VOICING BACK: THE POETICS AND POLITICS OF PING CHONG'S ETHNO-HISTORIOGRAPHIC FABLES

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In spite of Ping Chong's reputation in the American theatre scene, little has been done to explore his artistic works from a fully theorized perspective. In this dissertation, I propose a category of "cultural narrative texts" to investigate cultural and historical themes of "culture and the other" in Chong's fascinating ethno-historiographic fables.

The poetics and politics of Chong's narrative texts are the subject of this dissertation. The frames of myth and narratology in their constructive aspects (*how* the mythic narratives are expressed) provide the poetics part. I adopt the literary approaches of Northrop Frye and Kenneth Burke for their intense studies on image (narrative unit), rhetoric (narrative signification), and emplotment (narrative sequence). In a connective linkage from poetics, the politics part engages the cultural and historical thematics through which I read *what* is expressed in Chong's (counter-) myths on people, cultures, and histories. For this complex thematic part, I construe a theoretical bricolage of a broad range of disciplines and methodologies, from psychoanalysis, cognitive science, anthropology, historiography, sociology, to poststructuralism, postcolonialism, and feminism.

This dissertation deals with Chong's ethno-historiographic fables throughout his theatrical career over three decades, examining how his deconstructive myth-making wrestles with the problematic notion of "the other" in both local (national) and global

aspects. Borrowing Julia Kristeva's socially informed psychoanalysis, I approach

Chong's concept of "the other" as "social abject" inhibiting at the margins. I argue that

through Chong's (counter-) myth-making which destabilizes the authority of hegemonic

narratives of the incompatible split between the self and the other, multiple voices of the

marginalized return, and the monologue of the hegemonic culture is interrupted. In this

dissertation, I demonstrate how the performance of Chong's (counter-) narratives, what

I call "voicing back," resist the silence, enabling the marginalized abject to become the

subjects of their own desires and histories. This "voicing back" in its shared political

languages of respect, equality, and justice (toward the others) prepares for the

performance of a democracy which is based on the complete modes of speech acts,

speaking and listening.

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I thank the artistic director Ping Chong and managing director Bruce Allardice at Ping Chong and Company, who generously helped me and showed me friendship when I joined the company in New York City for my internship. I thank Ping Chong for letting me participate in <u>After Sorrow</u> (1997) as an assistant director and for his continuous assistance and friendship shown through formal and informal interviews and e-mail conversations. I acknowledge Bruce Allardice for allowing me access to and Sara Zatz for assisting me with the Company's archives.

Last but not least, I thank my best friend Jason Quinlan and my family in Seoul, Korea – my grandmother, my parents, my sister, and my brother for their love and encouragement. I thank my wife, Lee Gang-Im, for her encouragement, love, and devotion. I dedicate this dissertation to my lovely daughters, Kue-Rin and Ye-Rin who have been the well of inspiration and energy for completing this dissertation.

1. INTRODUCTION: A TRAVEL GUIDE TO PING CHONG'S ETHNO-HISTORIOGRAPHIC FABLES

Ping Chong[1] is a prominent contemporary American artist, whose career spans

three decades, comprising more than fifty theatrical productions along with many

installations and video works. He was born in Toronto, Canada, in 1946, but grew up

speaking Chinese in New York City's Chinatown. Undergoing a traumatic phase upon

leaving Chinatown to study art at the High School of Art & Design and Pratt Institute and

then filmmaking at the School of Visual Arts, Chong built up a sense of being an

outsider who did not belong to either of the two cultures he was between and "began to

think of the entire world as [his] culture" (Chong, Nuit Blanche, 4). This sensibility of

"between cultures" heavily influenced Chong as a hybrid (borderline) artist in terms of

his thematic concerns.[2] Chong positions himself as an outsider (as an artist, as an

immigrant, and as a gay man) in hegemonic cultural frames and has been concerned

with the issues of "culture and the other" expressed in such themes as identity and

difference, cultural diversity and hybridity, cultural violence and global harmony, cultural-

historical writing and otherness, and so on.

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[1] Refer to the Appendix for the information of Ping Chong's theatrical achievement and history.

[2] Chong's "between cultures" is not confined to ethnicity. His sexual orientation is also an important factor in his formation of the sensibility of betweenness. In a personal interview with me, Chong states, "my work has always been about 'otherness.' In the beginning 'otherness' was a very hard thing for me because it meant being an artist, it meant being a person of color as well as something (because it's really personal and I didn't really deal with it until much later) about being bisexual. All these things were 'otherness.' But as I got older, I saw it as a valuable asset" (Personal Interview, July 2004).

Chong's poetics and politics began to be formulated from his cultural experiences of the 1960s, through which the artists and the social practitioners strived for the breakdown of traditional values and ideas in the United States. In 1970, Chong started his theatrical career with Meredith Monk,[3] one of the radicals who tried to dissolve traditional art forms in 1960s and '70s. Monk was an interdisciplinary performance artist who objected to the idea of artistic categorization. Her works included writing music, choreographing dance and movement, experimenting with vocal technique, and inventing languages. Chong's education in art and film, his collaborations with Monk, and his early exposure to Chinese Opera (made available by his parents who were a director and a performer of Chinese Opera)[4] all contributed to his penchant for stylized, audio-visual, interdisciplinary theatre. In 1975, Chong established his independent theatre company, The Fiji Theatre Company (later developed into the present Ping Chong and Company)[5] to realize his artistic visions and ideas. Another facet of his artistic creativity, his academic affiliation with universities as an artist-in-residence or a workshop organizer, has continuously inspired and shaped his works.

Chong embellishes his stage with various audio-visual images that illuminate ideas and themes, eccentric (sometimes esoteric and robotic) movements and dances

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[3] Refer to the Appendix, "Performance Works Created in Collaboration with Meredith Monk."

[4] Chong's father and grandfather were producer-directors of southern Chinese Opera and his mother was a Chinese Opera singer. His parents were Chinese Opera practitioners who first came to North America on tour. For a better life, they first landed in San Francisco, moving subsequently to Vancouver, Toronto, and New York. His parents ran restaurants there. In New York's China Town, they opened the first dim sum restaurant in the United States.

[5] According to the company description of the managing director (Bruce Allardice), "Ping Chong and Company is a modestly sized, not-for-profit experimental arts organization. The company is artist-run and maintains a small full-time staff, offices and storage facilities in New York City. In addition, the company provides an artistic home and professional base for a multi-racial core group of performers, designers and theatre artists who collaborate with Ping Chong on a project basis" (Ping Chong and Company History).

that estrange audience, and multilingual dialogues that put spectators in the role of the outsider. Chong has written many narrative texts often with other collaborators. His plays are non-linear, multi-referential, fragmented, and imagistic; characters converse, but do not actually respond to each other; scene changes indicate radical shifts in perspective and time; audiences are entertained to find diversity of tones, moods, or perspectives through various theatrical and visual elements, and his stories are saturated with eclectic subjects filled with allusions to history, philosophy, science, religion, literature, and popular culture.

In spite of his reputation in the American theatre scene, however, little has been done to explore his art from a fully theorized perspective. At best, there have been occasional essays by scholars such as Philip Auslander, Josephine Lee, Karen Shimakawa, Una Chaudhuri, Noël Carroll, and Suzanne Westfall. A primary obstacle to addressing Chong's work is that its most "universal" feature is diversity. As I mentioned above, his artistic world seems to defy categorization and reject containment. His works have been classified under various labels such as multi-media, performance art, dance theatre, theatre of image (spectacle), travel essay, poetic documentary, and documentary theatre. They are interdisciplinary in the sense that they traverse not only the borders of artistic media but also those of such social practices as art, ethnography, and historiography.

This dissertation proposes a category of ethno-historiographic fables, examining cultural and historical themes that Chong tells through his narrative texts. I note that my selection is more or less politically oriented. It does not cover Chong's broad interests and concerns, which range from almost "apolitical" puppet theatre to overtly political

allegory and activism. I chose several of Chong's narrative texts – <u>Fear and Loathing in Gotham</u> (1975), <u>Humboldt's Current</u> (1977), <u>Nuit Blanche</u> (1981), <u>Nosferatu</u> (1985), <u>Kind Ness</u> (1986), <u>Deshima</u> (1990), <u>Chinoiserie</u> (1994), and <u>Undesirable Elements</u> (since 1992) – for this dissertation, not because they are representative, but because they are suitable examples for discussing the themes on people, cultures, and the histories of certain periods on which Chong's narrative texts focus.

1.1.   Narrative Texts

As poststructuralist scholars like James Clifford, Michel de Certeau, and Hayden White attest, art, ethnography, and historiography converge to tell a story about culture and history. According to poststructuralism, these three areas of social practice aspire to imitate science through their realistic, positivistic, and objective methods. But, the poststructuralist paradigm views cultural and historical writing not as truthful recording of facts but as fiction. In this vein, I approach Chong's works through a framework of "ethno-historiographic fables," or "cultural narrative texts," to dismantle the seeming dichotomy between performance (orality) and writing (literacy). The privileged status of writing as the most truthful apparatus of cultural representation and mnemotechnique has been challenged by many scholars. James Clifford considers ethnographic writing as performance of ethnographic allegory. In <u>The Predicament of Culture</u>, he questions the high status of written documents over oral testimony in his observation of the Mashpee Native American suit, a group of land-claim actions filed in 1976. Michel de Certeau emphasizes the process of writing as labor (performance) in <u>The Writing of History</u> and Jacques Le Goff, in <u>History and Memory</u>, discusses various mnemonic materials for cultural transmission – speech, images, and gestures besides written texts.

Meanwhile, Pierre Nora, in his article "Between Memory and History," advances the concept of environments of memory (*mileux de mémoire)* found in gestures, habits, skills, the body's inherent self-knowledge, unstudied reflexes, and ingrained memories. This "living memory" contests our modern obsession with "places of memory" (*lieux de mémorie)* in archives, monuments, and theme parks.

From the positions of performance studies, Richard Schechner complicates the dichotomy of writing and orality when he points out the significance of electronic media in contemporary art and life in The Future of Ritual and Joseph Roach, following Kenyan novelist and director Ngugi wa Thiong'o, introduces the concept of "orature" as a methodological tool to approach genealogies of performance in, what he calls, "the circum-Atlantic world." "Orature," according to Roach, "comprises a range of forms, which, though they may invest themselves variously in gesture, song, dance, processions, storytelling, proverbs, gossip, custom, rites, and rituals, are nevertheless produced alongside or within literacies of various kinds and degrees" (Cities, 11). Chong's narrative texts hybridize such diverse media as projected written texts, visual and aural images, film, speech, storytelling, gesture, song, and dance. As I mentioned earlier, his "heteroglossia" (a term conceived by Mikhail Bakhtin to describe the diverse social speech types and voices in any utterance) in media seems to arise from the American avant-garde of 1960s and '70s, in which the boundaries of artistic genres started to collapse. Collaboration with Monk in the 1970s marked the period when he could expand and elaborate his expressivity as an artist trained in film, visual arts, and dance. But, as Chong relates, his observation of Chinese Opera and other Asian

performing arts like Kabuki also helped shape this spirit of heteroglossia, which I regard as Chong's main principle of artistic elaboration.

The poetics and politics of Chong's narrative texts are the subject of this dissertation. As many scholars argue, through our narratives, we shape, preserve, and transmit our experiences, our understanding of the world. The relationships between narrative texts, memory,[6] culture, and history constitute my reading of Chong's fabulous stories. Chong's approach to his works, that is, his poetic construction of culture and history through performance, parallels what poststructuralist ethnographers and historiographers regard as the production of culture and history through writing. They all agree that we are fabricating a truth through myth-making rather than discovering truth. This mythic aspect (i.e. how [counter-] myth is expressed) composes the poetics of Chong's fables. The theoretical framework for this poetic aspect stems from literary approaches to cultural representation, since literary criticism has most eagerly engaged in the discourse of rhetoric and poetics: narrative units; narrative signification through the relationships of narrative units (tropes); narrative structure (plot, form); and so on. Narratology is not just confined to literary theory but prevails in cultural studies: Claude Lévi-Strauss' structural analysis of myth through the basic units of signification called mythemes; Victor Turner's approach to social performances as employment of mythic and commonsensical stories; Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of Carnival utopia as polyphonic (counter-) novel to the imperialist-monologic novel of hegemonic official culture; Feminism's search for alternative forms of storytelling that subverts Oedipal (patriarchal) narrative form; and so on. Narrative grammars and systems of plot units were also

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[6] Sally Banes aptly points out that "memory is central to Chong's work, not only as recurring theme, but more fundamentally as a wellspring of imagery and even methods" ("World," 83).

proposed by cognitive psychologists attempting to characterize processes of memory. While psychologists investigate the cognitive processing of narrative texts, scholars such as the historian Hayden White, the philosopher Paul Ricoeur, and cognitive scientists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson raised the converse issue of the cognitive value of narrative structure, stressing the importance of narrativity in shaping our experience of reality in coming to terms with temporality.

The poetics of Chong's ethno-historiographic fables investigate narrative texts in their structural, cultural, and ideological aspects. I adopt Northrop Frye's literary theory on image, allegory, and plot and Kenneth Burke's theory of master tropes, as well as other theories concerning image, tropes, and narrative structure from phenomenology, formalism, postmodernism, and cognitive science in order to render a comprehensible construction of an explanatory story. The cultural and ideological nature of tropes and narrative forms engage the politics of Chong's fables. The themes and variations of "culture and the other" in the continuum of the past and the present constitute the politics of these fables. In this sense, cultural thematics (which approaches cultural phenomena through narratives) characterizes my approach of using cultural themes fashioned by tropes as a critical tool in the reading and retelling of Chong's fables. The discourses of James Clifford, Michel de Certeau, Hayden White, Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Anne McClintock in relations to Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault provide rich insights pertinent to this examination. But, I strongly stress that the poetics and politics are not separate issues. They constitute the link between Chong's poetics and the themes he presents.

Thematically, the poetics and politics of Chong's ethno-historiographic fables engage the problematics of the concept of the other. Who (what) makes and who (what) becomes the other? Clifford and de Certeau contend that ethnography and historiography are registers of the encounter with the other. As Julia Kristeva insightfully notes, the other is "the social abject"[7]: the invented container for whatever is regarded as irrational, unintelligible, and impure. According to Kristeva, the marginal is invented from the pure narcissistic ego by attributing the impure traits to the underprivileged: women, criminals, madmen, the poor, foreigners, gays and lesbians, and so on. As Stuart Hall points out, categorizing the self (insider) and the other (outsider) in cultural territory is an arbitrary politics of exclusion, that is, the systematical institution of how we define similarities, differences, the whole and parts (through tropes). Chong's stories, given the existence of this power structure, convey the political and ethical conundrum of how we can live peacefully with the others. As Chong explicitly states, the theme of culture and the other is his or our predicament in our global culture where connectivity by uneven power produces dystopian vision and perpetuates the myths of the other. Chong mines the traditions and the contemporary myths in order to retell the undersides of them, the hidden stories of the abject. If I may borrow historian Jules Michelet's concept of "resurrection" White introduces, Chong's aim is "to restore to 'forgotten voices' their power to speak to living men" (White, Tropics, 256).

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[7] I will deal with Kristeva's notion of the other as "the abject" in Chapter 1 in detail since it is significant to understand Chong's notion of the other.

1.2. Narrative Units – Images

I view visual and aural images as narrative units in Chong's texts. Frye, in his Anatomy of Criticism, defines image as "symbol in its aspect as a formal unit of art with a natural content" (82). Phenomenologically speaking, however, as Bert O. States contends in his book Great Reckonings in Little Rooms, "[image] is a sensory experience that cannot be accounted for by semiotic systems" alone. "Unlike the sign, the image is unique and unreproducible (except as facsimile); whereas the sign is of no value unless it repeats itself" (25). Chong's works are often called "theatre of image" since his theatrical images are so vivid that they transcend mere signification; images in Chong's narrative texts appeal to both intelligence and senses, making the audience both think and feel. Chong's technique of bricolage, derived from Lévi-Strauss' thoughts on myth-making, recycles images from the cultural repertoire but only to contest the grounding mode of thinking involved in the images he uses by means of making the familiar strange. Chong's defamiliarization technique resembles Bertolt Brecht's alienation effect,[8] producing distance to create ironic commentary. Using the term bricolage itself is ironic in that Chong as an artist identifies with the savage, demonstrating the new formulation of the artistic self as a primitive other. In Chong, the self and the other live together as human being and artist.

Chong's (counter-) myth-making encompasses both Frye's literary approach to myth, which views myth as the structural foundation of literature and Lévi-Strauss'

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[8] When I asked Chong about his affinity with Brecht in regard to his distancing techniques, Chong answered that "I never really studied theatre, so my influences are not theatre practitioners although obviously an artist like Brecht has had such a pervasive influence that it is hard not to stand in his shadows. I saw Chinese opera as a child long before I saw any Western theatre, let alone Brecht, so I suppose the alienation effect in my work comes from Chinese Opera, not Brecht" (Personal Interview, July 2004).

anthropological studies of myth. Furthermore, as Chong's narratives extensively deal with such cultural artifacts of mass culture as writing, film, tv, and advertising, Roland Barthes' concept of myth is very useful to examine Chong's narrative texts. In the essay "Myth Today" included in his book <u>Mythologies</u>, Barthes defines myth as a type of speech. For Barthes, it is not any type, but a mode of signifying practices. "A tree is a tree," for example, "but a tree as expressed by Minou Drouet [a French poet] is no longer a tree, it is decorated, adapted to a certain type of consumption, laden with literary self-indulgence, revolt, images, in short with a type of social *usage* which is added to pure matter" (109).

In the concept of Barthes' myth, there are similarities and differences in its connective (ideological) links to Foucault's "discursive formation" (normalized knowledge formulated through the serious speech acts of the qualified members of institutions). While both refer to the more systematic language construction of speech acts[9] (thus, ideological aspect of language usage), Foucault's concept of "discursive formations" highlights discursive operation of the institutional power. Chong's archeological digging of distinctively formative discourses on men and societies in specific cultures (for example, dominant shifts in the ideas of American assimilation) finds affinity with Foucault's archeological methods. In <u>The Archaeology of Knowledge</u>, Foucault sets out the task of archeology, remarking that it seeks "to describe statements, to describe the enunciative function of which they are the bearers, to analyze the conditions in which this function presupposes and the way in which those

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[9] The term "speech acts" implies that our speech is part of our actions, not mere sentences. It refers to our linguistic behavior that takes place in a situational context and based on the shared conventions and procedures between the addresser and addressee.

domains are articulated" (115). Unlike J. L. Austin and John Searle's notion of "speech act,"[10] which theorizes the everyday practice of enunciation, Foucault specifies the domain of his archeology as serious speech acts. Foucault claims that even though serious speech acts cannot be isolated completely from the rest enunciative network, "they are constituted as serious by the current rules of a specific truth game in which they have a role" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 54). The institutional position of serious speech acts is well exemplified by Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow. According to their example, "'It is going to rain'" is normally an everyday speech act, "but it can also be serious speech act if uttered by a spokesman for the National Weather Service as a consequence of a general meteorological theory" (48).

For Barthes, myth is an anonymous, but insidious ideological form prevailing in everyday lives. At the time when he wrote the essay on myth (1956), his focus fell on this anonymity of everyday myth, through which French imperiality and bourgeois values were naturally embedded into popular imagination. Due to its naturalizing strategy, the bourgeois myth appears as a depoliticized speech. According to Barthes,

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[10] Speech act theory, a theory of language as a mode of social action, is outlined by the Oxford philosopher of ordinary language, John L. Austin, and is later revised and extended by the American thinker, John R. Searle. Their theoretical views appear respectively in their major works How to do Things with Words (1962) and Expression and Meaning (1979). Austin focuses on the specific type of speech acts, what he calls "performative," which differ from the "constative." Later, he revises these types of speech acts into "locutionary" and "illocutionary." According to Austin, whereas in constative mode of utterances, the speaker and the listener are concerned with the statements of facts, that is, truth or falsity (for example, Pittsburgh is in the State of Pennsylvania), in a performative mode of speech act, language is used to perform such conventional social acts as appointing, marrying, baptizing and sentencing (for example, I christen thee and with this ring, I thee wed). Austin illuminates the pragmatic status of speech as an interpersonal force in the actual world. Meanwhile, Searle extends Austin's limited usage of performative mode of speech type in ritualized social statements into everyday speech events like promising, requesting, stating, ordering (for example, I promise to pay this debt and Pass me the salt). The speech act theory has been utilized by such diverse disciplines as linguistics, sociology, social anthropology, cognitive psychology, speech communication, and literary criticism. I adopt Austin's notion of "performative" via Judith Butler's concept of "performativity" when I discuss the relation between the body, performance, and politics.

it is the characteristic of the liberal-humanist myth in the way it eternalizes, naturalizes, and universalizes the status quo through such concepts as Eternal Man, Universal Family of Man, and History. Barthes argues, "everything, in everyday life, is dependent on the representation which the bourgeoisie *has and makes us have* of the relations between man and the world," in this way, "being neither directly political nor directly ideological, they live peacefully between the action of the militants and the quarrels of the intellectuals" (Mythologies, 140).

From counter-ideological positions, both Barthes and Foucault well illuminate the correlation of the problematics of imperiality and class domination and the mythic dramas of liberalist-humanism, but they rarely recognize the gendered frame of the imperialist-capitalist myths on men, cultures, and histories. As a male scholar, I, myself, often unconsciously postulate man as a gendered male subject. Toward his later career, especially in his historical narratives, East/West Quartet, Chong's politics of irony interrogates the dominant myths from their more complicated and ambiguous aspects, in which such conceptual frames as ethnicity, class, gender, nationality, and sexual orientation are complexly interwoven, and as Chong articulates in a personal interview with the author, his idea of "otherness" encompasses "ethnic/cultural/sexual differences" (Personal Interview, July 2004). For this reason, I try to listen to what feminist scholars like Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Anne McClintock, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak say about people, cultures, and histories. Especially, I incorporate McClintock's and Spivak's balanced attention to those conceptual frames into my examination on Chong's deconstructive fables. Spivak's recognition of the gendered frame of the imperialist-masculinist-capitalist versions of Narcissus and Oedipus myths,

which have been considered as the touchstones in discussing Western identity

formation, is very suggestive in this context.

In her essay "Echo" contained in <u>The Spivak Reader</u>, Spivak rereads Ovid's and

Freud's narratives of Narcissus and Echo along with other deconstructive readings on

this myth, highlighting the irony of absence (disappearance) of Echo in most narratives

on Narcissus and Echo. She wonders how it is that Freud and more recently,

Christopher Lasch have attributed narcissism primarily to women, when Narcissus was

a boy. Spivak asks, "Where was Echo, the woman in Narcissus's story?" Therefore,

her aim in the essay becomes "to give woman to Echo, to deconstruct her out of

traditional *and* deconstructive representation and (non) representation, however

imperfectly" (176). As Spivak lays stress on deconstruction as an ethical project that

concerns the relationships between the self and the others, Spivak rereads the myth of

Narcissus and Echo as the ethical instance between Narcissus and Echo: Echo's

ethical undoing of Narcissus' self-fixation, "whose self-knowledge […] is so clear that it

will not lead to relation: to know that to know the self is to slip into visible silence" (190).

Spivak remarks, "Narcissus is fixed, but Echo can disseminate" (196). Since Echo is

obliged to echo everyone who speaks, which means "her desire and performance are

dispensed into absolute chance rather than an obstinate choice, as in case of

Narcissus," Spivak identifies Echo with the subaltern who cannot speak (as subjects),

but echo. But, for Spivak, echoing is a kind of resistative speech act in a way in which

the underprivileged resist answering back (185). Echo imitates what Narcissus says,

but Echo's imitation demonstrates slippage between the identity and difference in a

sense that Echo's imitation is not quite the same in its inevitable alterity characteristic of

repetition.[11] Spivak regards subaltern's imitation as a positive resistance, underscoring

difference, not for exclusion, but for inclusion and embrace, as the basis for an act of

love expressed in her phrase "bonding in difference."

As Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean, the editors of The Spivak Reader,

sharply observe in "Introduction: Reading Spivak," "[Spivak's] figuring identities and

relations differently – not as narcissistic fixtures expecting mirror-reflections across the

globe, but as a call to honor and embrace across impossible differences and distances

– is indispensable for any movement toward decolonization" (5). Spivak's decolonizing

critiques on narcissistic myths and politics are suggestive in a way in which Spivak

unmasks the inventiveness of the "European sovereign subject" in accordance with the

colonizer's own self-image by defining its colonies as its Others.[12] In regard to her

critical commentary on the politics of assimilation, it can be said that Narcissus, as an

assimilator, not a relater to the others, misrecognizes Echo's imitation as the same,

assimilating into his self-knowledge about one national or global unity. Following and

expanding Derrida's deconstruction, Spivak's deconstruction of narcissistic ideas that

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[11] Against this theoretical background on mimicry and deconstruction, I apply Bhabha's concept of "strategic mimicry" in relation to feminist discourses on "gender mimicry" due to its dovetailed applicability to discuss the issue of (ethnic) hybrid subject in Chong's fables on identification. As Spivak recognizes, active decolonizing cannot be fully achieved through only the passive resistance of echoing. I draw on her debates on the dialogic mode of speech acts and the possibility of subaltern agency as speaking subjects in detail in relation to inclusive politics and historiography in Chapter 5.

[12] Spivak deploys this problematic of dichotomy of European sovereign subject/its Other in her essay, "The Rani of Simur," in Europe and Its Others Vol. 1. Even though Spivak points out the multiple factor's in the concept, the other, Chong's question on the bipolarity of feminine and masculine suggested in Undesirable Elements oral history project even complicates the presumption of heterosexual paradigm, proposing a new space for narratives that disrupts the Oedipal drama in its very bipolarity of feminine and masculine. Like Chong's recognition of the relation between narrativity and (gender) positionality, Teresa de Lauretis in her book Alice Doesn't asks if it can be accidental that in fairy tales the object of the hero's quest is a princess and "the central Bororo myth in Lévi-Strauss' study of over eight hundred North and South American myths is a variant of the Greek myth of Oedipus" (79). Seen and framed in this way, Chong's anti-Oedipal gender articulation (gender hybridity) contests the same myth of absolute identity and difference intrinsic in narcissistic identification politics (in its dichotomy of the same and the other).

are expressed through the binary logic of center/periphery, identity/difference, and the self/the other extends to the contemporary debates on multiculturalism. According to Spivak, "in the current conjuncture, national identity debates in the South and 'liberal' multiculturalism in the North" make people "engage in restricted-definition narcissism as well. Simply put: love-your-own-face, love-your-own-culture, remain-fixated-in-cultural-difference, simulate what is really pathogenic repression in the form of questioning the European universalist superego" ("Echo," 186). If I add my own commentary to the contemporary political conflicts across the globe, such ideas as ultra-nationalism and fundamentalism based on the incompatible dichotomy of the centered self and the peripheral other are the very political mutation of narcissism.

Chong's dual task of deconstruction and political activism through his (counter-) myth-making, I argue, aims to illuminate this complicit connection between the narcissistic liberal-humanist myth and the discursive regime of the conservative political right of the United States. Chong's awareness of the gap between myth and reality, constituted in marginal consciousness, arose during the civil rights movement in the 1960s and '70s. Even though Chong does not draw a direct link between his artistic consciousness and the civil rights movement, his political consciousness in this period appears to have been dormant; it would emerge years later, according to him, during the Reagan years. But, as Chong is very cautious, his political commentary is not confined to the Reagan-Bush regime.[13] Chong clarifies in a personal interview with the

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[13] I do not think that Chong's political commentary is confined to the (neo) conservative political right. In terms of Bill Clinton administration's foundational idea of common culture and national identity, his (neo) liberal administration also advanced the universalistic cultural politics (metonymic conceptualization of multiculturalism), which Chong strongly contests. Regarding this topic on cultural politics, refer to Racial Formation in the United States by Michael Omi and Howard Winant.

author that his deconstructive tactics target the identity politics of the political right,

especially those which flourished through Reagan-Bush administration during the 1980s

(hauntingly reappearing now in the beginning of 21st century in the political (neo)

conservatism of the Bush Jr. regime,[14] whose narcissistic national (global) politics tears

its nation down and turns the world into the battle fields of "Hot War").[15] From a

deconstructionist position, which seeks to destabilize the philosophical foundation of the

authority of the hegemonic discursive regime dependent on the logic of the binary

system, Chong's politics of irony unmasks the myth of narcissistic liberal-humanism of

the political right, whose political languages of absolute liberty (that does not concern

itself with the liberty of the others), individual dignity (antithetical to the despotic

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[14] In the conclusion of his West Point speech quoted in Harvey's New Imperialism, President Bush remarks that "today, humanity holds in its hands the opportunity to offer freedom's triumph over all its age-old foes. The United States welcomes its responsibility to lead in this great mission." "This may not," Harvey asserts, "amount to a formal declaration of empire but it most certainly is a declaration redolent of imperial intent" (5). This speech echoes fellowship among the good in the recent mega-hit epic melodrama, The Lord of the Ring – especially, the last battle scene in the third part of the trilogy where the driving energy of the mesmerizing images comes from the binary antagonism of the good White/the evil Colored. Whereas the alliance of the good is established among white fairies, wizards, humans, and hobbits, Sauron's black evil armies are supported by the armies whose curious images are the collage of evil "Orientals" (realized in their clothes and the accompanying elephant-like animals). Cinematic fantasy seems to resonate the fantastical reality of narcissism and racism in our globe.

[15] Here, I record my question and Chong's answer in regard to his political position. **Choi**: "You allegorically criticize the Reagan-Bush administration as an almost fascist (and imperialist) regime in your work Elephant Memories. Particularly, your description of a xenophobic, masculinist, and imperialist virtual nation in the work seems relative to the present problems of domination, terrorism, the resurgence of nationalism (ultra patriotism), and fundamentalism (in Nuit Blanche, too). How would you describe your political position? You seem to severely attack the conservative political right. And, if possible, would you describe the flow of your political orientation from the time of the civil rights movement to the current time?" **Chong**: "Elephant Memories was a prescient work, wasn't it? Maybe we should bring it back! My political beliefs have not changed fundamentally since I became an adult but my level of involvement has changed. My work took on a more explicitly political tone in response to the rise of the right in the Reagan era and I continue to make work that responds to the terrible abuses of the Bush administration. But politics do not trump aesthetics in my work. Don't forget I made two gentle, basically apolitical, puppet shows during this era. They represent a facet of my interests, too, just as the explicitly political pieces like Truth and Beauty and Undesirable Elements do as well" (Personal Interview, July 2004).

system), and rationale (that can protect the system from the eruption of the irrational evil) justify the domination of the fittest in the due course of mankind's progress.[16]

In the early and middle years of Chong's career (1970s and '80s), his thematic and methodological focus was converged on critiquing the dominant representation of the other and the culture of the other, which were imagined and typified by the hegemonic culture. Thus, in this period, ethnic actors were not frequent collaborators. Instead, voices of the other were echoed in Chong's ironic commentary. In regard to Chong's political activism, the Undesirable Elements project from the early 1990s, I believe, was a shifting point in that he actually showed the marginalized on stage and facilitated their voices being heard. The series are community-based documentary theatre, which tell the stories of people on social margins sharing positionality of displacement and marginalization. Local people of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds and sexual orientations tell the stories of personal genealogies with the contrapuntal fabrication of global histories woven by the facilitator-director, Chong. Chong's historical consciousness has been consecrated through this oral history project, and East/West Quartet, as a hybrid form of fiction and documentary, deploys a more sophisticated and complicated deconstruction of the myth of historical progress expressed in the idea of the civilized West/the barbarian East. From this historical

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[16] In a personal interview, when I asked what he thought about the statement by many critics that he was a humanist, Chong expresses his views on men as "humanist." But, I pointed out that his works criticized "the liberal-humanist ideas of absolute (and narcissistic) freedom that does not concern with the others (other nations and cultures), rationality, progress, and atomic individualism that brings forth social alienation." He responds, "I am humanist in the sense that I support and promote humanist values in my work – values of social justice, freedom of expression, racial, sexual, economic equality, peace, internationalism, etc. But you are right that I am skeptical of what you describe as 'liberal-humanist ideas.' I identify myself as a human being and above all not as an ideologue" (Personal Interview, July 2004). Obviously, his humanist values of justice, liberty, and equality come from different political languages than the liberal-humanist values. I deal with the complicated issue of (anti-) humanism, imperialism, and historicism in Chapter 5 in detail.

period, ethnic actors,[17] shifting from their own situations to the situations of the theatrical

personas, have performed the slippage of identity and difference embodied in hybrid

subjects. The monotone of American history is displaced by the genealogies of various

Americans. In Chong's historical narratives, American history is not conceived as the

legitimate continuation of European cultures but the stand-ins of divergent cultures.

Irony filters through the discontinuities between mono-history and genealogy.

1.3.   Narrative Signification – Tropes

As the ironist Chong sharply recognizes, it is the power of rhetoric (both

regulative and resistive) that operates in both institutional and popular myths about

people, cultures, and histories. Narrative signification in those myths is processed by

tropes and, tropes are cultural and ideological formulations. As Burke underlines,

rhetoric is not mere literary decoration, but a key feature of speech acts that can move

(induce) people to action. For Burke, rhetoric in its three aspects of "identification,"

"persuasion," and "communication" establishes rapport between a speaker and the

addressed (Rhetoric, 45-46). Burke's concept of rhetoric refuses the function of

language as merely the means to convey information, and postulates the political/ethical

relations language can establish. As Burke suggests, tropes are epistemological

transactions between our consciousness and our world.

