

The Translingual Expressions in Overseas Chinese English Writings

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Abstract: The translingual writing of overseas Chinese writers, at its widest scope, plays an increasingly prominent role in world literature. Such creative writing practice embodies the characteristics of diversity, heterogeneity and hybridity, and transcends the border of Chinese and English languages. Focusing on the English works of some representative overseas Chinese writers in North America and the United Kingdom, this article identifies and illustrates the types and characteristics of their translingual writing in relation to their creative use of languages and cultural resources. Given its unique aesthetic characteristics, the cross-cultural and translingual practice not only highlights the aesthetic connotations of the diversity and heterogeneity of overseas Chinese literature, but also expands the expressive space of world literature.

Key words: overseas Chinese English writings; translingual; border-crossing; hybridity

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标题: 海外华人英语写作中的跨语言表达

内容摘要: 在世界文学范围内，中国海外华人作家的跨语言书写引人注目。这些作家的创作语言跨越中文、英文的藩篱，体现出多元、异质、杂糅的特征。本文聚焦于北美和英国在跨语言写作上卓有建树的华人作家的代表性英语作品，分析其跨语言创作的不同类型及特色，其对东西方语言、文化资源

的创造性使用。本文认为，海外华人作家英文创作中的跨文化和跨语言实践，不仅彰显了海外华人文学多元异质的美学内涵，同时也以其独特的美学特征，丰富和拓展了世界文学的表达空间。

关键词：海外华人英语写作；跨语言；跨界；杂糅

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Introduction

In the late 19th and the early 20th centuries, China started promoting cultural and educational exchanges with the West, which led to a burgeoning field of overseas Chinese writings. Lin Yutang (林语堂, 1895-1976), S. I. Hsiung (熊式一, 1902-1991) and C. Y. Lee (黎锦扬, 1917—) of the period are known as the first generation of overseas Chinese writers. From 1949 to the 1970s, however, the diplomatic contact between China and most of the Western countries was suspended. It was not until 1972 that China resumed its contact with the United States. China's Reform and Opening-Up in 1978 further developed interactions with the Western world, which boosted the prosperity of the younger generation of overseas Chinese writings. Writers such as Lien Chao (赵廉), Yan Li (李彦), Geling Yan (严歌苓) and Anchee Min (闵安琪), in appropriating Chinese and Western cultures and going beyond the boundaries of languages, have demonstrated unique features in their “creative self-expression[s]” (Stakhnevick 11).

Language plays a significant role in cultural inheritance and daily communication, which has its philosophical root in Martin Heidegger's philosophy. According to Heidegger, “What is critical is developing a manner of thinking through language,” the thinking that “opens up new avenues and discovers unexpected insights less by way of concepts or arguments than by a specific way of listening to and being guided by language and its intrinsic ingenuity” (Qtd. in Ziarek 1). Language, through a Heideggerian lens, is a constitutive tool of human existence and being. This anthropocentric approach to language has been adopted by bilingual writers like François Cheng (程抱一, 1929—). He notes that “Through languages, each of us forms respective personalities, thoughts, spirits and inner worlds filled with rich affections, desires and fantasies. Languages carry our minds and feelings, and

at an upper level, languages serve as the access for human beings to go beyond themselves and accomplish certain kind of creation” (Cheng 114). Affected by his bilingual educational background, Cheng aptly incorporates his sensitivity to and insightful understanding of both languages in his Chinese and French writings and research. Cheng’s writings, among others, showcase how the hybridized application of two or more languages can generate more possibilities in human communication and creation.

In this translingual context, this paper focuses on the English works of translingual Overseas Chinese Writers in North America and the United Kingdom, including those of Lin Yutang, S. I. Hsiung, C. Y. Lee, Lien Chao, Yan Li, Geling Yan, Chun Yu and Anchee Min, to distinguish their bilingual forms and features, explore the creative use of Chinese linguistic and cultural resources and further investigate the significance they have brought to both Chinese literature and world literature. With a close textual reading of the selected works, ranging from poetry, novel to autobiography, we argue that the translingual expressions can be illustrated from the aspects of border-crossing bi/multilingualism, hybridized English with Chinese characters or Pin-yin, linguistic de-familiarization and bilingual thinking.

