle. Likewise, Manzhi, at the end of the story, seems poised for a second revolutionary marriage. While her first relationship with Shijun

had engendered strong passions, her implied reunion with her cousin Mujin, who once pursued her unsuccessfully, suggests that her second marriage will be based on comradeship, not love.

Similarly, Shuhui's exhortation to Cuizhi to forget about their unrealized affection for each other and instead use her energy for the betterment of society foreshadows a similar sublimation of romantic desire on the part of both Cuizhi and Shijun. They have lived out a loveless marriage based largely on convenience and societal expectations. Shijun remains unconsciously in love with Manzhi, and his chance encounter with her makes it clear that they still care deeply for each other, but the romantic potential of their relationship is sublimated and transformed into a shared desire to go to Manchuria and work to better the lives of the people.

Cuizhi has also been nursing a lifelong passion for Shijun's friend Shuhui. She attempts to speak to Shuhui about it, and he rebuffs her. Shijun then returns home after his encounter with Manzhi, having summoned the courage to broach the topic of going north to Manchuria, and Cuizhi unexpectedly agrees to accompany him. It is not clear from Zhang's description whether their feelings toward each other improve, but the power of the revolutionary cause allows them to strengthen their marriage bond while working for revolution. When Mujin encounters Shijun, Shijun refers to Cuizhi as "his lover," implying that their relationship has improved. Zhang does not discuss further the emotional implications of Manzhi and Shijun's meetings or what the revelation of their unaltered feelings toward each other entails.

In *Love of Half a Lifetime*, Zhang makes a number of changes, the story has been expanded to include more plot points with counterparts in *H.M. Pulham, Esquire*. There are franker depictions of sexuality and an extended description of Manzhi's rape, the brutality of which is not described in its earlier incarnation. In addition, during Shijun's chance meeting with Manzhi after such a long time, the two kiss passionately, a scene that closely resembles Harry's

encounter with Marvin at his college reunion. Obviously this expression of their abiding attraction to each other cannot be articulated in the socialist literary reality of *Eighteen Springs*.

After many years, Manzhi is able to tell Shijun about her experiences. She had previously fantasized about doing this, imagining that only this could assuage her agony over her experiences. These scenes establish their connection to each other, but rather than leading to a brighter if unromantic future, their romantic feelings remain unacknowledged and their love is suddenly transformed into a feeling of platonic comradeship. Their unrealized passion makes the ending of the novel rather bittersweet. In *Eighteen Springs*, Zhang Ailing tries to demonstrate that individual passion must give way to a platonic desire to work toward the greater good.

The ending of *Love of Half a Lifetime* emphasizes the passage of time and the principal characters' recognition that the affections they have cherished are unrealizable. Shijun and Manzhi are separated by misunderstandings and eighteen years. A twist of fate allows them to be reunited. Manzhi was able to tell her story, and Shijun is able to learn the truth, that she has never stopped loving him and did not suddenly marry Yujin. Shijun mistakenly believes at first that they can pick up where they left off. He tries to offer his help, but Manzhi bitterly rejects it. When she does, Shijun finally realizes what Manzhi has known all along, that a happy ending is impossible for the two of them.

她一直知道的。是她說的，他們回不去了。他現在才明白為甚麼今天。那麼迷惘，他是跟時間在掙扎。從前最後一次見面，至少是突如其來的，沒有訣別。今天從這裡走出去，是永別了，清清楚楚，就跟死了一樣。

She had known from the start. As she said, they couldn't go back. Now he knew why he had felt so lost, he had been battling with time. Before, the last time they had seen each other, they had parted so suddenly they hadn't had a chance to say goodbye. After they left here today, they would bid farewell forever, he was very clear on this, as if one of them had died.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Zhang, *Bansheng yuan*, 374.

This scene parallels a scene in *H.M. Pulham, Esquire* in which Harry and Marvin are reunited at Harry's college reunion. When they see each other again, they immediately begin kissing each other. However, Marvin immediately voices a similar concern.

“Darling,” she said, “we—” and she choked on what she was trying to say. She reached out towards me as though she were frightened and her cheeks were wet with tears.
“Marvin,” I said, and her head was on my shoulder.
“Darling,” she said, “we can't go back.”⁹⁷

Both Harry and Shijun realize the truth of what Marvin and Manzhi say as soon as they say it. Harry willingly consigns himself to his repressed existence and unhappy marriage; although he consoles himself that although he will always love Marvin, he has a good life with his wife, Kay. In the meantime, Kay and his friend Bill King carry on their love affair right under his nose while Harry remains blissfully unaware.

Shijun and Manzhi's struggle against time is expressed in much more desolate terms. Shijun does not have any illusions about his life, although he denies that they have both been through too many experiences to resume their previous relationship. While Harry returns to his normal state of complacent befuddlement, Shijun understands with painful clarity that this will be their final meeting. They are meeting as incarnations of their old selves, to say good-bye properly and then go back to the lives that they have made.

Desolation comes to the other characters as well as the uncomfortable truth that family members are willing to sacrifice others for their own gain. Both of the Gu sisters, Manlu and Manzhi, sacrifice themselves for their family. Manlu becomes a dancing girl and prostitute in order to support her family. Zhang makes it clear that Manlu makes this choice herself, breaking off her engagement with Yujin (called Mujin in *Eighteen Springs*) and passing up the chance to marry out of her impoverished situation. When she is an aging dancing girl and is losing her

⁹⁷ Marquand, *H.M. Pulham, Esquire*, 420.

patrons, Yujin reenters her family's life. He falls in love with Manzhi and proposes to her, but she turns him down, and, crestfallen, he is about to leave the Gu family home.

Manlu hears about his visit and wants to meet with him to reminisce about the past. When she does, however, Yujin realizes that she believes he is still in love with her and rejects her overtures. Manlu wears a purple gown, meant to evoke another purple gown she had worn in their youth. She asks him if she has changed.

曼璐微笑打量著他道：“你倒還是那樣子。你看我變了吧？”豫瑾微笑道：“人總要變得，我也變了。我現在脾氣也跟從前兩樣了，也不知道是年紀的關係，想想從前的事，非常幼稚可笑。

Manlu smiled at him speculatively: “You're still the same. Do you think I've changed?” Yujin smiled and said, “Everyone changes. I've changed too. My temperament today is completely different from before. When I think of my past self, I think he's pathetic.”⁹⁸

Manlu reflects on the bitterness of having sacrificed her youth and future for her family and then being unhappily married to a man she doesn't love. She regrets her decision and berates herself for being stupid.

Out of concern for her family, Manzhi also delays her marriage to Shijun. Zhang comments on Manzhi's stubbornness in refusing Shijun's repeated proposals. Unlike Manlu, who is acutely aware of the passage of time and missed opportunities, Manzhi retains her youthful arrogance and assumes that Shijun's love will keep until she is ready for it. This opportunity is snatched away when Manlu and her husband, Hongcai, conspire in her rape and imprisonment. Manlu's willingness to exploit her younger sister to solidify her place in Hongcai's affections is also complemented by their mother's complicity in Manlu's prostitution and Manzhi's rape. Although she occasionally has a pang of conscience, she is consistently able to excuse behavior that will continue to guarantee her own wellbeing. Zhang's penchant for

⁹⁸ Zhang, *Bansheng yuan*, 150.

desolation is displayed to full effect in this portrait of multiple family members who are willing to compromise their beliefs in order to put another younger woman to work for them.

Cuizhi and Shuhui are the final pair of characters left desolate. Although it is never explicitly portrayed in *Love of Half a Lifetime*, Zhang strongly suggests that Cuizhi and Shuhui have fallen in love with each other. Shuhui briefly considers pursuing her but decides against it because his station in life is too low and her family would consider him a fortune hunter. In addition, a pampered girl like her wouldn't make a fit wife for someone like him. Throughout the novel, it is clear in stolen moments that Cuizhi and Shuhui have fallen in love, but he remains pragmatic about his future and believes a girl like her has no place in it.

In *Love of Half a Lifetime*, Shuhui is just as desolate as the others, in contrast to his counterpart in *Eighteen Springs*, a selfless and heroic Party member returned from the interior who brings hope to his former friends in the happiness offered by the Communist Party. His return also acts as a stimulus for the end of the novel. However, rather than returning as a triumphant cadre, Shuhui has left the United States after having obtained a doctorate. He has already married and divorced a rich and temperamental overseas Chinese woman.⁹⁹

Shuhui pays a visit to Shijun and Cuizhi. The visit is filled with tension, as Shijun remains unaware of the feelings his friend and his wife have for each other. Unlike the character in *Eighteen Springs*, Cuizhi does not confess her love to Shuhui; her affection remains unspoken but implicit. After drawing Shijun's meeting with Manzhi out to its desolate conclusion, the novel turns to Shuhui and Cuizhi's reunion. Although they could easily embark on an affair, as their counterparts in *H.M. Pulham, Esquire* do, Shuhui abstains out of respect for his friendship with Shijun. Yet their situation is equally desolate: Cuizhi is caught in a loveless marriage to a

⁹⁹ In *Shiba chun*, Shuhui is an underground Party member and runs away to the interior.

man that she neither likes nor respects, and her children are estranged from her; Shuhui has entered into a series of loveless affairs as well as a failed marriage to a much younger woman.

翠芝忽然微笑道：“我想你不久就會再結婚的。”叔惠笑道：“哦？”翠芝笑道：“你將來的太太一定年輕、漂亮---”叔惠聽她的語氣未盡，便替她續下去道：“有錢。”兩人都笑了。叔惠笑道：“你覺得這是個惡性循環，是不是？”因又解釋道：“我是說，我給你害的，放佛這輩子只好吃這碗飯了，除非真是老得沒有人要。”在一片笑聲中，翠芝卻感到一絲淒涼的勝利與滿足。

Cuizhi laughed abruptly. “I believe you’ll marry again before long.” Shuhui chuckled. “Oh?” Cuizhi went on, “Your new wife without a doubt will be young, beautiful—” Shuhui could tell that she hadn’t finished and completed the sentence for her, “and rich.” Both of them laughed. Shuhui said, “Don’t you feel that this is a vicious cycle?” He explained, “I mean, I hurt you, and it seems that I have been set on this track for the rest of my life until I’m old and no one wants me.” In the midst of her laughter, Cuizhi felt a cold shiver of victory and fulfillment.¹⁰⁰

Zhang ends the novel with her familiar tone of desolation. Cuizhi enjoys a fleeting moment of vanity, knowing that Shuhui has acknowledged the unhappiness of his life without her. However, both are aware that little can be gained from this knowledge.

Love of Half a Lifetime concludes with the brief reunion of two couples who have been separated by circumstance and time. Rather than providing any hope of an emotionally fulfilling but passionless future, as *Eighteen Springs* does, the conclusion of *Love of Half a Lifetime* emphasizes the inescapability of the passage of time. Time passes for all the characters, and they lose not only their youth and ideals but also the sense of why these ideals were important in the first place. Despite the wrongs that have been done to the different characters, time remains their greatest opponent.

In *Eighteen Springs*, Zhang converts her initial adaptation of Marquand’s critique of the American middle class in *H.M. Pulham, Esquire* into an attempt at a socialist critique. Although it is not entirely clear when Zhang read Marquand’s novel, *Eighteen Springs*, published in

¹⁰⁰ Zhang, *Bansheng yuan*, 376.

mainland China also bears clear influences of his novel, including versions of the key passages mentioned above. Cuizhi's selfishness and Shijun's consequent unhappiness are the results of a bourgeois lifestyle. Once they abandon this lifestyle and embrace socialism, their problems disappear. In *Love of Half a Lifetime*, however, the novel changes focus. In the new ending, both sets of lovers meet again, but rather than rekindling their feelings for each other, they encounter the specters of the past. As Shijun describes it, seeing each other again only confirms the permanence of the loss of what they had and ends their feelings for each other.

Zhang's revisions in *Love of Half a Lifetime* also result in the loss of historical specificity. In *Eighteen Springs*, life in Shanghai under the new regime is described in detail, Manzhi attends struggle sessions in her spare time, and both Shuhui and his father wear styles of clothing that reflect the new regime. The novel makes several references to the actions of the Nationalists in the civil war. The Shanghai of *Eighteen Springs* is clearly rooted in the early 1950s. However, *Love of Half a Lifetime*, written at a remove of seventeen years from the time and place that it depicts, presents a more problematic case. Rather than discussing the way in which the lifestyles of many of the characters leave them unfulfilled, Zhang turns to a different theme, the inescapability of time. At the end of the novel, the Sino-Japanese war is clearly a thing of the past in Shanghai. Most of the references to the Nationalists have been changed to mentions of the Japanese army. The characters lead lives of some stability, which also makes it clear that events take place after the war, yet there is no mention of Communism.