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[17] Chong's shift to more particular ethnicity-based performers and works should also be regarded from a larger frame of cultural politics. At the end of the 1980s, multiculturalism emerged as a formative idea in various cultural scenes, and governmental or nongovernmental organizations began to be conscious in "equal" distribution of funds among diverse ethnic artists. This changing cultural politics and Chong's political and historical awareness as well can explain Chong's shifting artistic direction. But Chong strongly objects to containing him as an Asian American artist or a Chinese American artist by the negative side of multicultural art administration and policy. Chong sharply points out the danger of "ghettoization" or "tokenization" of the contemporary Asian American artists. Furthermore, he does not consider that the funds are distributed equally.

Psychoanalysis and cognitive science also claim that tropes are in the intersection of psychic performance and the world. Lacan asserts that we can have access to the unconscious only via tropes, and he applies the distinction between metaphor and metonymy to condensation and displacement respectively, which are what Freud views as the major principles of dreaming. Significantly, cognitive science stresses the physical and cultural aspects of tropes. According to Lakoff and Johnson, spatialization metaphors, for example, are embodied, which means that they are not random assignments, since "our physical and cultural experience provides many possible bases" for them. "Which ones are chosen, and which ones are major, may vary from culture to culture" (Metaphors, 19). Since our thought is mostly unconscious, most of the time we are unconsciously encoded by the tropes of the dominant culture. Lakoff and Johnson's statement above suggests a similar idea with what Foucault calls the "discursive relations"[18] in a sense that discursive practices (serious speech acts) are possible through complicated power relations among institutions, techniques, social forms, and practicing subjects. But conversely, the linkage between tropes and power can lead to the possibility of changing the established (discursive) power by altering (severing) the chain between them. Lakoff and Johnson aptly observe that tropes are not just the mode of thought but at the same time the mode of action. They remark, in their Metaphors We Live By, "If we are right in suggesting that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do everyday is very much a matter of metaphor" (3).

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[18] Foucault clarifies his idea of "discursive relations," remarking that "discursive relations are, […] in a sense at the limit of discourse: they offer it objects of which it can speak […] they determine the group of relations that discourse must establish in order to speak of this or that object, in order to deal with them, name them, analyze them, classify them, etc." (Archaeology, 46).

Meanwhile, Derrida's term "white mythology" is used to refer to the metaphysical value of metaphor, through which Western philosophy is claimed to mask the figurative link metaphor formulates between two different objects. Derrida remarks, "metaphysics – the white mythology which resembles and reflects the culture of the West: the white man takes his own mythology, Indo-European mythology, his own logos, that is, the *mythos* of his idiom, for the universal form of that he must still wish to call Reason" (Margins, 213). Derrida's notion "white mythology" also refers to the ethno-centric metaphorical masking of "white myth," when his concept "white" designates the cleanness (purity) of European thought in metaphysical writing that erases any impure stain. Thus, language is confused with reality, resembling nature. His own metaphor of "white ink" suggests the invisible and insidious design of myth (Margins, 213).

In terms of the more direct relationship between tropes and power, Foucault's notion of "episteme" designates the cultural and historical dominance of a certain type of trope. In The Archaeology of Knowledge, Foucault defines "episteme" as "the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences, and possibly formalized systems," that is, "it is the totality of relations that can be discovered, for a given time, between the sciences when one analyses them at the level of discursive regularities" (91). Foucault probes how things have been ordered differently in different epochs by a dominant mode of thinking ("episteme"), which enables discursive practices. In The Order of Things, by using his notion of "episteme," Foucault deploys his generalization of the history of human sciences.[19] According to Foucault, different epochs had different classificatory systems

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[19] Refer to Chapter 10 "The Human Sciences" in The Order of Things.

in recognizing similarities, differences, and the whole and the parts. For Foucault, to gain knowledge about the world in human sciences means to categorize things by means of tropes. Foucault identifies the dominant trope in 16th century human sciences as metaphor, whose mode is characterized by the assertion of similarities between two different objects. The statement A=B or A is B implies both similarity and difference; for example, "black is evil." For Foucault, metonymy refers to the reductionist strategy that configures the whole as sum of the parts as expressed in the mechanistic view of the world. Foucault regards the dominant trope of 18th century human sciences as metonymy. According to Foucault, the sciences of life, labor, and language of the 19th century set the new epistemological projection between the whole and the parts expressed in language by the trope of synecdoche. In synecdoche, the whole (the totality or the organic unity) is greater than mere sum of the parts. The totality presumes the deep essence and this essence represents the whole like our head in a headshot passes for our identification.

Although being cautious of Foucault's tropological generalization that sustains his analysis of the course of human sciences from the 16th century to the 20th century,[20] following Burke, White contends that four "master tropes," metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony, are "in reality relationships existing between consciousness and a world experience calling for a provision of its meaning" (Tropics, 72). For White, the theory of tropes provides a way of characterizing the dominant mode of historical

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[20] White asserts, "we might say that, for Foucault, the human sciences of the 20th century are characterizable precisely by the *ironic* relationship" and "it can be shown that in fact he views such philosophers and systems of thought as psychoanalysis, existentialism, linguistic analysis, logical atomism, phenomenology, structuralism, and so on – all the systems of our time – as projections of the trope of irony." In this context, White regards Foucault's postmodernity as "postironic" (Tropics, 255).

thinking in historical writings. For instance, he finds corresponding modes of thinking in four respective 19th century historians: Jules Michelet, Leopold von Ranke, Alexis de Toqueville, and Jacob Burckhardt. According to White, with the ambition driven by scientific discourses, some 19th and 20th century historians and positivistic philosophers have tried to make history into an objective explanatory discipline, which tells what happened and why it happened in the manner of sciences, claiming truth in a more authentic way. In these scientific discourses, the dominant modes of tropes are metonymy and synecdoche.

Adopting Burke and Foucault, White articulates metonymy as the trope of mechanism (Newton's physics), in which the world is explained as a complex part-part relationship and cause and effect is the dominant rule that governs the relationship. Lakoff and Johnson also point out how the frequent use of metaphor of machine describing our mind reflects the mechanist thought still prevailing in our culture. Meanwhile, in the organist system of explanation inspired by biology, synecdoche suggests the possibility of understanding the particular as a microcosm of a macrocosmic totality. In this sense, metonymy is reductive and synecdoche is representative. Mechanist metonymy searches for a universal truth in a commonality of the parts: the grammarians' search for the universal grammar and the economists' search for the true basis of wealth. Many scholars point out that synecdoche is a very seductive trope, since it enlists to represent totalities not available to thought other than through a mode of rhetorical totalization and essentialization. For example, the natural historians searched for the essence of organic species in the contemplation of their external attributes.

Such scholars as Foucault, Derrida, Barthes, and Spivak suspect the totalizing and fetishistic rhetoric of Euro-centric humanist discourses. In their understandings, such discourses are based on both metonymy and synecdoche in a sense that they universalize particular European values and ideas as the common essence of humanity over the culture of others. Chong, too, sees the dystopian disguise of the ideas and values of Euro-centric humanism in the rhetoric of imperialism and racism; in this paradigm, metonymy searches for universal human values and synecdoche conspires to essentialize these hegemonic values and ideas. This rhetoric of racism inevitable in imperialism repeats in the idea of Anglo-conforming assimilation in America, which Chong strongly rejects. While the alternative idea of the melting pot has been a reality for some, however, it has been a myth for others. Chong is one of them who use "what the unmelting pot has to offer" (Chong, "Notes," 65). People of diverse cultures, whose visible differences set them apart, have typically not melted into a homogenizing uniculture of America.

Chong's (counter-) myth-making, which engages both institutional and popular myths, is resilient in its politics (ethics, also) of irony. Irony achieves reflexive and self-critical commentary through its contrapuntal technique.[21] In other words, in its mimetic mode, it repeats the established tropical formulations of the dominant culture with its renewed meanings. According to White, irony is a mode of trope in which the meaning ambivalently or ambiguously "signals a denial of the assertion of similitude or difference contained in the literal sense of the proposition." As White gives us an example, "He is

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[21] Burke, in his essay "Four Master Tropes" contained as an appendix in A Grammar of Motives, views irony as dialectical. But White dismisses Burke's idea of irony as a dialectical mode of trope in Tropics of Discourse (73). I consider that the contrapuntuality of irony can bring opposition that does not lead to the new totality that the dialectical mode of thinking postulates.

all heart," a metonymy within a synecdoche, renders a different possibility when it is enunciated as "He is *all* heart," an irony on top of synecdoche (Tropics, 73). In this sense, irony is a kind of metaphor that interrogates the other tropes. As I mentioned above, Chong's most distinct trope is irony. His irony is a tool to deconstruct the rhetorical formulations of the dominant culture. It contests the authority claim of the hegemonic tropical formulation to show the plural possibilities of excluded meanings. As Derrida's deconstructionist method is considered to use irony as its major trope, Chong's irony cuts the naturalized link established in serious or popular speech acts to make new meanings. As an example of Chong's ironic image formation, in his historical work Chinoiserie (1994), Chong juxtaposes the baseball bat as an icon of American nationalism and the baseball bat used as a weapon in the murder of a Chinese-American, Vincent Chin. The defamiliarized image of a baseball bat engages the whole body of the audience, voiding the mythification of American national spirit it normally evokes.

In the contemporary American cultural milieu, the concept of cultural pluralism challenges the idea of the melting pot.[22] Chong's (counter-) myth of America is, however, not based on the mechanist pluralism in which different ethnic groups do not have interrelationships. Chong is aware of pros and cons to multiculturalism.[23] There is a positive aspect to it (recognition of diversity among Americans), but it contains the risk

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[22] The discursive formation of multiculturalism cannot be explained by any single factor. It is the effect of complicated interactions in social history. I deal with the interactive links between discursive formations and social history in Chapter 1.

[23] In a personal interview with me, Chong affirms the basic values of multiculturalism, stating that, "I see multi-culturalism as a mixed bag. There are things that are lost and things that are gained in the mixture of peoples and cultures in the modern world. But, on a basic social level, I think that the values multi-culturalism embraces – that is acceptance/toleration of ethnic/cultural/sexual differences – are correct" (Personal Interview, July 2004).

of perpetuating differences in the form of hierarchical antagonism among diverse cultural groups in America. Chong asserts, "I am not going to allow myself to be ghettoized as an Asian-American artist. I am an *American* artist" (qtd. in Madison, 41). If the metaphor of the melting pot can be used to explain cultural assimilation, the metaphor of the collage can be used to describe cultural pluralism. In a melting pot, each individual item loses its original characteristics to become part of something else. In the collage model of cultural pluralism, however, the particular without losing its characteristics is always "in the nexus of relationships" with the other particulars and the whole (Clifford, Predicament, 344). But, from the negative side of multiculturalism, this collage model is misrecognized as metonymic plurality. The whole in this model, I argue, emerges from the relations that the particular parts have with one another, not from common origins, but from what Raymond Williams calls "underlying structures of feeling."[24] (Following Bruce McConachie's notion of "the emergence of community through performance" based on Williams' concept of "underlying structures of feeling," I will deal with this issue when I examine Chong's community-based theatre project.)

Chong's identification (characterized by the process of territorization and deterritorization) shifts when he identifies himself respectively as a New Yorker, a Chinese-American, an American, and a transnational citizen of cosmopolis. Chong's predicament in his shifting identities arises when we view culture as a fixed entity. As Clifford observes, culture is on the move. Clifford uses the metaphor of "travel" as the

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[24] Williams' concept of "structure of feeling" is present as early as 1954. In his essay "Film and the Dramatic Tradition" published in 1954, Williams uses the notion "structure of feeling" in regard to the relation between the dramatic conventions of any given period and social structures because for him it seems "more accurate" than "*ideas* or *general life*" (33). It refers to the shared ideas, emotions, and ideologies in a given time period.

alternative to the metaphor of "root" when he describes culture, and "travel" is the most frequent figuration Chong uses. According to Clifford, we need to ask where we are between rather than where we are from ("Traveling," 109). Chong contests the metaphorical formulation, the self is an insider/the other is an outsider, instead, suggesting a hybrid subject between cultures. When we are sitting on the fence, or going back and forth beyond the borderline, are we insiders or outsiders? His "two visions" (related to Said's concept designating contrapuntal positionality of the hybrid subject) makes the concept of insider and outsider become meaningless. "Blessed or cursed," Chong, as a hybrid subject, is "the result of a culture that is 2,000 years old mixing with one that is 200 years old" (Chong, "Notes," 65). Also when Chong demonstrates the inventiveness of such conceptual containers as New Yorker, Chinese-American, American, and World Citizen, the concept of insider and outsider constantly shifts.

Between cultures is, however, not always a good thing when global culture is the consequence of travels of modernity through the routes of war and appropriation. Nowadays, the increasing migration of people, goods, and capital and the development of technology in mass communication produce more complex webs of connectivity so that the sense of global and local is not just confined to immigrants. Chong explores culture on the global scope, suggesting the utopian vision of "one human republic," where all humans respect their diversity. But, his political activism based on community-based theatre comes from his dystopian vision of global culture where violence and aggression are a reality. The metaphor of "one human republic" that is based on the ideas of respect, responsibility, justice, and equality aspires to

reconceptualize the antithetical description of homogenized global culture (the universal) and cultural pluralism (the particular). Chong examines American culture molded out of this traveling global culture, resulting in a heteroglossia of cultures.[25] Chong's vision of collage is metaphoric making of America and global culture. As many sociologists and anthropologists register, America is not discovered but invented. Contesting visions of America mark the constant process of making and remaking America. Chong demystifies the myth of Anglo-conformity assimilation and melting pot, and makes his (counter-) myth of plural-intercultural America. Chong also problematizes the myth of the homogenizing global culture, inventing the (counter-) utopian myth of "one human republic" where a human race respects its cultural diversity.

Chong is strongly critical of the realist synecdoche as the major trope of the dominant myths on people, cultures, and histories, just as Clifford points out the ideological implication contained in synecdochical representation of culture. In his essay "On Ethnographic Allegory," Clifford contends that "the claim that non-allegorical description was possible – a position that underlies positivist literalism and realist synecdoche (the organic, functional, or typical relationship of parts to wholes) – was closely allied to the romantic search for unmediated meaning in the event" (100). In photography, film, and tv, a camera was conceived as the objective apparatus that interrupts the subjective mediation of human mind even though today it generates considerable debates. Inspired by this new technology of photography and later film

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[25] Chong's heteroglossia in mixing images, that is, bricolage, resists the claims of purity and unity in monolithic melody and Renaissance perspectival visual composition, creating the polyphony and collage prefigured in Mozart's music, Bakhtin's polyphonic novel, cubism, surrealism, and Eisenstein's montage.

and tv, simulation of synecdochical realism tempts to replace representation with reality. According to Jean Baudrillard, through the proliferation of mediated simulation replacing the real, we lost our critical distance between the representation and the real. Frederic Jameson agrees with Baudrillard that simulating media, especially central tv experience of our time, greatly influences our cognitive processes of understanding the world around us. For sure, Chong rejects self-deceiving realist synecdoche since, using Roland Barthes' concept of "realist effect" whose task is to hide under the fiction of realism, realist synecdoche claims the truth by evoking the "prestige of it happened" (de Certeau, Writing, 42). Chong is a storyteller who does not hide his poetic construction.

For the same reason Baudrillard pessimistically affirms the simulating realism as the distinctive postmodern mode of representation, Chong rejects realism for its difficulty in taking a critical distance in telling the story of the other. When the exotic and seductive stereotypes of the other reappear in a realist effect, they can easily reinforce the rhetoric of the hegemonic power. Even though some playwrights like David Henry Hwang and Frank Chin attempted to dismantle the rhetorical formulation of stereotypical representation of the other within the structure of realism, it is hard to take a critical distance due to its too familiar perception of the other. Chong defamiliarizes the dominant images of the other produced mostly by realism. For instance, instead of a person, Chong uses a gorilla mask (suit) as an ethnic type in Kind Ness (1986), making the audience see how dominant ethnic groups treat the other as the beast much more clearly. Chong weaves the narratives of Kind Ness as an explicit allegory of "the typical American melting pot situation" (Chong, "Notes," 65).

Frye's concept of the sliding scale of allegory, to which Clifford draws our attention in his essay of "On Ethnographic Allegory," is useful in discussing Chong's sliding scale of cultural representation when Chong (echoed by Bruce Allardice, the managing director of the Ping Chong and Company) marks the formalistic shift of the Ping Chong and Company from "allegory to history" (qtd. in Dillon, 19). While Clifford uses allegory as a general mode of cultural representation, Frye uses allegory in a narrower sense, denoting a category for a thematic mode of literature in which "the idea" or "*dianoia*" (best translated as "theme") is the primary interest (Anatomy, 52). According to Frye, "allegory is a contrapuntal technique" in the sense that the author says, "by this I also (*allos*) mean that." Borrowing Frye's concept of a sliding scale, in Chong's works, I can find a kind of a sliding scale, ranging from "the most explicitly allegorical" at one extreme, "to the most elusive, anti-explicit and anti-allegorical" at the other – though his sliding scale does not correspond to a chronological order of Chong's narrative texts (Anatomy, 90-91).

In his early years of explicitly allegorical narratives, we see types of the other appearing as a phenomenal creature between a human and an animal in Kind Ness, a vampire and a ghost in Nosferatu (1985) and Elephant Memories (1990), a biblical figure in Lazarus (1972), a strange immigrant in Fear and Loathing in Gotham (1975), a beast in Humboldt's Current (1977), death in Lazarus and Nosferatu, evils and beasts in Angels of Swedenborg (1985), and a slave in Nuit Blanche (1981). Chong sometimes condenses two different periods in a figure (Swedenborg in Angels of Swedenborg) and two historical figures in a person (Humboldt in Humboldt's Currents) to comment on contemporary issues. Allegory tends to express explicitly its moral precepts, and

traditionally classical allegory was used to reinforce the dominant ideology of the period. Chong's allegories have their moral precepts, but they contest the dominant ethics based on narcissistic interests of liberty and survival through his new postulation of ethical relations to the others in the ethical/political languages of respect, responsibility, justice, and equality. In many of Chong's narrative texts, a lecturer appears (sometimes a voice-over), like Socrates, to question the dominant values and ideas of the dominant culture, leading the audience to see the ironies and paradoxes of them. His allegories suggest the counter-ideology that urges us to perceive the world and act differently.

Chong's dystopian worldview, formulated in his political awareness during the Reagan era, seems to have taken more concrete shape in his later career. As I mentioned earlier, the Undesirable Elements series, started in the beginning of 1990s, shows the shifting point at which he ponders the possibilities of change. Allegory seems to disappear in this community-based documentary theatre when Chong uses documentary narrative style, the most anti-allegorical form. But, when the documentary narrative style is framed in theatrical representation, the oral history project inhabits the border of allegory and history (according to Frye, historical writing starts where allegory ends), telling the pain and hope shared by the underprivileged. Along with this series, Chong inaugurated the East/West Quartet, Deshima (1990), Chinoiserie (1994), After Sorrow (1997), and Pojagi (1999), in which he tells the stories of the power encounters in modern history. Chong's historical awareness expands, and allegory here suggestively evokes the actual historical events. This type of allegory is in the center of Frye's sliding scale, and there the images have an "implicit relation only to events and ideas" (Frye, Anatomy, 91). But, at the same time, their documentary nature makes the

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historical Quartet fall below the center of the scale in which "poetic imagery begins to recede from example and precept and become increasingly ironic and paradoxical" (Frye, Anatomy 91).

Chong dubbed the first piece of the Quartet, Deshima, "poetic documentary," stressing the associative construction of the stories. According to Chong, "each element in the production – the text, choreography, sound and visual design – is inspired by an incident in the complicated history between Japan and the West" (Deshima, 2). Chong tells his version of stories of the East and West without claiming the truthfulness of representation, in contrast to the recent vogue for documentary, films based on true stories, journalism, and real tv, reflecting the taste of our age in its search for "truthfulness." Chong's Undesirable Elements series are categorized as documentary theatre, but this documentary theatre does not claim the authority of truth. Rather, it questions the exclusive truthfulness of the hegemonic discursive regime, which is claimed by what Chong calls "the victor" of history.[26] Does all the documentary theatre claim truthfulness? As Attilio Favorini observes in his article on documentary theatre, what he calls "the genealogy of documentary theatre" explores diverse historical directions of documentary drama, showing that truthfulness is not the universal claim shared by all kinds of documentary drama ("Representation," 40). This genealogy sheds insights in examining Chong's documentary theatre.

According to Favorini, documentary theatre does not denote a specific kind of theatre. In historical drama, the genealogy of documentary theatre is characterized by stand-ins of various types of theatre whose stories are based on partial or whole

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[26] In Chinoiserie, one of the performers uses the term "the victor" and Chong uses "the conqueror" in an interview with me (Personal Interview, July 2004).

actuality. As Favorini aptly points out, many documentary playwrights wanted their

audience to believe their plays were true to reality. For example, realistic effects were

the most common feature of German documentary theatres in the 1960s. Peter Weiss

claimed the truthfulness of his documentary play, Investigation, hiding his editorial

construction. Favorini suggests an alternative model of documentary theatre through

British playwright and director Peter Cheeseman. In his documentary plays, collective

authorships of real people involved in the event are highlighted without hiding his

editorial efforts. The actors' presentational mode of narrative style reports the event

rather than enacts, and mixing of songs and dances all create the polyphony of the

story we hear. As Favorini remarks, this type of documentary theatre is "not for

believers but for listeners" ("Representation," 37). The voices of people whose survival

is at the mercy of people of power begin to speak up their pains, frustrations, and

hopes. Chong's Undesirable Elements series follow, I believe, Cheeseman's model,

except that real people from a local community tell their tales on stage, reading the

script edited by Chong. (Cheeseman makes the real voices heard by using a tape

recorder). Authenticity claims based in using real voices, I believe, are not considered

to be replacing the hegemonic representation of history and asserting the truthfulness of

their own version. But, adding more voices excluded in the course of discrepant power

leads to dialogism, the real spirit of democracy.

1.4. Narrative Structure – Emplotment

Lastly, in terms of narrative structure, Chong's architectonics of narrative texts

differs from the conventional plot making, which is mostly linear. Adapting techniques of

jazz, Chong's story goes with its themes and variations.[27] Unlike a progressive (linear)

dramatic arc in realism, fragmenting scenes in his bricolages are loosely linked not by

causality and plausibility but by internal association between them, and each theme is

told by a collage of heterogeneous images, producing layers and volumes in the

storyline. Chong's temporo-spatial sense of narrative sequencing has an affinity with

the dual temporo-spatial consideration in cultural and historical writing. Clifford provides

us with his useful observation on how narrativity in cultural and historical discourses

delineates (contains) ungraspable reality through the tools of rhetoric and sequencing

events. Adopting Frye's literary approaches in anthropologist writings, Clifford suggests

that Western liberalism has mainly written the cultural narratives of linear progression as

the allegory of history. Clifford contests this ideological construction of narrative

sequencing based on unbroken continuity in cultural narratives. Clifford, in his

afterthoughts of the Mashpee Native American suit, a group of land-claim actions filed in

1976, recorded in his article "Identity in Mashpee," considers how descriptions of culture

and cultural identity are dominantly unified around the concepts of "wholeness,

continuity, and growth." The dominant idea of culture presumes "an expectation of

roots, of a stable, territorialized existence" like an organism rather than travel. But,

Clifford argues that "a community, unlike a body, can lose a central organ and not die.

All the critical elements of identity are in specific replaceable conditions: language, land,

blood, leadership, religion." Clifford questions the common sense that prevailed in the

court regarding the existence of Mashpee tribe and its identity, which claims that

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[27] Critic Beth Howard uses the term "jazz ensemble" to designate Chong's collaboration process, saying that "each player gets a turn displaying his virtuosity and originality, putting his own stamp on a piece of music while maintaining the work's coherence" (59).

Mashpee's tribal identity must be demonstrated "as an unbroken narrative." Mashpee

Indians, however, through their double modes in borderline identity, lived and acted

between two cultures, Clifford contends, so that "their history was a series of cultural

and political transactions, not all-or-nothing conversion or resistances" (Predicament,

336-345). This emerging concept of "borderline identity" (a consequence of

discontinuous and heterogeneous histories) and "route" is how Chong overcomes the

dominant metaphors of insider/outsider and "root" in cultural and historical process of

identification.

Likewise, Bhabha's notion of "mimicry"[28] as the resistive performance of a hybrid

subject (whether it is colonial or postcolonial) interrupts unbroken narratives of nations

and the world. His notion of temporality (time-lag that already implies a space) is not so

much bound with historiocity but as with locality, suggesting temporo-spatial aspects of

culture and history. In regard to the plot structure of narratives of modernity, he states

that "the linear equivalence of event and idea that historicism proposes, most commonly

signifies a people, a nation, or a national culture as an empirical sociological category or

a holistic cultural identity." We need another time concept to write culture and history,

which will replace "the progressive metaphor of modern social cohesion – *the many as*

one – shared by organic theories of the holism of culture and community and by

theorists who treat gender, class or race as social totalities that are expressive of

unitary collective experiences." Against this poetics of historicism and holism, he

argues that we only can reconsider the plot structure of the cultural and national

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[28] Bhabha's deconstruction aims to show the slippage of identity and difference in mimicry of the colonized, which destabilizes the authority of the colonizer in their claim of complete assimilation. I will deal with the notion of "mimicry" in detail in Chapter 1.

narratives in terms of "postcolonial time-lag" as disjunctive time (<u>Location</u>, 140-142). The <u>Undesirable Elements</u> series, what Chong calls "an oral history project," tell this time-lag, the discontinuous and simultaneous continuation of American history, relocating the missing (ignored or hidden) puzzle pieces of the marginalized into the grand narratives of America. Through this project, these buried parts of America emerge in the course of diverse people's narratives. Multiple voices return, and the monologue of the hegemonic culture is interrupted.

"Voicing back," derived from Favorini's "voicings"[29] and Foucault's "writing back,"[30] resists the silence, enabling the repressed people to become the subjects of their own histories. This "voicing back" is what Spivak proposes as the possibility of change; her subaltern studies begin with a question, "Can the subaltern speak?" "Voicing back" is the resistance to the demands of a stronger voice, which prepares the path to dialogism. In the following chapters, I will examine how Chong's ethico-political deconstruction of the dominant myths (disarming of discursive regime) in tandem with his political activism advances the possibility of "voicing back" of the marginalized, which compels the listening of the speaker of narcissistic monologue, toward the performance of democracy based on the dialogic mode of speech acts expressed in the ethical/political languages of respect, justice, equality, responsibility, and love connecting the self and the others.

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[29] The term "voicing" derives from Favorini's book <u>Voicings</u>, which examines documentary drama.

[30] Foucault regards writing as both regulative and subversive.

2. CHAPTER ONE: THEORETICAL APPROACHES

2.1. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

2.1.1. Situated Psychoanalysis

Chong's approaches to the (decentering) themes of the other(s) are double

ended and bi-visionary. On the one hand, he examines the psychoanalytic aspects of

discourse about the self and the other (especially in <u>Fear and Loathing in Gotham</u> and

<u>Undesirable Elements</u>). Conversely, he explores the epistemological impasse of

similarities and differences and further investigates the politics of identity and difference

(especially in <u>Humboldt's Current</u>, <u>Kind Ness</u>, <u>Nosferatu</u>, <u>Undesirable Elements</u> and

<u>Elephant Memories</u>). Through his fables of the other(s), Chong illuminates how the

politics of exclusion (ideological containment) has manipulated our psychic and

epistemological procedure of identification throughout modern history. In this respect,

Foucault's triad domains of desire (pleasure), power, and knowledge (truth claim) are

appropriate for investigating the complex structures of colonial and post (neo-) colonial

discourses of the other(s), which Chong has wrestled to articulate.

My use of the psychoanalytical model of man and society, however, is rather

selective. For instance, the Freudian topography of the psyche (the hierarchical division

of id, ego, super-ego) easily segues into psychological determinism (often sexual

determinism which Lacan attempts to overcome) whose end result of "a deep self"

Foucault condemns due to its reinforcing of corresponding hierarchical structures in

society.[1] Although Lacan suggests a different topography by using the term, "register,"

his interpreters still use the hierarchical term, "level," interchangeably with "register,"

often bringing forth confusion. Following Barthes' semiotic account, Lacan's own

emphasis on the realm of the unconscious as the site of the signified easily falls into the

same condition of psychological determinism, which does not account for material and

historical changes.[2] Even though the discovery of the unconscious is one of the

landmarks of modernity and the unconscious is a dominant psychic mode, the complex

bodily performance (since our consciousness is embodied) of desire, language, and

intentional thought in changing cultural and historical situations cannot be explained

solely by the determining effect of the unconscious.[3]

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[1] Foucault's approach to desire rejects the psychic interior of desire, enfolding the topics of psychic performance of desire and power. In The History of Sexuality, for instance, instead, he examines the sexual practices through history. For Foucault, the search for a secret sexuality behind appearances is not an attempt to find a deep truth of the human condition, but a mythic construction of modern thought.

[2] In accord with Barthes' semiotics, it constructs the myth of the unconscious as the sole site of the uncanny signified, whose essential depth produces meanings through the analogical link to the signifier. In his essay "The Imagination of the Sign" included in Barthes: Critical Essays, Barthes argues that "there is a history of the sign, which is the history of its 'consciousness.'" He classifies three kinds of consciousness of the sign (symbolic, paradigmatic, and syntagmatic). According to Barthes, for instance, Freud's psychology corresponds to the symbolic sign, which sees "the sign in its profound," "its geological, dimension," "since for the symbolic consciousness it is the tiered arrangement of signifier and signified which constitutes the symbol." Thus, "the symbolic consciousness implies an imagination of depth; it experiences the world as the relation of a superficial form and a many-sided, massive, powerful Abgrund [content]." By contrast, red signifies prohibition when it is systematically opposed to green and yellow in a "paradigmatic" system. This paradigmatic consciousness "sees the signifier, as if in profile, to several virtual signifiers." According to Barthes, Merleau-Ponty's and Lévi-Strauss' approaches to the signs belong to this second type of the sign relation. Lastly, in syntagmatic sign, Barthes notes, there is a signifying association, "analogous to the one uniting the words of a sentence." The dynamics of the image in syntagmatic consciousness is "that of an arrangement of a mobile, substitutive parts, whose combination produces meaning." Barthes exemplifies the third kind of imagination of the sign in "poetry, epic theater, serial music, and structural compositions, from Mondrian to Butor" (205-211). In the chapters in which I deal with the problematics of the hierarchical binary of surface/depth, I will reintroduce the concept of "depth."

[3] I acknowledge that the unconscious is a dominant psychic mode. According to the study of cognitive science, more than 90% of human mind operates unconsciously. But I do not consider that being dominant means deterministic.

To enrich this discussion, I am incorporating the conceptual framework of embodied consciousness advanced by the emerging field of cognitive psychology and neuro-science. Gerald Edelman, an expert in brain chemistry, proposes a bilateral vision of the conscious and the unconscious as transformative modes of our embodied consciousness. According to his model, our consciousness is explained as a bodily function of complex neuronal connections, and the unconscious is the specific mode of our consciousness when we are not aware of our own processes of perception, speech, and thought. Edelman contends that habits can be well explained by the economy of automatic transformation into the mode of the unconscious, which is our body's tactical adaptation to its environment; if our body were not partly habitualized, we could accomplish very little during our entire life. This cognitive model, in my opinion, enables us to bypass the problem of psychological determinism. Edelman sets his biology-based procedural psychic model against both Freud's psychological determinism and the Enlightenment idea of free will.[4] Significantly, Foucault's later view on the modes of a human being suggests the doubling of the conscious (cogito) and the unconscious (unthought),[5] and Bhabha's emphasis on Lacan's Other as the double of the Self[6] also parallels Edelman's bilateral explanatory model of our psyche.

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[4] In his book Bright Air, Brilliant Fire: On the Matter of the Mind, borrowing from James Mill's notion of "soft determinism" or "compatibilism," Edelman deploys his idea of "a degree of free will." He argues that "the present is not pregnant with a fixed programmed future, and the program is not in our heads" (171).

[5] In the chapter titled "Man and his doubles" in The Order of Things, Foucault postulates such doubling pairs as "the empirical and the transcendental," "the cogito and the unthought," and "discourse and man's being."

[6] Refer to the location of culture (52).

Poststructuralist and feminist scholars in particular[7] complain that Freud's and

Lacan's powerful psychoanalytic descriptions of our psyche tend to universalize the

notion of the essential Self and the Other, transcending the material and historical

existence of the embodied and changing self. Yet, psychoanalysis provides a useful

framework for the correlation between the psychic process and narrative. It is

significant that Freud's and Lacan's psychoanalytical models of identification are

derived from the Greek myths of Narcissus and Oedipus. This narrative nature of the

identification process allows me to approach the discursive aspects of identification and

power when it is supplemented with views from social history. Complementarily,

borrowing Foucault's notion of "discursive formations,"[8] I approach Chong's fables of

identification as counter-narratives that destabilize the institutional authority of identity

politics fashioned and supported by "discursive regime" (based on truth-claim), whose

classifying idea of the self and the other (identity and difference) shapes distinctive

social boundaries. This discursive regime produces a body of knowledge ("discursive

formations") on people, societies, and histories in such disciplines as psychology,

sociology, ethnography, and historiography. Chong's ethno-historiographic fables

unmask the connection between dominant ethnographic and historiographic knowledge

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[7] For example, Foucault, Spivak, and de Lauretis are suspicious to Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis.

[8] Chong's archeological approach and his recent shift to history complement each other; Chong isolates the shifting planes of defining "Americanness" postulated by American identity politics as Anglo-conformity, melting pot, and multiculturalism. At the same time, as a genealogist, he does not describe progress but rather he finds the recurrence of epistemological and ethical violence toward what the dominant identity politics views as the other. Deshima (1990) and Chinoiserie (1994) draw the genealogies of the other(s), in longer time frames, from the 16th century to contemporary times, examining how contemporary discourses on "Americanness" are constructed through a historical process of global power dynamics.

and institutional power, which manifest itself as cultural (identity) politics, regulating immigration laws, museum exhibitions, and history textbooks.