The Border-Crossing in Translingual Writings

The “translingual writers” under study here refers to “authors writing in more than one language” (Stakhnevich 11), while the term “border-crossing” means to cross the border “not simply of national regions, but of disciplines, cultures, methodologies, perspectives and the texts as well” (Wong 1). The border-crossing translingual writings encompass at least two or more languages, national regions or cultures, not limited to one singular discipline, methodology, perspective and text. The poems in Lien Chao’s *Maples and the Stream* (《枫溪情》, 1999) and *More Than Skin Deep* (《切肤之痛》, 2004) are cases in point as they signify the authorial quest for a viable language that transcends a specific national and cultural origin.

Chao reveals her creative process and calls it “cultural processing which forms “a sense of dialogue” (More ix). As she put it, “In the creative process, I composed my poems initially in English and later, I translated/rewrote them into Chinese. This writing experience itself illuminates a phenomenon of cultural processing” (More ix). As we read, Chao’s bilingual poems form an integrated cultural interaction between the two languages, as in *Maples and the Stream*:

摘起一片红叶 Picking up a maple leaf

溪水凝情 nourished by the stream
 我寻找，我的溪流 I search for my own stream
 我的激情 my passionate vision (Maples 2-3)

The maple leaf, the national symbol of Canada, is also frequented in classical Chinese poetry. The contextual symbolism is invoked as maple leaf is also a recurrent motif to convey homesickness or frustration in official career in classical Chinese poetry. In the poem “Mooring by Fengqiao at Night,” Tang poet Zhang Ji writes, “The fisher’s lights gleam, the maples croon; with much sorrow I lie” (Zhang 503)¹. Comparatively, in Chao’s maple leaves in a wooden frame on a gallery wall, as in her poem “Maples and the Stream,” remind the persona of the maple trees under the sunny autumn sky, of the blood flaming through the veins, of the stream on which maple leaves drift, and metaphorically, of her “own stream” that conjures up a “passionate vision.” The stream, connotative of its origin in Chinese culture, is now flowing under the maple trees on the foreign land. With a lyrical retrospect, Chao sets to making sense of her Canadian life through a reappraisal of the memories of her homeland. The poet’s nostalgia for and contemplation on both cultures are fused into the distinctive images in her bilingual poetry as, in her words, “a linguistic parallel to the cross-cultural journey myself and thousands of others have taken” (Chao Maples Preface).

While the title poem “Maples and the Stream” provides a linguistic parallel to enunciate the lived cultural reality for bilingual writing, “A Painter’s Poem” tends to break the formal constraints of bilingual poetry by striking equivalence in the form and content, language and culture:

东方的神韵 Eastern rhythm
 西方的神采 Western vigour
 缪斯下凡 the Muse transcends
 隐喻与色彩同源 metaphor shares an origin with colour (Chao Maples 14-15)

Combining the “eastern rhythm” with the “western vigor,” the poet juxtaposes Chinese and English versions for the two distinctive cultures to be compared and integrated. As is observed by Zhao Qingqing (赵庆庆), “the Chinese cultural legacy in their (overseas Chinese) writings has been integrated to the overseas Chinese literature with unity in diversity, which has established a comparative and integrative framework of overseas Chinese and non-Chinese writings” (16,

1 《张继·枫桥夜泊》：“江枫渔火对愁眠” (Zhang 1997, 502) .

our translation). Although Zhao draws notice to the significance of the Chinese cultural legacy, she overlooks the effect of bilingual cultures on the aesthetic communication and cultural interaction therein, a key point that is highlighted in this paper.