The depiction of Shanghai and the tone of the ending take on the perspective of an exile. Like Shuhui, who returns to China from the United States, Zhang calls up the ghost of a city where she once lived. The realities of publishing in Taiwan made discussing the Communist regime fairly difficult. However, Zhang explicitly discuss a time period, the Shanghai of *Love of*

Half a Lifetime is clearly postwar, but remains curiously devoid of any other temporal characteristics. Beyond the characters' lives, it is difficult to discern anything about the state of the city. Manzhi's son goes to university, and Shuhui is free to return from the United States to visit his family. Without the mentions of struggle sessions and the settlements in Manchuria, Zhang's depiction of Shanghai is similarly spectral. In adapting her novel for a new audience, she has produced an exile's story. In rewriting her novel, Zhang Ailing reencounters Shanghai and confronts the insubstantial nature of her own memory.

While revising *Eighteen Springs* into *Love of Half a Lifetime* is not the same kind of detached cultural brokering that Zhang performs in her earlier fiction, tracing the transformation of her work, from Shanghai writer to an overseas observer, what Zhang does in rewriting her original novel elucidates one of her early attempts to reinvent herself as a broker of old Shanghai to Sinophone audiences in American-friendly regions such as Taiwan and Hong Kong. Rather than being a cultural broker of other cultures to her home city, Zhang, in her later years, became "the last aristocrat" of the Qing dynasty, through her aristocratic lineage, and of semicolonial Shanghai, through her own writing.

The transition of authorial personae was difficult. Zhang herself felt that being away from Shanghai and the places that she wrote about made it difficult for her to write about them in the same way. Her writing did not become inauthentic because she had moved away, but distance did change the way that she wrote about the city. Shanghai in *Love of Half a Lifetime* has become a nostalgic city, a space that Zhang can only resurrect out of her memories, describing it to readers who may have never laid eyes on it. The two versions of the novel span the Pacific as well and also contribute to the ways in which Zhang's writing changed after she immigrated to the United States. In discussing the evolution of Zhang's writing and her attempts to mediate and

adapt her voice to new audiences, we can better understand her ways of continuing to negotiate between her identity as a Shanghai writer and her new perspective as part of the Sinophone community in the United States.

Conclusion

One of Zhang's final publications during her lifetime, *On Contrast* is a collection of her family photographs and anecdotes, which represents an attempt at curating her own persona, creating a personal mythology that emphasizes her role as the curator and chronicler of days long past. Many of these anecdotes are contained in slightly different forms in Zhang's posthumously published English- and Chinese-language novels, *Little Reunion*, *The Book of Change*, and *The Fall of the Pagoda*. Unlike these three works, *On Reflection* was a work that Zhang intended to be published. She presents numerous stories from her childhood accompanied by photographs primarily from her youth. The subjects of her photographs are the people that make prominent appearances in her writing, her mother, her aunt, her grandmother, and her friend Fatima. Although some of the photographs are dated after Zhang left China, the anecdotes that accompany them are very brief, dwelling very little on her nearly forty years living in the United States.

This conspicuous absence characterizes Zhang's Sinophone authorial persona, her most successful works were those which dealt specifically with old Shanghai and *Duizhao ji* teases her long-time readers with the possibility of knowing the true origin of many of the works of fiction that she produced. Combining anecdote with photographs provides a sense of verification or documentation, but it is a selective documentation, with the pieces of Zhang's story which do not fit easily into her role as a Shanghai writer are cropped out.

As a cultural broker, Zhang engages with a number of different audiences and literary markets. Much of her writing adopts a detached tone that is dependent on the assumption that she is an expert on the ways of multiple communities. She frequently breaks away from the narrative to address the stereotypes and foibles of the communities she describes. This role worked well in cosmopolitan Shanghai, but her authority as a cultural broker faltered when she arrived in the United States. While American readers did not question her authority on China, she did not provide them with the type of narratives they were seeking, and her Anglophone novels were never as well-received as her Sinophone works on Hong Kong and Shanghai. Han Suyin, Lin Yutang, Pearl Buck, and to a lesser extent Agnes Smedley and Lao She were far more successful at establishing themselves as authorities on China. In part this may have to do with Zhang's uncompromisingly desolate tone, as well as her tendency to expose the emotional vulnerabilities in her characters. Lao She's initial success in the American market came in part from his translator, Evan King's unauthorized decision to create a happy ending to what was intended to be a tragedy. While Zhang's Anglophone work was marked by a unique use of the English language, her style is a forerunner of that of the critically celebrated Anglophone Chinese writer Ha Jin.

Although American readers had often maintained an interest in literature about China as evidenced by the early success of Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth*, American involvement in the Pacific during the Cold War had increased interest in the countries that lay within the United States' sphere of influence. Zhang attempted to position herself within this wave of new interest, citing in her letters role models and rivals for this newfound audience. In her conversations with Stephen and Mae Soong, she discusses a number of bilingual writers such as Lin Yutang and Han Suyin, both of whom had successful Anglophone careers writing about China. Zhang

admires Lin Yutang, having looked up to him since she was young.¹⁰¹ She discusses Han Suyin at greater length, comparing their two works and careers,

My own stories are a bit like Han Suyin's novel. But her biggest problem is that she is a second rate writer. Even though her book's sold very well, I am the better writer. Because she writes badly, there's no real threat.

我自己的故事，有點像韓素英的書——不過她最大的毛病就是因為她是個 second rate writer...雖然她這本書運氣很好，我可以寫得比她好，因為她寫得壞，所以不可能是威脅。¹⁰²

Despite her self-professed scorn for Han Suyin, Zhang mentions her frequently, suggesting that she was conscious of her own lack of success while writing similar types of stories for an American audience. The great disparity between her success in the Anglophone and Sinophone reading communities suggests the struggles that Zhang went through. She went from representing Hong Kong to a Shanghai audience to representing all of China, past and present, to an American one. Her writing on China met with little popular success with English language audiences, and although she professes a nonchalance about Han Suyin's book sales, her frustration at being outsold by a "second rate writer" is palpable.

Although Zhang was long ignored by American literary scholars, the recent transnational turn in literary scholarship as well as the runaway success of the film adaptation of her short-story *Lust/Caution*¹⁰³, has brought her back into the public eye in the United States. In addition, the increasing transnational turn in Asian American studies has produced several in-depth studies of her English language novels within the context of American literature. All three of her Anglophone novels, *Rice Sprout Song*, *The Naked Earth*, and *The Rouge of the North* have been

¹⁰¹ Song and Song, *Zhang Ailing siyu lu*, 56.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 48-49.

¹⁰³ Appropriately this adaptation was undertaken by a similarly transnational director, the Taiwanese American Ang Lee.

reprinted with scholarly introductions. Zhang's novels have finally become the stories of China that American audiences, at least scholarly ones, want to hear.

Chapter 3

“A Mirror Restored?”: The Travels of Lao She’s *The Yellow Storm* and *The Drum Singers*

Lao She, best known for his novel *Camel Xiangzi* (*Luotuo Xiangzi*), is often labeled as the consummate Beijing writer. The success of his first novel established him not only as a leading writer but also as quintessentially Beijing, due to its depiction of life in the *hutong* (alleyways) and his use of Beijing dialect. However, Lao She’s itinerary and the subjects of his other works range far beyond his birthplace of Beijing. An examination of his far-ranging itinerary from England to Singapore and the United States over the course of his life reveals his engagement with other literatures beyond the borders of China and troubles the boundaries between what we think of as Chinese and American literatures through the collaboration and contestation that occurred during his sojourn.

Born Shu Yuqing in 1898, Lao She was the son of a poor Manchu banner family residing in Beijing. His father was burned to death while defending the city during the Boxer Uprising. The death of Lao She’s father left the family destitute and there was little means for Lao She to obtain an education. He began attending a missionary school in Beijing and later converted to Christianity, although the sincerity of this conversion has been contested. His Christian faith allowed him to qualify for scholarship and the connections of the missionaries allowed him to obtain a scholarship to teach Chinese at the School for Oriental and African Studies in London in 1924.

He lived and worked in England for five years before booking passage home. On his journey, he stopped off for several months in Singapore, after he ran out of money for his return journey. Landing in Tianjin, Lao She visited his family in Beijing in May 1930 but left a few

months later to take up a teaching position in Jinan, the capital of Shandong province. In 1934, he took up a position at Shandong University in Qingdao as a member of the literature department alongside established literary figures such as Wen Yiduo, Wang Tongzhao, and Liang Shiqiu. This period in his life marked a significant turning point in his career, causing Lao She to resign his position and commit fully to pursuing a career as a professional writer. *Camel Xiangzi*, his classic work, was set in Beijing although it was written and completed in Qingdao.

He left Qingdao shortly before it was invaded by Japan as part of their southward advance into China. He traveled throughout Free China throughout the war, committed to patriotic literary efforts.¹⁰⁴ After the Japanese surrendered, he finally returned to his hometown of Beijing. In 1946, he once again left Beijing as part of a diplomatic writer's visit to the United States with Cao Yu. While Cao Yu only stayed in the United States for a short time, Lao She stayed in the United States for almost four years, returning to Beijing only in 1949.

Upon his return to China he became a leading playwright in the new regime, creating a number of original plays and adaptations to widespread acclaim throughout the 1950s.¹⁰⁵ His play *Teahouse (Chaguan)* is one of his most celebrated works and one of the most famous contemporary Chinese plays. He became an extremely successful and well-regarded writer due to his depiction of local working-class life. Lao She's literary output ceased in the early 1960s as he felt increasing political pressure on his writing and was purged from the Communist party during the Cultural Revolution.

¹⁰⁴ For more about his wartime activities and output, see David Wang, "Lao She's Wartime Fiction." *Modern Chinese Literature* 5 no. 2 (1989): 197-218.

¹⁰⁵ For more about Lao She's literary output post-1949, see Walter Meserve and Ruth Meserve, "Lao Sheh: From People's Artist to 'An Enemy of the People,'" *Comparative Drama* 8 no. 2 (Summer 1974):143-156.

Lao She drowned in 1966 but accounts of his death remain unclear. According to some accounts he was beaten to death by Red Guards, in others Lao She was left alone and was shortly after discovered dead. Afterwards, the literary establishment in the People's Republic branded him a "counterrevolutionary" and his works fell out of favor. It was only after the end of the Cultural Revolution that Lao She was rehabilitated and new interest was taken in his work.

A great deal of scholarship exists on Lao She's canonical works, *Camel Xiangzi* and *Teahouse* but less attention has been paid to his career overseas. Scholarly studies of Lao She have most frequently focused on his place in the Chinese literary canon as a master satirist,¹⁰⁶ while other studies have focused on his relationship to Christianity¹⁰⁷. While Lao She's earlier sojourns in Britain and Southeast Asia have been the subject of recent studies, his American sojourn remains relatively unknown¹⁰⁸. This chapter focuses on his three and a half years in the United States, which was the time in Lao She's career when he was at his most collaborative, and the results of these literary collaborations have yet to be fully studied in the context of Chinese literature. While in the United States, he completed the final portion of his epic *Four Generations Under One Roof (Sishi tongtang)*¹⁰⁹. He also produced another novel, *The Drum*

¹⁰⁶ For a discussion of his work as a satirist, see David Wang, *Fictional Realism in Twentieth Century China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

¹⁰⁷ There has been a lot of interest in early American scholarship on Lao She to emphasize the Christian themes in his work. Lao She was officially a convert to Christianity and missionary patronage allowed him to gain employment in London, however Christianity did not play much of a role in his life after England. For discussions of Christianity in relation to his work, see Britt Towery, *Lao She: China's Master Storyteller* (Waco: Tao Foundation, 1999.)

¹⁰⁸ For studies of his time in Britain see Anne Witchard, *Lao She in London* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012) and King Hu, "Lao She in England," trans., Cecelia Tsim, *Renditions 10* (Autumn 1978): 46-67. For a discussion of Lao She's work depicting Southeast Asia, see Brian Bernards, "From Diasporic Nationalism to Transcolonial Consciousness: Lao She's Singaporean Satire, *Little Po's Birthday*," *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 26 no. 1 (2014): 1-40.