I stress that discursive formations should be examined in connection to material history since such formative ideas as (cultural) identity and difference, the self and the other, community and nationhood, and body and mind and social changes in demography, politics, economy, and technological development interact on a complex level. The increase and decrease in migrating labor forces is surely an important factor in relation to the changes in global political economy. Moreover, as much as changes in (global) politics and (global) economy are influential to fashion socially formative concepts, so are changes in media, information and communication technology, and technical developments in transportation, bio-engineering, and electric regulative systems. For example, developments in cybernetics have made people reconfigure the traditional concept of body and identity. The notion of "virtual body" in cyber space radically contests the idea of identity based on the corporeal body. Cognitively, our experiences attained through media change our perception of the world, and the development of communication technology induces an altered sense of connection between the self and the others. Electronic circuits seem to connect people, but conversely, they can result in social alienation. At the same time, the digitizing of statistics and information enables the hegemonic power to effectively regulate what it perceives as the other.[9] Technological developments in transportation have changed our notion of time and space, which forms the significant basis for our sense of identification and boundary (community). And developments in bio-engineering (stem

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[9] Recent invention of SEVIS (Students and Exchange Visitors Information System) is one of the exemplary regulative systems.

cell technology, embryo transfer, organ transfer, artificial organs, etc.) and plastic (cosmetic) surgery have reconceptualized the conventional notion of the self as the unchangeable organic body. Meanwhile, the eruption of such transferable diseases as AIDS and SARS has instilled the idea of "impure foreign body," making bodily contact a very dangerous act. Social movements and political activism (the civil rights movement, minority movement, feminist movement, political activities of nongovernmental organizations concerning international politics, corporate capitalism, and ecological destruction, etc.) are also important social factors in the ever-changing landscapes of cultural ideas about identification and community. I will try to engage these various complicated factors when I discuss Chong's deconstructive tactics, which are aimed at the hegemonic social (discursive) formations.

Anne McClintock's vision of "situated psychoanalysis" well recapitulates my dualistic approaches. In Imperial Leather, McClintock explores the formation of the other as the paradox of modern industrial imperialism. In dealing with the complex matters of colonial desire, power, and knowledge, she claims the necessity of the complementary uses of psychoanalysis and social history. McClintock argues that "the disciplinary quarantine of psychoanalysis from history was germane to imperial modernity itself" (8). Similar to my idea of a renewed psychoanalysis, her notion of "situated psychoanalysis" does not dismiss all the discourses of psychoanalysis, since psychoanalysis as a discipline already interacts with other disciplines while in the process of transforming and being transformed. In this context, "the situated psychoanalysis" is "a culturally contextualized psychoanalysis that is simultaneously a psychoanalytically informed history" (72).

McClintock's genealogies of "the fetish,"[10] which describe fetishes as standing in the intersection of psychoanalysis and social history, enable me to approach socio-politico-psychoanalytic aspects in Chong's fables of the other. "Far from being merely phallic substitutes," McClintock notes, "fetishes can be seen as the displacement onto an object (or person) of contradictions that the individual cannot resolve at a personal level. These contradictions may originate as social contradictions but are lived with profound intensity in the imagination and the flesh" (184). Contradictory powers, desires, pleasures, and values (social meanings) clash in the fetishes: religious fetishes (crisscross and sorcerer's claw), commodity fetishes (Gucci clones and simulations), sexual fetishes (boots, leather, and whips), imperial fetishes (compass, map, and measuring devices), social fetishes (stereotypes), and the national fetish of flags whose possessing power we witness again in time of global domination and the resurgence of nationalism.

As the examples above illustrate, the fetish formation is processed with a rhetorical suturing of metaphor and metonymy[11] through which contradictions and

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[10] "The fetish" like "the abject" stands in the borders of the social and the psychoanalytical. In Imperial Leather, disavowing Freud's definition of "fetishism," which "gives privilege normality to male heterosexuality and the scene of castration," McClintock attempts to "open the Freudian and Lacanian theories of fetishism to a more varied and complex history in which class and race play as formative a role as gender" (138). According to McClintock's informative research on the genealogy of "the fetish," Freud, indeed, transferred the term *fetishisme* for primitive religion coined by a French philosopher, Charles de Brosses, in 1760. Meanwhile, in 1867, Marx took the term *commodity fetishism* and the concept of primitive magic to explain the social aspect of the modern industrial economy. As McClintock insightfully observes, "the sciences of man – philosophy, Marxism, and psychoanalysis – took shape around the invention of the primitive fetish" (181-182).

[11] "Suturing" is Lacan's psychoanalytic term to describe the psychic performance. According to Barbara Freedman's study, Lacan originally used the word *suture* to refer to a pseudo-identification process. Jacques-Alain Miller developed this notion to describe the subject position, whose lack is constructed through stitching as zero is constructed as a number. Bhabha and Hall actively adopt this term to examine rhetorical involvement in identification process. I deal with the idea of "suturing" in detail in Chapter 3.

ambiguities seem clarified. Consequently, however, the splits between the positive and

the negative (the sacred/the secular, the productive/non-productive, the propertied/not

propertied, the phallus/the clitoris, the progressed/the degenerated, good white/bad

colored, the heterosexual/the homosexual, and the organized/the anarchic) remain

internal, bleeding in their ambivalence. This ambivalence can be accounted for in the

incomplete process of abjection itself involved in the fetish formation. Here, it is worth

introducing Julia Kristeva's notion of abjection as a conceptual framework from a socio-

historically contextualized psychoanalysis. Addressing the psychoanalytic process of

projection (first introduced by Freud)[12], Kristeva examines socio-historical operations of

psychic projection using the notion of "abjection." Besides the significance of Freud's

concept of projection, Mary Douglas' insight into social margin (what Victor Turner calls

"a liminal condition"[13]) is illuminating for Kristeva's notion of "the abject" as the

marginalized. According to Douglas, for social normalization, the perceived dangers

brought by the people of the margins necessitate the boundary rituals by which they

undergo public segregation and reintegration.[14] Using her concept "abjection," which

means to expel, or cast out, Kristeva notes that in order to be a social being the self

expunges what the society regards as impure (for example, menstrual blood,

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[12] It is interesting to note, however, that Freud inducted the psychic process from the social history. For
example, in Totem and Taboo, Freud observes that the hostility of the survivors toward the dead
transforms the dead themselves into demons and by this taboo formation the survivors believe that they
can be protected from their hostility. The taboo is constructed by the defense mechanism he labels
"projection." "The hostility, of which the survivors know nothing and moreover wish to know nothing, is
ejected from internal perception into the external world, and thus detached from them and pushed on to
someone else" (79). The dead becomes the strange other of the survivors.

[13] Turner's notion of "liminality" refers to "threshold" denoting the central of three phases in rites of
passage – separation, liminality (marginality), and reintegration. See The Anthropology of Performance
(25).

[14] Douglass observes, "as figures of danger," for the men of margins "to behave anti-socially is the proper
expression of their marginal condition" (Purity and Danger, 79).

masturbatory imagination, incest, etc.). But, according to Kristeva, these expelled elements haunt the edges of the subject's identity with the threat of disruption, bringing about ambivalences and contradictions. Chong names this impurity an undesirable element, using this for the title of Undesirable Elements where he examines the social abjection of the impure identities embodied in immigrant bodies, gay and lesbian bodies, and the dirty bodies of the working class. For Chong, the other is the impossible but invented container of the undesirable elements; racial, gender, and class abjection is regarded as a purifying ritual of the hegemonic self.

2.1.2.   The Discursive/Performative Approaches vs Essentialist

From a constructionist perspective, in a rigorous sense, we are not free-born women and men; we become women and men within the hegemony of the heterosexual paradigm. Some bodies are socially constructed as colored bodies even though they are not genetically so distinct from other white bodies; but are nonetheless stereotypically racialized by, what Spivak calls, "epistemic violence."[15] As Hall notes, stereotyping is a key element in exercising this representational (symbolic) violence. Stereotyping involves the process of abjection (projection of negative values onto the others) but it is also a fetish formation by which the excessiveness of the others (contradictions and ambiguities) are reduced to fewer traits, often negative but sometimes positive. Bhabha's demonstration of the ambivalence of stereotypes

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[15] Spivak's notion of "epistemic violence" is significant to understand discursive power of the politics of representation since the hegemonic power not only exercises material coercion but also draws consent through persuasion by means of rhetoric. This notion comes out of Derrida's idea of the discursive violence of totalization in Western metaphysics. In her essay "The Rani of Simur" included in Europe and its Others Vol. 1, Spivak accuses the epistemic violence of "a set of human sciences busy establishing the 'native' as self-consolidating Other" (130).

(multiple coexistence of positive and negative stereotypes) points out the internal

contradiction of identity politics (also internal contradiction of abjection and fetish

formation), destabilizing the authority of the discursive regime, which fetishizes diverse

cultures of people into essentialized stereotypes. It is these discursive practices of

biological sexism and racism manifested in stereotypical images of the others that

Chong attempts to confront through both his deconstructive tactics and political

activism. They not only aim to demonstrate the ideologically constructive nature of

identity politics but also indicate the subversively performative nature of the

identification process of the marginalized.

Chong's views on the duality of bodily performance as both inscription and

resistance (the double of object/subject) exceed the polarity of subjection and

subjectification.[16] This notion of dual body modes reconfigures both the notion of the

autonomous subject, supposedly exercising an enacting mode of body, and the

essentialist view of the body, whose biological determinism draws the mythical analogy

between identification and the material body. Furthermore, the possibility of resistance

in this double vision opens for a space for discussing the subject of historical agency.[17]

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[16] Foucault's earlier analysis on the body postulates the notion of the body as the grid on which all the
social discourses are inscribed. Foucault's rigid formalistic approach in power analysis in his earlier
developmental phase – in which he characterizes "disciplinary power as a fully installed monolithic force
which saturates all social relation" – as Hall rightly points out, leads to overdetermination of the efficacy of
disciplinary power ("Who," 12-14). As Foucault recognizes in his later theoretical trajectory, starting from
The History of Sexuality, his notion of "the docile body" is complemented by the "desiring body," opening
the possibility of subjectivity and resistance. But, although Foucault's new concept of "desiring subject"
erases his former negation of the psychic interior landscape as conceived by psychoanalysis, he turns to
phenomenology in its stead, dropping discussion of the unconscious. This does not mean, however, that
Foucault discards the matter of the unconscious in discourses about subjectivity. Far from it; his notion of
double, subjection/subjectification is based on the double of conscious and unconscious. Rather, he
takes the materialistic path to examine desire (sexuality) in the domain of action (sex) through the
genealogies of desiring bodies. His concern shifts from sexuality to historical practices of sex.

[17] Joseph Roach's concept of performance, "repetition with a difference (revision)" borrowed from
Schechner's "restored behavior" and de Certeau's "the practice of everyday life," highlights the link

Foucault's reconfiguration of resistance as the internal dynamics of power suggests the

possibility of the historical (political and ethical) agency for transforming societies

effecting a dominant shift in theory from a knowing subject to acting subject. Yet,

discourses about historical agency face a predicament when it is the unconscious that

makes not only the meaningful actions possible but also puts the meaning out of

control. This dilemma of the unconscious, and our hope for the possibility of historical

agency, necessitate dealing with the matters of our body in such domains of the body

as desire, pleasure, and action (performance).

Judith Butler's concept of "performativity"[18] (well delineating the constructive

nature in the identification process) seems an early theoretical bridge between

psychoanalysis and discursive/performative perspectives and her conception also can

throw light on Chong's engagement with the body as political site. Butler, merging

Foucault's social constructionism[19] with Lacan's psychoanalysis (specifically his "mirror

stage") and Austin's speech act theory, questions the coherence of binary sexual

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between transformative cultural practices and psychic performances. Roach states, "the paradox of the restoration of behavior resides in the phenomenon of repetition itself: no action or sequence of actions may be performed exactly the same way twice; they must be invented or recreated at each appearance" ("Culture," 46). This concept of performance opens the space for possible resistance, because memory is perpetually renewed (there is never exactly the same neuronal connection), and thus continuously reconstructs the embodied self. According to Edelman's model, memory is not explained by retrieval of stored images or information, but by reentry into the neuronal connections (recategorization). Memory is our body's procedural performance. Refer to Edelman's two important books, A Universe of Consciousness (written with Guilio Tononi) and Bright Air, Brilliant Fire: On the Matter of the Mind.

[18] Borrowing Austin's linguistic model of discursive operation and extending it into bodily realm, Butler defines performativity as a process that brings states of being into existence through acts (speech acts).

[19] The tripartite connection of desire (pleasure), power, and knowledge in the (counter-) myth of identity calls for the (re) conceptualization of historical agency. I want to approach this topic by way of discussing the notions of the body and performance (including speech acts). Foucault's accounts of the constitutive nature of the body (the subject) provide invaluable points to explore the relations of bodies, identification, and politics. For Foucault, the body is considered an inscribed surface on which the law and regulations are inscribed.

politics, disrupting the logic of resemblance (biological determinism) in that essentialist politics. According to her assertion, "the body in the mirror does not represent a body that is, as it were, before the mirror, even as it is instigated by that unrepresentable body before the mirror, produces that body as its delirious effect – a delirium, by the way, which we are compelled to live" (Bodies, 91). Even though the undismissable presence of non-discursive corporeality elides Butler's discursive analysis of the body, my present concern puts aside the matter of material body that exceeds our discursive capacity. Butler's notion of performativity contains both "the enacted" and "enacting." The analogy I draw between the doubleness of the body in its transitive modes, the enacted/enacting, and the corresponding transformative modes of our consciousness (the unconscious and the conscious), can explain the ambivalent status of performance as both inscription and resistance. But I do not clearly delineate inscription to the unconscious and resistance to the conscious, since we can both consciously interpellate the dominant ideologies and unconsciously resist them. Neither the surfaces of the effigies nor the autonomous essences are our bodies; rather, I suggest that our bodies are not only the raw materials but also the sites where the multiple sources of forces and discourses are played out. This idea is explored in Chong's narrative text, Kind Ness (1986), which displays the vacilating performance of bodies between cultures. The Undesirable Elements series also show a shift in Chong's notion of our bodies – not mere surfaces on which laws and the regulations are inscribed, but the historical and material "rallying point for the counterattack" against the forces of the hegemonic power where pains and pleasures in the same significant ways participate in the process of constructing what we are (Foucault, History, 157). In Chong's

Undesirable Elements series, marginalized people narrate how their bodies are materialized in the dual course of inscription and resistance of/against/within the discursive power of stereotypes.

The performative identification process is further advanced in Bhabha's and Hall's rich descriptive model of the performance psyche. This model is significant for understanding the cultural and historical process of identification and subjection/subjectification by way of acknowledging the anti-essentialist and relational process of identification. Especially at the point where Louis Althusser and Foucault could not answer *how* the individual is interpellated (hailed) by the ideological apparatus or discursive practices (i.e., *how* our psyche responds or operates against or within the dominant discourses), the psychoanalytic notion of "suture," which both Bhabha and Hall propose in describing the psyche's articulating performance, is particularly useful in accounting for the performative nature of identification. Furthermore, Bhabha's accounts of the incompleteness of suturing and Hall's view of the instability of the identification process provide divergent foundations for the discussion of resistance.

Bhabha moves toward deconstructionist resistance by showing the slippage in the unity and purity intrinsic in the politics of identity, that is, in the myth of the unified Self and Other. Bhabha, by way of illuminating Lacan's notion of the Other[20] as "a double entry matrix," tries to partially erase the hierarchical depth of the symbolic sign: "through the circulation of signifier in its doubling and displacing, the signifier permits the sign no reciprocal, binary division of form/content, superstructure/ infrastructure,

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[20] In Lacan's psychic topography, the Other refers to Ideal-I in the Imaginary register and the Law of the Father in the symbolic register, which engage respectively the ego formation and the socialization of the subject.

self/other." According to Bhabha, the subject of desire is never simply a "Myself" and

the Other is never simply an "It-self," "a front of identity," and "truth" (Location, 52).

Bhabha's trope of "doubling" is useful to examine Chong's vision of inclusive (identity)

politics in which the exclusive hierarchical perspective between the Self and the

homogenized Other is aspired to be overcome. Meanwhile, confronting Althusser's

explanation of one-sided subjection to "ideological apparatus"[21] (what Foucault calls

"discursive formations") as "interpellation," Hall urges a reconsideration of the relation of

the subject to discursive formations in historical articulation. As Hall argues, "the notion

that an effective suturing of the subject to a subject position requires, not only that the

subject is 'hailed,' but that the subject invests in the position, means that suturing has to

be thought of as an articulation, rather than a one-sided process, and that in turn places

identification, if not identities, firmly on the theoretical agenda" ("Who," 6). For Hall, the

notion of "suture" resides in an intersection between the subject and discursive

practices. Thus, in this theoretical frame, the subject is not merely disciplined, but

struggles, resists, and negotiates.

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[21] Building on Marx's concept of "social structure" and Antonio Gramsci's notion of "hegemony," Louis Althusser postulates his own notion of "social formation" in his influential essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" in Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays. As Marx conceives, for Althusser, the structure of society is constitutes by "levels" or "instances" articulated by specific determination: "the infrastructure" (economic base) and "the superstructure." According to Althusser, the superstructure itself is constituted by two "levels" or "instances": "the politico-legal (law and the State) and ideology (the different ideologies, religious, ethical, legal, political, etc.)" (134). These two levels of superstructure have material existence in what Althusser respectively calls "Repressive State Apparatus" (the Government, the administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc.) and "Ideological State Apparatuses" (churches, schools, the family, political parties, trade unions, the media, and cultural institutions). Whereas RSA, like Gramsci's coercive hegemony, functions through violence and domination (repression), ISAs, like Gramsci's hegemony based on consents, operate through dominant ideology. Althusser argues that the ISAs secure the reproduction of the conditions of production since it is the ISAs that perform this function through what he calls "interpellation" or "hailing" whereby the individuals who are addressed by the ISAs recognize themselves as subjects.

2.1.3. Mobility (Identification) vs Containment (Identity)

The fixed psychoanalytical notion of identity, therefore, should be replaced by a new interrogating concept of performativity since the fixedness of the notion of identity itself does not accommodate material and historical changes. In a complementary manner, following Hall, I propose the notion of "identification" since it destabilizes the essential, unchanging, and singular containment of identity, enabling us to discuss the historical and cultural process the notion implies. "Who needs identity?" Hall asks. While he seeks more open and fluid relations among people and cultures, identity politics is, to be sure, a major strategy of the hegemonic power whose desire and pleasure reside in keeping the status quo. Challenging new concepts of people and communities are emerging but struggling with the old, still forceful, discourses about men, cultures and histories. I anchor Chong's severe critique of identity politics and his emphasis on the performative nature of identification in this theoretical concern.

Using Hall's argument, identification is an "articulation" never successful and complete, thus always susceptible to historical and cultural changes ("Who," 3). Hall's insight into the constructive nature of identification demystifies the naturalist (metonymic) impulse of identity in which some common origin (as the stable core of the self or true collective self of a group) unfolds throughout history without change. In contrast with the essentialist approach, the discursive/performative approach proposes a conditional and positional view on identification. As Hall points out, identification can be won or lost, sustained or abandoned, but it does not necessarily imply that identification is simply contingent. Rather, I argue that the material, cultural, and historical situations operate in the articulating process of identification. In this sense,

identification is less contingent than situational. I propose the term "the situated

identification" to explore Chong's borderline identification reflecting historical changes of

migrating cultures and diversity. Hybrid identification (hybrid subject) is a situational

consequence of migrating cultures, but, as McClintock rightly observes, it is erroneous

to unify all cases of hybrid identities: "Culturally enforced ethnic passing (Jewish or Irish

immigrants assimilating in the United States, say) or brutally enforced hybridity (the

deliberate impregnation of Muslim women by rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina) entail very

different relations to hybridity and ambiguity" (67). In this sense, the matter of hybridity

is the matter of power in those very different relations. I will discuss this topic of hybrid

subject in different power relations and in resistance, identifying the historical agency

within Chong's representation of "tactical hybridity" within the broader discourse of

hybrid subjectivity.

2.1.4.   (Post-) Colonial Mimicry: Hybrid Performativity

The essentialist approach does not account for changing global histories in

relation to the formation of cultural identification. McClintock points out the historical

basis of the essentialist idea of Man of the Family as the specific social distinction of the

bourgeoisie patriarchy in the due course of the European imperialist invention of

distinctive realms of the private and the public (sexual division of labor), the

propertied/the not-propertied, and the civilized/the primitive. The imperialist fear of

degenerating their pure blood erupts through these excessive boundary rituals. And in

these purity rituals, bourgeoisie domesticity is invented as a sanctuary and microcosm

of global patriarchal control. McClintock remarks that "the family image came to figure

hierarchy within unity" (submission of woman to man and child to adult) "as an organic

element of historical progress, and thus, became indispensable for legitimizing

exclusion and hierarchy within nonfamilial social forms such as nationalism, liberal

individualism and imperialism." And the hierarchical familial image (synchronic

hierarchy) was used to justify the imperial invention as historical progress (diachronic

hierarchy): "paternal fathers ruling benignly over immature children" (45). But, as the

imperialist power tried to breed imperialist-father-like colonial children, it did not allow

the racial integration, and thus its violent assimilation flowed on to colonial subjects.

The imperialist-racist adoption of Man of the Family is an excessive reaction that

disavows the hybrid mode of subject existence.

In imperialist identity politics, hybridity is defined as a degenerating impurity,

since imperialist authority is grounded on the myth of what Derrida calls "the One and

the Same."[22] In this myth, all the differences are assimilated into sameness of the

authority of colonial power. Bhabha, for example, views hybridity differently. Against

the colonial myth of submission of colonial subjects to disciplinary colonial power,

Bhabha's concept of "strategic mimicry" tries to describe *how* colonial desire is

disciplined but at the same time displaced by the doubling form of mimicry. Bhabha's

notion of "ambivalence of mimicry" shows the slippage of identity and difference through

which the authority of the colonial boundary ritual of Self and the Other is seriously

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[22] In his essay "Violence and Metaphysics" in <u>Writing and Difference</u>, Derrida, borrowing Emmanuel Levinas' concept of "totality" of Western philosophy, postulates his idea of the epistemic violence of "the Greek domination of the Same and the One" (83). Many scholars claim that Derrida's "deconstruction" is partly a response to the philosophy of Levinas. Robert Young, for example, traces Derrida's attack on Western metaphysics in its totalizing propensity in Levinas' problematization of Western "ontological imperialism," whose concept of totality "has dominated Western philosophy in its long history of desire for Unity and the One" (13). In Chapter 5, I will examine the problematics of assimilating the others (differences) into the same in historiography in detail.

contested. The colonial idea of mimicry is grounded on the logic of assimilating others

into sameness, but the paradox of repetition is inevitable, indeed, resulting in

ambiguous similarity. The ambivalence of colonial hybrid identity itself thwarts the

claimed effectiveness of the disciplinary power: it is almost the same but not quite.

Bhabha remarks, "it [hybridity] unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial

power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of

the discriminated back upon the eye of power" (Location, 112).

In his earlier theoretical trajectory, Bhabha postulates mimicry as a psychic

scheme (form) whose function depends on metonymy. Bhabha regards mimicry as

"strategic camouflage" (borrowing from Lacan), a "form of resemblance, that differs from

or defends presence *by displaying it in part metonymically*" (italics mine). Therefore, it

is "at once resemblance and menace." Its threat comes from "the prodigious and

strategic production of conflictual, fantastic, discriminatory 'identity effects' in the play of

a power" (Location, 86-90). Bhabha, through this doubling state of mimicry, suggests a

possible theory of resistance. But, as Bhabha later modifies his notion of mimicry via

Butler's concept of performativity, instead of understanding mimicry as a hybrid form, I

propose mimicry as a transformative mode of the hybrid subject.[23] Chong also uses a

formal (static) metaphor of "fence straddler" referring to hybrid identity, but in Kind Ness,

he demonstrates the performative image of mimicry as a "vacillation" between two

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[23] McClintock points out the limitation of discursive resistance in deconstruction. For McClintock,
Bhabha's postulation of ambivalence of mimicry as a disrupting form is not regarded as a sufficient
resistance to bring about change. Thus, McClintock asks, "doesn't one need more demanding
engagement with social and economic power than a deconstruction of the ruptures of form?" (65).
Bhabha actually advances further to the more subversive side of strategic mimicry, which nonetheless
almost seems to escape the slippage of identity and difference. In another essay about the dual signs of
hybridity, "Signs Taken for Wonders," he argues that mimicry displays the counterattack through
"deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination" (Location, 112).

cultures. Chong's counter-discursive power evolves into his political activism realized in

his community-based theatre project, Undesirable Elements. I adopt Bhabha's notion of

"strategic mimicry" to examine Chong's performative agency of hybrid subject, but in a

more complicated way by incorporating other reference points of gender and class.

Bhabha also realizes that ethnic mimicry is not the only type of mimicry, but the colonial

subject he describes is certainly a male subject. I agree with McClintock that Bhabha's

psychoanalytic model of mimicry, which only concerns masculine desire and power,

should be elaborated or complicated.

Luce Irigaray's feminist's interruption that the subject is gendered undermines the

prioritizing male colonial mimicry, but her preference of gender over race in turn puts

aside the linked discourses of imperialism and feminism. Questioning the claim of

effective disciplinary power of heterosexual patriarchy, exampled in Bhabha's colonial

mimicry, Irigaray suggests the strategic and subversive aspect of feminine mimicry.

According to Irigaray, in a heterosexual patriarchy, women learn to mimic the norms of

femininity for survival. That is, women put a social mask of femininity for masquerade.

Precisely since this heterosexual performance is theatrical, feminine mimicry ironically

highlights the doubling state (her being and her socially adopted mask), destabilizing

the idea that gender mimics her biological body (nature). "To play with mimesis is thus,"

Irigaray notes, "for a woman, to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse

[where the speaking subject is posited as masculine] without allowing herself to be

simply reduced to it" (This Sex, 76). The very subversive aspect of feminine mimicry,

yet, in its reinforcing of the binary gender performance, affirms the system of

heterosexuality. But feminine mimicry is not the only gender mimicry. For example,

according to McClintock, cross-dressing is more overtly subversive in its gender ambiguities by displacing the signs of heterosexuality. Since the theme of hybrid gender is conceptualized less in terms of subversion than abjection in Chong's oral history project, Undesirable Elements, I do not deal with this theme in detail. But I consider that the ambiguous sexual act of "Skeletons" (gender ambiguity) in the carnivalesque scene of Nosferatu can be read as an anti-Oedipal narrative, which disrupts the tranquility of heterosexual paradigm of the yuppies of the 1980s.

In the same context, class distinction is performative in that it is not only productive of capital itself but also the desire to make social boundaries of prestige and supremacy. Capital enables people who possess it to gain privileged position to set the differentiating social values on life styles and tastes. In this fantasy world of capitalism, commodities exist not only to use and exchange values, but also sign values. People mimic social prestige by consuming brand-named goods, whose social sign values are well marked in modern advertising, which Raymond Williams calls "the magic of production."[24] Its marketing strategy is focused on invoking in consumers the desire to buy social prestige. This is why people buy more products seen used by social celebrities in advertisements, soap operas, and news programs ("product placement"). Contemporary advertisement doesn't convey use values and exchange values of what they sell so much as create a myth of social prestige. As Barthes elucidates the mythic construction of advertisement exemplified in the "white myth" of detergent in "Soap-

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[24] I found Williams' essay "Advertising: the Magic System" in The Cultural Studies Reader. According to the editor's introduction, this essay was written as a chapter in Williams' 1961 book The Long Revolution, but was only published later and as an essay. I consider that Williams' brief description of the history of advertising in England in the essay is insightful in a sense that as early as 1960s he uncovers the advertisement's transformative magic of commodities into fantastic signifiers (for example, a sport car as the signifier of social prestige).

powders and Detergent" included in his <u>Mythologies</u>, it is the sign value of white

appearance leading to the clean, thus better, lifestyle that makes people buy the

detergent. Levi's advertisement in the 1970s, as another example, appropriates the

Christian creation myth, bringing up the status of their product as a God's gift. In the

advertisement, which uses Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel fresco, God gives Adam life

and a pair of Levi's jeans. More subtle and imagistic postmodern advertisement creates

the myth of a luxurious lifestyle. In the advertisement of a luxurious car, one sees only

a small slice of drama in which a gorgeous couple enjoys their life when they drive a

BMW or Lexus. The advertisement encodes the message that if you buy this car, which

these people of social prestige have, you can be like them: "class mimicry." But, as I

discussed above, the desire for mimicry is a complicated performance of negotiation,

struggle, and accommodation to the social norms. Buying and using cheap imitations

(for example, Gucci knock-offs) can also tactically destabilize the constructed social

value guaranteed with high price; value is not natural. Gucci is not naturally valuable

but it is valuable because it is so constructed. Chong's narrative of contemporary

capitalist vampirism, <u>Nosferatu</u>, satirizes the boundary ritual of the yuppie class in which

commodity fetishes are used as powerful props for their class distinction and <u>4 Am in</u>

<u>America</u> (1990) lampoons the mythic (based on the racist stereotypes) construction of tv

advertisements.

2.1.5.   Hybrid Subject Situated in Globalization Process

Hall's and Paul Gilroy's performative approaches described in the terms

"mobilizing (positional) identities" and "creolization" give useful criteria to examine the

relations between changing geopolitics and cultural identification, and further to

advance the pitfalls of reverse essentialism in some cases of marginal identification.

According to Hall, with the process of globalization, the form of relationship between

national identity and a nation-state is beginning to change "in ever-increasing global

connectivity" ("Local," 21).[25] Migrating cultures induce multifold processes of

dissemination, assimilation, and transformation. The deindustrialization process in rust-

belt areas brings about a new international division of labor and deregulation policy in

trade backed by transnational capitalism. This results in ever-competitive economic

wars and domination over the world. The continuing political conflicts and war

necessitate the migration of armies, high-tech arms, and information. A new form of

global mass culture is dominated by television, film, the image, and styles of mass

advertising. But, as Hall observes, globalization is a twofold (or multifold) process of

global domination and fragmentation (resurgence of localism, traditionalism,

nationalism, and religious fundamentalism); "global and local are the two faces of the

same movement from one epoch of globalization" ("Local," 27).

Hall notes that the Thatcher regime's identity politics, for example, was a

counter-reaction to changing global diversity and mobilization. "When the era of nation

states in globalization begins to decline, one can see a regression to a very defensive

and highly dangerous form of national identity which is driven by a very aggressive form

of racism" ("Local," 26). In racism, the essential unity is constructed through the

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[25] Hall, in his paper presented at a conference on culture and globalization and published as "The Local and the Global" in Culture, Globalization and the World-System, questions what ethnicity means at certain historical moments. For example, the image of an English gentleman, in its bodily images (fully buttoned-up, stiff upper lip, and corseted), is a kind of ethnicity built around the idea of a free-born English person (man). But this specity of Englishness is a negotiated one that absorbs "all the differences of class, of region, of gender, in order to present itself as a homogeneous entity" (21).

unbridgeable gulf between the same and the other. But Hall also observes the reverse

essentialism of the underempowered against the hegemony. Against the essentialist

representation of collective identity in which common origin or common structure of

experience define the essential core of a group identity, Hall proposes mobilizing

(positional) identities. Disavowing the notion of "Black" (skin color) as essence, Hall

remarks that the mobilizing identity of "Blackness" is "always complexly composed,

always historically constructed," thus, "it is never in the same place but always

positional" ("Old," 57).

Along the lines of Hall's performative approach, but against the theoretical rigidity

of anti-essentialism that only counts the inescapable plurality and negates "the pursuit

of any unifying dynamic or underlying structure of feeling," Gilroy suggests a

sophisticated way of reconceptualizing the unity in the realm of political reality (Black,

80). But, Gilroy's double negation, what he calls anti-anti-essentialism, does not imply

the return to the origin and root, as I stress it. According to Gilroy, the notion of

"diaspora," which is used synonymously with dispersion, dissemination, and plurality,

cannot alone explain the complex formation of cultural identification. Gilroy deploys the

complex formation of "diasporic black identities" through examining diverse black

musical cultures. Gilroy remarks, "the histories of borrowing, displacement,

transformation, and continual reinscription that the musical culture encloses are a living

legacy that should not be reified in a primary symbol of diaspora and then employed as

an alternative to the recurrent appeal of fixity and rootedness" (Black, 102). For him, if

the black populations are unified at all, "it is more by the experience of migration than by

the memory of slavery and the residues of plantation society" (Black, 81). If the

underlying political forms and "structures of feeling"[26] (coined by Williams to designate

shared ideas, emotions, and ideologies in a given time) in a particular political solidarity

of black culture are pursued, according to Gilroy, it is not the color black, but "the

political language of citizenship, racial justice, and equality," which concerns the ethical

relations with other people (Black, 83). Following Gilroy's assertion, blackness is a

construction that refers to politico-ethical performance (participation and involvement)

toward the transformative society. Chong's pursuit of unity in political solidarity of the

marginalized should be understood in this context, not the portrayal of the essentialized

collective agency, "the marginalized." Political (historical) agency is not a default form

of the subject, but is constructed through participation and involvement in meaningful

political events even though its hope is often clouded by its own double, the unthought.