In experimenting with poetic forms, Chao's bilingual writings are more than simple translations from one language to the other. For example, both versions of "Eternity" featuring "a drop of water" allow readers to extract meaning independently and interactively:

一滴水 A drop of water
顺势而流 born to migrate

永不休止 never ceases flowing
以白云为翼 ascending with the clouds
以大海为床 Descending into the sea (Chao Maples 18-19)

In the Chinese version, the nouns "clouds" and "the sea" stand out metaphorically and anthropomorphically with the former as wings for the "drop of water" and the latter as its bed. In contrast, the English version is verb-oriented with the uses of "ascend" and "descend." Underlying the depiction of the dynamics of "a drop of water" is the poet's contemplation on immigrant life, which assumes the symbolic force of water as it "never ceases flowing." Moreover, both versions cast the universal paradox of permanence and immanence amidst the fluid and the changeable. Drawing from her immigration experiences, Chao articulates poetic expressions across geographical borders. In her words, "The significance of a bilingual format lies in the sense of dialoguing other than creating a word-to-word match" (More ix). She further attests to the rhetorical differences that "the two languages are placed side by side in print to mirror what we are, what we think, and how our bi-cultural background affects our being," with the hope that "the bilingual format will present a similar process to the reader, linguistically and visually" (Chao More ix). In the same vein, Chao applies the bilingual format to another collection *More Than Skin Deep*, in which she delves into the Chinese immigration history and contemporary life in Canada to delineate that the pains, brought by the second language learning, cultural collisions and racism, are "more than skin deep."

Besides the intentional application of bilingual format, the features of border-crossing expressions manifest themselves in the English translations of Chinese American writings. For example, Yan Li translated her English novel *Daughters*

of *the Red Land* (1995) into Chinese and re-published it in China in 2010. Though the two versions are not written in bilingual format as that in Chao's poetry collections, Li justifies her method of rewriting by saying that "When I translated my English novels into Chinese, I made those cuts and rewritings for Chinese readers" (Li 228, our translation). For her, "It is natural to delete, simplify and rewrite the illustrations of Chinese historical background or customs in the original novel" (Li 228). Li speaks even more specifically than Chao on the creative process, which may also be called "cultural processing." Similar to Chao, Li is sensitive to the differences between Chinese and Western languages, cultures and histories, eschewing the word-to-word correspondence in content. Pin-Chia Feng echoes Yan Li's appreciation of the role of bilingual intellectual "whose task involves more than translating linguistic and cultural codes from one country to another, but moving beyond linguistic barriers to facilitate 'cultural agency' as 'cultural translator'" (Feng 172). Feng's definition of bilingual intellectuals as "cultural agents," rather than those who simply perform the act of "translating linguistic and cultural codes," refreshes a different perspective to approach bilingual writings (Feng 172).

Hybridity of English, Chinese Characters and Pin-yin

In contrast to the border-crossing bilingualism, the English expressions, after hybridization with Chinese linguistic codes, further obscure the border between the two languages and cultures. The Chinese linguistic codes, consisting of Chinese characters and Pin-yin, gains a new momentum in the English-language narrative genres, such as autobiography. In the meantime, such writing practice unmasks the diasporic identity of overseas Chinese writers.

In Anchee Min's autobiography *Red Azalea: Life and Love in China* (1996), Min relates to the political sufferings her whole family underwent during the Cultural Revolution in China. The names in this book are literally translated, not in Chinese Pin-yin, which indicates Min's detachment from the memories. However, "红杜鹃" (lit. red azaleas), as a Chinese image and three-character word, is used in chapter titles or intervals between parts. In so doing, the author seems to stamp the novel with a Chinese "logo" and conjures up a visual picture of the red azaleas blossoming all over the settings of the novel. The insertion of Chinese characters explicates precisely what King-Kok Cheung describes as "the inventive and subversive uses of Chinese sources" (55). In Cheung's view, such use may "challenge the cultural dominance in Sinophone and Anglophone nations and displace the supremacy of the Western heritage in the New World [America]" (56). Following Cheung's lead, we would like to add that Min makes creative efforts to challenge

the Anglo-American cultural domination, and therefore, displaces the language supremacy through hybridizing the Chinese and English expressions.