¹⁰⁹ Because this chapter touches on multiple versions of the texts, the contemporary Sinophone versions with the additions and abridgements of Ma Xiaomi are referred to as *Sishi tongtang [Four Generations Under One Roof]* and *Gushu yiren [The Drum Singers]* using pinyin only to mark the difference between the two versions. The 1950s Anglophone versions are referred to as *The Yellow Storm*, Ida Pruitt She's translation of *Sishi tongtang*, and *The*

Singers (*Gushu yiren*). In addition, he collaborated in the translation into English of three of his novels, *The Loves of Lau Lee* (*Lihun*), *Sishi tongtang*¹¹⁰, and *Gushu yiren*. The translation of the latter two works had an unforeseen impact on contemporary Chinese literary history. When Lao She returned to mainland China in 1950 he carried with him the manuscripts of the final installment of *Sishi tongtang* and of *Gushu yiren*. Due to the political upheavals of the Cultural Revolution, these manuscripts were never published and later disappeared never to be recovered. *The Yellow Storm* contained this final section of the novel and the manuscript of *The Drum Singers* was published in its entirety in English shortly after Lao She returned to China. This rupture created two versions of the novel, where the English translation, *The Yellow Storm*, was the more “complete” whereas the 1961 edition of *Sishi tongtang* was missing the final volume. After the Cultural Revolution ended, there was a resurgence of interest in Lao She’s work and the translator Ma Xiaomi used the English versions to reconstruct these lost portions of Lao She’s works. This act of “restoration” complicates the comfortable understanding of the original manuscript as the “true” version of the work and the translation as a secondary “copy.” Lawrence Venuti analyzes the “invisibility of the translator” in which the translator’s work on the translation goes unremarked. Generally, critics prize a translation which reads fluently without creating a reminder of its passage between two languages. In the case of the three translators discussed here, they left unmistakable marks on the text. Rather than treating these interventions as flaws or perversions of the original lost document, I treat these traces of the translators as part of the dialogic evolution of the texts.

Drum Singers Helena Kuo’s translation of *Gushu yiren*. Lao She’s novel *Li hun* was translated into English twice during this period, as *Divorce* in an unpublished manuscript by Evan King, and as *The Loves of Lau Lee* which was translated by Helena Kuo and published with Lao She’s permission.

While both literary scholars and Lao She's family have described the translation of the English language versions of these two novels as a restoration to their rightful place within the Chinese literary canon, this interpretation of the retranslation of the English translation back into Chinese disregards the itinerary of the text itself that traveled from Chinese through intensely collaborative translations with Ida Pruitt and Helena Kuo, and their own particular command of English and Chinese, and then through the hands of Ma Xiaomi, who made her own alterations to the texts. Rather than seeing the addition of these works to Lao She's canon as "a mirror made whole," I find it helpful to trace the ways that these texts cross both geographic and linguistic boundaries and how this travel is reflected in textual production and representation.

The turbulent histories of these two works present a conundrum to the model of Chinese literature as a national literature. Lao She's collaborative approach to working with his translators, discussed in greater detail below, and the absence of a complete Sinitic-language manuscript for either text have forced scholars to treat the English language translation as the most authoritative version of these novels. By doing so, these scholars complicate the idea of Chinese literature as a monolingual literature that is composed and consumed within the national boundary. The finished product of the Mandarin translation of *Gushu yiren* and the final chapters of *Sishi tongtang* represents a collaboration between the author and the translator. While Lao She remains the author credited on the cover of both books, his collaborators contribute significantly to these works. These texts as they exist today are part of a dialogic process of literary exchange between Chinese and American writers and translators and a combination of different literatures.

My analysis of the dialogic transformations of Lao She's work seeks to unpack the question of how texts travel and transform through translation and transmission. In this chapter, I will look at the ways that the roles of Ida Pruitt and Helena Kuo complicate the divide between

translator and author and further highlight the confrontation between Chinese, Chinese-American, American leftist, and American neo-imperial interest in the representation of the Chinese subject. How does the “recovery” of Lao She’s lost novel and the ending of *Sishi tongtang* from their American versions complicate the idea of Chinese literature? Rather than being seamlessly incorporated into the Chinese literary canon, both texts, but most clearly *Gushu yiren*, show the marks of their itinerary through Chinese to English, and finally back into Chinese again. Rather than dismissing these marks as “inauthentic,” these inconsistencies and ruptures in the text complicate the idea of fixed geographical borders that separate national literatures. In fact, the process by which texts travel between Lao She and his translators suggest the ways that texts can travel and develop dialogically as they travel between different literatures and languages.

Mr. Shu Goes to Washington

Lao She was recruited by the United States State Department to serve as an unofficial cultural ambassador for the Republic of China to the United States. Together with the famous playwright Cao Yu, Lao She arrived in the United States in 1946. Lao She remained there for four years before returning to the newly formed People’s Republic of China in 1950. After arriving in the United States, Lao She took an active role in his American literary career and became active in the American literary world. He retained a literary agent, David Lloyd, and participated in such literary activities as the Yaddo writers’ retreat in Saratoga Springs, New York.¹¹¹ Lao She finished the second part of *Sishi tongtang* at Yaddo and completed the final third while in New York City.

¹¹¹ Lao She crossed paths with the American leftist writer Agnes Smedley, friend of Lu Xun and Xiao Hong, at Yaddo.

Although the circumstances of the translations discussed in this chapter are known and accepted by literary scholars in mainland China, they are generally grouped alongside other translations of his work into English, ignoring the uniquely collaborative aspect of these translations. The two notable critical discussions of this period of Lao She's career are Richard So's impeccably researched dissertation, "Coolie Democracy," and Li Yue's monograph, *Lao She zuopin yingyi yanjiu*. Li's work is primarily a collection of data related to all English translations of Lao She's fiction. While Lao She's work published in the United States gets a mention, the study mostly describes the circumstances of the translations and how they were done rather than providing any analysis.

On the other hand, Richard So's discussion of Lao She examines the complex and collaborative nature of the American translations. He frames this primarily as a struggle between American liberal democratic values and Chinese ideals of socialism: how the working and reworking of the text becomes a contested ideological terrain where Lao She is made to fit into an American idea of Chinese fiction. In this chapter, I address many of the same historical events and relationships, but my interest in the complex process of translation that produced *Sishi tongtang* and *Gushu yiren* is primarily in how problematizing the seamlessness of the finished products now housed securely within the Lao She canon as well as how this act of collaboration blurs the lines between Chinese and American literature. In my analysis, these texts are hybrid texts, having undergone the translation from spoken or written Mandarin Chinese to English and back again. I am interested in the interventions of the author, the English and Chinese translators, and his American and posthumous Chinese publishers. While Lao She's works were incorporated into an Americanized idea of a Chinese novel in his English translations, his Chinese translator also altered portions of *The Drum Singers* in order to fit her idea of an

appropriate Lao She novel. An examination of the complex process by which the present day version of the text was formed reveals the different perceptions and assumptions of what makes the novel Chinese through the negotiations and contestations of multiple versions of texts that cross nation and language in order to form the finished product.

Lao She was one of the few modern Chinese writers who already had an established literary reputation among the Anglophone public when he arrived in the United States in 1946. His novel *Camel Xiangzi* had been translated in the 1940s by Evan King as *Rickshaw Boy*. Although King's translation is now universally dismissed as a poor one, due to his notorious decision to change the ending of the novel to a happy one, it was quite successful among its American readership at the time of its publication. The popular and critical interest he enjoyed was buoyed not only by American interest in their new eastern "empire" but also helped by the network of American leftist China hands and Chinese postwar émigrés. Pearl Buck and Ida Pruitt played critical roles in bringing a sense of China politically and literarily to a sympathetic American readership. In addition, Chinese transplants to New York, the center of the American publishing world, such as Lin Yutang, Zhang Ailing, and Lao She's translator Helena Kuo used increased interest in China to publish their Anglophone works. While Zhang Ailing and Helena Kuo both published works that indicate a Chinese people on the verge of an American style democracy and the evils of the Communist party, Lao She's own political stance made his entry into this publishing niche significantly more complicated. His inability to fit in with the mostly pro-Nationalist Chinese émigrés and their willingness to portray the Chinese as ready and eager for the advent of democracy, may have also contributed to his sense of dissatisfaction with the United States. This disconnect between fellow countrymen is clear in a memoir written by George Kao, then editor, with Zhang Ailing's close friend Stephen Soong, of *Renditions*. Kao

recalls a moment at a dinner that Lao She attended during his visit when one of the other guests praised Hu Shi, whose views were already deemed conservative by leftist writers in China, the literary light of recent Chinese migrant literati, as the “cultural leader in post-War [sic] China. At this Lao She’s face darkened and he instantly expressed some negative reaction to that statement.”¹¹²

Kao later recalls that Lao She seemed to hate everything about the United States as he waited for his ship to depart in San Francisco, “When we stopped for ice cream, he would have none of it. A drink of Coca Cola, maybe? He hated it.”¹¹³ It was in large part his belief in the Communist enterprise in China and his disillusionment with the opportunities that America had to offer that caused him to return in 1950 shortly after the founding of the PRC. Kao ends his memoir by wishing that Lao She had not become a propagandist for the Communists. Instead he ends his piece

wish[ing] that Lao She’s fate would not have turned out like this, but rather in the words of Evan King when he changed the ending of the story into one of Hsiang-tzu’s reunion with “Little Lucky One” *She was alive. He was alive. They were free.*¹¹⁴

Whereas Lao She looks forward to returning to China to experience communist liberation, Kao turns nostalgically back toward the rewriting of Lao She’s dark satire into a romantic end. Evan King’s choice to emphasize the freedom that both characters feel has been noted by Richard So as an expression of “coolie democracy.” This passage further emphasizes the way that Lao She fits uncomfortably into the American and Chinese émigré idea of an acceptable Chinese author. Whereas Kao sees pessimism and negativity, Lao She’s letters to Ida Pruitt and David Lloyd

¹¹² George Kao “Lao She in America,” *Renditions* 10 (Autumn 1978): 72.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 75.

once in China suggest an exhilaration with being home and a strong sense of optimism about the new regime. Kao's wish that Lao She's end could have been that of the hero of Evan King's ending instead of his own, with its darkly ironic parallel to the death of a character from *Sishi tongtang*, suggests the great difficulty that Lao She and his works had in fitting into the Chinese émigré sensibility.

Much of Lao She's frustration with the American publishing world was his lack of control over the way in which his works were translated and portrayed. Lao She had disliked Evan King's translation *Rickshaw Boy* which was published before he arrived. While in the United States, he took a more active role in the translation of his other works into English. In the case of *Rickshaw Boy*, King translated the novel and Lao She had simply given his consent after he had completed it but the process by which his later works were produced was more collaborative.¹¹⁵ He approved the choice of the translators of his later works, Ida Pruitt and Helena Kuo, and collaborated with them in their work. He also discussed working on a possible movie adaptation with James Wong Howe.¹¹⁶

He also was able to advocate for his own vision for his works. Shortly after his arrival in the United States, Lao She became embroiled in a dispute with Evan King. King had already begun a translation of the novel *Li hun*, entitled *Divorce*, which he had completed and intended

¹¹⁵ *Rickshaw Boy* had become a bestseller and had been selected by the Book of the Month club. None of Lao She's other works were able to reach this level of popularity.

¹¹⁶ Lao She flew to Hollywood to meet with Wong in August 1948 to discuss the adaptation of *Rickshaw Boy* into a film, but returned frustrated by his lack of creative control in the adaptation of his novel. In a letter to David Lloyd, he recounts his frustration, "The whole business with Wong Howe is miserable indeed. I should have been asked to help to write the first screen play in the first place. But Wong just engaged a Hollywood man to do it alone. When the fifteen thousand screen script proved to be a dud, Wong began to remember me. He should then ask me to write it, yet he again engaged another man." Lao She to David Lloyd, 8 September 1948, in *Lao She yingwen shuxinji: zhongying duizhaoben*, ed. Shu Yue (Xianggang: Qin+Yuan chubanshe, 1993), 54. Neither script was satisfactory to Lao She or Wong and the film adaptation came to nothing. It is clear from Lao She's letter to Lloyd that he expected to be deferred to as the author of the original novel.

to publish without Lao She's consent. In an attempt to prevent him from doing this, Lao She came out with his own approved version first translated by Helena Kuo entitled *The Love of Lao Lee*. This successful attempt to preempt what amounted to the theft of his novel represents one way that his residence in America enabled him directly engage with his Anglophone readership. This conflict also reflects one of the central issues that Lao She faced during his four years in the United States: a struggle to determine who was qualified to represent and transmit his work.

Because of this crisis of representation, the translators of Lao She's novels, *Sishi tongtang* and *Gushu yiren*: Ida Pruitt, Helena Kuo (Guo Jingqiu), and Ma Xiaomi are key figures in my study of these two texts. Translators are often overlooked in the process of literary production and have often been seen as simply converting a text in one language into another. Translators play a key role in the transmission and circulation of literature works between places. The translator's work is considered to be separate from that of the author. Rather than the conventional relationship between writer and translator, where a translator converts a finished text by an author into a different language, Lao She worked with both Helena Kuo and Ida Pruitt to craft the English translations they produced.