2.2. TACTICAL APPROACHES

2.2.1. Politics of Representation and Deconstruction

As I discussed earlier, "tactical mimicry" deconstructs by way of displacing the

authority on which material power is dependant. In this context, deconstruction is a

necessary (but not sufficient process) for possible political change. As Spivak claims,

deconstruction is not merely textual, but also political and ethical in nature since it

destabilizes the discursive foundations of the dominant authority by unmasking their

constructions of political inclusion and exclusion. If discursive formations consolidate

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[26] Gilroy borrows this concept to refer to the imaginary unity in political solidarity, and McConachie uses this term to describe the shared ideas, feelings, and ideologies as the generative processes for the emerging sense of community in grassroots theatre projects.

the performance of material power, by the same logic, counter-discursive power can

thwart material power by destabilizing its very (philosophical) foundation of authority.

Why don't we use both sources of counterattack: deconstruction on one hand and

political alliance on the other hand? I argue that deconstruction itself is not the aim but

the means that facilitates the advanced tactics of political action. In an interview with

the author, Chong articulates his double task of discursive deconstruction and political

activism in his historical narratives. Chong states, "it has been my privilege as an artist

to help bring a number of these 'secret histories' into the public arena. Presenting

multiple histories is a subversive act today because the economic elites would have us

believe there is only one history – theirs. History is written by the conqueror" (Personal

Interview, July 2004). Meanwhile, in regard to the theatrically framed oral history

project, Undesirable Elements, Chong postulates his idea of political change. "I am

neither an optimist nor a pessimist. I do not believe in the possibility of big change. I

believe changes come in small steps, one – two people at a time. That is what the

Undesirable Elements project is all about – changing people's attitudes one person at a

time" (Personal Interview, July 2004).

Bhabha's notion of "strategic mimicry" in hybrid identification mimics his own

deconstructive writing in that it destabilizes the authoritative claim of any discourse he

uses by demonstrating its shadowed doubling(s). Likewise, Chong's recycling of

images, ideas, and narratives in a manner of hybridity is a "deconstructive mimicry" in

that it summons the established voices to question their claim of authority and

demonstrates how they play a truth-game. As Derrida notes, deconstruction is a kind of

strategic mimicry in a sense that it repeats the target discourse fractionally through

parody, satire, irony, or dissimulation in order to displace its antagonistic opposition (binary system), inscribing the heterogeneous doubling (further multiplying the doubling itself) within the unified dichotomy.[27] It demystifies what is presupposed to be essence in the philosophical discourses on men, societies, and histories. In this sense, deconstruction fights against any claim of essentialism. Chong's critiques on American identity politics of the political right backed by dominant anthropology, sociology and historiography target the discursive regime that perpetuates the ideas of Man, Society, and History. Following him, I do not examine humanism in a universalized form, but the specific kind of humanism whose grounding ideas of absolute and narcissistic liberty, atomic individualism, rationality, truth, and progress are still utilized for the hegemonic power to justify domination of antagonistic groups and nations. Its ideas of Man, Society, and History are already constructed on exclusion in the binary hierarchies of the Self/the Other, West/the Rest, the Civilized/the Primitive: one being the essence, the other being the auxiliary. Kind Ness and Nosferatu demonstrate the slippage of such rigid notions of identity and difference (the Self/the Other), as Chong's mimicry of Victorian duality in Humboldt's Current illustrates the decentering through such tactical languages of parody, satire, and irony. The historical narratives of Deshima and Chinoiserie exemplify the most complicated deconstructive tactics targeted on the myth of the civilized West/the barbarian East.

It is the centering desire (according to Lacan, the ego) that creates hierarchy. Chong investigates how the narcissistic desire of hegemonic power manipulates the

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[27] For Derrida, a deconstructive strategy is not a simple reversal. Its strategy consists in inscribing heterogeneity within an opposition by repeating it. But, this repetition is not identical to itself. This doubling replaces and mimes "both like and unlike because it is – in that it is – like, the same as and different from what it duplicates" (Dissemination, 191).

politics of representation, searching for alternative tactics of representation that redefine

the logic of whole (unity) and parts (diversity), sameness and difference, and depth and

surface. The discourses on complicity deconsruction postulates bring about the

complex relations of desire, pleasure, and power. In order to examine Chong's

"deconstructive mimicry" in detail, which is linked to his poetics and politics, I will

discuss those interrelated topics here. In regard to the complex issues of

representation, complicity, and resistance,[28] Spivak poses her differenciation in two

interpretations of representation: *Vertretung* (political representation) and *Darstellung*

(portrait). "*Vertretung*, to tread in someone's shoes, represent that way" and

Darstellung is "placing there." According to Spivak, complicity consists in collapsing

these two different meanings of representation, mistaking aesthetic sense of

representation for an actual political representation. "No *Vertretung*, representation, can

take place without essentialism. What it [the discourse] has to take into account is that

the 'essence' that is being represented is a representation of the other kind, *Darstellung*"

("Practical," 108-109). The essentialist representation of reality, Spivak asserts,

pretends to do without this complicity. Spivak contends that deconstruction as

resistance subversively forges the gap between these two different meanings of

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[28] Derrida acknowledges the unavoidable complicity in the deconstruction of metaphysical presence (Being, origin, essence, etc.), even though "the metaphysics of presence is shaken with the help of the concept of *sign*," because the very concept of sign presupposes the signified that the deconstruction directed against (Writing, 281). If we cannot deconstruct without signs, I argue, we need to reconfigure the very concept of sign itself and search for the possibility of decentering the hegemony of the signified within the sign system. We should problematize what Foucault calls the "hermeneutics of the sign (deep and thick meaning)," the hierarchical depth between the signified (unchanging truth or essence) and the signifier (appearance). As Lacan's doubling of the Self and the Other is a trial to erase the hierarchy between them, Foucault's notion of doubling of the signified and the signifier in his genealogy reconfigures the concept of depth in hierarchical dimension. For Foucault, doing and undoing Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological conception of depth as invisible background against which meanings emerge into visibility, "the movement of interpretation is, on the contrary that of a projection, of a more and more elevated projection, which always leaves depth above it to be displayed in a more and more visible fashion"; the depth is resituated as an absolutely superficial secret ("Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," 273).

representation. But, even deconstruction cannot avoid a degree of complicity since the

very notion of political representation implies the sense of essence, which the centered

subject cannot easily avoid.

This desire for "a stable center" (essence) is operating even among people on

the margins. Acknowledging the problematics of authorship (Said's Orientalism

showcases this problematics of representation), against the hegemony of the culture

industry, some artists from the margins seek to represent the *authentic* representation

of their own cultures. But, as such scholars as Hall, Gilroy, and bell hooks point out,

their reverse tactics replacing the negative images by the positive images are also

essentializing the diverse and complex reality into a unified whole. Hall problematizes

the legacy of the black subject, which essentializes the diverse populations of black

people across the different cultures, nations, and ranks into the same good black

subject. He views it as "a necessary fiction" to the oppositional forces but "it is one of

the predicates of racism that you can't tell the difference because they all look the

same" ("New," 225). Chong, to be sure, objects to the same error of essentialism

involved in representation of marginal groups, which struggle to discover the authentic

and original content of collective identity (for instance, the authentic black or Chinese

American experience or through the oppositional tactics of replacing the negative

images of stereotypes into positive stereotypes.[29]

Chong recognizes that self-unifying ghettoization takes the risk of transforming

(universalizing) the diverse experiences within the group into a fictional singular voice.

Consequently, he approaches the matter of identification through narratives with the

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[29] For example, Frederik Turner in The Culture of Hope suggests this simple solution.

diverse routes of desire, pleasure, and power and diverse intersections of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, and class. In the oral history project (the Undesirable Elements series) Chong, through the collective authorship with his participants, narrates the genealogy of the marginalized (the abject) in a way that overcomes what Spivak views as the theoretical limitation of subaltern historiography (i.e. the danger of transforming the heterogeneity of subaltern voices into a singular essence of "the subaltern"). The collaboration process (diverse voices) Chong prefers in his weaving narratives among co-authors, co-directors, dramaturgs, designers, and technicians reflects his idea of democratic decision-making in the dialogic mode of production. In many cases, Chong as co-author or co-editor leads the collective process of making, collecting diverse voices and ideas for designed bricolages. This collective creativity shelters them from the tyranny of a singular perspective in representation. One of Chong's long-time collaborators, John Fleming, relates how they collectively conceive a show: "In the creation of a new show, Chong meets with the actors and explains what his ideas are for the piece, then everyone suggests scenes. We all talk about it, and have a lot of conversations that start 'You know what we could do…' or 'What if'…. As the process goes on, you get the feeling whether it's going to be a verbal scene or a visual scene. The actors and Chong write scenes and find text to be used in the piece, such as passages from the Bible or old English love poems" (qtd. in Huth, 5). This collective authorship tries to eschew the most problematic mode of representation, stereotyping, whose essentialized traits represent and summarize large groups.

As bell hooks points out, most marginalized people comply by unconsciously experiencing pleasure in the stereotypical portrayal of themselves forwarded by racist identity and representational politics. In Black Looks: Race and Representation, she argues that "from slavery on, white supremacists have recognized that control over images is central to the maintenance of any system of racial domination" (2). Cultural hegemony and normalization, impose significant consequences on the self-representation of the marginalized, making them see and experience themselves as other, and reducing them into fixed stereotypes, as Hall recognizes. Chong's narratives such as Kind Ness and Nosferatu are the projects that deconstruct the essentialist rhetoric of stereotype, and the Undesirable Elements series resist and attempt to promote the self-representation of the marginalized.

Stereotypes are the regulatory power of the hegemonic politics of representation and, for this reason, deconstruction targets the discursive regime that produces stereotypes. Hall's analysis of binary systems of identity, difference and several mechanisms of hegemonic stereotyping practice – naturalization, essentialization, reduction, and universalization – provides necessary theoretical and practical points of departure for the self-representation of the marginalized. In "The Spectacle of the Other," first, Hall details the discursive formation of identity politics in displacing the cultural (ideological) rhetoric with natural reality. "If the differences between black and white people are 'cultural,' then they are open to modification and change. But if they are 'natural' – as the slave-holders believed – than they are beyond history, permanent, and fixed." Therefore, "naturalization is a representational strategy designed to fix 'difference,' and thus *secure it forever*." Secondly, stereotyping is different from "typing"

in its reduction to a few essentials. Hall, informed by Richard Dyer, differentiates

stereotype from our normal categorizing process of typing. As cognitive science

suggests, according to Dyer, "we understand the world by referring individual objects,

people or events in our heads to the general classificatory schemes into which they fit."

Finally, these few simple and exaggerated traits are universalized in the larger binary

division of "good us" and "evil them" (245-258).

The alternative tactics, however, as Chong is consciously aware (and Said, Hall,

and hooks all caution), do not consist in inverting the established binary poles because

they do not problematize the binary polar system of identity and difference itself. Hall

evaluates the first tactical movement in the various areas of cultural representation,

which tries to reverse the negative images with the positive images, as a vengeance

and, as I mentioned earlier, as a necessary fiction of the weak. Hooks' feminist

perspective on this tactic is strongly severe when she criticizes that "collectively, black

men have never critiqued the dominant cultures' norms of masculine identity, even

though they reworked those norms to suit their social situation" (96). The exaggerated

black macho style adopted as a defense mechanism of white patriarchal power of their

infantilization during slavery, however, also expresses aggressiveness toward black

women. And many black scholars of cultural studies point out the misogynistic nature of

the socially subversive rap music centering around black male performers.

The second tactic substitutes a range of positive images of black people, black

life and black culture for the negative imagery which continues to dominate popular

representation. But, Hall criticizes this approach, remarking "this approach has the

advantage of righting the balance" but, "does not necessarily displace the negative."

"The strategy challenges the binaries – but it does not undermine them." The third

counter-strategy attempts to contest the politics of representation itself within its

complexities and ambivalences. It does not avoid the complex interweaving of ethnicity,

gender, sexuality, class, and nationality and indeed highlights the ambivalence of

looking (gaze) and fetishism (stereotype as the fetish) in their complexities of power and

desire ("Spectacle," 270-275). Bhabha's deconstructive tactic, which demonstrates the

ambivalence of stereotype (multiple containment, for example, coexisting images of the

descent black slave/the degenerated black slave) exemplifies this strategy. Chong's

fables of the other can be accounted for by this third counter-strategy in that they

problematize the politics of representation itself and unmasks its desire and power to

abject what it regards as impure.

2.2.2.   Politics of Pleasure and Deconstruction

Examining the politics of representation (i.e. how we represent people, nations,

cultures, and histories) demands consideration of the politics of pleasure that regulates

our aesthetic values and experiences in cultural representations. For example, how do

we feel of/about stereotypes? Following Freud's notion of ambivalence in phallic fetish

formation, the coexistence of pleasure and displeasure, Bhabha further advances the

ambivalence of stereotype. As Kristeva also notes, since the abjection process is never

successful, the abject itself retains the incomplete split, bleeding inside. Thus, the

abject invokes a very complicated and ambivalent feeling, since our bodies are not only

the site of desire but also pleasure and pain. The discourses on pleasure bring about

more complicated issues of desire, pleasure, complicity, and resistance.[30] Contradicting

Barthes' antithetical view of desire/pleasure, Dorinne Kondo contends that pleasure is

not always an antagonistic rival to desire, which always seeks meaning. The issue at

stake is not the antagonistic confrontation of desire and pleasure, as in Barthes'

postulation of "disciplinary desire" and "contestatory pleasure." Rather, pleasure is the

complex sign of "contradictory contestation and reinscription of power that occurs

simultaneously, in multiple registers." Pleasure is "seductive, insidious, and

empowering" (10-14). So, as Kondo observes, it can be both "a major site of complicity"

and "a site of potential contestation that might engage, and at times be coextensive

with, the critical impulse." "How we dress, how we move, the music that accompanies

the daily activities, and that we create and refashion […] do matter and can be included

in a repertoire of oppositional strategies" (13). Especially, in examining the Undesirable

Elements series, Kondo's linking of identification, desire, pleasure, music and

performance provides a very useful framework.[31] The community-based oral history

project, by incorporating diverse ethnic music, dances, and ritualized movements,

demonstrates how the pleasure of the bodies of hybrid subjects recalls the silenced

heritage within their bodies. I will briefly discuss the issues of pleasure, complicity,

resistance, and power in textual representation in order to prepare for the matter of style

and reception in Chong's "tactical (deconstructive) mimicry."

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[30] Dorinne Kondo, in light of the recent resurgence of feminist discussion on women's body, pleasure, pain, and being inspired by Hall and Gilroy's emphasis on the significance of performance, music, movement, dress and style of the black diaspora, argues that not only desire but also pleasure should be reconsidered in examining identity politics.

[31] In drawing the connection between pleasure and identification, Gilroy suggests the alliance of the marginalized through the power of music (performance) as a mode of dialogue; through special forms of pleasure, the lines between self and others are blurred and a constructed collective community emerges.

David Henry Hwang's <u>M. Butterfly</u> controversy illustrates how a narrative text can be both contestation and complicity. While scholars like James Moy sees it as reinforcing the Orient in its empowering representation of the stereotypical image of the oriental woman, Josephine Lee emphasizes the contestatory side of the narrative text. Kondo regards it as contestatory, yet, she does not completely dismiss the complicity in it. Kondo takes up the active interpretation of Bhabha's concept of "mimicry" to suggest the confrontational side of Hwang's renewed realism. As in Aristotle's view of instinctual pleasure, "strategic mimicry" brings us pleasure, but a pleasure which does not quite rely on the pleasure of simulating the original. Bhabha's and Irigaray's emphasis of the subversive aspect of mimicry does not much concern the relation between power and complicity. Introducing the notion of complicity complicates the dialectical description of power and resistance since mimicry resides between compliance (seduction to resemblance) and resistance (contestation of difference). Bhabha sees the metonymic performance of mimicry as a subversive strategy, but metonymy is also a strategy of simulation based on the idea of verisimilitude: mimicry is also the performance of internalization of the norms it mimics. I do not regard mimicry as subversive in its dependence on metonymy since all representation is metonymic. Strategic mimicry is subversive because it fractionally mimics through *strategic means* (parody, irony, exaggeration, travesty, etc.), which highlights the internal difference within mimicry. The notion of mimicry should be internally divided again (from its multiple intersections of race, gender, and class as I discussed earlier), this time being examined within matters of different styles and receptions of mimicry since they change the signification process.

We should consider who represents and *who* consumes the representations of people and cultures in the complexity of desire and pleasure. I discussed the positionality in representation earlier, and I will now focus on matters of styles, reception of representation, and deconstructive tactics. Referring to the M. Butterfly controversy again, both arguments of complicity and contestation are partially valid. Moy points out the complicity caused by the realistic trappings of the representation of the Orient, while Lee stresses the limited but positive deconstruction she detected within the conventions of realism. At the same time, it can be said that Moy's position prevents him from digging further into Hwang's subversive tactics that destabilize conventional realism. Moy ignores some aspects of representation that exceed the stereotypical oriental woman. But Lee does not address the possibility of seduction that the very portrayal of the oriental woman can evoke. As for who consumes the representation of others, different receptions (including pleasure and displeasure) on the part of the audience can change the meanings of a production. In the M. Butterfly controversy, what also matters is whether the audience participated in the complicity of reinforcing (affirming) the stereotypes by experiencing desire (pleasure) of voyeuring the mystified and submissive oriental lotus blossom, despite of the author's attempt to deconstruct the very stereotypical image – a reinforcement completely dependent on seeing instead of careful listening to what she says. Also, the matter of the style it mimics (renewed realistic style) can account for the ineffectiveness of its deconstructive tactics. The distance between the stereotypical image and its deconstruction is not sufficiently procured. By contrast, Chong problematizes the empowering side of realistic

representation by derived from what Barthes calls the "realist effect." I will return to this topic later.

Chong's <u>Kind Ness</u> is an instructive instance of the relations of pleasure, power, and complicity. Chong states that <u>Kind Ness</u> received controversial receptions among critics and audiences; "the New York snobs" were displeased with seeing Chong's overtly political portrayal of racism and discrimination in America. As for the displeased spectators, Chong's recycling of stereotypical images in <u>Kind Ness</u> brings forth the issue of ambivalent feelings toward stereotypes. They did not like to see "Ping doing situation comedy" in which they experience their own unpleasant abjection. Eschewing this returning of the abject, they wanted to see Chong as an "obscure and esoteric" experimental artist, as when Chong approached otherness as a more existential condition of the human being in his first independent bricolage, <u>Lazarus</u> (qtd. in Goldner, 6D). Thus, one critic drew an inappropriate link between Kafka's <u>Metamorphosis</u> and <u>Kind Ness</u> (in which Chong portrays the immigrant character Buzz as a gorilla, drawing on racist perceptions and ambivalently rendering him somewhere between a gorilla and a human being).

The most controversial reactions were provoked by productions of <u>Deshima</u>. While it has been praised as one of the most beautiful productions ever staged by Ping Chong and Company around the world, it displeased many Dutch critics. Ironically and seemingly irrelevantly, considering that the Mickery Theatre of the Netherlands had commissioned Chong to create a theatre piece commemorating the centennial of the death of Vincent Van Gogh, Chong titled the piece <u>Deshima</u>, whose meaning comes from the fan-shaped Japanese island where 16th century Dutch traders were

quarantined. When the Van Gogh centennial committee offered Chong the Mickery

commission in 1990, they must have expected a poetic, highly visual multimedia tribute

to the artist. Chong decided to explore the problematic relation (and conceptualization)

of East/West through the motif of the artist Van Gogh when he heard the news that the

Yasuda Fire and Marine Insurance Company bought Van Gogh's Sunflowers for $30.9

million. As Suzanne Westfall informs us, "fascinated by the Japanese economic

colonization of the West, Chong began to see Van Gogh as the inheritor of the exile at

Deshima, a symbol of the other, a stranger and outcast controlled by economic forces

beyond his command" ("Invasions," 10). Certainly, the Van Gogh centennial committee

wanted to prove through the project that the Netherlands has always encouraged and

supported creative artists like Van Gogh. But, unexpectedly, Deshima spoke of the

complicated genealogies of imperialism, racism, and capitalism of the modern world.

As Westfall notes, the reason for the anger the Dutch critics displayed seems political.

"While many western powers, like Britain and the U.S.," Westfall states, "are quite used

to being criticized for imperialism, the Dutch are not" ("Invasions," 11). Ironically, the

Netherlands' nationalistic exploitation of its native artist who had been capitalistically

exploited in his own time (one of the paralleling themes of the production) was

interrogated by a foreign artist whom it commissioned.

By contrast, various versions of Undesirable Elements received mostly positive

responses. For instance, one participant from the Chicago version of Undesirable

Elements (1999) reports his experience of bonding with an audience member. One

woman said to him after the show that "you made a statement. I just wanted to shake

your hand and tell you that you'll be in my prayers forever" (qtd. in Strzalka, 2:8). The

audience member was in the mode of dialogue with the participants on stage and the underlying structure of feeling symbolically appears as the physical bonding (shaking hands) between the two. But two exemplary negative views of the Undesirable Elements project raise the issue of reception and changing meanings. According to a critic of the Charleston version of Undesirable Elements, the project was destined to fail in its symbolic building of community by excluding people by virtue of its presentation within the elitist arts festival. The Charleston version of Undesirable Elements, Secret History (2001), was presented with other event pieces entitled "Evoking History: Listening Across Cultures and Communities" in the arts festival called "Spoleto USA." Kristen Rhodes, a writer of the Charleston City Paper, reports the significance of the arts festival in the Charleston community as follows: "Art in the western world is a commodity. Beauty is for those who can afford it. A sentiment that has been repeated by many in the Charleston community is that Spoleto is an elitist festival. With that statement, we must admit the perception among many that the 'arts' in general, are elitist (We can't fault Spoleto for that)." Thus, she does not expect further import in the performance with regard to building imagined alliance and community, though she is aware that the purpose of art consists in dialogue between the participants and the audience. Her perceptions are detached: "Secret History [among the productions presented in the arts festival] is the easiest one to explain. There is a clear product. It's a play. You can buy tickets and go see it. […] The stories are told from an 'outsider' point of view, whether that be an outsider due to race, nationality, or sexual orientation" ("Revolutionizing," page # not available).

I agree with Rhodes that the same production might have different meaning in accordance with where it is presented: the social environment of community hall, university setting, or arts festival can change the meaning of a production, though in Secret History, class is almost invisible – ethnic and sexual abjection being highlighted. But I disagree with her totalizing and deterministic definition of art, which categorizes Chong's community-based theatre as an elitist art. The concept of community-based or grassroots theatre itself emerges from the alternative possibility of people's theatre in non-commercial form and structure. It rejects commercialism of both high and low culture. Tobin Nellhaus and Susan C. Haedicke in the introduction of Performing Democracy: International Perspectives on Urban Community-Based Performance, informed by Augusto Boal's view of theatre and art as everyday practice, differentiate community-based theatre from mainstream theatre, stating that "Art is now defined not solely as a set of formal features: it also involves a set of social relationships. In so far as community-based performance shapes a group's social relations through activities that involve images or the imagination, it is an artistic practice, even if mainstream aesthetics fails to recognize it as such" (8). In this inclusive definition of art, Rhodes is incorrect. Participants in non-commercial art organizations, community facilitators and political activists creating events or performances do not aim only to sell their cultural products.

Rhodes predetermines that the performance of Secret History is intellectually sweetened to allure people who are willing to pay for narratives about outsiders. In another article on Chong, she reduces his serious task of production ("If you want to learn the other side of the American story, this is the place to see it") to a "worthy sales

pitch." And she ends the article with the ambiguous sentence, "He might just be right" ("Outsider," page # not available). Regarding this issue of commodification of art, Chong remarks that "Most commercial theatre is candy. It's not to make you think; it's not to make you ask questions. That's not what I do. It's not entertainment only, and it's not candy" (qtd. in Pacual, 20). When Rhodes defines arts in general as elitist practices and commodities, she does it in a narrow and elitist sense. How would she categorize the artistic practices of ordinary people in the border between art, life, commodity, and politics? Elitist definition of art excludes and persecutes other practices in the intersection of beauty, life, and politics.

Elitist definitions of art essentialize by the key determining factor of economics. Thus, Rhodes unifies the makers and consumers of arts as the elite. As Pierre Bourdieu attempts to prove, the operating economic factor in aesthetic taste prevents art from being a class-neutral practice; some people cannot afford opera and therefore do not go. According to Bourdieu, taste is not merely an aesthetic judgment. The view that taste is a gift of nature is an ideological construction, as Bourdieu's science of taste proves. According to his view, cultural preferences are closely linked to educational level and to social background; tastes functions "as markers of class" (2). Bourdieu's critique of taste is sharp in that our distinctions between the beautiful and the ugly are not natural but bound up with different dispositions ("habitus") characteristic of different classes. Our ideas of beauty (for example, unity, purity, and continuity) are ideological and social. It implies that such aesthetic values are closely tied with the politics of representation. But Bourdieu's science of taste oversimplifies the complex factors interacting within the realm of cultural preferences and values. I believe that education

and class distinctions (privilege in the capital) alone cannot explain the matter of social taste.

People do not partake of an art product just because they can or cannot afford it. The situation is more complex than that. Bruce McConachie, in his essay on community-based theatre, points out the same issue of class imbalance and theatre-going, but adds other diverse factors to that of the economic situation of theatre-goers. McConachie remarks that "despite our best effort to draw more local working-class families into the theatre, the audiences for our four performances though more racially integrated than usual, remained predominantly 'middle-class.' Given the general demographics of theatre audiences in America, none of this is surprising, even for grassroots theatre" (44). He analyzes the diversity of his middle-class audience by such factors as age, education, social and political view, ethnicity, and personal and local concerns (interests). Economic factor is an important reference point, but it is not a determining factor in the sense that low admission or free performance does not always guarantee a house full of working-class people.

A second negative view of Undesirable Elements highlights the dominance of tradition in determining reception and meanings. Douglas McLennan, a reviewer for The Seattle News Tribune, evaluates the Seattle production of Undesirable Elements (1995) as follows: "As ceremony it works. One is struck by the sincerity of both the piece and the performers. As a piece of theatre or art, it is less satisfying. While their sincerity comes across, some of the deliveries are awkward. Undesirable Elements seems more like testimony than acting, making it difficult to judge as a work of art" (page # not available). As McLennan complains, the production does not fit into the

established category of traditional theatre and acting. But he uses the descriptive

category, art, as an evaluative term; since the performance does not accommodate the

traditional sense of theatrical structure and acting, it is devalued. He critiques the

performance with the standard of realistic acting style in which dialogues between the

characters are the dominant modes. McLennan catches the in-between phenomenon

of the performance not only in the stories and the performers, but also in the

presentational mode of the production: in-between life and art and in-between the

theatre and the public forum, as Brecht envisioned in his idea of seminar theatre and

Boal embodies in his forum theatre. But McLennan's essentialist complicity chooses

one side in the bipolar division of life (ceremony) and art (theatre). Art becomes

autonomous and formal, being alienated from our everyday practices (popular

imagination, politics, and ethics). Is theatre unable to be a ceremonial art, which

celebrates our bonding in imagined community? Is a realistic representation of our life

the only norm?

     As an another exemplary reception based on the evaluative parameter of

realism, Alice Yang in her review of Chinoiserie does not acknowledge the narrative

text's poetic divergence from the traditional dramatic arc to disrupt the embedded

political signification of progress, even though she registers the archeo-genealogical

myth-making techniques in the narrative text. Yang remarks that "it is not easy to hold

all of these pieces together. Layered one on top of another, the surfeit of images and

texts can be at times exhilarating, at times laborious. After a while, all the kitschy

asides become so many nervous flourishes which detract from the production's

dramatic arc" (107). Yang's preference for the neat, orderly, and linear progression of

narrative structure is grounded on the logic of exclusion (essential dramatic arc/too many asides) whose logic is contested in Chong's genealogical inclusion.

Chong's distancing position from realistic representation is even more conspicuous in the documentary-basis of the Undesirable Elements series. As I discussed in the introduction, documentary theatre (based fully or partially on actuality) is not restricted to conventions of realism. In an interview with the author, Chong expresses the historical and political aspect of his adoption of documentary narrative style in a very associative manner. He remarks, "In the late 1980s, I started to use documentary material and historical events as a strategy for making art. The term 'poetic documentary' was intended to capture the artistic and historical aspects of Deshima. Similarly, 'docu-concert-theatre' was intended to describe the qualities of Chinoiserie, particularly the word, 'concert,' as I did not want any one to come expecting an 'opera' or 'music theatre' as these terms are commonly applied" (Personal Interview, July 2004). Chong's deliberate insertions of ritualistic movements (for example, clapping) and the direct address of the audience bring forth alienation effects, which block the audience's oversentimental indulgence otherwise induced by the painful stories voiced on stage. Chong's direction, balancing between the emotional and the intellectual, renders both the psychological and instructive import of the narratives. Rhodes' interview with a Native American participant in Secret History confirms that the cast was aware of this balancing act between the emotional and the social: "Nelson [the Native American] says the first day the cast got together to read through the script was extremely emotional, 'We were all crying,' she says. But once they got over the initial reaction, the cast saw how well the sensitive issues were handled." Rhodes further

quotes Nelson: "They handled the hard-hitting issues with humor. And they intertwine our stories with the history of the area, as well as world history and show how these major events have affected our lives on a personal level. It's about our shared experience as well as our cultural distinctions" ("Personal," page # not available).

It is obvious then, that the pleasure associated with these texts depends upon a renegotiation of power relations, so those relations are commonly expressed in aesthetic choices and expectations. Evidently, Chong and the participants did not want to be stuck in the negative impacts of discrimination and abjection manifested in self-hatred and victimization, but to seek an alliance through which they together can search for empowerment of the marginalized through shared stories. The highly emotional and political topics of ethnic and gender abjection are presented in a social space organized as the form of a public concert or forum. Some reviewers describe the project as "a public testimony," and the production guideline for participants refers to the project as "a public forum." In musical terms, Chong arranges the diverse voices in the manner of polyphony, wherein the singular unity of symphony is not the privileged virtue. Like musicians, the performers sit on chairs in a fan shape, using microphones and reading written scripts. Chong's humor tunes the tone of the performance, and ritualization as an organizing principle of the project enables the audience to both think and feel about the confronted issues and expressed pathos. Humor, mostly in the form of satire and irony, contrapuntally hits serious issues.

As an organizing principle, ritualization can be discussed in two ways. First, identification is an unstable articulation through performance and ritual, as formal performance endows a group with a sense of collective identification emerging through

the alliance. Second, Chong, through ritualistic presentation, eschews the complicity of realist effect.   Barthes' indictment of the realist effect points out this complicity with the example of fundamentalism, which displaces the imagined (interpreted) portrait of reality with literal referents in reality. Chong is aware of the contradictory nature of realistic presentation in its both seductive and contestatory sides, thus he both learns and unlearns the powerful portrayals of reality drawn by such film directors as Yazujiro Ozu and Robert Bresson. Chong acknowledges his indebtedness to those artists, stating that "Bresson and Ozu were for me the real inspiration. Some people expect me to say Bunuel because of the surrealism, which might appear important to me but isn't. I don't feel any relation to Bunuel" (qtd. in Apple, 22). In the art of these directors, the artificiality of the conventional realism is overcome. Crucially, the typical elements of a deep secret and its revelation at the climactic moments disappear. Through their art, reality is stripped of the hermeneutic layers of essence (fixed depth) and appearance (changing surface), being drawn more simply and more mundanely. From these artists, Chong learns how mundane our everyday reality is, but he unlearns their naturalistic representation when he associates his approach with the magical realism of South American writers: "It's that sense of reality being absolutely fantastical" (<u>Nuit Blanche</u>, 4). As in magical realism, in Chong's narrative texts the mundane and the fantastical coexist as the two faces of reality, and things happen simultaneously. In <u>Kind Ness</u>, Chong narrates the fantastical aspects of racism and discrimination in the mundane settings of the everyday lives of the characters, and in <u>Undesirable Elements</u> series he weaves the mundane (hi)stories of marginalized people with the monumental (hi)stories of the world, fashioning a genealogical tapestry of the lost parts of America on which

erased maps are restored by tracing the routes of individual marginalized (hi)stories.

What we hear through the stories of the marginalized in the Undesirable Elements

series is how painfully and/or joyfully their bodies struggle and/or negotiate

against/within the forces of the hegemonic power of racism and assimilation.

2.2.3. Toward an Imagined Community and Political Alliance

With regard to the problematic link between the political alliance of the

marginalized and the unified representation of it, Hall raises a basic question: do we still

need "the feminine," "the subaltern," or "the abject" as the essential unity opposing the

powers of "the masculine," "the elite" or "the dominant"?[32] Spivak is also aware of this

predicament. In her earlier theoretical phase, she proposed "strategic essentialism" as

the necessary political negotiation. Spivak suggests that we can problematize the

theoretical flaw of the essentialist approach toward "the subaltern" since she recognizes

that "the subaltern" is never based on the unified essence but on the diverse

intersections of gender, class, ethnicity, and nationality. But she argues that we can

use it strategically to fight against the hegemonic power.[33] Does the strength of the

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[32] Sue-Ellen Case in the introduction of Performing Feminism: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre deals
with the split between essentialism and poststructuralism around the idea of the feminine, stating that "as
a stall this split seems to have produced a crab-like, sideways-scurrying motility that cannot effectively
advance against the increasingly hegemonic attacks by the Right in the late 1980s" (7). As Case points
out, while praxis seems to be unavailable to the poststructuralist, the essentialist strategies fail in their
exclusionary practice. Like Spivak, Case also recognizes the necessity and impossibility of the category
of the marginalized and maintains that "in the era of differences, it is also necessary to find some notion
of the same that allows coalition politics and united fronts to form in resistance to the increasing attacks
on women's rights, civil rights for people of color, and lesbian and gay rights" (13). As I discussed earlier,
exclusionary essentialism is based on antagonistic binary of sameness and difference. Since Case
knows the epistemic violence of the logic of sameness, she claims that "after all the same doesn't
necessarily need to denote the opposite of difference" (13).