Chinese American writer Chun Yu (俞淳, 1966—) recalls the sweet and sorrowful events that occurred during the Cultural Revolution in her poetry collection *Little Green* (2005). In this book, the Chinese characters and Pin-yin are pervasive, ranging from the kinship addresses like “Taiye (great-grandfather)” and “Waipo or Nainai (grandmother)” listed in the family tree to “Destroy the Four Olds (Po Si Jiu)” and “Down with (Da Dao)” in the glossary. On the one hand, the poet counters the political authority in writing about the Cultural Revolution; on the other hand, she deconstructs the hegemony of English by inserting Chinese characters and Pin-yin in English expressions. This kind of hybridization, to borrow Homi K. Bhabha’s words, is a “displacement of value from symbol to sign that causes the dominant discourse to split along the axis of its power to be representative, authoritative” (162). It undercuts the tension between English language as an authoritative discourse and other languages in the process of multi-cultural interaction. In the case of *Little Green*, the hybridization or appropriation of Pin-yin weakens the “representative and authoritative” power of English in a way that exhibits a new possibility pertained to the bilingual writing. In other words, the translingual and multicultural hybridity not only provides Yu with abundant linguistic and cultural resources, but also empowers her to confront the dominant language and cultural paradigm in the host countries.

While a strong family tie can be traced in how Yu maintains all the Pin-yin formats of the kinship addresses, some culture-specific terms are translated in Pin-yin, despite a sharp sense of satire in Pin-yin, for example, “xiang-xia-ren, a country folk” (59), “du-shu-ren, one who reads books”(62), “Da ChuanLian, / a revolutionary mass rally”(65). These terms help to dramatize the plot, increase the effects of linguistic de-familiarization, and furthermore disturb the authenticity of Standard English language. As Brigitte Wallinger-Schorn notes,

[A]ll linguistically hybrid poems refuse to quietly acquiesce to a racist American power pyramid with a dominating Anglo-American group and its language at the top, instead engaging in ethnic empowerment as linguistic activism and thereby negotiating and retrieving a distinctive, but fully American, Asian American subjectivity. (101)

Wallinger-Schorn notes that the linguistic hybridity, as the source of the ethnic empowerment, challenges the linguistic domination of Anglo-American group. Simi-

larly, the putatively “inappropriate” use of words has turned the language into the quiescent site of resistance to the supremacy of the languages and cultures of the host countries.

As discussed in the first part, Lien Chao expresses her wish to create “a linguistic parallel to the cross-cultural journey” through the English/Chinese format in her two collections of poetry. Chao’s memoir *Tiger Girl* (《虎女》, 2001), an account of her life experiences during the Cultural Revolution, sees a mixture of Chinese characters and Pin-yin. The book presents a hybridization of Chinese characters, Pin-yin and English in the cover and a large number of Pin-yin expressions inside the text. Below are three examples:

duo-zi-duo-fu, “more sons more happiness” (Chao, *Tiger* 13)

Congratulations, another thousand jin(26)

the ancient Chinese saying, buyao fang huguishan, “Do not let the tiger return to the mountain” (42)

Writing an autobiography in a foreign language is conducive to the free interpretation of historical events without being subjected to the political constraints of the motherland. On the other hand, the deployment of Chinese characters and Pin-yin also reveals the author’s bond to Chinese culture. Although Chao adopts the “tool language” (English) of the host country, her mother tongue (Chinese) affects her writing to a great extent (Huang, *Border-crossing* 117). Therefore, the overseas Chinese writers engage with trans-cultural wordplay, a linguistic gesture towards their sensibility in forging an ethnic identity, which complicates the cultural continuum of their mother country as well as offers diverse representational forms of displacement in American reality. In this process, the cultural features of overseas Chinese writings operate on the incorporation of Chinese characters and Pin-yin expressions as interesting cross-cultural resonances.