Both of these translations differ from the translations of Lao She's other works due to their recirculation into Chinese literature after the author's original manuscripts were lost. In an essay detailing the publication history of *Sishi tongtang*, entitled "The Broken Mirror Restored" [*Pojing chongyuan*], Lao She's wife and son discuss the lost ending to the novel and how it has now been rejoined to the rest of the text through Ma Xiaomi's translation. The new text represents the completion of Lao She's original novel, which is represented as the incorporation of the fragment into a complete whole. This striking image suggests that the new version of *Sishi tongtang* is a completed, seamless whole. This attitude is the consensus of Chinese

commentators of both *Sishi tongtang* and *Gushu yiren*. While all acknowledge that the English translations possess new information and a unique insight into what Lao She intended, once the novel has been retranslated into Chinese, these works are considered to be restored to their rightful place within the Sinophone canon, making invisible both translators. This point of view does not acknowledge the uncertainty of recovering an author's original voice, particularly in the case of Lao She's collaboration with his translators.

The retranslation of *The Drum Singers* is far from being a complete and direct translation of the English text. The Chinese translator, Ma Xiaomi revised certain portions of *The Drum Singers*, excising parts that she believes to be uncharacteristic of Lao She. The current versions of *Sishi tongtang* and *Gushu yiren* are the product of imperfect and dialogic negotiation between the author and multiple editors and translators. Rather than a flawless mirror, these texts represent a mirror broken and then pieced together again, the fragments might form a single object but each facet shows a slightly different image. This imperfect object also provides evidence of a unique historical moment, in which Chinese and American literatures interpenetrated each other to create such a text. In this chapter, I discuss the dialogic formation of these two novels through the interaction of the author, translators, and editors and the way that the formation of this text illustrates the shifts in how the text is imagined and reimagined over forty years.

How Four Generations Became The Yellow Storm

Lao She's magnum opus, *Sishi tongtang* (Four Generations under One Roof), recounts the history of Beijing's eight years under Japanese occupation through the trials and tribulations of the Qi family and their neighbors who reside in the *hutong* neighborhood known as the

Sheepfold. The Qi family struggles to maintain their way of life and their integrity while adapting to life under increasingly oppressive Japanese rule.

Lao She published the first two parts of the novel in Chongqing from 1944 onward before leaving for the United States in 1946. Lao She completed the third portion of the novel in the United States. From 1946 to 1947, he collaborated with Ida Pruitt in translating this novel into English. In 1948, it was published under the title *The Yellow Storm*. Lao She returned to China in 1950, bringing the manuscript of the third portion of *Sishi tongtang* with him, but the final thirteen chapters were never published in China and the manuscript was lost. After the Cultural Revolution, the discrepancy between the English and Chinese versions was discovered and Ma Xiaomi translated the final thirteen chapters into Chinese. These final chapters have been incorporated into the canonical version of the novel.

A key party to the transmission and translation of Lao She's novel was Ida Pruitt. Lao She and Ida Pruitt had first met in China and were reintroduced by Pearl Buck after Lao She arrived in the United States. She was a child of missionaries born and raised in Shandong province. Pruitt lived and worked in mainland China, with a brief stay in the United States to attend college. Her work put her in touch with many leftist China hands such as Rewi Alley and Agnes Smedley. Pruitt published several books of her own, including a memoir, *A China Childhood*, and two biographies of Chinese women: a peasant woman and a wealthy widow. She is also well-known for her translation work, having worked with Wu Yong and Lao She in translating their works into English. In her memoir, Pruitt describes her sense of identity as caught between Chinese and Western sensibilities; she considered China her motherland, but ultimately returned to the United States to live. While in America, she remained active in nonprofit aid work in China. Pruitt, was unable to read Chinese but was completely proficient in

spoken Chinese, which required some adjustment to the conventional process of translation. Rather than working primarily with the written word, her collaboration with Lao She was primarily oral. Pruitt describes their translation process in a letter to a friend,

He would come every evening at seven o'clock and we would work until ten...Our method of work was unusual. Lao Sheh would read to me in Chinese and I would type in English. He knew more English than he would own to. As I typed I said what I was typing. Often he would challenge or correct me. Knotty points we discussed.¹¹⁷

Pruitt and Lao She's process of translating was inherently collaborative: the translator and author created the text together. Lao She's input was clearly central to the translation process and he would sometimes disagree or correct Pruitt's translations. A key part of this relationship was Lao She's own facility with the English language that enabled him to put forward his own choice of word and nuance.¹¹⁸

While Pruitt's account of Lao She is for the most part positive, Lao She's account of his collaboration with Pruitt was candid about the benefits as well as its shortcomings. Lao She praises her familiarity with Chinese culture in a letter to his agent, David Lloyd, stating "she knows so much about China that she can visualize all that I read to her at once from my book."¹¹⁹ He then devotes a much longer paragraph to list his points of dissatisfaction.

She has however her shortcomings. She would, for example, insist to keep the Chinese flavor as much as she can which makes her sometimes write broken English. When I gave the draft of the first ten chapters of the translation to Miss Herz¹²⁰ to read, she told me to stop working with Miss Pruitt at once, as she thought the English was all very queer. And she also made the remark that if I were to continue working with Miss Pruitt, it would be quite necessary to get a third person to polish up the English...I went, then, to

¹¹⁷ Ida Pruitt to Gladys Yang, 20 October 1978, Ida Pruitt and Marjorie King Papers, 1891-1994, MC 701, Folder, #1.69, Experimental Archives Project, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University.

¹¹⁸ For a discussion of the dialogic process of translation as reflected in Pruitt's original manuscript of her translation of *The Yellow Storm*, see Richard So's chapter on Lao She in "Coolie Democracy."

¹¹⁹ Lao She to David Lloyd, 22 April 1948, 12-14.

¹²⁰ Henrietta Herz was Lao She's literary agent before David Lloyd.

see Mrs. Walsh¹²¹ and asked her advice about it. After her reading of the same ten chapters, she told me to go ahead with Miss Pruitt. Her opinion is that she likes the story and all the slips and mistakes made by Miss Pruitt can be easily corrected by a competent editor.¹²²

Lao She's primary complaint with Pruitt was that the prose that she produced was not standard enough, an ironic complaint for a translator. Rather she was too loyal to the Chinese original to translate it into natural sounding English. Lao She paraphrases the words of his former agent to demonstrate the strangeness of the language produced. The second opinion is hardly more positive about the quality of Pruitt's prose, but suggests that it is possible to edit out her "slips and mistakes." The redeeming quality of the text is the interest of the larger plot that Lao She is solely responsible for.

From her own perspective, Pruitt discusses her own philosophy of translation in a letter to David Lloyd,

Though all the story is in the English translation, and the quality of the characters, it was impossible to carry over all the nuances in Dr. Shu's brilliant use of the Peiping colloquial speech. Colloquial – gaining as it does its richness from the culture it grows out of and from the customs of the country and sometimes even incidents in the history of the country – cannot be translated by the colloquial of another language which has its own rich connotations from its own culture. These are different therefore the meaning would be altered. Where ever possible I have tried to get a translation that will carry the weight or lightness of the original language. This has not been at all times possible. I wanted very much also to give the translation a genuine Chinese feeling and yet in no way "arty" or "picturesque."¹²³

In her letter, Pruitt draws a parallel between the colloquial language of each country and its culture and history. Each expression is something that she sees as indistinguishable from the

¹²¹ The married name of Pearl Buck.

¹²² Lao She to David Lloyd, 22 April 1948, 12-14.

¹²³ Ida Pruitt to David Lloyd, 31 August 1949, Ida Pruitt and Marjorie King Papers, 1891-1994, MC 701, Folder, #1.66, Experimental Archives Project, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University.

customs and history of the country. Pruitt states that to find an equivalence in another language that has its own customs and history, is impossible. To find a seeming equivalence would be to pervert the original meaning in the original language. She suggests that her goal in translating the novel was to preserve the “genuine Chinese feeling.”

Her interpretation of a translator’s duties, to remain rigidly loyal to the original, and that of Lao She were in clear conflict. Lao She valued a fluent translation that did not present too many challenges to the reader. Pruitt preferred a translation that was more direct and reminded the reader of the text’s Chineseness. To the contemporary reader, Pruitt’s translation seems stilted and contains overly direct translations of Chinese, often featuring a kind of pidgin English, which is intelligible to readers who like Pruitt, are fluent in both Chinese and English, but struck other readers as unnatural.

For example, in a conversation between Old Man Qi and his adulterous granddaughter-in-law.

The old man stopped her. With a loud voice he said, “Roll!” Then his speech spurted like water from a pump. “Roll away! Get out! You have the face to come here and bring gifts to me. If I should accept your presents my ancestors could not lie quietly in their graves. Roll!”¹²⁴

A more colloquial translation of the same passage might read something more like this:

The old man interrupted her. His voice was not raised, but his words were crystal clear. “Get out!” Then, as if a dam had burst, he let out a roar, “Get out! Leave! How dare you come back here bearing gifts! If I accepted your presents, my ancestors would spin in their graves. Get out! Get out of my sight!”

老人攔住了她。他聲音不高，可是清清楚楚：“滾！”然後像河水開閘似的，連聲嚷：“滾開！出去！還有臉上門，給我送禮來！我要是受了你的禮，我家墳裡祖宗都不得安寧。滾！給我滾！”

¹²⁴ Lao She. *The Yellow Storm*, trans. Ida Pruitt. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1951), 473. Name given on the jacket is Lao Sheh, but for consistency and to prevent confusion, the author will be referred to as Lao She.

It is difficult to imagine that the direct translation of “Roll!” for the Chinese *gun* would be recognized in the same way by Anglophone audiences. The contrast between the two translations reveals a key point of Pruitt’s philosophy of translation. Her word choice hews as closely as possible to the Chinese word, although sometimes without regard to the different ways seemingly equivalent words are used in Chinese and English. Given her own prose, it is clear that Pruitt’s translation choices were deliberate. Her extremely direct translations were in part due to her professed attempt to communicate the majesty of the original, but it may have also been in part to replicate what Pruitt thought of as the Chineseness of the text. In a letter to David Lloyd, she argues strongly against editorial interference of any kind, “both Dr. Shu and I have reputations also that are based on the integrity of our work. We cannot have an Americanization of our work.”¹²⁵ In her letter, Pruitt is clearly aligning herself with what she perceived to be the Chinese side against any American influence in the text; she regarded any alteration to the language constituted an assimilation of the text. Although she professes her loyalty to Lao She’s original text, he himself seems open to editing the novel to make it more readable in English.

It is difficult to tell how disappointed Lao She was with the translation, since he avoided giving much of his own opinion beyond citing the relatively unfavorable opinions in his letter. The difference in their philosophies came to the fore in their disagreement over the title. Lao She came up with the title, *The Yellow Storm*, for the translation, quite different than the Chinese title that translates literally as “four generations in the same house.” Pruitt expressed her frank dislike of this title to David Lloyd and attempted to talk Lao She out of it in a lengthy letter.

The reaction of most people with whom I have talked about the title *Yellow Storm* is not too good. It is unfortunate that such a good word as yellow should have any connotations that are not any good. It started I think with the way a man in this country looks when he is frightened and treacherous. The blood leaves his face and he turns the color that here is

¹²⁵ Ida Pruitt to David Lloyd, 24 February 1950, Ida Pruitt and Marjorie King Papers, 1891-1994, MC 701, Folder, #1.66, Experimental Archives Project, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University.

called yellow and on the Chinese stage is given a white face. It is a popular saying when a man is weak and treacherous, that he is “yellow” or that he has a yellow streak in him. This second comes probably from the streak of yellow clay often found between solid rocks and weakens them, and makes them treacherous to those climbing on them and trusting them. Therefore in the average man’s mind, yellow is a weak word. An adjective, in any case is weaker than a noun, or a good verb. The color yellow is so beautiful and all the connotations of the word in Chinese are grand. I hope that the word will be redeemed soon in English...I do not think that *Yellow Storm* would carry to an American the grandeur of the book and they would expect it to be a book in which the main theme was treachery. I made a suggestion- which does not please me too well- to use perhaps, “The Earth Shook” from the saying “Kai Tien Pi Ti,” the “Heavens Split and the Earth Shook.” That brings in the same idea of disaster that the word Storm has, and carries the Chinese flavor. But I still like *Four Generations* best, and I feel that the publishers could, with the advertising [sic], so easily explain it that no one would think it a sociological treatise.¹²⁶

In this letter to Lao She, Pruitt positions herself as an expert on American culture and the probable audience response to *The Yellow Storm*. In doing so, she gives a definition of the word yellow and gives two examples of its cultural connotations and glosses yellow as meaning weak and treacherous. She opposes this to the Chinese meaning that is positive, suggesting a lack of fluidity that translation cannot bridge. In addition, she adds a grammatical point to her objection, saying that an adjective is too weak to make a good title. It is not clear exactly why *The Earth Shook*, Pruitt’s alternative title, is better than *The Yellow Storm*¹²⁷ beyond her own stated preference. This once again echoes Pruitt’s repeated position that she is both a transmitter of Chinese cultural tradition to America, but also an interpreter of American culture for Lao She.