[33] In this sense, Bhabha's formulation of the colonial subject in his earlier version of colonial mimicry
succumbs to essentialism driven by male desire.

political alliance emerge only as it strategically dons the power of unity, erasing

differences and contradictions? Or, if the unity is impossible but necessary, how can

this be reconceptualized in a way in which the renewed concept avoids the pitfall of

essentialism? In her later theoretical trajectory, Spivak drops this idea of strategic

essentialism. Against (or within) the hegemonic politics of representation whose logic is

the absolute sameness and difference, I argue, what we need is the logic of the

similitude that encompasses the notion of difference, that is, what Foucault calls

"murmuring resemblance." In murmuring resemblance, the absolute logic of identity

and difference is deferred for the fecund meanings that polyphonic murmuring

enunciates. Bhabha's notion of ambivalence of colonial mimicry, for instance, registers

the doubling enunciation. As Foucault acknowledges, we need to reconsider semiology

based on similitude and plural meanings against ordering hermeneutics that are based

on identity and difference only. "On the one side, we shall find the signs that have

become tools of analysis, marks of identity and difference, principles whereby things

can be reduced to order, keys for a taxonomy; on the other, the empirical and

murmuring resemblance of things, that unreacting similitude that lies beneath thought

and furnishes the infinite raw material for divisions and distributions" (Order, 57-58).

When Chong says that "(1) we are not just stereotypes, (2) we have more in common

with each other than we think, and (3) difference is not a bad thing," he suggests that

his community-based oral history project Undesirable Elements will present this

murmuring resemblance of fellow Americans (qtd. in Pascual, 20).

Against the exclusive mainstream theatre, grassroots theatre aims to make this

murmuring of people heard. Bruce McConachie's self-reflexive essay on his grassroots

theatre project insightfully describes how the unity of political alliance can emerge

through participation and involvement in performance. Like Gilroy, he adopts Raymond

Williams' notion of "structure of feeling" as the multiple connective links, which make

community possible. McConachie, in his essay, "Approaching the 'Structure of Feeling'

in Grassroots Theatre," introduces the term "structure of feeling" "to designate the

emotional bonding generated by values and practices shared by a specific group, class,

or culture" in order to reflect upon his own grassroots project, Walk Together Children,

presented in Williamsburg when he was an academic educator there. According to

McConachie, "the concept includes ideology, in the sense of an articulated structure of

beliefs, but also ranges beyond it to encompass collective desires and concerns below

the conscious level" (35). McConachie's articulation on the notion provides illuminating

points to examine the structure, task, and goal of Chong's Undesirable Elements project.

If what McConachie calls "the symbolic building of community" emerges through the

performances of the Undesirable Elements project, it is most likely by the underlying

structure of both feeling marginalized (frustration, rage, anxiety, etc.) and feeling

oppositional (awareness, justice, equality, etc.) against the hegemonic power shared

between the participants and the audience members. It is not the unified category of

the oppositional or the marginalized (difference) but the similar feelings and political

views (similarity encompassing difference) that unite the participants and audience

members. This "pleasant feeling of bonding" was obviously stated by the director-

facilitator, Chong, when he says that the Undesirable Elements project is for/about

connection. It is the connection not only among participants but also between the

participants and fellow American citizens. Chong's idea of connection in this sense

avoids the pitfalls of community-based theatre. His sense of connection is not based on the binary logic of "us/them." It is based on "us" who try to make a connection to other heterogeneous others, searching for murmuring similarities among divergent Americans. The underlying structure of feeling is not the cause of the emergence of the imagined community, but the invisible connection that makes the community possible.

The problematics of essence in representation and identity politics (in both senses of proxy and portrait) are entailed by the rhetoric of synecdoche (a specific part as an essence can represent the whole and the rest of the parts as the auxiliary are excluded). In this way, it is necessary to reconceptualize the relation between the whole and parts in representing people and communities. Essence, as I have tried to dismantle it, is not transcendental but a culturally and historically constructed privilege through prioritization and exclusion of the hegemonic power. The logic of inclusion is the alternative corollary. Genealogy restores diverse histories excluded under the unified signifier of History. Reconceptualization in representation is necessary to examine Chong's cultural and historical description, which I call "thin description."[34] Chong's "thin description" is tactical since it destabilizes the murky (thick) myth-making in which specific cultural and historical interpretations are constructed as the uncanny signified: for example, the notion of Progress as the deep secret of human History. Chong's genealogical description of diverse histories embodies Foucault's notion of

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[34] My use of the term, "thin description," contests Clifford Geertz's "thick description" used to designate his cultural description based on the depth perspective of phenomenology. These two terms actually come from Gilbert Rye's notions "thin description" and "thick description." Refer to Geertz's Introduction to his book The Interpretation of Cultures. I observe that Chong's (counter-) myth-making is strongly based on his perceptual capacity. But his perceptual description is not so much based on phenomenological depth perspective as on genealogist perception which resituates the hierarchy of surface and depth.

doubling: "depth as an absolutely superficial secret"[35] ("Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," 273).

"Genealogy," Foucault states, "does not pretend to go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity that operates beyond the dispersion of forgotten things" and it "does not resemble the evolution of a species and does not map the destiny of a people" ("Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 146). The singularity of events Chong represents rejects any finality, telos, and depth. Therefore, it is often claimed that his representation is superficial and microscopic, as genealogy seeks "the surfaces of events, small details, minor shifts, and subtle contours" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 106). Chong's "thin description" catches the profound recurrence of human destruction and injustice through the disparity and discontinuity of historical events. Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow well note the "profundity of the genealogist's insight," remarking that "the world is not a play which simply masks a truer reality that exists behind the scenes. It is as it appears" (109). What Chong's historical narratives attempt is (as I examined in the discussion of Chong and his participants' statement of mission through the oral history project) the dispersion of forgotten things, forgotten others, and forgotten (hi/her)stories.

In inclusive politics, the individual does not (cannot) represent the whole community, but the individual's belonging to the community sets the relation between them. In his essay "Identity and Cultural Studies," Lawrence Grossberg proposes the project of "the coming community," which respects the other without absorbing it into the same, or the different. In this concept of community, the mode of existence is

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[35] Foucault, against the traditional historical method, sets the task of genealogy as follows: "it must record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality" and "it must be sensitive to their recurrence, not in order to trace the gradual curve of their evolution, but to isolate the different scenes where they engaged in different roles." In this way, genealogy "rejects the metaphysical deployment of ideal significations and indefinite teleologies" and "it opposes itself to the search for origins" ("Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 139-140).

accounted as an example, which is neither universal nor particular (individual) in the sense that "the example belongs to the set which exists alongside of it, and hence it is defined by its substitutability, since it always already belongs in the place of the other" (103-105). This is "an unrepresentable community" since the example cannot represent (politically) and describe (portrait) the set. I consider this notion of community, constituted as examples of individuals, to overcome both the rhetoric of synecdoche by which the essential parts can legitimately represent the whole and the mechanistic metonymy by which the whole is the mere sum of the parts. The Undesirable Elements series embodies this notion of community in a sense that the emerging community of the margins in the series is not based on the unified concept of the whole (by common origin or common experience), but on "the logic of involvement, the logic of the next (rather than of the proper)" that the politics of inclusion calls for. In the series, there is no given common identity to start with, but the community of the margins emerges by the pleasure of bonding, in which the participants and the audience members value equality, justice, and connection through the transformative practice of resistance. They become the historical (political and ethical) agency; in other words, they become subjects.

3.   CHAPTER TWO: POETIC MYTHOLOGY OF PING CHONG'S FABLES

As I have tried to show, what we value (whether it is aesthetical, political, or ethical) as truth, goodness, and beauty is a historical and ideological construction. In this Chapter, I will investigate such privileged aesthetic values (but also political and ethical) as unity, purity, and continuity embedded in the *deep* myths of Man, Society, and History. These assumed higher orders in the hierarchies of sign systems attempt to seize the hegemony, but are in confrontation with the counter-flows of such underprivileged conceptual values as diversity, hybridity, and discontinuity in the politics of representation. By the way, dealing with signifying values (aesthetic, social, and historical) needs to take account of the problematics of depth perspective since the desire and pleasure behind this conceptualization produces the hierarchies themselves in the conceptual pairs of unity/diversity, purity/hybridity, and continuity/discontinuity. The reconfiguration of the notions of surface and depth in non-hierarchical structure will provide access to Chong's "poetics of doubling (multiplying)," whose tactics reflect the vision of non-hierarchical and multi-lateral conceptions of men, societies, and histories. Chong's "tactical mimicry," mostly through irony, destabilizes the authority of politics of representation by deconstructing the binary value system. In the myths of Man, Society, and History, the binary hierarchies of the Self/the Other, West/the Rest, and the Civilized/the Primitive provide the framing units, participating in homogenizing the complex and diverse cultures and histories. The unified cultural and historical descriptions, in turn, reinscribe the hierarchies in men, societies, and histories as

knowledge of authority. Chong's (counter-) myth is constructed through his alternative

poetics of fragmentation, hybridization, and doubling (multiplying), envisioning an

inclusive politics and historiography.

I adopt Frye's "poetic mythology"[1] to explore Chong's myth-making. As Frye's

poetic mythology through studies of genres, archetypes, and conventions draws the

links between the stars and planets in his literary universe, I hope that Frye's poetic

mythology will help illuminate Chong's poetics, bridging the cultural and historical

meanings Chong's fables have in relation to other mythic constructions of men,

societies, and histories. I take up Frye's poetic mythology as a springboard to scrutinize

the privileged values in the binary conceptual pairs since it allows me to practice

thematic approaches, and able to direct me toward the decentering themes of the

alternative politics of inclusion. Frye's poetic mythology sets its thematic task when

Frye states that "our attention shifts from the sequence of incidents to another focus: a

sense of what the work of fiction was all *about*, or what criticism usually calls its theme"

(Fables, 23). Frye mentions discontinuity and fragmentation in his stress on the

thematic approach to the narratives, remarking that "we may tentatively accept the

principle that, in the direct experience of fiction, continuity is the center of our attention;

our later memory, or what I call the possession of it, tends to become discontinuous.

[…] Thus the incidents themselves tend to remain in our critical study of work,

discontinuous, detached from one another and regrouped in a new way" (Fables, 23).

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[1] Frye uses the term "poetic mythology" in the same title of the book, Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology, exploring myth from such literary concepts as genres, archetypes, and conventions. Frye sets out his task of poetic mythology, remarking, "myth is a conception which runs through many areas of contemporary thought: anthropology, psychology, comparative religion, sociology, and several others. What follows is an attempt to explain what the term means in literary criticism today" (21).

According to Frye, our memory reshapes the narratives by recategorizing them. And I consider that this memory function (recategorization) in Frye's criticism operates in Chong's narrative weaving. Most of Chong's narrative texts allude to recurring images in such cultural reservoirs as myths, rituals, folk-tales, popular imagination, and dreams, and his memory reinvents the narratives through reshaping the selected fragment images: "tactical mimicry." Through deconstructive renewing, Chong's narratives contest those ideologically loaded values of unity, purity, continuity, and depth, illuminating the themes of decentering in his (counter-) myths of people, cultures, and histories.

3.1. Poetic Mythology I: Genres

For Frye, "the plot or progress of events as a whole is also manifestation of the theme, for the same story could be told in many different ways" (Fables, 24). This intertwined plot and theme suggests the link between the poetics and the politics of Chong's fables. I will commence with how Chong's hybrid weaving of fragmented narrative sequences brings out different views on fixed genres. As Thomas Beebee's genre theory underlines, pure genres as distinct poetic constructions embody ideologically different views of the world and people.[2] Pure genre theory by its fixity and the logic of absolute difference and sameness, Beebee contends, holds genres apart, but there is "another epistemological claim on genre which moves in the opposite

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[2] Beebee views genre as a form of ideology and argues that "if genre is a form of ideology, then the struggle against or the deviations from genre are ideological struggle" (19). He introduces Ross Chambers' notion of ideology to examine the ideological nature of genre not only in its necessity but also in its instability. Meanwhile, Chambers' concept of ideology is derived from Louis Althusser's notion of "lived relation" of ideology, which is similar to Michel Foucault's "discursive relations." See his introduction to The Ideology of Genre. I have already provided those two concepts in Chapter 1 "Theoretical Approaches."

direction, away from separation and toward miscegenation." Beebee argues that "most

works not only can but *must* be analyzed in more than one generic way in order for their

messages to have any effective meaning or value." Beebee claims the recursive

definition of genre, declaring that "genres are made of other genres." Borrowing Walter

Benjamin's metaphors of stars (texts) and constellation (genres), Beebee notes that

"constellations are imaginary way of representing real relationships between stars.

Generic distinctions are imaginary in a similar way." If there is *something similar* (italics

mine) between texts, "that something belongs to the transient, unstable constellation I

have drawn between these texts" (264-268). As Beebee observes, Frye's theory of

genre demonstrates both this necessity and impossibility of stable generic distinction to

describe the individual literary texts. According to Beebee, contrary to Frye's search for

stable distinctions, Frye's genre theory breaks the fixity of pure genre theory by showing

multiple ways of distinguishing genres, thereby acknowledging generic instability.[3]

      With regard to these unfixable distinctions in terms of fixed notion of structure,

Frye states that as the dynamic forces of the construction of narratives, different plots

endow different shaping unity to different genres; while "comedy has a U-shaped plot"

following the shapes of the mouths on the conventional masks, "tragedy has an inverted

U, with the action rising in crisis to a peripety and then plunging downward to

catastrophe through a series of recognitions" (Fables, 23-25). Since Frye views the

narratives' social function as their imaginary way of dealing with the community –

"Verbal drama, whether tragic or comic, has clearly developed a long way from the

primitive idea of drama, which is to present a powerful sensational focus for a

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[3] According to Beebee, "generic instability" refers to "its ability to confound our generic expectations" (9).

community" (Anatomy, 282) – Frye's generic distinctions in one way are based on how he isolates narratives' different ways of resolution on a community, *mythos*. According to Frye, tragedy narrates about a community in terms of "as it must be," comedy "as it should be," romance "as it is what we like to be," and irony "as it is." But, when Frye classifies narrative texts into distinctive structures of comedy, romance, tragedy, and irony (satire), he uses the notion of shifting scale, what he calls "phase."[4] Frye draws the constellation of the literary universe against the backdrop of a literary zodiac, in which four distinctive genres are located at four points and each genre starts its move into other genres through six different phases. For example, Frye states that "there are a variety of comic structures between the extremes of irony and romance. As comedy *blends into* [italics mime] irony and satire at one end and into romance at the other, if there are different phases or types of comic structure, some of them will be closely parallel to some of the types of irony and of romance" (Anatomy, 177). As Beebee argues – genre is made of another genres – what Frye categorizes as a comic structure is already defined by another generic terms such as irony or romance.

When Frye demonstrates another way of registering generic distinctions (epos, prose, drama, lyric), he remarks that "the basis of generic distinctions in literature appears to be the radical of presentation," that is, the rhetorical "conditions established between the poet and his public" (Anatomy, 246-247). In other words, generic distinction is drawn somewhere between how the poet speaks and how the audience

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[4] See Frye's "Third essay: Archetypal Criticism" in Anatomy of Criticism, which deals with theory of myths. Frye situates comedy in the Mythos of Spring in his literary zodiac (the Mythos of Summer: Romance, the Mythos of Autumn: Tragedy, and the Mythos of Winter: Irony and Satire). Frye identifies "six phases of each *mythos*" and he notes that "the first three phases parallel to the phases of a neighboring *mythos*." In this sense, "the first three phases of comedy are parallel to the first three phases of irony and satire, and the second three to the second three of romance" (177).

listens, interprets, or translates. According to Frye, however, how we are to classify an individual text is less important than the recognition of the fact that different radicals coexist in it. Frye puts a stress on the plural differences in generic similarity. From Frye's example, Browning's middle-sized poem Ring and the Book, which takes a dramatic structure, can be viewed as both a poem that has a dramatic structure and a generic experiment in drama.

What I want to pay attention to through the examination of Frye's genre theory is that something similar in the classificatory logic of Frye's (Beebee's) imaginary constellation among literary texts. Similarity implies neither sameness nor difference. The logic of similarity that encompasses differences contests the ideological notions of unity, purity, and continuity, which are based exclusively on the binary logic of sameness and difference. As I discussed in Chapter 1, Derrida's critique on the metaphysics of presence attacks this tyranny of "the One and the Same," which erases the plurality (differences) in similarity. Meanwhile, Foucault's problematization of the logic of exclusion in history (philosophy) and politics points out how the logic of homogenizing differences (also based on totalizing sameness) guarantees the purity and continuity of the hegemonic power by terminating similarities. The absolute logic of sameness and difference brings forth closures and non-interactive boundaries. If we only see sameness and difference in classification, whether in literary texts or in cultures – for example, in the speech act like The Arabs (sameness) are different (difference) from the Americans (sameness) – there is no space for the plural and cross-cutting relations among people and cultures.

If our categorization or imaginary constellation is an impossible necessity, it should not be based on the simulating resemblance (grounded on sameness and difference) but what Foucault calls "the murmuring resemblance of things," through which we can hear both similarities and differences. <u>Kind Ness</u> (1986) satirizes the identity politics whose principal of categorizing only consists in simulating resemblance historically embodied in the idea of unified cultural assimilation in America. In this logic of simulating resemblance, only the binary division of like (the self, belonging, etc.)/not like (the other, not belonging, etc.) fully operates. Chong wants us to hear the murmuring when he says, "you see that people have differences, but they also have an incredible amount of commonality"[5] (qtd. in Thomas, 5C) and "the difference is not a bad idea" (qtd. in Pascual, 20). One of the participants of the Wisconsin-Madison production of <u>Undesirable Elements</u> affirms the idea of murmuring resemblance that encompasses differences, saying that "hearing other's histories and experiences confirms the beauty in our differences" (Wolff, 9). As I examined above, if our epistemological categorization is based on the cultural and historical situations of identity politics, it also denotes that its imaginary constellation is unstable to change in history. Thus, there is a space for resistance, and Chong's ethno-historiographic fables embody this space for a disclosed and flexible society.

<u>Kind Ness</u> is similar to what Frye calls "ironic comedy" (one of six phases of a comic structure). Even though the narrative text contains salient differences from the traditional comedy in terms of plot structure and characterization, <u>Kind Ness</u> can be

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[5] As I argued in the previous chapters, Chong's metonymic search for commonality is not based on such essences as common origin, experience, and culture. It refers to the underlying positionality, feelings, and ideas.

discussed within a comedic genre and its conventions, as Chong himself calls this narrative text as "metaphysical comedy." In the sense that metaphysics is *about* essence, the text is metaphysical; but at the same time, since it questions if our origin (where we are from) is the essence in articulating cultural identification and community, it is also anti-metaphysical and ironic. In its light treatment of the serious subject of assimilation and abjection, the narrative text is comedic, but the text sometimes moves toward such other generic modes as the tragic and the ironic. Humor, wit, heavy sentiments, satire and irony all expand and supplement the unified tone of the traditional genre of comedy. For example, the chief character Buzz's changing status from a popular guy to a demonic immigrant in the end of scene 9 titled "Bus Stop," along with the sentimental melody of Schubert's String Quartet in C Major, op. 163, invokes a pseudo-tragic scene of the hero's downfall even though audience's oversentimentalization is blocked with a distancing technique in which the projected words of "Rain" fall on him, interspersed with the names of countries in conflict at the time of the performance of <u>Kind Ness</u> – Sri Lanka, Israel, South Africa, etc. (<u>Kind Ness</u>, 85). And the last scene, "At the Zoo," narrates the irony of fixed rhetoric of the outsider and the insider as the principle of categorization of people in a community. The double mode of Buzz's existence (an immigrant from Rwanda), as the consequence of cultural miscegenation, defies the binary split of the insider and the outsider. Buzz is neither the insider nor the outsider and at the same time he is both insider and outsider. Chong's metaphoric formulations of "a fence-straddler" and "vacillation" between two cultures to designate hybrid subject destabilize the logic of belonging/not belonging inherent in the dominant identity politics in American assimilation. The narrative text demonstrates the

way of the racist world, as the ironic narrative shows a community as it is and points in the direction of the inclusive community its comedy aspires to embody.

In Nosferatu (1985), Chong borrows a form of "a drawing room comedy," and he said that when he made it, "the form sort of dictated how it progressed" (qtd. in Collins, 14). Thus, critic, Robert Collins, describes the narrative text as "a Noel Coward look at 1980s America" (14). But, as the other sources of the bricolage, F. M. Murnau's Nosferatu (based on Bram Stoker's novel Dracula) and Walter Abish's How German Is It? indicate, it has a gothic and dark tone, so that critics like Mel Gussow labeled it as "necromantic comedy" (qtd. in Osborn, 14). The bright setting of the yuppie living room inhabited by rich realtor Jonathan Harker and his wife Nina Harker, both WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) caricatures, is counterpointed by the gloomy narratives drawn from the film Nosferatu. At one scene, above the stage, the audience sees a projected title reading that "I have long sought the causes of the terrible epidemic, and found at its origin and its climax the innocent figures of Jonathan Harker and his young wife Nina" (Nosferatu, 2). By doing so, Chong juxtaposes bright and dark sides of American culture through the comedic presentation on stage and the slide projections of paralleling dark narratives above the stage. Paradoxically, while there is no sense of comedy in terms of celebrating inclusive community in the (bright) domestic yuppie characters, comedy transpires in the carnivalesque wedding of the Red Bride and the Groom along with the liveness of her neighbor outsiders ("3 Skeletons," "Immigrant Wife," "Indian," "A Cook," "Punk," etc.). What insiders recognize as outsiders is mere projection (abjection) of what is already inside of them. Thus, ironically, both insiders and outsiders exist as inside-out and outside-in of fantasies. By restoring the outsiders

to the insiders' boundary, Chong deconstructs the binary division-itself construed

through the dichotomous metaphors of light, positive, clean, and proper insiders and

dark, negative, unclean, and threatening outsiders. A similar architectonics of parallel

and bilateral juxtapositions in Nosferatu is found in Chong's earlier narrative texts,

Humboldt's Current (1977) and Nuit Blanche (1981). Humboldt's Current decenters the

deep myth of the unified Victorian duality (the self/the other) traveling through the global

routes of European imperialism and Nuit Blanche highlights the irony of historical

progress by juxtaposing the repeated destructive power with the technological evolution

in human history.

3.2.   Poetic Mythology II: Archetypes

As is the case with the primitive myth-making (bricolage), Chong's poetics of

hybridization reuses the recurring images in various cultural reservoirs. His use of

archetypes is expressed when he explains his way of dealing with "primal materials in a

contemporary settings." "I'm interested in," Chong says, "the archaic, archetypal,

sometimes savage elements in these tales, and in the relation of the organic to the

highly technological" (qtd. in Banes, "World," 83). Most of Chong's narratives allude to

multiple sources and archetypes and out of them he makes his bricolages. The range

of borrowing extends from so-called high culture to pop culture: biblical images of

resurrection and Garden of Eden in Lazarus (1972) and Astonishment and the Twins

(1984); allusion to popular images of Angels and Devils in Angels in Swedenborg (1985)

and Nosferatu; folk-tale motifs found in Little Red Riding Hood and Alice in Wonderland

in Astonishment and the Twins and Noiresque – The Fallen Angel (1989). He also

references contemporary films, fictions, cartoons, and comic books in many of his

narrative texts. Chong's bricolage of archetypal images weaves polyphonic and disjunctive cords so that it does not seek the continuity of a single thread tracing back to the archaic origin, so much as a web-like connectivity between individual source narratives and the narrative text constructed by Chong. For example, <u>Astonishment and the Twins</u> features a cartoon-like biblical parable in the fantastic setting of <u>Midsummer Night's Dream</u>, with poignant political and social critiques on the Reagan era's liaison with corporate power. It takes place in a new Garden of Eden, where young twins (portrayed in the manner of Looney Tunes) live. While Mother Nature, called Big Lady, in a red robe (little red riding hood character) teaches the twins their lessons, a wolf (Satan) character called the Lounge Lizard in a white tux jacket tries to buy the Eden in order to turn all of the homes he bought into shopping malls. Besides the recycling of the stereotypes in an Archie comic book,[6] <u>Kind Ness</u> is, Chong explains, conceived from reading Thomas Merton's <u>Wisdom of the Desert</u>. "Unable to theatricalize," Chong began "thinking about the quality of kindness." By this way, he came up with the image of the gorilla as the expression of Buzz's pure kind ness (Osborn, 16).

Frye's distinction of universal archetypes and culture-specific archetypes exemplifies the position of archetypes in the intersections of psychic performance, anthropology, and social history.[7] His account of archetype as the "communicable unit"

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[6] According to critic Nancy Goldner, the high school principal's name in <u>Kind Ness</u> was the name of the supremely idiotic principal in <u>Our Miss Brooks</u>.

[7] What Frye calls the "mythical phase of symbol" (symbol as archetype) is key to understanding the mythical symbol of stereotype in Chong's fables. The concept of archetype in relation to the collective unconscious is defined by C. G. Jung as "typical images and associations" observed in the "myths and fairytales of world literature" as well as "in the fantasies, dreams, deliria, and delusions of individuals living today" (<u>Memories</u>, 382). To Jung, archetypes are universal and unchanging; thus, he calls them "primordial images" meaning preexistent forms (<u>Archetype</u>, 384). Archetypes are incorporated into

(symbol), that is, the typical and recurring image that makes the cultural and historical communication possible, illuminates changing forms of archetypes in accordance with different cultural and historical situations (<u>Anatomy</u>, 99). Frye asserts that all the archetypes are not universal. "Some symbols are images of things common to all men, and therefore have a communicable power which is potentially unlimited." Examples are food, drink, the quest, journey, light and darkness, and sexual fulfillment. But, "It is inadvisable to assume that an Adonis or Oedipus myth is universal" (<u>Anatomy</u>, 118).[8] As Chong acknowledges, <u>Nosferatu</u> probes the archetypal human experience of light and darkness manifested in vampire myth, retelling it in the specific cultural-historical situations of 1980s America; therefore, Chong calls this narrative text a "symphony of darkness." The narrative text also deals with archetypal image of center and margin, which the Greek Narcissus myth well illuminates. One of the recurring images in <u>Fear and Loathing in Gotham</u>, <u>Kind Ness</u>, <u>Nosferatu</u>, <u>Undesirable Elements</u>, <u>Deshima</u>, and <u>Chinoiserie</u> is that of an outsider/insider.

According to cognitive science, such spatial-relations images as inside and outside, parts and whole, and center and periphery are components of basic image schemas that enable the sense-making of the world around us. Unlike Jung's claim of

literary criticism via Jung's psychoanalysis, on one hand, and from cultural anthropology (James Frazer), on the other hand. In <u>The Golden Bough</u>, Frazer traces archetypal myths and rituals in the fables and ceremonies of diverse cultures and provides a cultural foundation for literary criticism. Meanwhile, psychologist Erich Neumann takes a little different approach from Jung's in terms of reconfiguring the cultural and historical aspects of archetypes. Following Jung, Neumann contends that "the archetype is not only an image" but "at the same time, dynamism [energy]" (<u>Great</u>, 4). But "the archetypes," Neumann notes, "are varied by the media through which they pass – that is, their forms change according to the time, the place, and the psychological constellation of the individual in whom they are manifested" (<u>Art</u>, 82). In Neumann's notion of archetypes, psychoanalysis, anthropology, and social history intersect.

[8] In this sense, Peter Brook's universalist argument that culture-specific myths are the site of universal ground for transcultural communication is erroneous. Regarding this issue, refer to my discussion of interculturalism and power in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

primordial images, these basic concepts (image schemas) are unconsciously learned via language acquisition (for example, uses of *in* and *out* in English). Cognitive scientists Lakoff and Johnson explain that when we conceptualize, reason, and visualize our subjective experiences, "these body-based image schemas are among the sources of the forms of logic" (Philosophy, 36). And the cognitive mechanism for conceptualization and reasoning is the conceptual metaphor: "when we conceptualize understanding an idea (subjective experience) in terms of grasping an object (sensory-motor experience) and failing to understand an idea as having it go right by us or over our heads" (Philosophy, 45). This primary metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson contend, is universal or at least widespread. But, there are also culture-specific metaphors.

This distinction of primary and culture-specific metaphors is reminiscent of Frye's categorization of universal archetypes and culture-specific archetypes. For instance, one basic image schema, time, is rhetorically tied with movement, examples of which are flying or stockpiling. The moving time metaphor is said to be common among many languages. The time is money metaphor (derived from resource schema), however, is a culturally and historically specific metaphor, which implies that the rhetorical tie between time and money reflects the changing historical situation of modern capitalism. By the same logic, then, the rhetorical tie between outside and a person from a different culture can be contested in the cultural and historical situation of dissemination and hybridization. Archetypes by their definition are stable, but the contents of the culture-specific archetypes (their rhetorical formulations) change in accordance with historical situations. The metaphors of "a fence-straddler" and "a swinger" in Kind Ness and the

inside-out/outside-in metaphor in <u>Nosferatu</u> challenge the use of the absolutely divided concepts of inside/outside in our experience of categorizing people and cultures.

Chong's use of archetypes works for political and ethical allegories, but his more history-oriented narrative texts maintain their allegories through his use of social types. As I discussed in the introduction, allegory deals with types and these types are exemplary, which means that these types contain both particularity and generality. According to cognitive science, categorizing is an "inescapable consequence of our biological make-up," relating to our status as neural beings since, "in the brain for information to be passed from one dense ensemble of neurons to another via a relatively sparse set of connections, […] the sparse set of connections necessarily groups together certain input patterns in mapping them across to the output ensemble" (Lakoff & Johnson, <u>Philosophy</u>, 18). In this way, we get concepts and types through language acquisition and in return, these concepts and types are used to categorize things in the world. For example, we recognize a thing that is flat, rectangular, and made to sleep as bed. (Lakoff and Johnson call such concepts as bed a basic-level category since it is widespread due to its possibility of mental picture in our mind.) Since this concept does not seem to change, unlike the changing condition of an actual bed, Plato's metaphysical realism recognized this concept as essence (Idea), outside of our mind. But according to cognitive science, these concepts are the consequences of the intersubjective transaction between our brain and the environments and the historical situations of power (ideologies) operating in the very basis of the categorizing process. How do we recognize a thing that is flat, rectangular, but made to both sleep and sit on? The singular concepts of bed and chair cannot contain this dual actuality.

Thus we use such a concept as a daybed. If power insists that the thing is categorized as either chair or bed, we have a stereotype of the thing in that the concept reduces, essentializes, and fetishizes the thing. Chong's fables of the other deal with this mechanism of stereotyping and the way we can overcome it, portraying more fluid social categories.

Richard Dyer in his book, <u>The Matter of Images: Essays on Representation</u>, rejects rigid distinction between stereotypes and social types in terms of belonging to a society: stereotypes are those who do not belong and social types are a representation of those who do.[9] This distinction alone, however, cannot define stereotype and social type since "who does or does not belong to a given society as a whole is then a function of the relative power of groups in that society to define themselves as central and the rest as 'other,' peripheral or outcast" (14). The hegemonic power fully operates in configuring stereotypes and social types in that the main function of stereotype is to maintain sharp boundary definitions. "Nowhere," Dyer continues, "is this more clear than with stereotypes dealing with social categories that are invisible and/or fluid." "The role of stereotypes is to make visible the invisible, so that there is no danger of it creeping up on us unawares; and to make fast, firm, and separate what is in reality fluid and much closer to the norm than the dominant value system cares to admit" (<u>Matter</u>, 16). Stereotype is the extreme case of our cognitive typification (projection) in that it contains few, easy, and graspable traits of a group of people. As Dyer argues, the changing power constructs the boundary of who belongs and who does not belong,

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[9] Walter Lippman who coined the term stereotype, acknowledges the ambiguous roles stereotypes (a way of substituting order for the confusion of reality as a short cut) play in ideological necessity and limitation, remarking in his book <u>Public Opinion</u> that "it [stereotyping] is the projection upon the world of our own sense of our own value, our own position, and our own rights" (96).

which also implies that even though by their definition stereotypes maintain their fixity, they actually change in specific historical situations.

3.3. Poetic Mythology III: Conventions

So far, I have adduced two parts of Frye's poetic mythology, genres and archetypes. In this section I will discuss the last part, conventions, focusing on the convention of recognition. In relation to identification, in successive points of the unifying plot, it is the convention of a point of recognition (Aristotle's *anagnorisis*) that Frye isolates as "a point of identification." Myth of birth or origin, especially, highlights the point of recognition where a hidden truth about origin or character is discovered by a chief character. It is a corollary that the essentialist fables of identity presume the unified self in an unbroken continuity. For instance, the Oedipus myth embodies this essentialist myth in its archetypal settings of displacement, the ultimate search for an origin, and punishment for disturbing a continuing family line in the form of committed taboos such as parricide and incest. Long before the blood test or the advanced DNA test used to prove the biological tie between parents and their offspring, in many tales of this kind, Frye remarks, birthmarks (or scar) and birth-tokens (chains, rings, etc.) are presented as "the emblematic talismans" (Fables, 26). A similar myth of origin, the well-known tale of Ugly Duckling, which I take as the essentialist archetype that Chong's (counter-) myth of Kind Ness demystifies, tells how the hidden true origin of a swan displaced in culturally different duck-kind unfolds through the developmental phases of the young duckling. In this fable of origin, there appears no emblematic token, but the analogical link between the origin and the bodily look serves as the moment of recognition in the point of the duckling's identification.