Linguistic De-familiarization and Cultural Enrichment

Besides linguistic hybridity, traditional Chinese customs and cultural heritage can be detected in most English works by overseas Chinese immigrant writers, in particular, Lin Yutang’s *Moment in Peking* (《京华烟云》, 1939), S. I. Hsiung’s *Lady Precious Stream* (《王宝川》, 1934) and *The Bridge of Heaven* (《天桥》, 1943), and C. Y. Lee’s *The Flower Drum Song* (《花鼓歌》, 1957). These works commonly disregard the rules of so-called “standard English” and challenge English readers’ thinking paradigms by means of linguistic de-familiarization.

The kinship terms of address in *Lady Precious Stream*, such as “my dear relative,” “my honourable sons-in-law,” and “my dear father-in-law” (Hsiung, *Lady* 21), exemplify the traditional Chinese strategy of claiming closeness in a socially interactive context. By comparison, the way to address younger males in an extensive family in *The Bridge of Heaven*, such as “Ta-Shiao-Ya” and “Erh-Shiao-Ya” (Hsiung, *Bridge* 19), is transliterated from Chinese provincial dialects, which may be cognitively challenging for most of the Chinese and western readership. A number of folk expressions and practices in *The Flower Drum Song*, such as “tsa-chiang-mein,” “chiao-tze,” “lao-ping,” “incense money,” and “icebox,” are transliterated from Cantonese. By using these expressions, Hsiung and Lee achieve the linguistic effect of “de-familiarization” while reinforcing their trans-cultural identity. To affect conscious linguistic signification of its relation to local dialects, the bilingual writers studied here break the established mono-linguistic rules for the pursuit of creative freedom.

By the same token, slangs and sayings, though translated into English, still maintain the Chinese linguistic rules and cultural favor in the selected writings of overseas Chinese writers:

Hearing isn't believing; seeing is believing! (Hsiung, *Lady* 68)

The reminder of my declining years may be compared to a candle exposed to the wind, which is very soon extinguished. (68)

I would have become his subordinate if my father didn't smash the rice bowl for me. (Lee 20)

Wish you a longevity comparable to that of the South Mountain, and a fortune as wide as the East Sea. (89)

These Chinese-English expressions have bridged the two cultures, and enriched English expressions. As Huang Wanhua (黄万华) remarks, overseas Chinese writers' “hybridization of Chinese” makes its own contribution to “the enrichment and development of one language” (Huang *Border Crossing* 114). The heterogeneity of these expressions, disturbing the semantic rules of the mainstream discourses, has continued to underlie the value system of translingual writings. According to Wai-lim Yip (叶维廉), “the literature out of the mainstream represents the dialogue and the tension between different cultures. The cross-fertilizing reproduction creates the space that is liminal or inaccessible to the mainstream consciousness, but in this sense, the mainstream discourse is enriched” (Yip 5, our translation). Yip considers the heterogeneous writings to be “the cross-fertilizing reproduction”

and “the dialogue” between different cultures, which not only diversifies the mainstream culture, but also empowers the marginalized culture.

The heterogeneity of “Chinglish” writings is accentuated in the works of C. Y. Lee and Geling Yan. Take their fragmented short sentences and irregular expressions mimicking oral speech as examples:

“You’ve come the wlong day,” Charlie said. “Seaweed soup for today. It is good. Come to this loom, please. The best loom — like it is leserved for you.”(Lee 106)

“So, Mister is a journalist?” (Yan 138)

“get beyond my peasant limitations” (272)

These expressions, representing “new mixes of linguistic, cultural, political and racial beliefs and forms” with “polyphony of voices, narrative forms and viewpoints” (Wisker 190), are nevertheless hybridized. In this way, the writers seek to entail a sense of linguistic and cultural equality. As Gina Wisker observes, “Hybridity aligns itself with a sense of a cultural equity despite difference, through varieties of voices” (190). Specifically speaking, in displaying the hybridity and the multiplicity of voices, the overseas Chinese writers disregard, resist or subvert the representation system of the mainstream culture so as to fulfil their cultural demands for a heterogeneous representation system (Feng, *Chinese* 176). Their efforts to foster a modification of the hegemonic literary representation in their works are, as the following section will show, characterized by their openness to embrace cross-cultural hybridity especially in philosophy and art of fiction.