She states her preference above all for the title *Four Generations*, a shortened version of the original Chinese title, *Four Generations Under One Roof*, that reinforces her stance as a translator as absolute defender of the original text, a paradoxical one for a translator. Pruitt seemed to regard herself as the guardian of both Lao She’s genius and the cultural authenticity of

¹²⁶ Ida Pruitt to S.Y. Shu, 5 March 1950, Ida Pruitt to David Lloyd, 24 February 1950, Ida Pruitt and Marjorie King Papers, 1891-1994, MC 701, Folder, #1.66, Experimental Archives Project, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University.

¹²⁷ In fact *The Yellow Storm*’s use of an adjective is identical to that of Pearl Buck’s bestseller *The Good Earth*.

the text and remains resistant to any editing or abridgement of the text. Yet she also argues with Lao She about how the novel should be packaged and titled, in this case positioning herself as an authority on what American audiences would and would not find appealing about the title. At the same time, she seeks to preserve the text and prevent it from changing in any way. In her account of its creation, the text that would become *The Yellow Storm* is fundamentally transformed by the collaboration between Pruitt and Lao She and their translation. Her attempts to preserve the novel's Chinese qualities are based not upon the original Chinese manuscript itself that she was unable to read, but upon the oral conversations and negotiations between author and translator.

Pruitt's letters to Lao She and David Lloyd suggest the fundamental anxiety that she has about the fluidity of the text as it moves between different languages and cultures. Despite her own role in its transmission and the unconventional nature of her own translation, Pruitt considers Chinese and American audiences and culture to be completely separate and without any common reference points in terms of language and cultural nuance. As a translator, she does not want to make any concessions to ease an American's comprehension of the text, arguing that this would be a perversion of *The Yellow Storm's* essential Chineseness. Part of this contradictory position is the way that Pruitt saw herself, as an intermediary between and a defender of the Chinese to the Americans, ironically, her view of the text was that for the Chinese text to be properly appreciated on its own terms, she had a duty as a translator to resist extensive interference by American publishers and editors.

Preservation or Communication: The World of the Sheepfold

Within the closed environment of the city besieged and later occupied, Lao She portrays the world of the Sheepfold Hutong and the effects wrought by the seven years of Japanese

occupation. The four generations of the novel's Chinese title refer to the Qi family who are the most venerable family of the hutong. Through the fates of the three Qi grandsons, the central protagonist Ruixuan, collaborator Ruifeng, and the resistance fighter Ruiquan, and their neighbors, the craven traitor Guan Xiaohe and his wife The Red Pepper and their daughters, principled Gaodi and beautiful but amoral Zhaodi, Lao She presents a portrait of the effects of the war on a wide range of Beiping society in miniature: patriots and collaborators alike.

The plot and cast of characters is too complicated to summarize here, but I focus in particular on two instances of cross-cultural friendship in the city, Ruixuan's connection to his Japanese neighbor and Mr. Goodrich, an English expatriate. Ruixuan, the eldest Qi grandson is a modern-minded man, who was born a little too early to participate wholeheartedly in the New Society. He acquiesces to an arranged marriage to a good woman of little education or understanding, but hopes through his work as a teacher to encourage and foster the next generation to live a modern life. It is Ruixuan, burdened by his young family and his responsibilities to his parents and grandfather, who lies at the center of the novel.

In addition to Lao She's depictions of Japanese occupation, he sharply critiques the barely veiled racism and hypocrisy of European expatriates who live in the city. As the Japanese begin their advance on Beiping, Ruixuan asks a priest at one of the schools he teaches his opinion on the coming invasion.

“Father Donofiro! How do you think the Sino-Japanese war will end?” The priest's first inclination was to smile, but then overcome by a wave of scorn, put his smile away. “I don't know! But I do know that fallen regimes are nothing new in Chinese history!” Ruixuan's face burned. He could see on the priest's face base human nature: to worship the victorious (no matter what kind of cruel methods were used to obtain victory) and to look with scorn and loathing upon the defeated.

“竇神父！你看中日戰爭將要怎麼發展呢？”神父本也想笑一下，可是被一點輕蔑的神經波浪把笑攔回去。“我不知道！”我只知道改朝換代是中國史上常有的事！”

瑞宣的臉上燒得很熱。他從神父的臉上看到人類的惡根性——崇拜勝利（不管是用什麼惡劣的手段取得勝利），而對失敗者加以輕視及污蔑。¹²⁸

Despite European pretensions towards a superior value system, Ruixuan is disillusioned by the lack of compassion exhibited by his fellow teacher and resigns. Despite Brit Towery's view that Lao She embraced Christianity, this passage and others in the rest of his work after he returned from England, suggests that he was equally critical Christian hypocrisy which was often mixed with a pervasive sense of racial superiority among Western clergy. There is a particular kind of superciliousness that accompanies Ruixuan's interaction with Father Donofiro: although the priest lives in China he is protected from Japanese aggression personally due to his nationality that seems a likely reason for his scornful indifference to Beiping's plight.

Lao She's depiction of another European, Ruixuan's friend Mr. Goodrich (Fushan xiansheng) is a very different one. Mr. Goodrich works in the British legation in Beiping, where, as a young man, he slowly fell in love with the city and its people. While he remains thoroughly English in his stubborn opinions and his assertion of English superiority, he comes to love Beiping as much as he loves his native land. This love of Beiping comes to a head when he decides to marry a Chinese woman, even though he knows that such a marriage would undoubtedly end his hopes of professional advancement. After her untimely death before they can be married, he refuses to marry again, but dedicates himself to the study of the lore of Beiping when it had been the Qing capital, Beijing. He lives in an old mansion that he equips with relics of antiquity, including a eunuch who once served in the Qing court. Lao She mocks both his sense of English superiority and his nostalgia for "old Beijing" as well as his sadness at

¹²⁸ Lao She, *Sishi tongtang*, (Beijing, Beijing shiyue wenyi chubanshe, 1996), 60 [translation my own].

the way that modern China is progressing. Mr. Goodrich focuses on his magnum opus on Beijing, where he records all of his knowledge and local lore.

He knew Beiping's lore better than most native Beipingers. Beipingers had lived there too long. There were times when they found everything about the place entirely unsurprising. He was a foreigner. His eyes didn't miss a single detail. He would carefully look over everything and then add his own judgment. Slowly he became a Beiping expert. He considered himself as the master of Beiping, for he knew all that lay within it.

對北平的風俗掌故，他比一般的北平人知道還要多一些。北平人，住慣了北平，有時候就以為一切都平平無奇。他是外國人，他的眼睛不肯忽略任何東西。凡事他都細細的看，而後加以判斷，慢慢的他變成北平通。他自居為北平的主人，因為他知道一切。¹²⁹

This passage captures the satirical nature of Lao She's depiction of Mr. Goodrich: he is deeply moved by Beijing culture and yet his love makes him into a collector or an ethnographer. In his careful preservation of relics of the Beijing of thirty years ago, Lao She presents a man increasingly out of touch with China of the present day, clinging desperately to the vestiges of the more exotic aspects of Chinese culture: opium pipes, bound feet, and the Qing dynasty, a British version of Gu Hongming. Yet at the same time, Mr. Goodrich proves a good friend to Ruixuan, giving him work when he needs it and coming to his aid when he is arrested by the Japanese. Whereas Reverend Donofiro looks down on the plight of the Chinese from the relative security of a European expatriate, Mr. Goodrich's approach to his Chinese friends is relatively more egalitarian.

He had taught Ruixuan before and liked him. This was mainly because of his cultured and quiet temperament. From Mr. Goodrich's perspective, Ruixuan was a bit like a Chinese man of thirty years past. Ruixuan had helped him compile the material for that always never quite finished masterpiece and helped him translate some of the Chinese poetry and prose that he had wanted to use. He had good English and his Chinese wasn't bad either. Working with Ruixuan filled him with joy. He said to him, "If you ever run into any trouble, please come to me. I will do everything in my power to help you. I have lived in China for thirty years, I have studied a bit how Asian friendships are!"

¹²⁹ Ibid., 289.

他教過，而且喜歡，瑞宣，原因是瑞宣的安詳文雅，據他看，是有點像三十年前的中國人。瑞宣曾幫助他搜集那或者永遠不能完成的傑作的材料，也幫助他翻譯些他所要引用的中國詩歌與文章。瑞宣的英文好，中文也不錯。和瑞宣一塊兒工作他感到愉快...他告訴瑞宣：“有什麼困難，都請找我來，我一定盡我力所能及的幫助你。我在中國住了三十年，我學會了一點東方人怎樣交友與相助！”¹³⁰

Mr. Goodrich has genuine respect and affection for Ruixuan, but his sentiment has its roots in the same connoisseur mentality that he uses to approach the culture of old Beijing. For him, Ruixuan is someone worthy of admiration because of his resemblance to what Mr. Goodrich feels is a Chinese man of thirty years ago. From Lao She's depiction of Ruixuan, we know that this is not how he would choose to describe himself. His interest in modern thinking and Western learning, both of which Mr. Goodrich abhors as anathemas to Chinese culture, are what caused him to study English and make his friend's acquaintance. Mr. Goodrich treasures the Qi family, for their symbolic value as a typical Beiping family and he treasures them less as individuals but as examples of a particular type of Chinese person.

Lao She depicts Mr. Goodrich as desperately attempting to stave off the effects of time by preserving Beiping's past as the imperial capital. His eunuch servant, collection of antiquities, and his great, never-quite-finished history of Beijing signal his extraordinary devotion to the past as well as his status as a collector and curator of these traces of imperial nostalgia. Although Lao She depicts him as a sympathetic and loyal friend to Ruixuan, Mr. Goodrich's depiction is also gently satirical. Like Ida Pruitt, Mr. Goodrich treasures Chinese culture, purveying himself as a true connoisseur of the culture given his unique status as a foreigner, capable of being objective where the Chinese themselves cannot be. Ruixuan himself is a favored friend, not necessarily because of himself, but because of the romanticized notion of the ancient culture that

¹³⁰ Ibid., 292.

Mr. Goodrich feels that he represents. Like Pruitt, Mr. Goodrich treasures China but only if it remains untouched by the other cultures that threaten to irrevocably alter its traditions.

Lao She's portrait of Mr. Goodrich is an affectionate one, but through his use of satire, shows the man's position for the condescending one that it ultimately is. Despite his genuine affection for Ruixuan, Mr. Goodrich sees himself more as his curator and his champion than his friend while remaining unaware of Ruixuan's interest in radically reforming the traditional culture that he holds so dear. Similarly, Ida Pruitt also conceived of herself as Lao She's champion and the champion of Chinese culture. Lao She, due to his fluent English, is able to recognize and dismiss Pruitt's prose as "queer" and in need of a good editor. Mr. Goodrich and Ida Pruitt vainly attempt to remain true to a Chinese tradition that Ruixuan and Lao She, with their fluent command of English and modern ideas, show has already begun to change irrevocably.

Lao She also allows for the possibility of cross-cultural understanding, even between the Japanese and the Chinese. As neighbors are arrested and killed by the Japanese police, the war profiteer Guan Xiaohe begins to buy up their houses and rent them to Japanese families. One of the Japanese families that comes to live in the Sheepfold comprises two men, their wives, and their sons as well as one older woman. The two Japanese boys bully Shun'er, the young son of Ruixuan, before his mother intervenes. Because of this, the inhabitants of the Sheepfold look on them with hatred and suspicion. The old woman behaves quite differently; throughout her stay she tries make contact with Ruixuan, who tries his best to ignore her for fear that she is an informant. One day she manages to approach him,

She raised her head, and looked at Ruixuan. She bowed again and straightened her body. She began to walk in his direction. She walked quickly and as she did, her manner changed. She was no longer like a Japanese woman at all.

她抬起頭，看見了瑞宣。她又鞠了躬。直起身，她向瑞宣這邊走過來，走的很快。她的走路的樣子改了，不像個日本婦人了。¹³¹

This curious transformation is explained when she begins speaking to him in fluent English. She explains that she was born in Canada to Japanese parents and raised in the United States. She later accompanied her father to London where he did business and she lived a fashionable modern life. Afterwards she returned to Japan but without a son, she entrusted her inheritance to her nephews and became entirely dependent on them, forced to become an unpaid servant in her own house. Although Ruixuan initially distrusts her motives, he comes to trust her through her actions towards his family; she vouches for them when they come under suspicion by the police and comes to tell them that Japan has surrendered.