If the tie between the biological factor and its assumed simulating resemblance in the bodily image is the sole resource for identification, it is right to say that the ugly duckling reveals its true origin as a swan-kind. But we are at the historical moment when biological unity and purity as the basis for identification is destabilized by multi-generation miscegenation, and the genetic status as the fundamental ground of a family is contested by such alternative notions of family as foster family (family by contract). As an extreme case, Marilyn Strathern reports on a legal case in which an American boy *divorces* his biological mother. Of course, I'm not arguing that people should abandon all the traditional value markers like responsibility and blood obligations in regard to the matter of identification. The logic of either biology or choice cannot provide a framework to explain social phenomena regarding identification.[10] According to Strathern, even in case of an alternative family based on the notion of contract, not of kinship but friendship, the members still remain loyal to the virtues of a traditional family: "the quality of the interpersonal relations." Borrowing Williams'[11] description of the coexistence of the "residual" culture and the "emergent" culture, Strathern contends that advanced reproductive technologies like IVF (In Vitro Fertilization) and embryo transfer enabling people to choose "whom and what one desires to call family" at the same time reflects more status "more traditionalization of family life" by preserving some element of a biological tie in ways that were never possible before (37-48).

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[10] Against the theoretical rigidity of social constructionism in discussing gender hybridity (of gays and lesbians), Teresa de Lauretis proposes "situational essentialism," which does not totally dismiss the biological factor in gender identification.

[11] See Chapter 8 "Dominant, Residual, and Emergent" in Marxism and Literature. By "dominant," Williams refers to the hegemonic. According to him, by definition, "residual" means an element of the past, which "has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process." By "emergent" he means that "new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationship are continually being created" (121-127).

What I am proposing here is that we need to reconsider the unity, purity, and continuity intrinsic in biological naturalism in both personal and cultural identification. And I also question, as Schechner argues, whether we live a "culture of choice," in which we choose culture as we pick from exhibited diverse commodities. The tale of the ugly duckling does not relate to the question of choice since it (or its parents) did not consciously choose the culture of duck-kind. But similarly, the choice of Buzz in <u>Kind Ness</u> to adopt American culture cannot be simply explained as his personal taste and desire since he is *situated* in the larger geo-political paths of migrating cultures. People migrating from the so-called Third World to the First World, as Clifford argues, cannot be explained with the same labeling of traveling cultures as we do for tourism of the First World to the Third World. I will discuss this uneven exchange between cultures through the discourses of globalization (doubled with localism) in the section of Chong's ethnographic fable of culture (in Chapter 4).

Returning to the issue of biological naturalism and identification, is the ugly duckling identified as a swan despite acquisition of different life style and practices in a displaced habitat? Is its swanness a true character to be discovered after all the performative years as an ugly duckling? As Jonathan Ree advances, personal identity is "the accomplishment of a storyteller, rather than the attribute of a character," whose essence is revealed in a point of recognition. Narrative is not something achieved through some essential continuity but through a "recurring belief" in personal coherence, a belief necessarily "renewed in the telling of tales" (qtd. in Frith, 122). Then can we say the mimicry of duck culture transforms the ugly duckling into a beautiful duck? In spite of his anti-essentialist approach, influenced by Paul Ricoeur's exclusive correlation

between time and narrative, Ree's notion of identification stresses temporal aspect in a fixed location, privileging history over spatiality. If the historical factor alone cannot fully explain how and why the recurring belief of the ugly duckling is renewed (sustained, abandoned, or newly invented), we need to be concerned with the displaced *situ* of the ugly duckling.

Borrowing Paul Gilroy's paradoxical, but apt formulation, identification is about "the changing same,"[12] not the return to the "root" but a coming-to-terms with our "routes." This metaphor of "route" overcomes the antitheses between history and geography, allowing me to examine temporo-spatial aspects of Chong's ethno-historiographic fables. The oral history project, the Undesirable Elements exchanges an idea of commonality, based on the singular origin or experience for one based on the historical and cultural situation of displacement. People at the margins in the Undesirable Elements series narrate how they come within the borders in which they are situated through different routes as political refugees, laborers, and the social abject (gays and lesbians in a heterosexual paradigm). Children of War (2002), one of the oral history projects, deals with political refugees, especially young people who came to America after going through and surviving terrible wars in their countries. In many pieces, Chong emphasizes economic situations are the dominant reasons for migration and displacement in the global landscape of labor division between the so-called Third World and the First World. In the Washington D.C. version of Undesirable Elements (2000), a Mexican immigrant tells how he lost his bartending job due to a newspaper

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[12] In the preface of The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness, Gilroy suggests this concept, "a changing same," to illuminate the diaspora concept, which is significant to examine the relationship between ethnic sameness and differentiation.

columnist. According to his story, the columnist asked him for chilled white wine. But

he did not know what chilled white wine was so his co-worker put ice cubes in the white

wine and served it to the columnist. The columnist wrote about it jokingly the next day,

and the bartender got fired. The discrimination women immigrants confront, however, is

more unbearable by virtue of sexism. In the Twin Cities performance of <u>Undesirable</u>

<u>Elements</u> (1994), a Turkish American recalls how she had to suffer both racism and

sexism in her efforts to become an architect. Chong also includes the stories of the

social displacement of gay people. In the Charleston production of <u>Secret History</u>

(2000), a Lesbian participant narrates her experience of displacement from her former

heterosexual marriage. As one of the participants of the <u>Undesirable Elements</u>

performed at the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Madison (2001), called a

"vanilla other" by one reviewer, tells it, "being gay is not that different from being some

other kind of 'other.'" What resonates for him is "the common denominator of

otherness" (Wolff, 9). As an ongoing project, <u>Undesirable Elements</u> references

ethnicity, nationality, gender, and class, which are explored within the larger frame of

abjection. (Class is the weakest link in the intersections of those references; Chong is

aware of this and hopes to deal with it intensely in his future project regarding homeless

kids.)[13]

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[13] Chong remarks, "right now [2003] I am very interested in stories of homeless kids, gay kids, and all the
millions of kids who are living in America below the poverty line and have no public voice at all" ("This
Week," 6).

3.4.   Poetics and Temporo – Spatiality

Frye's poetic mythology is a specific version of literary criticism based on a specific culture and history. As a point of departure, it is very useful to discuss Chong's fables of identity in terms of genres, archetypes, and conventions. But, the temporo-spatial frames on which Chong's fables rely exceed the tempo-spatiality on which Frye's poetic mythology is grounded. If time and space are the basic conceptual frames on which unity (as necessity and impossibility, I would say) of our lives and narrative rely, the complex relations between identification, temporality (history), and spatiality (culture) come under our speculation. As a segue to Chong's poetics, this section examines the issues of temporality and spatiality in life and narrative. The concept of unbroken continuity as a value in narrative and history, which is described as something that develops essential features (true character or origin), is contested through such issues as diaspora, hybridization, and disjunctive history in a time of moving cultures (whether utopian or dystopian). Geographical distance has been replaced by a time measure (Pittsburgh is within several hours from New York), and even though it is limited and sometimes manipulated, through tv people can watch simultaneously what happens in their local neighborhood and the far away countries. In both positive and negative senses, cultures travel through the itinerary paths of people, natural resources, commodities, finances, images, and electric circuits. The fixed singular perspective of a unified self and culture entails a concept of history as a continuous progress. But if we acknowledge diverse people and cultures, history becomes disjunctive and simultaneous.

Ideologically, the concept of unifying plot sets forth the notion of a unified progression of history. For instance, 18th century historiography, White contends,

"either fell under the charge of Christian myth or its secular, Enlightenment counterpart, the myth of Progress, or displayed a panorama of failure, duplicity, fraud, deceit, and stupidity" (Content, 65). As White maintains, our life events are neutral (neither tragic, comic, romantic nor ironic) but our narrative emplotment makes stories out of mere chronicles. Following Frye's view on the convergence of history and fiction in their mythical poetics, White argues that emplotment operates in both poet and historian through "the encodation of the facts contained in the chronicle as components of specific kinds of plot structures" (Tropics, 83). If the notion of history itself is the historian's poetic construction based on specific frameworks of genres, as White argues, we need to examine on what principal historians categorize life events. According to White, for example, while Michelet emplotted the French Revolution as Romance, his contemporary Tocqueville wrote it as Tragedy. Historians categorize the cluster of events around the French Revolution by the logic of identity and difference, that is, the principal of exclusiveness. "They sought out different kinds of facts because they had different kinds of stories to tell" (Tropics, 85). As I discussed above, in both histories of Michelet and Tocqueville, the unifying plots of Romance and Tragedy fashion (pattern) their narratives.

That historical progress is a constructed idea becomes more conspicuous when it is viewed from other perspectives. According to de Certeau, the linear construction of history is a uniquely Western trait. In India, for example, history is conceived of as a "stratified stockpiling," thus, new forms and old forms coexist in Indian historiography (Writing, 4). In an interview, Chong explains how his historical narrative weaving in

Maraya-Acts of Nature in Geological Time (1987)[14] reflects Zen Buddhism's view of time

and history. Masao Abe's comparative approach to Western (Christian) linear progress

and the Buddhist notion of non-substantial time sheds light on Chong's sense of history

postulated in the narrative text Maraya. Abe contends that while Western concepts of

time as linear progression treat time as "an objective entity or independent reality apart

from our consciousness," the Buddhist notion of time arises from its world view in which

"all conditioned things are impermanent." "In Christianity time is understood to be real

because time is a creation of God," but in the Buddhist view of inseparable time and

things (events), time is understood as non-substantial, since things are non-substantial

in their passing and impermanent nature. From the Buddhist perspective, the Western

linear progression of time "discriminates past, present, and future, substantiates them in

their fixed form through attachment." According to Abe, the Buddhist view recognizes

two aspects of time: "the aspect of continuity or forward movement and the aspect of

discontinuity or transcending movement." Using the Buddhist paradox, "discontinuous

continuity is real continuity" and "passageless passage is real passage." Abe remarks,

"real forward movement must include its self negation, that is the repeatability and

reversibility of time." In this sense, "time dies and is reborn at each and every moment."

Abe concludes the chapter "Time in Buddhism" saying that the Buddhist view of time is

neither linear nor cyclical but both linear and cyclical (163-169).

The death and passing silenced in the formation of the idea of linear progress

(suggested in de Certeau) returns in Chong's narrative texts. As Chong has expressed

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[14] My descriptions of Maraya are based on the rehearsal script of Maraya and the reviews of the
production. I asked Bruce Allardice, the managing director of Ping Chong and Company, to send me the
finished script of Maraya, but he said that the company archive kept only the rehearsal script.

his Asian influence through many interviews, articles, and narrative texts, he acknowledges his affiliation with the Buddhist view of time and history in <u>Maraya</u>. In the case of <u>Maraya</u>, as the titular image implies (Maraya is Chong's corruption of the Hindu word, *maya* meaning the world of illusion), Chong's idea of history is constructed in accordance with Zen Buddhism's view of elusive (non-substantial) time. In an interview with a reviewer of <u>Maraya</u>, Chong states that "from the Zen point of view, there are not major events; there are only events" (qtd. in Karb, "Less," 98). As Chong recognizes, prioritization (essentialization) of specific events results in exclusion of the rest of the events, sets out the illusion of linear progress. Against this tyranny of chronological progression, in another interview with one of the critics of <u>Maraya</u>, Chong asserts "I take time, throw it into the air and shuffle it up again." This is why parts of the first scene take place in the 16th century, whereas the last scene ends in prehistoric era. "For all our supposed progress," Chong asks, "where are we?" (qtd. in Anderson, C28). The recurring aggressiveness of human culture <u>Maraya</u> thematizes contradicts the telos of Enlightenment in the linear progression of human history. The idea of linear progression embodied in imperialist-capitalist-liberal-humanist historiography is a fetish whose power irons out the ambiguities and contradictions of the diverse global histories. Chong's arbitrary time construction in its arbitrariness discloses the hidden fetish of linear progress. <u>Maraya</u> seems to say that the telos of rational evolution is a lie and illusion.

Rethinking historiography as "heterology" (register of the voices of the other), de Certeau interrogates the Enlightenment notion of linear progression. According to him, Enlightenment epistemology, by differentiating the subject of knowledge and its object,

separates the past from the present. In this way, the past is treated as the object and transformed into archives and a museum of memorable traditions. This historical act, de Certeau observes, is based on a drive to produce "in this typical conception of expansionist bourgeois economy." Time becomes exterior and other, only appearing as a principle of classification. "Recast in the mold of a taxonomic ordering of things, chronology becomes the alibi of time, a way of making use of time without reflecting on it, a way of banishing from the realm of knowledge the principle of death or of passing (or of metaphor)." In this time frame, "time continues to be experienced within the productive process," that is to say, time is "an ethical language which expresses the imperative to produce." De Certeau proposes historiography's return to its traditional task of "articulating time as ambivalence that affects the place from which it speaks and, thus, of reflecting upon the ambiguity of place as the work of time within the space of knowledge itself" (Heterologies, 214-221). Chong's experiment in present tense (hi)story-telling highlights this point. In most narrative texts, the narrators tell the story retrospectively, using past tense. But, the narrators (participants) in Undesirable Elements series tell their stories in present tense. Chong's adoption of this antinomic narration (Brian Richardson's notion) emphasizes the past embedded in the present.

Chong's narrative weaving, as he notes his diverse influence from other artistic and discursive fields, should be discussed in relation to the changing views on time and space in narratology. According to Brian Richardson, the concept of unified plot (embodying continuous evolvement of teleology) has been contested by the counteractive idea of narrative sequence in which irregular, disjunctive, and simultaneous clusters of events lead the narrative dynamics. In "Introduction: Narrative

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Progressions and Sequences" in <u>Narrative Dynamics</u>, after reviewing a diverse body of

theoretical work on narrative dynamics, Richardson recognizes "the multiplicity of

sequencing strategies, the potential ideological valences of certain kinds of sequencing,

and also the corresponding difficulties in articulating a unified concept of narrative

production" (163). Then, in another essay titled "Beyond Story and Discourse: Narrative

time in Postmodern and Nonmimetic Fiction," Richardson posits a narrative theory of

nonmimetic narrative texts against the traditional narrative theories sharing "the same

general mimetic assumptions of virtually every other current theory of narrative time"

(47). Richardson contends that Gerard Genette's concepts of "order," "duration," and

"frequency"[15] are still the standard conceptual frameworks describing narrative

temporality, but the majority of nonmimetic contemporary literary texts demonstrate

alternative temporal frameworks (according to Richardson, "circular," "contradictory,"

"antinomic," "differential," "conflated," and "dual" or "multiple").

　　According to Richardson, these six types of temporal reconstruction, which are

among the various violations of realistic temporality present in recent narrative texts,

bear tactical resistance to the dominance of realistic representation "insofar as they

engage in logical contradictions" ("Beyond," 48). Since they are useful to discuss the

various types of nonrealistic temporality in Chong's narratives as "the poetic resistance,"

I will briefly outline Richardson's accounts of these six kinds of temporal dynamics. 1.

Circular: In this type of narrative text, ending returns to its own beginning, thus

continues infinitely (Samuel Beckett's <u>Waiting for Godot</u>, Gabriel Josipovici's <u>Mobius the

Stripper</u>, and John Barth's <u>Frame-Tale</u>). This type of temporality problematizes

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[15] For the detailed accounts on those concepts, refer to Gerard Genette's <u>Narrative Discourse: An Essay
in Method</u>.

Genette's concept of frequency since one can identify only repeated instances of

singular events rather than multiple events.   2. Contradictory: In this type of temporal

reconstruction, one finds incompatible and irreconcilable versions of the story. In other

words, in this type of narrative text, there is no single, unambiguous story, if we define

"story" as discourses constituted of a single, self-consistent set of events. This type

violates Genette's notion of frequency as well as his concept of story since it assumes

the existence of a fixed, retrievable, noncontradictory sequence of events. (Like time

construction in Jorge Luis Borges' and Alain Robbe-Grillet's novels, in this type time

divides, bifurcates, and branches off into multiple possibilities and alternatives). 3.

Antinomic: The narratives that move backward in time (Harold Pinter's <u>Betrayal</u>) or

simultaneously move backward and forward in time (Martin Amis' <u>Time's Arrow</u>) belong

to this type. In a realistic text, the narrator tells the story retrospectively (in the past

tense) as the audience's reception is prospective, but in antinomic narration, both

narrator and audience move prospectively (in present tense, even future tense). 4.

Differential: This type bears a curious temporal difference between a chronology of a

character and a chronology surrounding the character (In Caryl Churchill's <u>Cloud Nine</u>,

a character ages twenty years as the society the character inhabits gains a century; in

Borges' "The Secret Miracle," time slows down for a character who waits for execution

so that the character can finish writing a play; and in Salman Rushidie's <u>The Moor's</u>

<u>Last Sigh</u>, the protagonist ages faster than people around him). 5. Conflated: In this

type, different time zones slide and spill into one another as the distinctions between

each cluster of events collapses. Thus, the story segments and their respective

temporalities run into each other (In Claude Simon's <u>Les Corps conducteurs</u>, the

narrative moves from setting to setting, and separate times and spaces bleed into each other so that it is hard to identify "now" and "then," and in Milan Kundera's <u>Slowness</u>, the contemporary character is brought in with the hero of 18th century novel and both characters are encountered by the narrator). 6. Dual or multiple: This type of narrative moves through the double time manifested in different plotlines. The dual plots begin and end at the same time, but they take different numbers of days to unfold – Shakespeare's plays ("Beyond," 48-52).

Chong's sense of narrative time reflected in his plotless narrative sequence (from a conventional standpoint), cannot be explained by those temporal concepts of order, duration, and frequency. As Genette's primary temporal concept, the idea of order (chronological order in narrative progression) brings the seemingly anarchic or chaotic heterogeneity into unity. In most of Chong's narrative texts, chronological order, however, is deliberately ignored for the sake of the thematic thread. In <u>Kind Ness</u>, for example, it goes backward and forward in an associative manner whenever it is needed at the point of thematic concerns. In historical pieces like <u>Maraya</u> and <u>Snow</u> (1988), time jumps forward and backward several centuries. Genette's concept of frequency (how many times the same event appears) based on singular identifiable events cannot be used to explain the narrative time in <u>Nosferatu</u> since in the narrative text it is hard to identify clearly distinctive events. The seemingly different event of the appearance of the Red Bride is part of what happens simultaneously with the chief yuppie characters. In this conflated narration, the two different time zones (the contemporary and the eternal or anarchic) bleed into each other. This signifies that the Red Bride is the shadowed double of the yuppies.

Genette's notion of duration examines the relation between the amount of time it takes for an event to occur and the time it takes for that event to be recounted. This concept of duration is contested by Chong's novelistic insertions in the middle of the dramatic presentation. For instance, in <u>Nuit Blanche</u>, projected texts summarize the events that happened in 11 years in 4 sentences – "1853 Slavery is abolished. Berenice Haurpes makes her way to North Carolina. 1854 Gloria Ortega dies in childbirth. 1863 La Mariposa is lost at the gambling tables" (<u>Nuit Blanche</u>, 12). Also, the time frame in <u>Nuit Blanche</u> is beyond the ordinary parameters; for example, Scene 9 is divided by minutes and seconds. In <u>Nuit Blanche</u>, time is divided like a space from macro to micro, starting from century to second, as some watchful eyes (maybe aliens) zoom in with telescope or camera from outer space. Also in <u>Nuit Blanche</u>, time differential is significant in terms of the theme of traveling imperialism. Across the several centuries and different continents, the same actress who plays a slave (Berenice) in a Latin American plantation appears as a working-class Ms. B (reminding the audience of Berenice, the slave) in a laundry room in North Carolina, and the actor who plays the European owner of the plantation appears as the owner of an international resort in a South-East country in the 20th century. The narrative text shows the brief encounter of them in an airport, implying the repeated itinerary of imperialism in contemporary geopolitics. Like Caryl Churchill's <u>Cloud Nine</u>, the chronological time and the narrative time for the characters are contradictory to each other. While several centuries pass chronologically, for the characters, years pass from their youth to the middle-aged.

As Chong acknowledges, his idea of narrative temporality is much influenced by novelist experiments with narrative time. While Chong's <u>A.M./A.M.–The Articulated Man</u> (1982) (whose story is based on the Jewish Frankenstein myth, Golem) and <u>Angels in Swedenborg</u> (1985) (dealing with 18th century visionary scientist, Swedenborg in a 20th century setting) are inspired by Jorge Luis Borges, the same quest for spirituality in time of technology found in <u>Angels in Swedenborg</u> and <u>A.M./A.M.</u>, recurs in <u>Maraya</u> and alludes to Marguarite Yourcenar's <u>Abyss</u> dealing with the 16th century Renaissance alchemist-philosopher, Zeno the Heretic. In these novelists' narrative constructions, time jumps up, divides (simultaneous), conflates, and goes multidirectional (both forward and backward). In the chief figures in <u>Angels in Swedenborg</u> and <u>Humboldt's Current</u>, the past and the present are conflated, as Yourcenar in <u>Abyss</u> invents the character Zeno among the collages of Renaissance figures including Leonardo Da Vinci, in order to express a historical sensibility. In <u>Angels in Swedenborg</u>, the 18th century scientist Emanuel Swedenborg appears as the yuppie character Robert Swedenborg, who is surrounded by stereo components, VCRs, Sony television, IBM-PC and recordings on Deutsche Grammophon. Charles Humboldt in <u>Humboldt's Current</u> is a temporally conflated collage of the 19th Victorian scientist Charles Darwin and the 19th century German explorer and scientist, Alexander von Humboldt. Particularly, in <u>Angels in Swedenborg</u>, the divided stage represents the simultaneous juxtaposition of Swedenborg's existence on Earth and his vision of heaven and hell.

Chong's narrative temporality is drawn from the idea of history, the patternless repetition of human cultures in destruction. Briefly, I will discuss the changing relations between the narrative weaving and the ideas of time, space, culture, and history.

Against the tyranny of history as a seamless continuation and progression of unfolding

pure essence, the relation between temporality (history) and identification is discussed

in many studies of poststructuralist anthropology, postcolonialism, and cultural studies

in terms of the less stressed spatial factors of migrating cultures. But I disavow the

overemphasis on spatiality as much as I object to the over-determining temporality. For

instance, in the case of Una Chaudhuri, despite her recognition of the significance of

geographic locations in formation and studying of modern drama, by taking up partial

statements on the emphasized spatial factors in the discourses of Foucault and Edward

Soja, she prioritizes geography over history. The logic of either temporality or spatiality

reflects our propensity to consider time and space as separate entities. But according

to cognitive scientists like Lakoff and Johnson, time and space are metaphors, whose

concepts are interdependent: time cannot be thought without the changing space

(movements) and space cannot be discussed without changing time (duration). Edward

Soja, against both hegemonic historicism and the unproductive aura of an anti-history,

argues that "from these confrontational polemics is also arising something else, a more

flexible and balanced critical theory that re-entwines the making of history with the

social production of space, with the construction and configuration of human

geographies" (137). As Foucault notes, history reminds us of the hegemonic violence of

historicism. In this sense, using Foucault's tactics, Chong's archeological genealogy

aims to analyze a history of a space through the itinerary of the aggressive mobile

power, historically manifested in such forms as imperialism and (neo-, post-)

colonialism. For instance, Chong's historical narrative texts, East/West Quartet

(<u>Deshima</u>, <u>Chinoiserie</u>, <u>After Sorrow</u>, and <u>Pojagi</u>) demonstrate this balanced critical approach toward the temporo-spatial aspects of culture and history.

3.5. Poetics of Fragmentation

Against the temporo-spatial backdrop I draw in the second part of this chapter, I will here delineate Chong's poetics of fragmentation, hybridization, and inclusion. As I discussed in the tactical approaches, Chong's "tactical mimicry" repeats resources fractionally. His (counter-) myth-making does not hide its fragmentary borrowing. Rather, against the illusion of a unified whole (whether it is self, other, culture, society, or history) and seamless coherence and continuity, it is the fragmentary nature (based on the principle of plurality) of Chong's narrative presentation that contributes resistance to the privileged concepts of unity, purity, and continuity in cultural and historical discourses. Noël Carroll rightly recapitulates this featuristic fragmentation, remarking that "Chong's strategy emphasizes scene over sequence, the moment over the chain of events; the drama's linear quality recedes and sometimes disappears altogether." "By lifting images and scenes out of the flow of the story and concomitantly de-emphasizing narrative connection," Carroll notes, "Chong imbues each of his plays' acts with heightened intensity. Each scene accrues a special aura or presence rather than existing as a stepping stone along a neatly rising narrative structure" (74).

For instance, <u>Kind Ness</u> is narrated through 12 vignettes, in which various sources of allusion and influence are mixed in hybrid styles (dance forms, conventional slapstick comedy, dramatic presentation, slide projection, etc.). Also, discontinuous and multidirectional chronological order is deliberately designed for the underlying thematic thread of assimilation and abjection in America. As the subtitle "A Select View of

Earthlings" in <u>Nuit Blanche</u> suggests, the seemingly incompatible fragments containing different time frames and locations (16th century South America, 20th century North America, and 20th century Southeast Asia and America) address the global itineraries of human destructiveness and aggression. To an extreme degree, the narrative text <u>Snow</u> (1988), is constructed through fragmented historical vignettes ranging from the 16th to the 20th century in which there is no detectable connection except the recurring thematic thread of human aggressiveness and destruction under the similar settings of snowy weather. In <u>Snow</u>, "viewers may recognize," reviewer Randall Findlay observes, "Nathaniel Hawthorne's sentimental 'Snow Image,' or Alain Robbe-Grillet's casually tragic 'In the Labyrinth'" (18). In <u>Snow</u>, the variety of styles and genres (Robbe-Grillet-style novel, Commedia dell'arte, Japanese Nŏ, Fairy Tale, Science Fiction, Situation Comedy, etc.) that correspondingly present the disjunctive scenes fashions a global collage of cultures and histories. "The ultimate effect of Chong's storytelling style is that," Philip Auslander notes, "meaning arises more from the accumulation of characters, actions, images, information, and cultural allusions than from a causally structured plot" ("Ping," 85).

Due to the fragmentary presentation, even though there are coherent thematic threads, often the audience members are put into a position where they cannot easily connect the subsequent scenes. In this way, the audience's minds are constantly in motion and often the connection between scenes is performed at the same moment when the themes and variations are mentally conceived. Chong emphasizes this active reception on behalf of the audience; for Chong, it's up to the audience to connect the sequence. The complicated architectonics of narrative doubling (multiplying) and

layering necessitates the audience's virtual journey of mind. The trope of "travel"

illuminates not only how Chong describes migrating cultures and appreciation of other

cultures but also how appropriately the audience can participate in producing meanings

and pleasures with his narrative texts. Chong regards himself as a "traveler," always

finding himself "in a new context with constantly shifting relations to constantly shifting

environments" (Dillon, 21).

A narrative text like <u>Skin</u> is framed in a virtual reality space as if the audience

traveled to some foreign time and place; the audiences enter the theatre to the voice-

over sounds of an airplane being loaded and the crew's comments and

announcements. The production of <u>Humboldt's Current</u>, a tale about Western

civilization's (imperialist) quest of "the beast" (the irrational primitive), is designed for the

audience's virtual voyage through the itineraries of imperialism pursued in the paths of

anthropologist-explorer Charles Humboldt. "A shipboard menu," critic Erika Munk

informs, "is printed on the program: from Saucission a la Lyonnaise through winter

melon soup and brains with groundnuts to Damson fool – our culture, bits of this and

that ripped off from here and there" (77). Like de Certeau's historian (walking through

historical moments) and Clifford's traveler, while bracketing the historical and cultural

privileges of their own the audiences engage in a new way of historical and cultural

flight.

Mentally wandering audiences displace the traditional spectatorship of a fixed

perspective, catching the ambiguities and ironies which Chong's narrative texts

enunciate. Examples abound in several fragmented scenes in <u>Deshima</u>. In one scene

titled "Let's Dance," set in 1941, U.S.A., the audience does not know immediately

whether they watch a group of "(non-Asian) American" teenager dance contestants played by "Asian-American" performers or "Asian-American" teenagers since there are double signifiers that deliberately confuse the audience's conception of "Americanness." The radio show host of the dance contest highlights the adjective "American" while the Americanness is embodied in the "Asian" bodily images of the performers. The characters' American names (Anita, Bobby, Biff, Freddy, Suzy, Ed, Edwina, Wilma, etc.) and future dreams (restaurant owner, dentist, teacher, pharmacist, housewife, farmer, etc.) are declared "so American" by the radio show host.[16] Their ethnic ambiguity seems to be further heightened in the later scene ("Internment Camp, U.S.A., 1942") in which they are revealed as Japanese Americans since in the previous scene ("Lets Dance") the (Japanese-American) dance contestants did not appear to be bothered when the show host announced radio hits such as "I'm Gonna Find a Fellow Who's Yellow and Beat Him Red White and Blue," "We Are Going To Wipe Those Japs Off the Maps," "Lets Make Saps Out of Them Japs," and "To Be Specific, It's Our Pacific" whose jingoistic and racist containment reflects the anti-Japanese sentiment at the time of the Pacific War. The scene "Let's Dance" challenges both our propensity to identify people based on their bodily images and our invention of the idea of the other (exclusion) for our own identification. The scene shows and tells the ambiguity of the hybrid subject formed "in-between."

This process of inclusion and exclusion in American identity is disrupted completely when the audience later sees a scene titled "Internment Camp, U.S.A., 1942" in which a group of Japanese-American internees have been ambiguously

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[16] The host is played by Afro-American performer, Michael Matthew who is also one of the co-authors of Deshima.

connected to the teenager dance contestants by their American names and occupations. The audience's fixed perspective in how they define Americanness is destabilized. The audience is prompted to travel back to the previous scene and, then, the irony emerges when the audiences realize that Americanness was unconsciously defined as an exclusive containment even though it is already a hybrid conception. At the end of the internment camp scene, the audience watches a slide projection in which a portrait of a Japanese-American in a U.S. Army uniform appears. This juxtaposition of the Japanese-American internees and the Japanese-American soldier intensifies the ironic confusion of Americans with the Japanese, underpinning the embedded hybridity in the very concept of "Americanness."

Surprisingly, this internment camp scene parallels another scene titled "In God We Trust" in which, like the Japanese-American internees, Christianized Japanese are abjected by the political power of the land they inhabit. In the scene, the Japanese-American internees enter singing a gospel song "Go tell it on the mountain," which intratextually refers to the previous Jesuit scene. The evacuee's Japanese family names (Abe, Oshima, Hakamura, Sakomoto, Tojo, Morita, etc.) are connected to the Christian names given by the Portuguese Jesuit priest, Padre, (Luke, John, Peter, Matthew, Martin, Paul, etc.). Like the Christianized Japanese Brothers, the Japanese-American evacuees deliver the same line "Padre, we are afraid" and do the same movements of turning sharply in profile, crouching slightly, and turning back to their original positions. This intratextual mnemonic technique makes the audience wander back and forth to mentally connect the disjunctive sequences and to reach meaningful signification. Threading through these layered disjunctive scenes is the perdurance of

power and desire to contain the other(s). The hybrid Christian Japanese in 16th century

Japan and Japanese-Americans in time of World War II in America had alike been

victimized by the destructive power of abjection.

Chong maintains that the poetics of fragmentation manifested through his

technique of bricolage is "a way of speaking to our time, which by necessity must also

be fragmented," reflecting back what is happening in "a time of great fragmentation"

(Anawait, 35). Fragmentation, however, has ambivalent edges in Chong's usage.

When Chong speaks of fragmentation in a positive sense, he implies social movements

of plurality or diversity defying a unified whole (most violently manifested in fascistic

conformity) in local, national, and global scales. But when he views it in a negative

sense, it connotes mediatized perception (reduction), social alienation, the non-

interactive split of social boundaries, and political and religious conflicts over the world.

This ambivalent approach to fragmentation is well explored in his recent narrative text

<u>Reason</u> (2002). It tells the stories of alienation squarely accelerated by high-tech

devices like computers, telephones and televisions by showing the bodies

compartmented by window frames. Chong uses the window frames to show multiple

actions happening simultaneously, but at the same time, the frames themselves

contribute to signify the social alienation among individuals. In <u>Reason</u>, containing

frames are phenomenologically visualized. The fragmented bodies (waist-ups signifying

the mind or the rational) are framed like in a film screen. Michael Rohd, as one of the

co-authors of the narrative text, claims this ambiguous format of film-like theatre

questions how much our experience is "mediated through two-dimensional screens" like

television, film and computers (Weisstuch, 5).

In regard to Chong's interests in media culture on both local and global levels, it is here worth examining the relations between globalization, fragmentation, and the media culture. In most cases (I do not exclude local resistance), as the agency of transnational capitalism (based in the so-called First World) and consumerism, the media culture (of the First World) on a global scale maneuvers to unify world culture. But, at the same time, the global world in reality is fragmented by the very globalizing hegemony of transnational capitalists. Sherif Hetata observes this seemingly contradictory phenomenon as two faces of the same coin called globalization, remarking that "the spread of global culture is the necessary corollary of a global economy and a global market, but there is also an opposite movement leading to increasing division and fragmentation, which is related to an increase in ethnic, racial, communal, and religious conflict." The recent resurgence of localism, nationalism, and religious fundamentalism is the consequential reaction arising from the global hegemony in economic, political, and cultural areas. And we have already witnessed the devastating terror of the recuperating religious fundamentalism resulting in the subsequent wars between Christian allies and Islamic Iraq. Is "the global village" our utopia in the etymological sense of no place? Is the illusion of global village the mere disguise of transnational corporate power? "To unify power, economic, or cultural, at the top," Hetata notes, "in the hands of the few, it is necessary to fragment power at the bottom" (282-283).