Hybridity of Chinese and Western Philosophies and Art of Fiction

In terms of thematic concerns and writing techniques, the trans-lingual writings of overseas Chinese writers also demonstrate their uniqueness in crossing the border of Chinese literature and foreign literature.

Though written in English, Lin Yutang’s *Moment in Peking* displays the Chinese philosophical thinking as exemplified in Confucianism and Taoism. Take its implication of Taoist philosophy for example, the three books of the novel have extensive literary references to *Chuangtse* (《庄子》). The preface of Book One “The Daughters of a Taoist” is quoted from Chuangtse’s essay “The Master”: “To Tao, the zenith is not high, nor the nadir low; no point in time is long ago, nor by lapse

of ages has it grown old”¹ (Lin 2), which encapsulates the mystery and eternity of Tao. Book Two “Tragedy in the Garden” is excerpted from Chuangtse’s “Relativity,” and Book Three “The Song of the Autumn” from Chuangtse’s “The Northern Travels of Knowledge”²:

Therefore, all things are one. What we love is the mystery of life. What we hate is corruption in death. But the corruptible in its turn becomes mysterious life, and this mysterious life once more becomes corruptible. (656)³

The quotations from Chuangtse fundamentally guide the plot development of the three volumes of *Moment in Peking*, which is mainly about the rise and fall of three big families from 1900 to the 1930s. Book One recounts the comparatively peaceful childhood and adolescence of the major characters, such as Mulan and Yao Mochow under the guidance of their Taoist father, the self-disciplined Kung Lifu of a late Confucian father. Book Two mainly narrates the turbulence of each family facing the social upheavals in the tones of lament and sorrow. Last but not least, Book Three mainly dwells on the enlightenment of life: “all things are one” and “what we love is the mystery of life.” The novel, interwoven with Confucian notions and Taoist ideas in its plot development, promotes the readers’ understanding of Chinese culture.

Moment in Peking is also influenced by Cao Xueqin’s classic *The Dream of Red Mansions* in the creation of characters, the realistic portrayal and narrative techniques. According to Lin Rusi(林如斯), Lin Yutang intended to translate *The Dream of Red Mansions* in 1938 but felt that the time was not ripe for such a project (5). Instead, he borrowed descriptions of the social customs and the historical context from *The Dream of Red Mansions*. *Moment in Peking* is set in the early 20th century when Western concepts of individual freedom and the modern Western intellectual resources were imported in China. In such a context of social transformation, a focal point in *Moments in Peking* is how the characters trace out

1 《庄子·大宗师第六》：“夫道……，在太极之先而不为高，在六极之下而不为深，先天地生而不为久，长于上古而不为老”(Chuangtse 2011, 137)。

2 The preface is as follows: “Those who dream of the banquet wake to lamentation and sorrow. Those who dream of lamentation and sorrow wake to join the hunt ... This is a paradox. Tomorrow a sage may arise to explain it; but that tomorrow will not be until ten thousand generations have gone by. Yet you may meet him any day just around the corner” (Lin 2009, 400).

《庄子·齐物论第二》：“梦饮酒者的，旦而哭泣；梦哭泣者，旦而田猎。……是名也，其名为吊诡。万世之后而一遇大圣知其解者，是旦暮遇之也”(Chuangtse 2011, 56)。

3 《庄子·知北游第二十二》：“故万物一也。是其所美者为神奇，其所恶者为臭腐，神奇复化为臭腐”(Chuangtse 2011, 391)。

a growth trajectory among the convergent forces of old and new social, educational and marital systems.