When she first makes his acquaintance she tells him her reasons for approaching him:

I have wanted to talk with you for a long time. Of all the people in this *hutong*, it is only you who have character and are the most thoughtful. I can tell. I know that you are wary and will not want to confide in me. But if I tell an understanding person my innermost thoughts, that will satisfy me. I am Japanese, but when I use Japanese to speak, I can never articulate my deepest thoughts. My words would be understood by only one Japanese person in one thousand.

“我早就想和你談談。這一條胡同裡的人，算你最有品格，最有思想，我看得出來。我知道你會小心，不願意和我談心。但是，我把心中的話，能對一個明白人說出來，也就夠了。我是日本人，可是當我用日本語講話的時候，我永遠不能說我的心腹話。我的話，一千個日本人裡大概只有一個能聽的懂。”¹³²

The old woman, who remains nameless throughout the novel, seeks Ruixuan out and speaks to him in English. During these conversations she transforms before his eyes from an unremarkable Japanese woman into something completely different. How she is different is not described in any other terms except that she seems not like a Japanese woman. Her English is described as

¹³¹ Ibid., 506.

¹³² Ibid., 507.

being fluent and “not sounding like it came from a Japanese person’s mouth.” [不像是由一個日本人口中說出來]¹³³ Her posture changes when the rest of her household is not around and she no longer walks like a Japanese person. Her cosmopolitan travels in North America and Europe give her a different perspective on the Sino-Japanese war, one that she feels “only one Japanese person in a thousand” could understand. She openly criticizes the war to Ruixuan. Their common language is English, which like his relationship with Mr. Goodrich, allows him to participate in different discourses than the rest of his neighbors and family members.

The relationship between Ruixuan and the nameless Japanese woman is singular in Lao She’s depiction of foreigners in the novel for being the only time that individuality transcends nationality. Father Dorofino and Mr. Goodrich both see him primarily in terms of his Chineseness, even if they define Chineseness in different ways. He and the Japanese woman see one another as individuals. Their common language is English. Although it is neither of their mother tongues, it gives them a means of communication. Eventually, Ruixuan is able to see beyond his initial assessment of her as a possible Japanese spy and see her as a cosmopolitan woman and an ally.

At the same time, the fate of her household serves as a representation of the costs of war inflicted on the citizens of Japan just as the rest of the Little Sheepfold can be said to stand in for all of China. Both of her nephews are killed during the war and their wives vanish; only later does the novel offhandedly mention that they have become military prostitutes. While the sudden appearance and disappearance of the Japanese in the Little Sheepfold does not present a fully nuanced depiction, Lao She’s account of their fate critiques the actions of the Japanese government as exploitative to the Japanese people themselves. Men are killed and women are

¹³³ Ibid., 506.

used either to create future soldiers, represented by the two brutish sons of her nephews, or to satisfy the needs of their own soldiers. Although the rest of *Sishi tongtang* is replete with descriptions of Japanese arrogance and brutality, the portrait of household of Number One in the Little Sheepfold creates a counterpoint showing the costs of war to the Japanese occupiers.

The old Japanese woman appears at the very end of the novel when Little Sheepfold is in the midst of a crisis. Ruixuan's daughter, Niuniu has died of malnutrition. Grief stricken, her great-grandfather, Old Man Qi takes her body out into the *hutong* to show to his Japanese neighbors. Niuniu's death occurs on the day of the Japanese surrender. As a crowd gathers outside the Qi household, the old woman approaches to tell the Qis that Japan has surrendered. In doing so, she unwittingly confronts a crowd of desperate and outraged neighbors. Upon the news that Japan has surrendered the crowd feels a release from eight years of oppression and their vengeance finds a target in the old woman.

Their eyes fixed on the figure of the old Japanese woman. She was no longer the peace-loving old woman of a moment ago, but the embodiment of oppression, invasion, and mass murder. Eyes full of hatred bored into her body. What could she do? There was no way to explain herself. This was the day of reckoning. Words were not enough. She knew that even though she herself was blameless, she could not say so. She knew she must bear some of the blame of Japan's militarism. Even if her own way of thinking had already transcended nation and ethnicity, she still belonged to this nation and this people. Therefore she must share some of the blame.

所有的眼光一下子都集中在日本老太婆身上。她不再是往日那個愛好和平的老太婆，而是個集武力，侵略，屠殺的化身。飽含仇恨怒火的射穿了她的身體，她可怎麼辦呢？她無法為自己申辯。到了算帳的日子，幾句話是不濟於事的。她縱然知道自己無罪。可有說不出來。她認為自己應當分擔日本軍國主義的罪惡。雖說她的思想已經超越了國家和民族的界限，然而她畢竟屬於這個國家，屬於這個民族，因此她也必須承擔罪責。¹³⁴

The thinking of the Japanese woman is explicitly conceived by Lao She in this passage as international. Her friendship with Ruixuan transcends both nation and people, which is the

¹³⁴ Ibid., 730-31.

reason why she can think critically of Japan's mistakes and see him outside of the master-servant bond of the Japanese occupiers and their Chinese collaborators. While Guan Xiaohe and Ruifeng both wish to become more like their occupiers the Japanese because it will give them power and wealth, Ruixuan's friendship with the old woman, even more so than his friendship with Mr. Goodrich, is a relationship of equals. Ironically the old woman sees him more clearly than Mr. Goodrich when she describes his character and depth of thought as exceptional. Rather than Mr. Goodrich who sees his value as coming from the past traditions of Chinese culture, the old woman sees his knowledge of the world and modern values as a point of commonality between them. As the only fluent English speaker in the *hutong*, he is the only person that she is able to communicate with in the language of her youth.

When the mob advances upon her, Ruixuan puts aside the grief of having lost his daughter and stands between the mob and the old woman.

Until that moment, Ruixuan had been sitting on the ground. He seemed to have lost all awareness of his surroundings. He suddenly stood up, and with one step placed himself between the crowd and the old Japanese woman. His face was deathly white; there was a bright light in his eyes. He straightened up, he seemed to have grown much taller. He seemed as placid as always, but his voice was stern when he said: "What are you planning to do?"

瑞宣到這會兒一直坐在地上，好像失去了知覺。他猛然站起，一步跨到日本老太婆和大家中間。他的臉煞白，眼睛閃著光。他挺起胸膛，人仿佛忽地援高了不少。他照平常那樣和氣，可是態度堅決地問道：“你們打算幹什麼？”¹³⁵

Ruixuan protects the old woman against the mob and helps the old woman escape safely. After this the Japanese woman vanishes from the narrative. His actions at the end of the novel suggest that he asserts his own broadmindedness even after losing one of his children as well as successfully appealing to the better nature of his neighbors.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 732.

Mr. Goodrich cherishes old Beijing and late imperial Chinese culture. Lao She's depiction of him indicates that his love of China is sincere and selfless. Yet at the same time, Mr. Goodrich's attitude towards the culture he loves has many similarities to Ida Pruitt's attitude towards the act of translation: the Chinese original is the original, possessed of ineffable qualities that cannot be truly or completely translated into another language. Both Mr. Goodrich and Ida Pruitt cast themselves in the role of a curator of Chinese culture. These roles are genuinely felt, and yet at the same time proprietary. While Lao She in his letters seems willing to let the English version of his text transform into a different entity than the Chinese version, Pruitt remains stubbornly committing to keeping it as close to the Chinese original as possible, at the expense of the readability of the text.

By contrast, the Japanese woman and Ruixuan serve as counterexamples to this curatorial approach to culture. Both of them are more cosmopolitan than they appear to be. Rather than seeking to preserve their cultures as they were in the past, both move towards a different way of understanding themselves and others as individuals. In both cases, the knowledge of foreign languages and thoughts increase the depth and complexity of their thoughts. The tenuous friendship between Ruixuan and the old woman suggests the possibility even under the direst circumstances of a friendship that crosses national boundaries. Rather than seeking to preserve the separation of East and West, as Pruitt and Mr. Goodrich do, their use of English suggests that the changes brought by immigration and modernization introduce new possibilities of mutual understanding.

The Strange Journey of The Drum Singers: From Chinese to English and Back

The Drum Singers was the last publication in Lao She's American career. It was written during his stay in the United States and translated into English towards the end of his American visit. Lao She returned to China before the book's publication, and remained fairly detached from the publication process, frequently telling his agent that he considered it a slight work, hardly on the same level as *The Yellow Storm*, his magnum opus. Nevertheless, *The Yellow Storm* and *The Drum Singers* are complementary pieces: while the former tells the tale of the people who were unable to flee Japanese occupation, the latter tells the story of those people, in this case Beijing performers, who were able to flee to the provisional capital of Chongqing. Together, both works represent Lao She's efforts to write a comprehensive picture of China on either side of the line. His characterization of the novel is certainly accurate in terms of scope: while *The Yellow Storm* has an epic story with a huge cast of characters, *The Drum Singers* focuses on the concerns of two families of "troubadours."

The story centers on the Fang family, particularly the patriarch Fang Baoqing and his adopted daughter Lotus Charm as they struggle to establish a career in Chongqing, where their type of Beijing-style drum singing has never been seen before. Another troubadour family also ends up in Chongqing and acts as sometime allies, sometime enemies to the Fangs. While the first half of the narrative focuses on Fang Baoqing's attempts to form a troupe and marry off his daughter Phoenix Girl, the second half of the narrative focuses on the development of his foster daughter and fellow performer Lotus Charm into a modern young woman and her travails in love.

Gushu yiren, like *Sishi tongtang*, has a complicated history of translation and circulation. Lao She returned to China with the original Chinese language manuscript of *Gushu yiren*, but this manuscript was lost. The novel was only available in its English translation by Helena Kuo,

The Drum Singers, until the 1980s. After the Cultural Revolution ended, Lao She was posthumously rehabilitated and *The Drum Singers* was translated into Chinese by Ma Xiaomi and integrated into the Lao She canon. By most scholars, the Chinese translation by Ma Xiaomi is simply considered part of Lao She's canonical works. Regarding the translation as an unproblematic recuperation of Lao She's original text obscures the fact that the translators Kuo and Ma both left their own marks upon the text through their translations. Rather than viewing the present day version of *Gushu yiren* as a novel written by Lao She, I suggest that it is a composite text created by Lao She, Helena Kuo, and Ma Xiaomi through its passage between different languages and different time periods. Both translators clearly left their mark on the text. Upon translating *The Drum Singers* into Chinese, Ma Xiaomi considered certain portions of it to be so uncharacteristic of Lao She's other works that she removed them. Presumably she considered these un-Lao She like portions of the text the fault of the English translator, Helena Kuo. Although Kuo's contributions to the text are not noted, as Ma's are with footnotes, there are many portions of the text that bear a strong resemblance to her novel *Westward to Chungking* and her memoir, *I've Come a Long Way*. In the absence of Lao She's original manuscript, Kuo's changes in particular are indistinguishable from the most original extant text: the English translation.

Helena Kuo was born Guo Jingqiu in Macao to a wealthy merchant family and educated in Shanghai. Fleeing China during the war, she worked as a journalist in England before eventually arriving in the United States, where she lived and worked until her death in 1999. She published a memoir, *I've Come a Long Way*, as well as a novel, *Westward Towards Chungking*, and nonfiction such as *Giants of China* and *The Peach Path* that aimed to introduce a postwar readership to Chinese history and culture. She also worked for Voice of America and the United

States Information Service. She had served as the translator of Lao She's authorized translation, *The Love of Lau Lee*. Kuo's own prose is staunchly anti-Communist, and throughout her works, she frequently reiterates the aptitude that the Chinese people have for democracy and freedom. This political opinion puts her squarely at odds with Lao She's increasing sympathy for the Communist cause. His Communist sympathies were a significant factor in his decision to return to China in 1950. Despite these political differences, their working relationship was fairly harmonious, and Lao She seemed satisfied with both of her translations of his novels.

Like Ida Pruitt, Helena Kuo brought her own sensibilities to her collaboration with Lao She, although Pruitt's relationship with him is better recorded and documented. Pruitt and most scholars of these works have assumed that Lao She's collaboration with Kuo was identical to that of his collaboration with Pruitt, although given the difference in the translators' linguistic abilities this seems far from certain. From her autobiography, which recounts her education in Shanghai, Kuo was highly literate in Chinese and may not have needed to be read aloud to, but her largely southern Chinese linguistic background and experience may have required different adjustments than Pruitt's inability to read written Chinese. Lao She's letters suggest that their translation project also involved a kind of collaboration. In a discussion of Kuo's translation of his novel *Divorce*, Lao She describes a meeting between Theodore S. Amussen, Kuo, and himself regarding revisions to the novel.

“Following Mr. Amussen's suggestions, I did in two days all the necessary revisions. Miss Kuo liked my revisions very much and promised to do promptly the English for them. She could probably give them to Amussen next Monday.”¹³⁶

This passage suggests that Helena Kuo and Lao She's system of translation was collaborative, but the division of labor in terms of language was possibly more separate than his work with

¹³⁶ Lao She to David Lloyd, 30 July 1948, 36.