The homogenizing global hegemony coerces to unify the world culture through the global media networks, transporting its prime value of the beauty and goodness of consumption. In order to maintain global market and hegemony, however, it requires

the others to provide cheap labor, raw materials, and lands for factories, as well as eventually buying the products that are made. As Hetata recognizes, "divide and rule" is a golden strategy, which perpetuates the absolute logic of sameness and difference. Chong's narrative texts such as Nuit Blanche, Humboldt's Current, and the East/West Quartet draw the itinerary of global hegemony through the paths of imperialism and capitalism and its dystopian effects of destruction. Meanwhile, as a community-based theatre project, the Undesirable Elements series embody the inevitable interactions between the global and the local (and the national), suggesting conflict in the twofold process of global (national) domination and diversity. As an alternative ideology against the tyranny of unifying global and national power, multiculturalism is gaining its discursive power in the global and national scales. But, as Chong recognizes, if the growing discourses on multiculturalism hinge upon the same logic of identity and difference, their prescriptive power disguises the actual misery of the fragmented diversity, being complicit with the golden strategy of "divide and rule." As Chong is aware, cultural diversity (heterogeneity) does not necessarily imply closed division and fragmentation. Chong's narrative texts on "culture and identity" like Kind Ness envision diversity that encompasses flexibility and fluidity across or on the borders of the social boundaries. Chong's avowal of fragmentation, in this context, should be understood as the counterattack against, what Derrida calls, the tyranny of "One and the Same." As Chong emphasizes, his scattered (kaleidoscopic) glimpses reflect the non-hierarchical diversity in society.

From the technical point of view, Chong's fragmented audio-visual collages speak to the post-literary generation (cinema and tv) for which narrative progression

depends less on linearity than on juxtaposition and parallelism. Chong maintains that in order to reach audiences today, the contemporary artist has to deal with television and film. Thus, Chong's bricolage, technically similar to the cut-and-slash of MTV, could be viewed as part of the problem of mediatized culture, but Chong uses this technique of bricolage as a self-consciously subversive one. On both technical and mythological aspects, it maintains the sameness and differences with the extreme degrees and contents of MTV (deconstructive slippage). In Truth and Beauty (1999), previously titled American Gothic (1992), Chong uses 5 tv monitors with diverse things going on at the same time, which is a composition familiar to MTV bricolage, but through his (fractional) tactical mimicry he critiques the tv myths in their superficiality, commercialism, and simulation effects that displaces reality. Similarly, 4 AM America (1990) narrates the dark sides of media culture, which consolidates the stereotypical simulation of the others and the cultures of the others.

By satirizing the tv myths (a game show, tv commercials, and Soap Opera) the narrative text alerts the audience to the destructive impact of media myths, a tactic which greatly influences our cognitive reception of the world and people, advising the audience to be critical receivers of the media myths. Chong's seemingly contradictory view on high-tech media can be accounted for by the notion of "resisting tactics" Philip Auslander suggests in his exploration of the use of high-tech multi-media among contemporary avant-garde artists. As Auslander contends in Presence and Resistance, performance artists use multi-media for a paradoxical way of critiquing our media culture. Borrowing Auslander's argument, Chong's multi-media usage offers the audience positions from which to critique the dominant media culture "not by claiming

[to be] aside from it, to present an alternative to it, or to place the spectator in a privileged position with respect to it but, rather deconstructively, resistantly, from *within*" (51).

Due to Chong's poetics of fragmentation and multi-media usage, most scholars and critics label Chong as a postmodern performance artist. But I argue that Chong's artistic and political views are more complex than being merely contained by such a unified category. Concerning the genealogy of his theatre in its connections and relations with the traditions of theatre, he regards his works as "stand-ins" for traditional theatre, labeling himself as a theatre artist. In an interview with a critic, he remarks that "I think of myself as a contemporary theatre artist, meaning that I'm interested in incorporating visual arts, movements and text together in a kind of new theatre. I am feeling strongly against the 'talking head' kind of theatre. I feel theatre today has to be more active, and that's why movement is very much a part of my theatre" (qtd. in Neal, J10). Since Chong launched his independent theatre company in 1975, he frequently expressed his company's distancing position from dialogue-dominant realism. It seems that Chong feels great limitations and obstacles in conventional realism to portray his life and worldviews. But, as I discussed earlier, his preference for visual language does not imply his uncritical reception of visually-dominated mass media culture. As Chong acknowledges, his fascination with visual art mainly came from painting, critical cinema, and traditional Chinese Opera, and furthermore he does not deny his literary influence by such writers as V. S. Naipaul, Bruce Chartwin, Joseph Conrad, and Jorge Luis Borges. Rather, Chong maintains a deconstructive position in which he recycles the debris of the mediatized culture in order to contest its mythic constructions. In his quest

for alternative means to portray the contradictions and ambiguities of our reality, Chong

partly affiliates his style with the cinematic iconography of Bresson and Ozu in their

rejection of artificial depth creation. Thus, Chong claims that he produces theatre

mainly influenced from film.[17]

Theoretically speaking, the poetics of fragmentation have not been exclusively a

signature of postmodern compositions. Scholars like Lawrence Kritzman trace back the

ideas of the fragmentary to the sixth century Pre-Socratic philosophers (vii). Meanwhile,

John Tytell in his essay "Epiphany in Chaos: Fragmentation in Modernism" notes the

relation modernism has to the poetics of fragmentation, remarking that "the fragment

became one of the calling cards of the modernist movement, a recognizable, sometimes

enigmatic means of creating impact and communicating message, a device that

disturbed conventional notions of time and space in literary expression and

corresponded to a new sense of the universe that began to emerge as the nineteenth

century ended" (3). For example, Picasso's cubist perspective demonstrates the

ruptures in our illusionary conception of seamless unity. But if hybridity, which is less

featured in modernist avant-garde, is not taken into consideration, Chong's poetics of

fragmentation cannot have its full meaning, since fragmentation itself is not the goal.

Diversity based on hybridity and flexibility is what Chong, centrally envisions in his

counter-myth of man and society reflected in his technique of bricolage.

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[17] Chong's adaptation of cinematic techniques is conspicuous in such techniques as slide projection, imagistic sequencing (montage), uses of lighting and frames (long shot, close-up), and changes in scale (zoom in and out). For instance, in his puppet production, Kwaidan (1998), he changes the scales of a puppet (from a smaller one to a larger one) so that the audience feels like the puppet walks close to their sight.

3.6.   Poetics of Hybridization: Bricolage

As I examined above, Chong's idea of fragmentation is less prescriptive than tactical; his poetics of fragmentation disrupt the unifying forces that create the static fragmentation of people and the world. But I do not contend that emphasis on fragmentary nature alone suffices for the comprehension of his challenging alternative myth-making. Here, I will discuss the tactical aspects of the poetics of fragmentation supplemented by the poetics of hybridization through the philosophical and political significance of bricolage. Lévi-Strauss adopted the term bricolage to describe the method used among primitives in their myth-making. If we consider that Chong has been strongly interested in cultural anthropology and called himself an "amateur ethnographer" who devotes his time especially to studying myth-making, the connection between his poetics of hybridization and bricolage can be easily made. He called many of his earlier works "bricolages" and I consider that his later works on history also maintain his tactics borrowed from bricolage. If Chong's approach to the contemporary everyday myth is similar to Lévi-Strauss' exploration of primitive myths in that they both object to seeking the hermeneutic depth between the images (as signifiers) and meanings (as signified), what differentiates Chong's method of bricolage from Lévi-Straussian bricolage centers on Chong's deconstructive tactics directed to the compositional logic of the binary system internal to Lévi-Straussian science of myth. Chong's dominant rhetoric of irony is utilized to unmask the ideological construction of the binary system itself.

These tactical aspects of bricolage are well explored by Derrida. Derrida observes the theme of decentering in the "mythopoetical virtue of *bricolage*," stating that "what appears most fascinating in this critical search for a new status of discourse is the

stated abandonment of all reference to a *center*, to a *subject*, to a privileged *reference*, to an origin, or to an absolute *archia*" (Writing, 286). The tactics of bricolage resist what Derrida calls the violence of "One and the Same" based on the binary opposition in cultural and historical discourses. Chong's poetics of hybridity intervene and contest such organizing (centering) and totalizing (essentializing) notions as unity, purity, and continuity pervading our aesthetic, political, and ethical realms, and he reconfigures the pleasure of decentering, splitting, synchronic doubling, polyphony, and disjunction in our time of dissemination and syncreticism. "This is the historical movement of hybridity," Bhabha remarks, "as camouflage, as a contesting, antagonistic functioning in the time lag of sign/symbol, which is a space in-between the rules of engagement" (Location, 193). As Bhabha's concept of "time lag" suggests, hybridity brings forth the reconceptualization of not only purity and unity but also temporality based on unbroken continuity.

De Certeau's notion of bricolage adds a counter-ideological function of this technique in what de Certeau calls "the practice of everyday life." According to de Certeau, bricolage is tactical in its characteristics due to its way of combining heterogeneous elements in order for people to maneuver the dominant strategies of the elite. De Certeau shows how people (always against the elite group which produces dominant culture) make (*bricolent*) "innumerable and infinitesimal transformations of and within the dominant cultural economy in order to adapt it to their own interests and their own rules" (Practice, xiv). Chong's tactics of bricolage are "a way of operating" (encompassing de Certeau's speaking, reading, writing, walking, cooking, and shopping, singing, dancing, etc.) in resistance to hegemonic dominance, and through

his bricolages he demonstrates how people make their way through their hybrid paths. Through the performances of bricolaged identification and life styles in a time of migrating cultures, Chong's artistic achievements demonstrate a possibility of resistance to/within the dominant hegemony, which attempts to normalize our diverse ethical, epistemological, and aesthetic sensibilities.

The same issues of fragmentation, hybridization, plurality, and bricolage can be located in the vocabularies of the advocates of so-called postmodernism. But Chong does not completely embrace the beauty of pure surface, appearance, and decorative packaging prioritized through the postmodern media culture. As Chong investigates the contemporary electronic myths mainly constructed through tv, he finds the most effective and most subversive art form in tv advertising. Therefore Chong states that "we must learn from them because they are master manipulators of the first order." But "we should use," he adds, "these lightning-fast techniques in order to raise questions about society that has so little time for reflection and contemplation amid all the manipulation" (qtd. in Marx, C13). Chong's comments on tv advertising resonate the postmodern phenomenon in which, as Baudrillard describes, "advertising is the triumph of superficial form, the smallest common denominator of all significations, the zero degree of the meaning, the triumph of entropy over all possible tropes" since "it is without depth, instantaneous and instantly forgotten" (qtd. in Kellner, Jean, 98). But unlike Baudrillard's nihilistic avowal of postmodern superficiality manifested through the universe of simulacra in which all the binary components of surface and depth, appearance and reality, life and art, and subject and object collapse and are

manipulated by the simulation models and codes, Chong disavows (resists) the postmodern value of "the zero degree of meaning."

In his narrative texts, Elephant Memories (1990) and Truth and Beauty (1999), using the means of mimicking such contemporary mediatized values as fast tempo and superficiality particularly present in tv advertising, Chong critiques the recklessness and superficiality of our media-oriented culture and its conspiratory connection to consumerist-capitalism as a desire-producing cultural machine. As for the background of his narrative text Elephant Memories, Chong explains that "people are used to fast-paced, fragmented things, and this piece is an attempt to figure out a way to work in a world raised on television, which is why it's so pop-apocalyptic, so manic in its vision of a society that is becoming over-controlled." "Elephant Memories," Chong notes, "is about the systematic destruction of memory, and how a society without memory is a society without depth" (qtd. in Marx, C13).

Chong's affirmation of depth seems to be contradictory to his superficial style used to describe reality. But, if we view depth as "a superficial secret," this contradiction collapses. Many critics focus on the surface quality in Chong's portrayal of reality shown in such film artists as Bresson and Ozu. Kindness, Nosferatu, Nuit Blanche, Humboldt's Current, Deshima, and Chinoiserie, all touch on mundane everyday lives. Particularly, Chong's narrative text Snow can be characterized by, what I call, its paradoxical "thinness of profundity." In a similar method of representation with Foucault's genealogical interpretation, Chong's "thin description" allows depth to be laid out in front of him in a more and more profound visibility; depth is resituated "as an absolutely superficial secret" (Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," 273). In Snow,

Chong shows the fragments of our everyday life as chaos indexing the critical situations of destruction and death across human history and geography. As an exemplary "thin description," I will succinctly examine the quality of "thinness of profundity'" in Snow.

The narrative text begins in 1946 Berlin with a highly superficial description of the events reminiscent of Robbe-Grillet's In the Labyrinth; an American soldier arrives on the scene with a mysterious package, searching for an address. The soldier's critical situation is oddly juxtaposed with the calm surface action of a street cleaner sweeping massive snow and dogs barking in the distance. Suddenly, military police break into an apartment and arrest a man. The audiences hear off-stage gunfire signifying the execution of the man. Another man strolls while he plays his concertina. A poor and hungry woman tries to make money as a prostitute. Disjointly, but associatively, the chaotic human life is relayed in the second scene happening in 1862 Japan presented in Nŏ style. Dealing with human betrayal and death, it introduces the fairy tale of the Snow Maid, the figure of death. In a later scene set in 1823 Massachusetts, the same motif of snowman is transformed into a real life, in which two children make a snow sister who is transformed into a real girl by their faith, but is destroyed by their skeptical father. Then, narrative time goes forward again to the Western front, 1917, where the celebration of Christmas suddenly changes into senseless warfare. The audience is led to Venezia (Venice), 1976, where the figure of death reappears in the duel of the Duke and Duchess's lover in the style of Commedia dell'arte. In the next scene, a nun reappears from the previous scene to relay stories of death and destruction: at a French convent in 1670 where an infant boy is found and allowed to be raised. But, in the second act, the audiences come to know that the boy grows up and goes off to the war.

The story of snow continues in the scene of a family welcoming a young Laotian girl into an American family, as the falling snow reminds her of her country and family destroyed by war. The surface image of snow embroiders the casual tragedy of our everyday reality.

3.7. Poetics of Inclusion

Chong's "tactical thin description" is the counter-reaction to hierarchical depth perspective, in which what is viewed as essence is privileged and the rest is excluded as inessential axillaries. Chong's idea of "doubling (and multiplying)" contests the idea of hierarchical binary division, leading to what I call "poetics of inclusion." As the Undesirable Elements oral history project well exemplifies, Chong's sense of history as disjunctive time-lag has a murmuring resemblance with Foucault's view of history in genealogy. The East/West Quartet (Deshima, Chinoiserie, After Sorrow, and Pojagi) attempts to create a counter-historiography in constructing the genealogies of the other(s). Although his previous historical narratives such as Maraya, Snow, and Nuit Blanche tell the stories of human vulnerability, destruction, and power, the Undesirable Elements series and the East/West Quartet, based on actual historical events, concentrate more on the relations of power, knowledge, and the body – aptly for a genealogy. Foucault's resituation of depth in his genealogy, not as a determining signified, as a truthful higher order, or as a hidden drama, allows historical interpretation (description) to be laid out in a more profound visibility. Chong's "thin description," in this context, is engendered by this idea of depth bilaterally paralleling surface. Chong's "genealogical tactics of doubling (of appearance and signification)" contest both the

hierarchical orders of what Barthes calls "symbolic consciousness"[18] and the "erasure of depth" (zero degree signification) in Baudrillard's sublimation of postmodern superficiality and appearance. Instead of drawing a linear dramatic arc (in which depth is hidden as a secret and determines the dynamics of the events), the layered heterogeneous segments of narratemes (images as narrative units) provide the profundity of historical interpretations. Furthermore, the audience experience of the doubling (multiplying) itself is consistently engendered by the plural positions Chong's historical narratives situate and interrupt.

In Deshima, for example, the binary poles of East/West as a power hierarchy are contested by the plural positions and interruptions of ethnicity, gender, class, and nationality. In the first scene, the audiences watch how the unity of East/West is intersected by capitalistic accumulation and dispossession. A Japanese Daimyo and a Dutch trader in their business deal marginalize each other as the other, thus highlighting their differences as barbaric. The Dutch trader thinks that "this foreigner looks like a cannibalistic monster" and the Japanese Daimyo considers that "this foreigner looks like a man-eating beast" (Deshima, 6). The Daimyo normalizes his own customs and against this makes the foreigner the beast from a barbarian land. He invents the idea of barbarian as the abject out of his own idea of man when he condescends as follows: "Why do you write from left to right? It must be written from the top of the page down, as we do. The head of a man is at the top and his feet are at the bottom, so too should a man write" (Deshima, 5). But their difference is temporarily erased when both of them are the same exploiters of black slaves. The third person in this scene is the Servant

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[18] I explained this term in Notes # 2 of Chapter 1. Refer to Barthes' essay "The Imagination of the Sign" in Barthes: Critical Essays.

who is significantly played by an African-American performer and one of the co-authors

of the narrative text, Michael Matthews. The Japanese Daimyo asks what tributes the

Dutch trader brought him. The Dutch trader enumerates the items he brought. The

Narrator played also by Matthews relates that "among the most cherished gifts were

black people, whom the Japanese were particularly fond of" (Deshima, 6). The

metaphorical formulation of the Western aggressor and the Eastern victim is made

ironic by the geography-blind abjection and racism. In later scenes, Matthews plays the

role of Vincent Van Gogh, the Dutch artist who like the black slaves is exploited by the

capitalist motherland and later posthumously by Japanese corporate power when his

painting is sold for a fortune. Scene 10, titled "East Meets West 2," portrays the shift in

power dynamic in global economy as the composite of a Sony C.E.O., the American

Business Man who profits by duplicating Van Gogh painting as postcards, and a poor

New York artist who survives with selling cheap postcards for 85 cents. In a business

deal that partially memorializes the previous Daimyo/Dutch Trader scene, the American

Businessman does not mask the explicit capitalist exploitation across cultural

boundaries. "I cannot agree with your concept of the fat, the happy, the dumb

American…. You say we have too many Blacks, too many Hispanics, too many lazy

workers. Well, so what! We say the same things. You must remember this: money is

color-blind and that's what makes our country great" (Deshima, 33). As a meaningful

interruption to the static dichotomy of the "white" aggressor and the "colored" victim,

Matthews who played the Servant in Scene I (Daimyo/Dutch Trader/Servant scene)

performs both roles of American Businessman and Japanese Businessman, his black

body indexing what the American Businessman's color-blinding capitalistic

cosmopolitan gestures signify. Later in the scene, Matthews reappears as the poor

New York artist who is suggested as a contemporary portrait of Van Gogh, reinforcing

the thematic idea that capitalist extortion is indiscriminating in those factors of ethnicity

and nationality.

I will close this poetics chapter with Chong's inclusive tactics of narrative

weaving, which mimics his vision of politics of inclusion. The binary division between

the self and the other (the abject) is erased when the abject is the self's shadowed

double in Nosferatu. The neat concepts of order, unity, purity, and absolute distinctions

in the cult of the domesticity of the yuppies in Nosferatu are scrambled and blurred by

the magician's magic, which returns our wonder of the contradictions and ambiguities of

our reality. The linear concept of social progress is contradicted in the scrambled

anarchy (of the outsiders) in Nosferatu. The abjected Red Bride and her neighbors

elide into the clean domesticity of the yuppies. This sliding technique, through the

deconstruction of the centered rationality of the self, performs the inclusive view on what

it means to be human. Chong's sliding technique operates like two overlapping

segments of negative film. In Nosferatu, at the end of Scene VII, the characters' light

living-room conversations full of exchanges of hollow and concerned materialism (which

Chong recycles from interviews with yuppies in magazines like Interview and Rolling

Stone) is counterpointed by the appearance of a Red Bride, who is dressed in red and

wearing a grotesque death mask behind a couch. As Jonathan Kalb rightly observes,

"she shatters the cloistered atmosphere, the feeling of safe domesticity the yuppies

have generated because we see that she is not external to the characters but

something internal, something frightening that has dwelt among them all along"

("Intimations," 68). The rising of the Red Bride behind the couch is what slides into the clean and proper bourgeoisie domesticity of worshiping materialism and purity in distinction (race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class).

In another narrative text, Chinoiserie, one of the historical narratives of the East/West Quartet, Chong experiments in restoring the excluded (forgotten) historical events in the *authentic* historiographies by what Chong calls "victors." Chong as Narrator of the performance tells about the laborers left out of the photograph taken on May 10, 1869 by Andrew J. Russell to commemorate the completion of the railroads running the desert of Utah: "10,000 Chinese pioneers or 90% of the workforce of the Central Pacific Railroad," the Narrator states, "were not represented in the photograph" (Chinoiserie, 32). After this narration, the audience witnesses the dramatic sliding of another piece of picture containing the Chinese laborers projected into the original photograph to correct the historical injustice that was committed through the complicit connection between the mythic representation of Americanness by the photographer and the institutional authority of the railroad officials. Through this poetics of inclusion, the audience may experience the unity in diversity, Americanness in hybridity, and continuity in a disjunctive time-lag of American history.

4. CHAPTER THREE: CHONG'S FABLES OF THE OTHER(S) – THE MYTH OF MAN CONTESTED

In examining the triple components of desire (pleasure), power, and knowledge in colonial and post (neo-) colonial discourses on the other(s), Bhabha's theoretical articulation, from the perspectives of what McClintock calls "situated psychoanalysis" (in which the other is seen as the social abject and the fetish in the intersection of psychoanalysis and social history), will shed light on the themes of Chong's fables of the other(s). But, as I examined in the first chapter, in his eclectic approach, Bhabha almost prioritizes ethnic abjection, putting aside other important reference points such as gender and class. In my theoretical bricolage, Bhabha's perspectives on ethnic abjection are in an interactive mode with other supplementary views on the other(s). I regard Spivak's and McClintock's feminist-Marxist views as complementing Bhabha's psychoanalytically elaborated social history of the other(s). I will adopt several of Bhabha's psychoanalytically informed methodological concepts to explore Chong's narrative texts on the other(s), such as <u>Fear and Loathing in Gotham</u> (1981), <u>Kind Ness</u> (1986), <u>Nosferatu</u> (1985), and <u>Undesirable Elements</u> (since 1992). These concepts are "neurotic disorientation" (function of stereotype manifested as fear or paranoid), "Manichean structure" (the structure of racism as abjection), "psychic projection" (as the mechanism of the process of abjection), "gaze" (desire to look to fix or mark difference or as the resistive eye), "stereotypes" (as the modes of representation that make the other knowable and visible), "strategic mimicry" (as the performative mode of resistance

of hybrid subject), and "narrative forms" that consolidate stereotypes as forms of knowledge.

4.1.   The Myth of Man

According to Bhabha, it is the antagonism of the (Self's) desire of the (Lacanian) Other that creates a homogenized Other, which I consider the most problematic matter in the myth of identity. Bhabha moves toward deconstructionist resistance by showing the slippage in the politics of identity and difference, that is, in the myth of the unified Self and the Other. Bhabha's eclectic approaches, like Chong's heteroglossia, inclusively hybridize the theories of Lacan, Fanon, Derrida, Foucault, Barthes, and Said in order to confront stubborn racism produced by myths about the homogenized Other, which most sociologists diagnose as an almost incurable plague (despite juridical remedy – affirmative action in America for instance). My bricolage of these diverse theoretical discourses aims to allow dialogue between them and to propose open discourses for the inclusive and participatory society, which Chong's fables of the other(s) thematically envision.

From his early career, Chong has dealt with the problematics of cultural representation of the other(s) always displayed as common stereotypes in both discourses of colonialism and contemporary racism. In this respect, Bhabha's argument is to the point in examining the prevailing stereotypes and racism in our culture, even in its seeming posterity of colonialism. Bhabha, resisting "the traditional causal link that explains contemporary metropolitan racism as a result of the historical prejudices of imperialist nations," asserts that both forms of racism are based on "their shared symbolic and spatial structures [Fanon's Manichean structure] articulated within

different temporal, cultural and power relations" (Location, 55). Bhabha proposes that stereotype functions as the presentation mode of this symbolic structure and perpetuates the antagonistic division between the good Self and the evil Other that Fanon's Manichean structure features; through this psychic mechanism, the others are sutured as the Other. It seems that Chong meditates on this seemingly unbridgeable symbolic space between the Self and the Other, attempting to challenge this mythic construction of the dominant discourses of racism.

Bhabha, adopting Fanon's views on racism, asserts that throughout the history of (neo-, or post-) colonialism, primal scenes of the myth of the Other have been staged by the idea of Man. According to Bhabha, its fundamental basis, the projecting "I," always accompanies the compulsive, fantasmatic, and persecutory "they" (Location, 61). Bhabha, however, did not sufficiently clarify what he meant by the idea of Man. Thus, in order to comprehend Bhabha's critique of the idea of Man perpetuated in contemporary racist discourses, I feel it necessary to remark on Foucault's attack on Western humanism as the ethno-centric value system whose strategies consist in universalizing (essentializing) particular values over other preferences. Chong's fables of the other(s) reconfigure the notions of individualism, freedom, and, rationality, which are considered the foundational values in this myth of Man.[1] Following Foucault, I postulate that the idea of Man is a historical and cultural construction; "the development of humanity is a series of interpretations" ("Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 151). Foucault's genealogy

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[1] It is Fanon who expressed the most resolute disavowal of the value of individuality when he asserts that among the failed European models "individualism is the first to disappear" in order to establish a new concept of man in the community. Fanon attacks how "the colonialist bourgeoisie had hammered into the native's mind the idea of a society of individuals where each person shuts himself up in his own subjectivity, and whose only wealth is individual thought" (Wretched, 47).

regards the universals of humanism "as the result of the contingent emergence of imposed interpretations" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 108).

4.2.   Subjectivity, Power, and Resistance

Based on this theoretical thread, the fables of the other(s) inevitably lead to the fables of men. As a corollary, this chapter dealing with Chong's fables of the other(s) includes Chong's interpretive narratives on men; what are men? Through Chong's tales of the bright and dark sides of human beings and cultural practices, I aim to delve into the modern impasse of subjectivity in relation to the ever-insidious normative hegemony over heterogeneous components of contemporary culture. Returning to the centuries-old problematics of subjectivity, however, does not mean reviving the naïve belief in autonomy of the subject. Rather, by examining complex relations between power and subject, I wish to open up the space for the possibility of resistance as the sign of subjectivity, resistance which provides the basis for people being subjects of their own desires and ethical actions. This notion of historical agency, to be sure, disavows the autonomous agency, which is based on the knowing subject of Cartesian *cogito*.

Foucault reconceptualizes the ethical subjects at the point where Kant dropped this topic by resorting to the rationalization of the state by the prince. Toward the end of his life, after declaring the death of Man, Foucault confronted the problematics of subjectivity again in an about-face manner. As he had already acknowledged, we cannot drop the idea of what we are since we continuously seek for an answer for who we are or what we are in a proper sense. In drawing the connection between power and truth, Foucault remarks that "philosophy's question […] is the question as to what we ourselves are. That is why contemporary philosophy is entirely political and entirely

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historical. It is the politics imminent in history and the history indispensable to politics"

(qtd. in Dreyfus & Rabinow, 204). Chong seems to recognize that there is no recourse

to pure subjectivity when he advances his search for an answer as to what we are

through his archeo-genealogical probing of human artifices (cultural practices) in

history. Against this philosophical background, I will deal with how Chong wrestles with

the idea of Man and attempts to decenter such conceptual values as absolute freedom,

empowering rationality, and atomic individuality.

According to the idea of Man, individuals (rational human beings) are the

subjects of their own destiny. This autonomy of subject and unquestionable superiority

of the rational individual are the foundation for humanist discourses on humanity. In

regard to the relation of power and subject, Foucault's argument advances that

disciplinary power through its discursive formations turns individuals into objects. But,

as I mentioned above, toward the end of his analysis, he sought to study the way a

human being is turned into a subject. For instance, his interpretive analytics on

sexuality in The History of Sexuality postulates human beings as less subjects of

knowledge (*cogito* as invariable foundation) than subjects of desire. Thus, with the

genealogy of sexuality, what he calls "the history of desiring man," Foucault investigates

"how individuals were led to practice, on themselves and on others, a hermeneutics of

desire, a hermeneutics of which their sexual behavior was doubtless the occasion, but

certainly not the exclusive domain" (Use, 5).[2]

Chong's development of his idea of a human being as an individual realized in

narratives like Angels in Swedenborg (1985), Elephant Memories (1991), the

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[2] In this way, Foucault postulates object/subject doubling of a human being. As to Foucault's discussion of doubling, refer to Chapter 9 "Man and his doubles" in The Order of Things.

Undesirable Elements series (since 1992), and his recent history project East/West

Quartet (1991-1999), corresponds to Foucault's theoretical paths. As Foucault declares

the death of Man, after Angels in Swedenborg (Swedenborg is the typical liberal-

humanist figure whose spirit fights against the despotic system),[3] Chong also rejects the

idea of an autonomous rational subject, since he discredits the illusion of unlimited

human liberty in terms of searching for truth and pleasure. Chong's use of recurring

images of grids and codes that frame what we can know and encode what we are

invoke disillusionment with the autonomy of subject. But Chong finds the clues for the

possibility of being a subject in the resistance of people: we become subjects of our own

desires when we resist the bio-power manipulating our bodies. Freedom, in this way, is

not so much an autonomous human capacity as precondition for the exercise of power

"since without possibility of recalcitrance, power would be equivalent to a physical

determination" ("Subject," 790). Against the liberal-humanist idea of freedom, which has

been historically utilized to mask the logic of domination by the few propertied

imperialists, freedom in this conceptualization is comprehended as the condition to

resist.

4.3. Identity Politics and the Myth of Free Rational Man

My purpose to foreground the idea of Man in looking at Chong's narrative texts

does not consist in defining whether they adopt humanistic rhetoric or anti-humanistic

rhetoric. Does Chong's power analysis make him an anti-humanist? Is he both

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[3] Even though Chong attacks the corporate greed of America (capitalist materialism) in the 1980s, he
achieves this task through the spiritual liberty of an individual who fights against the hegemonic system.
In Angels of Swedenborg, Robert Swedenborg (a conflated figure from a contemporary American and 18th
century visionary, Emmanuel Swedenborg) embodies the liberal-humanist idea of Man.

humanist and anti-humanist or neither?   In a personal interview with the author, Chong

positions himself as humanist, remarking that "I am a humanist in the sense that I

support and promote humanist values in my work – values of social justice, freedom of

expression, racial, sexual, economic equality, peace, internationalism, etc." (Personal

Interview, July 2004). But his humanist values are different from the foundational

values of liberalist-humanism. Chong's different humanist ideas are reflected in his later

fables. They show the slippage of identity and difference, demystifying the idea of Man

fostered mainly by the liberal-humanist discourses. His political awareness has risen

from questioning both the narcissism and abjection embedded in the idea of Man

especially manifested in the political right of the Reagan-Bush eras. Chong states that

"we were growing insular from each other, a result of the Reagan era, when it became

okay to be selfish, okay to be intolerant. People in America should have the right to

have different opinions. When one group tried to clamp down on another group, that is

fascism. Americans have forgotten what democracy is" (qtd. in Brown, C1).

    Andrew Busch in his book Ronald Reagan and the Politics of Freedom claims

that Reagan's rhetoric of free democracy, which prioritizes the individual freedom

exercised in political and religious views and free enterprise, echoes "the fear of

democratic despotism" of French liberal-humanist Alexis de Tocqueville. Alan Woods in

"Consuming the Past: Commercial American Theatre in the Reagan Era." illuminates

how mainstream theatres in the Reagan Era resonated the rhetoric of grandiosity over

the idea of individual liberty. According to his assertion, "the Reagan era has been

characterized as the culmination of a conservative revolution, and as a period in which

Americans questioned, if not rejected, the liberal social agenda of the preceding four

decades" (252).[4] Woods argues that the commercial theatres of most Broadway

musicals in their spectacularity and simple story lines reflect Reagan's politics

respectively in "the public display of wealth" and political "issues simplified to slogans

essentially devoid of content" (254). Likewise, in most mainstream theatres, while such

important social issues as abortion, homeless, drug abuse, international politics, AIDS

epidemics, and ethnic harmony were rarely handled, the idea of an individual fighting

against the restrictive society or government was one of the highlighted themes in the

Reagan Era (254-262).

It is against this background that Chong in <u>Nosferatu</u> (1985), which he regards as

his first explicitly political narrative text, criticizes corporate greed enhanced by the idea

of the liberty of the propertied individual. "The figure of the vampire," Auslander

observes, "who in Chong's performance becomes an allegorical figure for the

unacknowledged darkness beneath the smooth surface of Reaganite America, is a live

recreation of Murnau's filmic image" ("Ping," 83). <u>Kind Ness</u> (1986), wherein Buzz in

gorilla mask and suit is presented as an allegorical figure of the ethnic abject, makes

thorny political comments on the ethno-centric identity politics of the Reagan era. In

further response to the intolerance of difference of the Reagan era, the <u>Undesirable</u>

<u>Elements</u> project was inaugurated in 1992 as an installation, which he titled <u>A Facility</u>

<u>for the Challenging and Changing of Undesirable Elements</u>. The series contain intense

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[4] Woods' assertion is backed up by many cases of political criticism of the Reagan Era. Busch in <u>Ronald Reagan and the Politics of Freedom</u> claims as follow; the free enterprise values protecting the corporate greed of a few privileged is to blame for making the American middle-class almost vanish, despite the seeming opulence, the Federal Government's deficit is reported to be as high as ever, politically, the President publicly attacked affirmative action and the values of the civil rights movement. Reagan's Government, internationally, exercised the power of world police against the evil Soviet blocks through frequent political interventions.

criticism on identity politics and its philosophical foundation of incompatible identity and difference.