Lin Yutang and S. I. Hsiung, representative of the early immigrant Chinese writers and the first generation of overseas Chinese writers, have displayed the similar hybridity of Chinese and western philosophies and arts of fiction in their writings, and consciously demonstrated their respect for the cross-cultural heritage. As Frances Wood remarks at the preface of Hsiung's *The Bridge of Heaven*, "His insights into traditional family life, into the continuing significance of Confucian belief and family ties, his descriptions of birth, marriage and death rituals are as valid, enjoyable and informative as they are in 1943" (vii). Through their writings, western readers get access to Chinese philosophies, customs and even people's daily lives.

However, the new overseas Chinese writers, such as Geling Yan, manifest diversity in the thematic concerns and narrative styles. Other than the autobiographical memory of the Cultural Revolution, Yan's English novel *The Banquet Bug* is the representative trans-lingual writing of the Chinese "new immigrant writers." This novel, set in modern China after the Reform and Opening-up, tells the story of Dong Dan, who, laid-off, pretends to be a journalist to attend different banquets.

Various banquets are portrayed in great detail, such as the luxurious pigeon-tongue banquet, the delicate Chinese-character banquet and even the sexual nudity banquet:

The food? It is going to be the best collection of seafood. The freshest and the rarest, shipped over by airplanes the same afternoon, directly from the fishing boats along the shores of Beidaihe. The girls? Well, they have to be college students eighteen to twenty-two, all virgins of course, selected from among thousands of candidates ... Their skin color matters a lot, too. It has to look white and tender, smooth as tofu, half-translucent as fugu, the rare Japanese blowfish delicacy. They will look better than any food displayed upon them, so you'll realize that the best food is not for your mouth; it's for your eyes and all your senses. (Yan 226-227)

Yan satirizes the Chinese "upper class," including the government officials, journalists, artists and scholars for their luxury or hypocrisy, which reflects a sordid or contorted social reality that the corruption runs parallel to the uninhibited sensuous pleasures. However, written and published in English, the novel is intended mostly for the Western readers. It has, to a certain extent, exaggerated the dark side of Chi-

nese society, which caters to some Westerners' stereotypical imagination of China as "Orientalized." In Edward Said's view, Orientalism, "as a Western style for dominating, restricting, and having authority over the Orient," takes effects by "making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it" (3). So to speak, *Banquet Bug* chronicles and insinuates the negative side of Chinese culture.

In addition, Yan Li's autobiography *Daughters of the Red Land* and its Chinese version are bilingual. First published in 1995, the author rewrote it into Chinese. This process brings bilingual and trans-cultural interactions to the fore. The narration progresses with two major threads: one is the story in China during the 1950s and the 1960s, the social period that witnessed numerous political movements; the other is the narrator's experiences in Canada as a writer and a housekeeper of a rich, old and lonely Canadian woman. *Banquet Bug* and *Daughters of the Red Land* renews the traditional autobiographical pattern that often points to the Cultural Revolution by eliciting cross-cultural narratives in a different direction.

Compared with the early immigrant Chinese writers, Lien Chao, Yan Li and Geling Yan tend to enact Chinese cultural repertoires as a positive outlet of their ethnic identity and to attract the interest of western readership in overseas Chinese stories. The distinction between the two generations of immigrant Chinese writers is largely contingent upon the cultural environments they lived through in China, and their living conditions and pursuits in the host countries.

Conclusion

Crossing the geographical, linguistic and cultural borders, translingual overseas Chinese writings observe the cultural interplay between their native country and host country, and incorporate the characteristics of diversity, heterogeneity and hybridity. The textual analysis, posit at the liminal expressive space of two different cultures, shows that the significance of transcultural identity and translingual capabilities in artistic creation is increasingly valued by a wide range of overseas Chinese writers. In a rapidly globalizing world, it is commendable that overseas Chinese writers should continue to adhere closely and critically to their bilingual and bicultural traditions, so as to amplify the strength of the multicultural aesthetic features, establish a unique ethnic culture of their own, and expand the expressive space of world literature.

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