Pruitt. In this passage, Lao She makes revisions to a Sinophone manuscript and Kuo then makes the necessary changes to the English one. Their collaboration does not involve the same unique process of oral reading and simultaneous translation that Pruitt required because of her inability to read written Chinese.

In one of Lao She's letters to his agent David Lloyd, he mentions a trip that he and Helena Kuo are taking to Miami, suggesting that they needed to be near one another in order to work.¹³⁷ Helena Kuo's voice remains absent from the conversation and can only be guessed at unless her papers surface.

The last thirteen chapters of *The Yellow Storm* and the entirety of *The Drum Singers* were both translated into Chinese in the 1980s by Ma Xiaomi. I can find few details about Ma and her career, only that she is the translator of several novels in English including Charles Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities*. Rather than remaining a passive translator, Ma takes an active role in shaping *Gushu yiren* according to her knowledge of Lao She's work, as will be discussed below. Both Ma and Richard So are sensitive to moments in *Drum Singers* where Kuo's voice appears to erupt from within the novel. While So as a literary scholar is drawn to these moments of eruption as an intriguing point of study, Ma as the translator sees her role as excising these inappropriate moments from the text in order to preserve Lao She's voice.

Despite its inclusion in Lao She's corpus, *Gushu yiren* has largely been undiscussed in scholarship on his American works because the lack of an original Sinophone manuscript makes it difficult to determine how it differs from its English translation. The Kuo translation has become the original manuscript, but as Ma Xiaomi's excision of certain passages suggests, Lao She's true text must be reclaimed beyond simply translating the novel from English to Chinese.

¹³⁷ Lao She to David Lloyd, 28 January 1949, 80.

Its content must be screened for possible impurities and inconsistencies within the text itself. The act of recuperation that Ma Xiaomi performs suggests that the problematic origin of the novel means that its authenticity needs to continually be reviewed and defended. Ma's footnote comparing *The Drum Singers* to Lao She's other works also suggests that she prioritizes a consistency with his Sinophone works over a fidelity to the Anglophone text in her possession. Ma seeks to construct the Lao She novel that she envisions that he would have written without the interference of Helena Kuo.

In my discussion of the novel, I will depart from earlier studies of Lao She's work by focusing on the multiple textual interventions that created the text we have today. I situate *Gushu yiren* as a text within a constellation of texts, in particular Helena Kuo's two principle works, *I've Come A Long Way* and *Westward to Chungking* as well as Ma Xiaomi's editorial interventions. Richard So suggests that there are moments when Kuo's authorial voice seems to emerge from *The Drum Singers*, and a detailed analysis of the novel and Kuo's own works certainly suggests as much. So focuses only on the English translation in his study. The focus of my dissertation is on the way in that Ma Xiaomi's translation of *The Drum Singers*, *Gushu yiren*, engages in a dialogue with its original, as well as the anxieties expressed by the alterations to the material.

A review of Helena Kuo's works are the only material available about this relatively understudied author in the absence of her own personal papers, and give valuable insight into her philosophy on writing. An examination of Kuo's novel makes it clear why she was selected by the publisher to be the translator for *The Drum Singers*: her novel *Westward to Chungking*, published in 1944, recounts the journey of a refugee family to Chongqing and focuses on the fate of the two daughters of the family. While the family of *The Drum Singers* is a family of

troubadours from Beijing, *Westward to Chungking* offers a story featuring a wealthy merchant family based on Kuo's own. Both novels address the romantic prospects and futures of the two daughters of the family in the midst of a rapidly modernizing society.

At the same time, it is ironic that a staunchly anti-Communist Chinese American writer should serve as the translator for Lao She, who had always been sympathetic to the ideals of leftism, particularly at the juncture when he chose to leave the United States to return to the newly established People's Republic. *The Drum Singers* charts a middle ground between Lao She's growing feeling that the Communist regime represented a bright new day for the future of China and Kuo's professed distaste for it by addressing the effect of modernization on the youth of China palatable to both sides of the political divide.

The point of commonality for the two writers is related to the scene that Ma Xiaomi excised from the Sinophone version of the text. *The Drum Singers* addresses more completely the struggle for social and sexual liberation in modern China through the main character's foster daughter, Lotus Charm. While the novel remains primarily focused on her foster father, Fang Baoqing, her elopement with Zhang Wen, and the birth of her daughter serve to move the narrative forward.

Kuo, in her memoir, styles herself as a new Chinese woman, the product of unprecedented access to education and self-improvement. One of the recurring themes of her memoir, *I've Come A Long Way*, is a contrast between herself, as a serious, hardworking career woman and her sister Lucy, who is styled as a gentle, obedient "home girl." Kuo describes her journey as one of liberation from Chinese tradition as well as one of transformation into a modern citizen of the world. Her autobiography charts various acts of defiance from her insistence that she be allowed to attend school and then later her decision to break with her

fiancé Lien as signs of progress towards her eventual goal. As she remains true to her desire to make her own way in the world, her travels take her to England and later the United States where she makes a living as a reporter. Kuo describes her life abroad as a rare opportunity for a Chinese woman to work as an equal with white men. In addition, she casts herself as an example of China's future, as a bastion of democracy like the United States. Through the introduction of modern values such as gender equality, knowledge of foreign languages, and democracy, she suggests that the rest of China can follow the path that she has trodden, as modern democratic citizens, capable of meeting the West on terms of equality.

As Ma Xiaomi has noted, *The Drum Singers* depicts franker scenes of sexuality and in particular female sexuality than many of Lao She's other works. Her response to the discrepancy is to censor the text, claiming that the frank descriptions of female sexual pleasure were unlike anything in Lao She's other works. While this is not entirely true, Lao She's novella *Crescent Moon* contains similar, if less explicit scenes, these passages bear a curious resemblance to Kuo's work at the precise moment that the narrative diverges from the main character Fang Baoqing and centers on the travails of his foster daughter Lotus Charm.

The page and a half of text excised by Ma Xiaomi from the Sinophone version of *Gushu yiren* is too long to completely replicate here but it involves the seduction of Lotus Charm by Zhang Wen. Ma notes her reasons for removing this portion of the text by referencing her knowledge of Lao She's other works, and noting that even the one which featured a prostitute as the main character did not contain similarly explicit love scenes and because these three pages seemed particularly unlike Lao She, she removed them and notes her intervention in the text with the following footnote:

In all of Lao She's works, including *Crescent Moon* which is about a prostitute, none contain an explicit depiction of bedroom scenes. Because of this, I have excised a paragraph set in the bedroom.

老舍所有的作品，包括寫妓女的《月牙儿》，都沒有床戲的具體描寫。故此我刪去了一段床戲場景。¹³⁸

In this footnote, Ma Xiaomi describes her alteration to the text as justified based on her comprehensive knowledge of Lao She's work. Her description of the perceived inconsistency between his other work and this one clearly positions the translation as inauthentic. Her actions suggest that she wishes not only to translate the English translation, but restore the text to one consistent with the authorial persona of Lao She. Ma remains conspicuously silent on one point; if the paragraph does not belong to Lao She, who does this paragraph belong to?

Ma does not state explicitly who she blames for this uncharacteristic part of the novel, but it is clear that she considers Kuo responsible for this inauthentic portion of the novel. Her comparison of the sex scene in *The Drum Singers* to Lao She's earlier novella, "Crescent Moon," is an apt one because this novella is one of his few works that are similarly focused on a female protagonist. Unlike most of Lao She's other works, *Gushu yiren* is uncharacteristically generous towards the romantic missteps of its female protagonist. Like the sex scene that Ma Xiaomi removed from the Sinophone version, this forgiving attitude towards female sexuality bears a stronger similarity to Kuo's other works than Lao She's. Her actions suggest an otherwise unarticulated anxiety about the purity of the English text. Ma claims her authority to make these changes based on her knowledge of Lao She's earlier canon, which seems to supersede Helena Kuo's sole access to the original Sinophone version of *The Drum Singers*, and Lao She's apparent approval of the English version itself. In doing so, Ma suggests that she is the text's

¹³⁸ Lao She, *Gushu yiren*, trans. Ma Xiaomi (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 2012), 200.

curator removing impure portions of the text that bear traces of outside influence. This anxiety both accedes and denies the fact that Kuo's alterations to *The Drum Singers* are now indistinguishable from Lao She's original text. By excising the portion she deems too unlike Lao She to be Lao She, she believes she will be able to preserve the author's original intention when he wrote the novel.

Ma's intervention presupposes a true original text in its original language and that the translation is simply an inaccurate copy by a translator who interfered with the original. However, her own translations consist of conjecture, based on her ideas of what Lao She would have wanted, which places her translations' connection to Lao She's text even more tenuous. Helena Kuo and Ida Pruitt both met with and collaborated with him to revise the English translations prior to publication, whereas Lao She was long dead before Ma began hers. This model of translation as lesser copy cannot account for the collaborative relationship that Lao She had with his American translator. Furthermore, Lao She's fluent English makes it clear that he was capable of reading the English translation and approving or disapproving of its content as he did with King's translation. He was clearly happy working with Kuo; she was the only English translator he worked with whom he worked with a second time. Furthermore, given the close collaboration that Lao She had with his two later translators, Kuo's influence on the text may be woven too closely into the original text to fully exorcise by taking out a single sex scene.

While I do not see the influence of Kuo's own style on the text as evidence of the impurity of the text as Ma does, but I am interested in the points when Kuo's voice comes to the fore in the novel. The ways in which Kuo's and Lao She's perspectives mix throughout the text is evidence of how *The Drum Singers* has become a collaborative text composed by both the

author and his translator, as well as a text marked by its own itinerary. It is also interesting to note that Kuo's voice seems to assert itself most strongly at the points in the novel when the plot focuses strongly on a young, modern, female protagonist, a subject that is also very prominent in Kuo's work.

In *The Drum Singers*, Lotus Charm, confused by the bourgeois romances she sees on her frequent visits to the cinema, is seduced by Zhang Wen, a government thug whom Fang Baoqing initially hired to discourage another inappropriate suitor. Lotus Charm becomes pregnant by Zhang Wen and he pressures her to leave her father and live with him. After he spends all of her money, he abandons her and their unborn child. While this story of a wayward entertainer seems to bear little resemblance to Kuo's personal struggles as an educated female reporter with her foreign-educated fiancé Lien, certain similarities in language continue to creep into the text of *The Drum Singers*.

Kuo's influence on *The Drum Singers* can be traced by noting the resonance of certain passages with Kuo's two major works, her novel *Westward to Chungking* and her memoir, *I've Come a Long Way*. In the love scene that Ma Xiaomi removes from the contemporary Sinophone version, Zhang Wen seduces Lotus Charm while her foster sister Phoenix Girl is giving birth to her son,

His arms went around her. He turned up her face to his, and smiling, he kissed her. She tilted her head back to avoid him, but their lips were still joined, his hot and hard against hers. She opened her eyes; then closed them quickly as outside the lightning flamed. Terrified, she subsided into a limp, pulsating stupor.¹³⁹

The language in the passage has some similarities to scenes in Kuo's work that describe the female protagonist's emerging sexuality.

¹³⁹ Lao She, *The Drum Singers*, trans. Helena Kuo (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1952,) 233.

That kiss shattered everything. It tore away the wings on which my soul seemed to have ascended and left me trembling, human, and resentful. I went home so unhappy with a guilty conscience, so confused, that I could not sleep. I could not even sing, but when Lien saw me next day he met an entirely different person.¹⁴⁰

Although what Kuo describes only goes as far as a kiss, the passage follows a similar trajectory from ecstasy to regretful torment. The same sequence appears in her novel, *Westward to Chungking*, when Fu-An and her husband Ting-Yu spend their wedding night together.

She felt suddenly that she was soaring, dreaming, flying in a world of color. Everything was in color: the scented night was red, it was purple, it was warm, heavy, so heavy that it crushed her, then dark in sudden despair, a dark despair that was suddenly transmuted into a fiery jagged light, darting, jumping, throbbing through incomprehensibility.¹⁴¹

It is this frank depiction of sexuality and, in particular the female experience of sex that Ma Xiaomi rejects as not like Lao She. There is certainly a marked difference between the sex scene in this novel and in *Sishi tongtang* where Zhaodi is seduced by an older man. Rather than examining her subjectivity during the experience, Lao She only reports that “it was done” and dwells on the character’s sense of disgust and simultaneous pride in her own good looks. In contrast, the passage recounting Lotus Charm’s seduction is focused on her desire for Zhang Wen and her physical feelings of passion. What is also striking about the three passages is the similarity in language and the narrative arch of each experience. In each case, the female protagonist has an experience that moves her in both body and soul.

Descriptions of desirable men in *The Drum Singers* also have strong similarities to Kuo’s work. When her fiancé returns from France, Kuo describes her feelings on meeting face to face for the first time after their long separation. “The first sight of Lien, bronzed and handsome in his

¹⁴⁰ Helena Kuo, *I’ve Come A Long Way* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1942), 108.

¹⁴¹ Helena Kuo, *Westward to Chungking* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1944), 242-43.

smart European clothes, completely vanquished my doubts.”¹⁴² *The Drum Singers* uses similar language to describe Zhang Wen after he returns from a long unexplained absence.

Two days later Zhang Wen burst into the little room. He was wearing a brand-new European shirt, with a silk tie and a bright silk handkerchief in his breast pocket. He looked bronzed and handsome.¹⁴³

Both passages contain similar descriptors, a bronzed and handsome appearance, specifically European clothing, and both characters have returned after an absence. The markedly similar language suggests that Kuo and Lao She’s work on the novel may have been collaborative, since this short passage seems to resemble Kuo’s autobiography published eight years earlier.

In her novel, *Westward to Chungking*, Kuo describes the reunion between Fu-An and her fiancé Ting-Yu.

As she clung to him she felt the iron of his muscles. The rigors of outdoor life had burned his face and body to a rich copper color. He no longer wore glasses. He was not a boy any more. He had become a virile man.¹⁴⁴

Again, there are several similarities between the passages: the emphasis on strong muscles and the observer’s judgment that the man before her is virile and mature. The description of Ting-Yu also notes his copper-colored skin, similar to the description of Lien and Zhang Wen’s faces as bronzed. All of these passages are notable for the focus on the sensuous attractions of the male form and the female enjoyment of these attractions, something that does not often make an appearance in any of Lao She’s other works. The passage describing Zhang Wen appears outside of the page and a half that Ma Xiaomi removed in the Sinophone translation of the text. The resonances that occur throughout the novel suggest that the “inauthenticity” of *The Drum Singers*

¹⁴² Kuo, *I’ve Come A Long Way*, 183.

¹⁴³ Lao She, *The Drum Singers*, 261.

¹⁴⁴ Kuo, *Westward to Chungking*, 238-39.

cannot be excised by the removal of a single scene. Kuo's influence appears throughout the text, while this influence may be less obvious after Ma Xiaomi's Sinophone translation, it is possible to trace the similarities between the novel and Kuo's own works through similar English phrasing. Many of these scenes and descriptions remain in the current Sinophone version of the novel as it appears today. Rather than viewing *Gushu yiren* as a damaged original to be recuperated by Ma Xiaomi, I propose that the contemporary version of *Gushu yiren* can instead be seen as a collaborative and continually evolving work, one that shows clearly why the author and the text's transnational itineraries matter greatly.

Conclusion

In mapping the history of translation and collaboration between Lao She and his two translators, Ida Pruitt and Helena Kuo, the publication and circulation histories of their work show the messiness of Chinese literature's intervention into other literatures and vice versa. *Gushu yiren* and *Sishi tongtang* move back and forth across the linguistic divide, transforming and taking on the traces of their translators as they do. It is impossible to separate out where Lao She's text begins and the translator's intervention ends. If this messiness is teased out rather than simply whitewashed as an unfortunate incident that has now been corrected by the restoration of the works into Chinese, it shows the ways that texts are altered as they travel and often transform dialogically as they move between different literatures. Ma Xiaomi's translations of Ida Pruitt and Helena Kuo's works are conceived of as both a translation but also a direct reaction to the choices of his American translators.

The Drum Singers and *The Yellow Storm* are not imperfect or untrue versions of Lao She's vision, but should be read as collaborations and signs of the vibrancy of textual circulation

during this period, particularly when read in the context of the neo-imperial contestations of the United States in the Pacific and Lao She's own increasing sympathies towards the Communist regime and dissatisfaction with life in the United States. Although Lao She returned to China in 1950, and showed very little interest in his English language career after this, the exchange and circulation of his texts continued through the revisions and circulations of his texts between mainland China and the United States. The political changes that both China and the United States experienced greatly influenced the circulation and transformation of these texts.

All four works, the Anglophone and Sinophone versions of both novels, show the mark of Lao She's movement between China and the United States, as well as the ways that the texts have been contested and reconfigured over time. The evolution of these texts also measures the ways that the movement of these texts corresponded with geopolitical changes throughout the world. The brief moment of cooperation between the Republic of China and the United States was the catalyst for Lao She's American visit, and the founding of the People's Republic was the reason he returned to China. The American public's interest in a vision of China ready for democracy also spurred the interest in Lao She's English language work, but his discomfort with the role of cultural broker was another major factor in his decision to return. His work with Ida Pruitt and Helena Kuo show the importance of leftist China hands and the anti-Communist Chinese émigré community in the United States in shaping the American cultural discourse about China in the 1950s, a subject worthy of further study in its own right.

Following the travels of Lao She's work back into the Chinese literary canon reveals the value of tracing the travels of writers and texts across national and linguistic boundaries. In doing so, it is possible to see the interventions of multiple translators and their work in contesting and reframing Lao She's original texts. Tracing the itineraries of these works also allows us to see

that a constellation of texts can resonate with one another, and in doing so troubling the boundary between national literatures. Rather than seeing this as a threatening development to the sanctity of national literature, this historical moment opens up important questions of collaboration and contestation that went on between American, Chinese American, and Chinese intellectuals during this time. Examining the itinerary of such works lays the groundwork for further research into more willing cultural brokers such as the famously successful Lin Yutang and the more ambivalent career of Zhang Ailing.

Conclusion

When my grandmother sold her house, she gave me all of my grandfather's letters and papers from the time that he was stationed in Japan as part of the United States Army's post-war occupying force. When going through his notebooks, I came across the romaji transcription of a popular Japanese song "Shina no yoru" or "China Night." On the next page my grandfather had written an English translation of the song, although if it was his own or one he had learned, I don't know. The song was featured in the Japanese film *Suzhou Nocturne* and sung by the Sinicized Japanese movie star known by many names in China, Japan, and the United States, Li Xianglan/Ri Koran/Yamaguchi Yoshiko/Shirley Yamaguchi. Ethnically Japanese, but born and raised in Manchuria, Yamaguchi posed as a Chinese actress and frequently played Chinese characters in films who fell in love with a Japanese man and assimilated into Japanese society. Whether transcribing this song was a translation exercise as part of his training to be an interpreter or something he noted down because of his personal interest, it surprised me how far it had traveled, first as a piece of film propaganda supporting the Japanese conquest of China, then as a song sung both in Japan and in occupied China, to the notes of an American serviceman honing his language skills, and finally into my hands in Los Angeles.

My grandfather had also traveled a long way from home to encounter this song. He and his father had been forced to sell their grocery chain in Los Angeles because they were being detained in the internment camp in Heart Mountain, Wyoming. He gained permission to leave the camp and attend college and was eventually drafted after the restrictions on Japanese Americans serving in the military were lifted. Because of his proficiency in Japanese, he was not sent to Europe as many other Japanese American men who joined the army were, but came to his

parents' motherland as part of the occupying American army. After the war, he returned to Los Angeles, where he finished his degree at UCLA and remained in Southern California for the rest of his life.

The itineraries both the song and my grandfather took were shaped by both Japanese colonial ambitions towards the rest of Asia, which required the production of films which highlighted the harmonious relationship between Japan and its colonial subjects and American interest in the region while it supervised the reconstruction of Japan's government. In this study, the itineraries of all three writers are impacted by the same forces: the push of the Japanese military southward from Manchuria into China and the postwar interest in Chinese literature and culture in the United States which drew Chinese writers and texts to the United States through publication and government sponsored visits.

The specter of Japanese colonialism played a large role in the writings of Xiao Hong who was a refugee from the newly created state of Manchukuo. Long after the political and cultural capital had shifted from Harbin to Xinjing the seat of the newly enfeoffed Manchu emperor, Xiao Hong continued to write stories that paid tribute to the homeland of her memories as she became one of the voices of the lost Northeast in Shanghai and later Hong Kong. Exile caused her to rethink her identity and crystallized her sense of Manchuria in all of its nostalgic specificity. Her time as Lu Xun's protégé in Shanghai led her to rethink her attitude towards Russian Jewish and Korean refugee populations in Harbin after she herself had become an exile. Xiao Hong never lived to return home to the Northeast, dying on the farthest southern reaches of the Chinese periphery in a hospital on Hong Kong Island.

Lao She's itinerary was also impacted by Japanese military conquest when he was forced to leave Qingdao with his family shortly before the second invasion of the city. Lao She worked

as a writer in Free China, traveling as part of a patriotic writer's group throughout the war. After Japan's surrender, he was selected to go on a one year tour of the United States. Unlike his traveling companion Cao Yu, Lao She stayed in the United States for three years, where he completed two novel manuscripts and supervised the translation of three of his novels into English. Lao She's time here highlighted the ways in which the translations of his novels were highly contested, between his own views on the transmission of his work and the point of view of the translators. Disillusioned both by the American publishing industry and the more politically conservative Chinese literary community that he encountered in the United States, he returned to China in 1949 after the PRC was founded, but eventually fell out of favor with the new regime and was persecuted to death during the Cultural Revolution.

Zhang Ailing arrived in the United States shortly after Lao She left it. She had already fled the new Communist regime in mainland China and stayed briefly in Hong Kong, where she had found work as a script writer for the new Mandarin language film industry and also as a writer of two anti-Communist Anglophone novels for the United States Information Service. The first of the two, *Rice Sprout Song*, enjoyed some modest acclaim in the United States which led her to hope that she could carve out a second writing career in English. Unfortunately, Zhang's efforts were unsuccessful; the other Anglophone works published in her lifetime, *The Naked Earth* and *The Rouge of the North*, disappeared without a trace after their publication. Zhang's attempts to be a successful cultural broker between China and the United States on the level of popular writers like Han Suyin and Lin Yutang were unsuccessful. Zhang did gain a second career among the Sinophone audiences of Hong Kong and Taiwan, writing back from the United States to capitalize on her status as a literary celebrity of lost Republican Shanghai.

All three writers are strongly identified with a specific locality, but an examination of their itineraries reveals the ways in which their regional identities were deployed throughout their lives, even as what their identities meant to their readerships were altered. All three writers wrote between different places and different audiences throughout their lives and their relationship to their audience and native place changed as they moved along their itinerary.

All three writers encountered new literary networks through their passage through different literary capitals. Xiao Hong forged strong connections between not only other members of the Northeastern Writers' Group but also Japanese and American leftist writers who were living and working in Shanghai. Her friendship with Agnes Smedley eventually led to her first translation and publication in the United States after her death. Lao She had already had a mainstream Anglophone success in the United States with the translation of *Rickshaw Boy*. In negotiating the further publication of his work, he relied on his connections to American China Hands such as Ida Pruitt and Pearl Buck in order to secure agents and publishers and locate translators of his choice. Zhang Ailing first worked for the United States Information Service under the direction of Richard McCarthy and produced two English language novels. Once she moved to the United States, she grew more reliant on a network of fellow expatriates and friends in Taiwan and Hong Kong to help promote and broker her work. Many of these friends were fellow Shanghainese who had relocated to other Sinophone regions. These friends proved important intermediaries in the transmission of her literary production back to the United States.

Cold War hostilities put an end to the literary relationships between American and Japanese leftist writers with Chinese writers. Chinese writers found themselves having to decide which side of the line they were on. Literary travels between Hong Kong and Taiwan and the United States continued through the efforts of figures such as Richard McCarthy and Nieh Hua-

ling who continued to promote literary exchange and travel between Sinophone and Anglophone literatures.

While comparative literature might conceive of these communities as exchanges between Japanese and Chinese literature or Chinese and American literature, when examined through the itineraries of the people involved, it becomes clear that these writers, editors, and translators comprised a transnational network which makes a strictly comparative analysis difficult, particularly as writers moved back and forth between places, creating work in different countries and in several languages. Translation played a key role in textual travel, however the writers and translators discussed above took part in many other forms of translation including textual borrowing from other works, collaborative translation, and self-translation. While translation studies problematizes the relationship between the author as creator and the translator as passive medium through which the text moves from one language to another, the focus is unidirectional from one language to another, from one country to another. The study of authorial and textual itineraries allows for the movement of texts in multiple directions, such as when translated texts are reincorporated into the canon of the original language. Examining authorial and textual itineraries also enables me to examine the qualitative effects of multidirectional mobility on literary works and in doing so, questioning the way that our understanding of literary works, particularly those coming from outside the West, is often restricted by a focus on national literatures. Itineraries allow us to see the ways that the paths of writers and texts can intersect as they move through the world, and often leading to connections and collaborations that remain unsung in the national narratives of literary history. Revealing these connections allows us a look at a world literature that least from the periphery to the center but in many different directions along a number of different paths.

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