Elephant Memories (1991), Chong's most overtly political allegory, illuminates the contradiction of the idea of individual liberty of the Reagan Era when it penetrates the selective prism of fantastical fascist control which, borrowing Chong's metaphor, irons the wrinkles out smoothly. Elephant Memories uses the sci-fi setting of an Orwellian fascist nation, where people are controlled by digital codes and there is no freedom (of choice). People called "no-joys" populate the nation. Created at the beginning of the first Gulf War, Elephant Memories alludes to the War, demonstrating how the idea of liberty, when it is manifested as narcissistic greed, can easily be mutated into domination of the others abroad. Chong remarked that Elephant Memories satirizes "how greed is tied into the way in which one culture dehumanizes another by calling it 'the enemy'" (Marx, C13). As one critic observed, "there's a reference to a troublemaking 'little creep' who sounds like Saddam. The line 'Lets just drop the big one over there' echoes many Americans' sentiments. Another line 'Our way of life is the way of life,' echoes sentiments that may go unspoken, but surely exist" (Temin, 31). The segment titled "IT'S A MAN'S WORLD" applies a severe satirical sting to masculine aura of the period. No face "Other" who has a woman's voice haunts this man's world. As a political allegory of the Reagan-Bush regime, Elephant Memories seems prescient in terms of recent geopolitics where the same rhetoric of human dignity, freedom, and the value of family and individuals masks xenophobia,

phallocentrism, and corporate greed, justifying the invincible hegemonic power rising over "an axis of evil" in the world.[5]

According to Foucault's accounts, against the common human enemy of irrationality, the grand project of Enlightenment progress under the lofty leadership of reason accelerated the development of science and technology for the well-being of humankind, but resulted in the devastating consequences of genocide in modern history. According to Foucault, human rationality has historically manifested its ambiguity in the irrational. Foucault remarks that "it was on the basis of the flamboyant rationality of social Darwinism that racism was formulated, becoming one of the most enduring and powerful ingredients of Nazism." "This was, of course," Foucault maintains, "an irrationality, but an irrationality that was at the same time, after all, a certain form of rationality" ("Space," 165). Chong's resistance to rationality, however, does not succumb to irrationality because he knows that liberation of the irrational alone cannot solve the problems we face. But as Foucault embraced the irrationality (madness) of Nietzsche, Chong sees a creative power in irrationality as one human aspect. Like Foucault, Chong warns us of the danger of the unbridled power of instrumental (technical) reason, whose development culminated in modern technology-oriented capitalism fueling national and global domination. In these political schemes, the idea of Rational Man projects its otherness, that is, the irrational, into the homogenized Other, creating a double fetish of intellectual Self and primitive Other. In

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[5] Liberal-humanist ideas of liberty and human dignity reveal their contradictions when they are enlisted in defending the rhetoric of world peace, justifying attack on Afghanistan and Iraq, which obviously destroys many people's freedom and dignity there. In terms of recent political conflicts, Chong told me in a personal interview that Elephant Memories was a prescient work and he wanted to bring it back.

Fear and Loathing in Gotham (1975) Chong deals with racist paranoia wrapped as rational power, illuminating irrational fear and fantasy as the double of rationality.

The first scene of Nosferatu represents Chong's own paradoxical image of man as an angel whose heart is made of that of a beast. The rationalizing rhetoric that constructs the other as beast, irrational, unclean, and dangerous can be exposed as a modern purification and abjection embodied in the politics of exclusion. The idea of the Rational Man, according to Chong, marginalizes the other(s) through the hegemonic power, creating social domination and subjugation. Chong remarks that "If I were to be seen making a political statements, I would say it is a very general one – holding the fort for the irrational" (Banes, "World," 83). Chong diagnoses the illness of our imbalanced rational culture, pointing out psychic repression of "the irrational forces" and the need to find "healthy channels for their release," not by the dangerous projection onto the other(s) of different ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, and nationality (Abbe, 6). To achieve psychic balance, Chong's narratives often weave dreams, rituals, and magic into rational life, and I consider that this is why his narratives are conceptually transparent, but at the same time perceptually mysterious.

In Chong's view, "the self is animal, primal." And his work is "a way of moving toward that, looking at it, and understanding it – even if it only begins by visualizing it" (Banes, "World," 83). It is not only the divisions among humans but also the fissure between nature (often the name for the unknown or the irrational) and human beings that Chong is much concerned with. In a 1989 interview related to the narrative piece Skin – A State of Being (1989), which deals with the theme of the human-animal, Chong claims that "we think we live in this rational world, that we are in control of things, but we

are not in control of things." "We think," Chong remarks, "we are removed from nature, but we are not removed from it or independent of nature – look at the problems we have with pollution, dumping in the ocean, the hole in the ozone layer" (qtd. in Huth, 5). Elephant Memories, which also alludes to Fritz Lang's Metropolis and the cyberpunk of William Gibson, shows the irony of the technical evolution that both leads to the destruction and protects us from the destruction. In the cyber-technopia set in Elephant Memories, due to the polluted air and ultra violet rays, people cannot travel outside their personal sphere without what they call "PabaHelmet." Even though he does not claim that he is against all the achievements of science and technology, Chong attacks the arrogant claim of superiority of rationality leading to a high-tech oriented society that appropriates and destroys our ecosystem.[6] Social alienation in the high-tech oriented society is Chong's recent theme in Reason (2002). Many scholars claim that the idea of atomic individuality is historically responsible for social alienation. Chong's narrative text, Reason visually demonstrates the severity of the atomic separation among people through the image of framed compartments. The narrative text makes us contemplate the vulnerability of human reason against the seemingly unaccountable operation of the unconscious and shows how people reason in their own ways, but end up with social alienation despite the evolution of communication technologies.

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[6] For a detailed discussion about the conspiratory link between the idea of Man and the destruction of our ecosystem, see Enrique Dussel's essay "Beyond Eurocentrism: The World-System and the Limits of Modernity" in The Cultures of Globalization.

4.4. New Conceptualization: Historical Agency and Heterotopia

"All islands connect underwater," Chong states, and in this way "what affects one human being somewhere else ultimately affects us. We have to understand that we are part of a whole, even as we're expressing our individuality" (qtd. in Kappe, page # not available). Chong's emphasis on individuals *in relation to* community and connection between individuals should be understood in his vision of new man and society.[7] Through his fables of men, Chong searches for this intersubjective connection between the self and the other(s) in a very historical moment when individuation based on narcissistic self recognition and the accumulation of individual wealth serves the culture of racism and economic greed, which he most severely criticizes. Chong regards the Undesirable Elements oral history project as "a form of connection," whose performance of political alliance emerges as "the whole," an imagined community.

According to Chong, the question of identity is not separable from our ethical behaviors expressing how we recognize others. Like Foucault, Chong draws our attention to Socrates' classic imperative, "Know yourself." In a 1987 interview, Chong remarks about the significance of knowing oneself and the evil and destructive side that lurks within, stating that "not looking inside means you always project out. You project the evil inside out onto the world outside, on to the Russians (the evil empire), the Iranians, etc" (Collins, 14). If repression operates within the self, projection is the key mechanism of abjection by which the self casts out what is considered to be evil, impure, and undesirable. In terms of the relation with power and desire, this

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[7] Chong's notion of connection among individuals can he discussed both biologically and politically (ethically). In Kind Ness, Chong suggests the biological tie among all human beings in a sense that we all share the same gene pool. Meanwhile, Chong regards Undesirable Elements oral history project as "a form of connection," whose performance emerges as "the whole."

mechanism of projection recapitulates Foucault's analysis on power and ethics. Foucault remarks, "if one does not know one's capacity and limitation in the abuse of power, one exceeds the legitimate exercise of one's power and imposes one's fantasies, appetites, and desires on others" ("Ethics," 288).

According to Foucault's Greek example, ethics encompassing care for the others is an ethics which suggests techniques for the care of the self. Taking Chong's links to Confucian ethics into consideration, a connection can be made between Greek and Confucian ethics in the sense that both types of ethics promote the cultivation of the self as the means to serve community. But, as Foucault warns in regard to the Greek example, Confucian ethics cannot be an absolute solution to contemporary problems since it was the cultural and historical product of a particular period and culture embracing normalization and a prescribed hierarchy of social class and gender.[8] Rather, Chong's techniques for the care of the self are manifested in his ethical languages (justice, respect, equality, etc.) that concern care for the others. In this way, Chong locates an area to disarm the hegemonic power perpetuating status quo not only in politics and but also in ethics. Chong's tactics become two-pronged: "voicing back" through his political activism and "reflecting back" the individual's ethical composition through his more morality-inclined narratives. This is why his narratives always leave us moral predicaments as well as political problematics.

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[8] In a personal interview, I asked if he considered Asian aesthetics and philosophy as alternative solutions to "Western problems" like atomic individualism since, in his early career, he expressed the idea of communal bonding postulated in Confucian sense of community. For me, Confucianism has been utilized to consolidate the prescribed hierarchies in society. Whereas Franz Fanon's sense of communal boding is derived from indigenous African idea of brotherhood (or sisterhood), the Confucian sense of communal bonding and harmony comes out of this hierarchical vision of community. Chong denies his Confucian affinity, remarks that "I am not a Confucianist except that philosophy was fundamental to the way I was raised" (Personal Interview, July 2004).

Against this theoretical backdrop, I will illuminate how Chong's fables of the other(s) and men deconstruct the narcissistic myths of Man in its absolute epistemological logic of identity and difference and suggest the alternative possibility of historical (political and ethical) agency. My approaches to the politics of Chong's fables of the other(s) mainly consist in two related themes: the first deals with the structure, mechanism, and effects of racial abjection (in a broad sense of ethnicity, class, and gender) backed up by the narcissistic myths of Man; the second part articulates Chong's deconstructive tactics: how he contests the authoritarian binary structure of the good Self and the evil Other by complicating it through his reformulation of rhetoric involved in the dominant myth of Man, which prepares for his proposal of an inclusive vision of harmony among people. This inclusive society can only be embodied in real space, what Foucault calls "heterotopia," "not a void inside of which we could place individuals and things," but a heterogeneous space of sites and relations "which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another." In this heterotopia, we can recognize others as subjects of their own desire and ethical actions, as we wish to be, and the experience of hybrid and cross-cut relations can save us from the danger of projecting our evils on to the homogenized Other as our antagonistic enemy ("Space," 168-169).

4.5.   Effects of Schematic Racism: Neurotic Disorientation

As Chong acknowledges, his ghetto consciousness developed in the contained Chinatown in New York City during his elementary and middle school years, and his experience of being the outsider when he left Chinatown to study at High School of Art & Design and Pratt Institute. Film making at the School of Visual Arts soon became the

source of his autobiographical approach to the theme of the other in his earlier narrative text, <u>Fear and Loathing in Gotham</u> (1975), which is a theatrical remaking of a classic horror film and a film noir. For a comprehensible explanation of the themes involved in the narrative text, I will briefly sketch out the production history and stage presentation. <u>Fear and Loathing in Gotham</u> was first presented in the Jean Cocteau Theatre in New York in 1975 and thereafter in other American and international cities. In 1981, the production participated in the World Theatre Festival in Nancy, France. <u>Fear and Loathing in Gotham</u> is a small-scale bricolage theatre work on a proscenium stage in which speech, slide projection, naturalistic and stylized movements, and shadow plays are used to tell about the intense neurosis which American people in situations of assimilation and racism are subject to experience. Meredith Monk composed and performed the music for this production.

In <u>Fear and Loathing in Gotham</u>, there are three main roles (a detective, victims, and a killer) and a stage manager who mainly acts to smooth scene changes. Two performers play the role of the victims. Three girl victims in two shadow plays are presented through stylized movements by a dancer, and the little schoolgirl in the classroom scene is played naturalistically by the other performer. The stage does not contain a definite scene construction except the white backdrop for lighting purposes and slide projection. Instead, the metonymic presentation of chairs and tables poetically signifies the spaces in which the characters are situated. The stage manager brings in the necessary furniture pieces and props one at a time (except small props like a dish and utensils) in a deliberate but at the same time casual manner.

Against Peruvian music, sitting in a chair, the detective is positioned with a newspaper in front of his face and he remains behind the newspaper. This pre-set leads into the opening scene as a part of the scene. The stage manager brings in another chair and table for the Chinese immigrant (a serial killer) in the beginning of the opening scene. In this overlapping scene segment, the two characters in two different spaces are juxtaposed. The detective is obsessed with finding clues for the case. This action image is typified trough his card playing (sorting out and searching through his cards as if for a clue). Meanwhile, the serial killer indulges in his private meal. The detailed images are suggestive to his killing; the killer numbly carves "some invisible dinner"; suddenly, he rolls his head around, "a huge wad of white stuff" and "dripping fine red string" stuck in his mouth (Jowitt, 106).

In the second scene presented as a shadow play, which is lit with pale, blue gel, against the background sounds of a children's song, a little girl (with hair bows and flouncy skirts) enters into the scene with a teapot and two tea cups in which "Victoriana" style wood chairs and a large round table with a lace table cloth are set. While she plays tea party with her imaginary guest, the killer joins the little girl. The second scene ends with a growing image of the killer as a shadow, which signifies his horrifying deed. In the short third scene, there appears an image of a facemask on invisible wire (maybe the ghost of the victim in the previous scene), which dances across the stage. The fourth scene is set in a classroom. A little schoolgirl answers the questions of an invisible teacher, chanting about the Indian's original sale of Manhattan with Jean Claude Ribes (The stage manager is turned into Chief while the actor, who was playing the killer, becomes the stage manager for the classroom scene). Her school

performance is juxtaposed with squirrely voiced English words (of the killer). The

facemask in the third scene returns, stopping in front of the face of the little schoolgirl.

This image forebodes her death. There is a blackout, during which a chilling flute cry is

heard. In the last scene, a pink lit shadow play, a little girl dressed up as a princess with

a crown and wand does ballet to a tinkling music box. The killer enters, and the little

ballerina girl leads the stumbling killer as if he were the Prince and she the Fairy. They

go off stage, and the light changes from pink to yellow. The flute cries again. The last

victim, a little girl in a nightgown with a lost doll enters into the scene. She crouches on

the ground and cries, hugging her doll. The killer enters and leads her off. The flute

cries again.

Fear and Loathing in Gotham is loosely based on Fritz Lang's classic horror film

M, a story about a serial killer who stalks young girls. But Chong's image description in

the rehearsal script of the detective who stalks the killer denotes – "*the overall

impression of a cop of the forties and fifties*" – Chong's debt to the film noir of the forties

and fifties. In this tale of an outsider, Chong uses popular images of the horror genre,

an innocent victim and cold-blooded serial killer, but in a subversive way. Chong

handles the audience's blind psychological horror triggered by witnessing the

horrendous deed of the killer in the original horror film in very non-mimetic and non-

psychological ways through choreographed scenes, drawings projected on the wall,

shadow plays, and suggestive sounds and visual images (a crying flute, growing

shadow images, a dancing facemask, and gel lighting). Chong's techniques of

distancing enable the audience to shift from their habitual perception of the conventional

horror genre (The other is a monster) into the ideological and cultural aspects of both insiders' and outsiders' pathology.

Meaningfully, in the premiere performance, Chong himself played the lonely outsider, making a bricolage of his autobiographical experience of the ethnic other with the popular classic horror film, film noir, a cartoon, slide projection, dance movement and a shadow play. In one exemplary scene where a tiny American Flag appears (classroom scene), Chong juxtaposes the image of a schoolgirl (later the innocent victim) who seems easily to learn English with a squirrel voice (of the killer) which struggles to sound English words out but is unable to do it with precision and completion, producing a grotesque howl. By doing so, Chong heightens the pain and frustration of coerced assimilation, which erases cultural difference in America, exploring this pain and frustration as the cultural psychopathology prevailing in the everyday life of immigrant community. As Philip Auslander rightly observes, beyond his experience of personal pain, "Chong alludes to a familiar representation of madness to suggest that the pathology he addresses is social, rather than individual, in origin" ("Ping," 83).

But in a more complicated and subtle way, what makes this narrative text so appealing is, I believe, the aspect of cultural psychopathology of both sides, insiders and outsiders, which Auslander overlooks in his stress on the killer's pathology. For a broader and inclusive spectrum of view in Chong's fables of monsters, Suzanne R. Westfall provides a valid perspective, stating that "Ping's works are full of potentially terrifying outsiders, yet these characters almost always turn out to be awesome and symbolic creatures of myth rather than the repellent monsters of horror. For if any one

quality unites his productions it is his concern with the outside point of view, or the

insider's point of view of the outsider, or the other way around, or simultaneously"

("Ping," 371). Kristeva's elaboration of the ambivalence of pleasure/pain,

satisfaction/fear, and prohibition/temptation in her socio-psychic conception of abjection

well illuminates the psychic/mythic aspect of horror, which Westfall mentions above.

Kristeva in her book Powers of Horror deals with the ambivalent double confrontation of

the narcissistic ego in its anxiety for certain boundaries and the phobia for the

uncertainties resulting from imprecise abjection in itself. According to Kristeva's

accounts, abjection hovers over the ego, threatening its self-identity. The boundary

rituals (for example, religious prohibition in the form of a sacred taboo) and myths, as

symbolic institution, in this sense paradoxically mirror the ego's horror at the return of

the abject (as the Oedipus myth well exemplifies). Kristeva notes, "A whole facet of the

sacred, true lining of the sacrificial, compulsive, and paranoid side of religions, assumes

the task of warding off that danger" (64). The social authorities "parcel out, demarcate,

delineate an order, a framework, a sociality" (74).

Chong borrows the structure of the horror genre, but he deconstructs its mythic

construction in its exclusive emphasis on the other's (outsider, monster, killer, beast,

stranger, the extraterrestrial, foreigner, etc.) horrifying deed, and corresponding fear on

the part of the spectators, for a pedagogical purpose ("To be alerted"). Through the

archetypal, antagonistic narrative structure of an innocent girl, a ruthless outsider, and a

policeman xenophobically tracking down the foreigner like a hunted beast, Chong also

explores the insiders' collective fear and paranoia exemplified through the policeman

toward the ethnic abject. That the outsider's fear and frustration resulted in a

compulsive hate crime is juxtaposed with the paranoid rationalization of the policeman's excessive hostility, suspicion, and defense. In this way, the fear and loathing in the title indicates not only the outsider's but also the insider's. Conclusively, as Fanon pointedly illuminates, in the antagonistic power structure, both insiders and outsiders suffer neurotic disorientation.

Outsiders suffer an inferiority complex, which the lonely Chinese immigrant in Fear and Loathing in Gotham demonstrates. The innocent ("white") girls, whom the Chinese immigrant stalks, draw him out only to trigger some fear and frustration to kill them. This theme of "white paranoia" reminds me of Fanon's description of his own autobiographical experience of being the other in his book Black Skin, White Masks: "The nigger is shivering because he is cold, the little boy is trembling because he is afraid of the nigger, the nigger is shivering with cold […], the handsome little boy is trembling because he thinks that the nigger is quivering with rage, the little white boy throws himself into his mother's arms: Mama, the nigger is going to eat me up" (114). The paranoia of the little girl with her doll lost in Fear in Loathing in Gotham indeed provokes the killer. Paranoia in the form of compulsive delusion is the conspicuous symptom the little girl manifests. Meanwhile, the insider's superiority in the form of rational power manifested in the policeman's tracking of the beast through the scientific evidence turns out to arise from his compulsive fear and loathing, as Chong draws his focus on the insider's ambivalent rationality.

As Kristeva complicates the slippage of identity and difference in the ambivalence of abjection (between pleasure and horror), Bhabha focuses on the slippage of narcissistic abjection in the context of colonial authority. In his essay "Sly

Civility," included in the location of culture, elaborating on Freud's concepts of

"projection" and "paranoia," Bhabha maintains that "the authoritarian demand can now

only be justified if it is contained in the language of paranoia," since the native refusal to

"return and restore the image of authority to the eye of power has to be reinscribed as

implacable aggression, assertively coming from without: *He hates me.*" As Freud

explains the mechanism of displacement of projection, this persecutory paranoia comes

from the frustrated wish "I want him to love me," which turns into its opposite "I hate

him" and then through projection and the exclusion of the first person, "He hates me."

According to Bhabha, "the other side of narcissistic authority may be the paranoia of

power; a desire for 'authorization' in the face of a process of cultural differentiation"

(100).

Recent psychology, however, complicating Freud's single condition (cause) of

paranoia, views the broad range of conditions, from "people who have rigid and

suspicious personalities yet function more or less successfully in society" to "psychotic

patients with megalomaniacal or messianic delusions" (Farrel, 41). Chong deals with

this obsessive-compulsive syndrome of paranoia in the social condition of racism. The

racist paranoia of the policeman in Fear and Loathing in Gotham is a "slant" or a

"rationalized mode of thinking." Butler's analysis of the racist rhetoric of the Rodney

King case is also to the point. In her essay, "Endangered/Endangering: Schematic

Racism and White Paranoia," Bulter problematizes the rationalization of racist rhetoric

through the scientific evidence of the videotaped site of self-defense of the policemen.

"According to this racist episteme, he is hit in exchange for the blows he never

delivered, but which he is, by virtue of his blackness, always about to deliver" (19). The

way the racists look at (interpret) King's black body is already schematized by their phobia toward the black body. According to Butler's reports, alongside the video, the defense attorneys of the accused police officers offered the frozen frames without sounds one by one in detail, in which "the magnification of the raised hand as the hyperbolic figure of racial threat, interpreted again and again as a gesture foreshadowing violence, a gesture about to be violent, the first sign of violence, violence itself" (20).

The rationalizing racist rhetoric that the other is always ready to threaten or cross the pure racial boundary is, in fact, rooted in irrational phobia like the Nazi's rationalization of their genocidal purification ritual. The neurotic disorientation, whether it is inferiority complex or "white paranoia," is correlated with schematic racism. (Abjection of differences, of course, may extend beyond ethnicity to gender, class, and nationality.) Chong's narrative texts like <u>Elephant Memories</u>, <u>Deshima</u>, and <u>Chinoiserie</u> deal with what David Harvey calls "the paranoid style"[9] of American politics in which persecutory narcissism is repeated: in McCarthyism reacting to red (communism) phobia;[10] Internment of Japanese-Americans from a fear of sabotage by Japanese-Americans; and xenophobic immigration laws (for example, the Chinese Exclusion Act

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[9] See Harvey's recent book <u>New Imperialism</u> (51).

[10] As to this matter, here I record conversations between Chong and me. **Choi**: "Speaking based on the sources that I have (including your works), you did not mention about any significant American historical and political events related to communism such as McCarthyism and the Cold War (except your mention on the American projection to the Russians). If you had not mentioned about communism at all, does this have something to do with the fact that your route to America is related to communist China? If you had dealt with it, where?" **Chong**: "Actually, I made an entire work about the communist era in China entitled WITHOUT LAW, WITHOUT HEAVEN in Seattle in 1987. Unfortunately things didn't end happily between me, my collaborator and the producer. I never received a copy of the text and the project is undocumented. But let me say this in response to your question – I came of age in America during the fifties and sixties when the threat of communism was practically all we heard. In truth the propaganda effort hasn't stopped today even as the communist era has passed" (Personal Interview, July 2004).

in the 1880's and recent institution of SEVIS [The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System] designed to regulate international students and visitors as potential enemies after the involvement of Arab international students in 9/11). The paranoid style of Chong's fables of the other(s) frequently focuses on schematic racism.

4.6.   The Structure of Schematic Racism: The Manichean Self/Other

Bhabha has recourse to Fanon's Manichean split to describe ethnic and national abjection. According to Fanon, the spatial compartments in the demography of the colonial city reflect the Manichean structure of colonial consciousness and its fixed division. Fanon states that "the Colonial world is a Manichean world. It is not enough for the settler to delimit physically, that is say with the help of the army and the police force, the place of the native. As if to show the totalitarian character of colonial exploitation the settler paints the native as a sort of quintessence of evil […]." "At times," Fanon continues, "this Manichism goes to its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the native, or to speak plainly, it turns him into an animal" (Wretched, 41-42). Fanon's severe attack on the colonial myth of Man pinpoints the colonialist narcissistic ego that turns the natives into its antagonistic Other (savage, primitive, animal, beast, monster, etc.).

Bhabha points out the same symbolic structure in contemporary metropolitan racism. I consider that this symbolic structure answers the frequent questions that Chong encountered in regard to characterizing Buzz in Kind Ness, an immigrant from Africa, as a gorilla. "It gives," Chong maintains, "much more distance to have a gorilla, instead of another person. Also, you can see how they treat him as 'other' much more clearly" (Chong, "Notes," 65). Alan Kriegsman thus draws a connection between

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Chong's <u>Kind Ness</u> and Kafka's <u>Metamorphosis</u> (whose hero finds himself transformed into an insect), but I argue that <u>Kind Ness</u> deals less with universal (existential) human conditions than the concrete cultural and historical practice of American assimilation and abjection in the 1950's and '60's, the formative period when Chong retrospectively recalls how his idea of identity and difference was forged. The titular theme of identity and difference is reflected in Chong's ironic reformulation of the word kindness into kind ness. The word, kindness denotes human sympathy toward the same human beings or living beings, but the politics of kind ness (identity politics) are never concerned with this basic human sentiment. The space between kind and ness visually signifies the seemingly unbridgeable divisiveness of the Manichean structure.

To enrich the discussion of the themes of identity and difference in <u>Kind Ness</u>, I will succinctly describe its production history and stage. <u>Kind Ness</u> was conceived and directed by Chong, being developed in a workshop at Northeastern University, Boston. The University's Division of Fine Arts presented the premiere performances of the narrative text in April of 1986.[11] In May of that year, it was brought to La Mama E.T. C. in New York and won 1987 *USA Playwrights' Award*. The narrative text was written in collaboration with Rober Babb, John Fleming, Brian Hallas, Jeannie Hutchins, Lenard Petit, Louise Smith and Louise Sunshine.[12] Like Chong's other productions, <u>Kind Ness</u> is designed for a proscenium stage. In the production, the stage is bare and has no curtain. The stage floor is painted white. There are six pairs of black wings with

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[11] The premiere performances were funded, in part, by the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Dalglish Foundation.

[12] For brief accounts about the collaborators, refer to the prescript of the play published with other new plays in <u>New Plays USA 4</u>.

accompanying black teasers. On the back wall is a floor-to-ceiling white cyclorama, and downstage of the cyclorama are two small white plaques for special lighting effects. There is no set except for folding chairs which are carried on and off, and some styrofoam rocks in the last scene, "At the Zoo." The stagehand brings in the rocks, and these rocks form "*a diorama-like setting,*" "*a habitat for an animal"* (<u>Kind Ness</u>, 93). Since there is no set construction except in the last scene, "*the plaques help to give spatial definition to the stage. They also suggest that the audience is watching human specimens in a zoological environment*" (<u>Kind Ness</u>, 56).

There are six main characters. Daphne is a rich WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant). Rudy and Lulu are both Irish Catholics. Dot is a blind, Jewish girl. Alvin is a poor French-Canadian. Buzz, an immigrant from Rwanda, joins these five friends at an elementary school where Mr. Conklin is the stereotypical principal. The principal's role is played in a mask by the actor who plays Rudy. The role of the principal's wife, Mrs. Conklin, is also played using a mask and accessories by the actor who plays Lulu. Further exemplifying the strategy of multiple role-playing, which is designed to demonstrate the multiple positions one person can perform, the actor who plays poor Alvin even plays the role of the colonial master and a gorilla in a zoo. The ages of the characters are suggested through changing wigs and costumes, and also popular songs help the audience identify the time period. For example, in Scene 9 "Bus Stop," Rudy's yellow slicker and his childish behavior, "*hopping one imaginary puddle to another*" suggest his age in the scene (<u>Kind Ness</u>, 80). As the second graders, the characters in the scene whistle "Whistle While You Work." <u>Kind Ness</u> is set in Suburbia, USA in the

1950s and 1960s. The narrative text weaves the thematic threads of assimilation and abjection through six schoolmates from elementary school to early adulthood.

In spite of the seeming incongruence in the styles of presentation (vaudeville style dumb show and choreographed dance scenes juxtaposed with the more dramatic presentation of the text) the whole narrative text of Kind Ness consistently unravels the myth of assimilation and abjection during the 1950s and 1960s (allusively to the 1980s) in America. In the first scene of Kind Ness, in the frame of a game-show, the Narrator's voice-over (Chong's) entices the audience to participate in the epistemological impasse of identity and difference. The Narrator uses the image of Algerian woman in veil in this slide presentation as the marker of difference, that is to say, what is not like an American woman. Slide # 17 shows two images of women, "woman from Este Lauder ad/Woman from Algeria." And the Narrator's clarification goes as follows: "the image on the right is of a woman who had to remove her veil in order for this photograph to be taken. The woman on the left did not have to remove her veil at all" (Kind Ness, 61). The other is defined as otherness of the self and the veil informs this otherness.[13]

The Narrator's compulsive obsession to clarify identity and difference is highly exaggerated, as the slide projections proceed from simple geometric shapes to the more complex images loaded with cultural and ideological baggage. The Narrator's

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[13] It is interesting to note that borrowing Lacan's metaphor of veil Fanon uses it in his discussion of Algerian women and resistance in "Algeria Unveiled" in Dying Colonialism, and also Kristeva uses this metaphor when she describes the relation between self-identity and abjection. Fanon contends that for the French colonizers, the veil outlines the unknowable and invisible Arab society, demarcating the other(s). As Fanon observes, the colonizers did not recognize the potentials of Algerian women without veils in the Algerian revolution since for them putting off the veils was interpreted as the complete assimilation into the European values and life styles. But, as camouflaged mimicry, what Bhabha calls "strategic mimicry," the Algerian women's adoption of European styles enabled their tasks in the revolution to be successful. Fanon states, "the soldiers, the French patrols, smile to her as she passes, compliments on her looks are heard here and there, but no one suspects that her suit cases contain the automatic pistol which will presently mow down four or five members of one of the patrols" (58).

identification becomes less scientific as it becomes more political. Slide # 42 shows

images of "Kennedy/Refugees" and the Narrator identifies them as images of

rendezvous. In the next slide projection "KKK/Woman holding cross," the audience is

required to become seriously engaged politically, indeed finding themselves wondering

if there is an absolutely clear way to construct identity and difference. Slide #44 has two

images of "Fidel Castro with Khrushchev/Disney with Mickey Mouse" and the Narrator

claims that those are the two images of Disneyland. In the last slide projection, the

binary dichotomy, on which the Narrator relies for his identification process, is obviously

manifested in the images of "W. Mandela/W. Mozart." Their same initial W. does not

have any significance in the Narrator's kind/ness, instead, the Narrator's binary

systemic view maintains that "W. Mandela is alive and is native of Africa, W. Mozart is

dead and was a citizen of Vienna" (Kind Ness, 63). While the Narrator only sees the

dichotomous differences, others can see the similarities; both of them achieved similar

greatness as human beings even though they lived the different periods and locations of

cultures. In my reading, W. is an emblem for the human race, but this same signature is

subsumed in a racist society under bodily differences (skin colors). At the end of the

slide presentation, the Narrator concludes that "we hope this presentation has been

helpful to you in being able to determine what is alike and what is not alike. What is

similar and what is not similar. What the images have in common and how they differ.

What is harmonious and what is dissonant" (Kind Ness, 63). The Narrator's clarifying

knowledge based on likeness (alike/not alike) is humorously ridiculed, however,

because of its arbitrariness, revealing that the politics of identity is the process of

exclusion. This binary logic of like/not like, which the Narrator displays, is the very basis

of the pseudo-scientific knowledge of racist and sexist discourses, continuously

satirized in the following scenes about Buzz and his schoolmates.

In Scene 8 "Questions and Answers," Chong explores the identity and difference

among Americans in biological and cultural aspects. In this scene, Buzz and his

schoolmates in their 20s answer questions posed by Rudy, "a smart but insensitive

Irish-Catholic," in a white doctor's gown. Rudy asks how they perceive "a large black

man carrying a pole" when they walk through the forest and him. He gives the

participants multiple choices as follow; "He is (a) a fisherman – (*Alvin raises his hand*),

(b) a mugger – (*Dot raises her hand*), (c) God – (*Daphne raises her hand*), (d) a

poacher (*Buzz raises his hand*)" (Kind Ness, 78). Their answers are as diverse as their

cultural heritages. Next, Rudy asks how many chromosomes Lulu has. Lulu answers

that she has forty-six. Then, Rudy ironically asks if Alvin (a poor working-class) has the

same forty-six chromosomes. This theme of cultural diversity and biological oneness is

followed by Rudy's question about American citizenship to everyone. Who (what)

makes America? This scene seems to say that it is not exclusive difference but this

diversity that constitutes America.[14] In an interview conducted in 1991, Chong explains

that Kind Ness is "all about our differences" and "we all have to find some way of

acknowledging each other's differences" (qtd. in Osborn, 16). But, ten years later he

explains his reason for putting real immigrant people on stage in Secret Histories,

stating that "the audience will go away more aware of how they are different and how

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[14] Bhabha's preference of cultural diversity over cultural difference, I believe, provides an apt standpoint in which Chong positions himself in the discourses of racial (in a broad sense) harmony in America. Bhabha, in his essay, "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences" articulates the two rival notions, stating that "If cultural diversity is a category of comparative ethics, aesthetics, or ethnology, cultural difference is a process of signification through which statements *of* culture or *on* culture differentiate, discriminate, and authorize the production of fields of force, reference, applicability and capacity" (206).

they are similar to people like those on stage. Americans have to stop seeing diversity as threatening and see the richness of it" (qtd. in Minis, 7A). Chong strongly disavows cultural differences based on bipolar division, which is the epistemological logic of the politics of exclusion, the very foundational logic of the Manichean structure.

4.7.   Mechanism of Schematic Racism: Projection

Projection is the key mechanism of the Manichean structure, which produces the homogenized stereotypical other. In return, this fixity of stereotypes inhibits the imaginary realm of the self from accessing the others in reality. Freud introduced the concept of "projection" when he explained it as the mechanism of psychopathological symptom formation of paranoia. W. W. Meissner, in his study of projection and projective identification, notes that even though Freud stressed the pathological cases like paranoiacs, he also accounted for the normal process of projection in which "we refer the causes of certain sensations to the external world, instead of looking for them (as we do in the case of the others) inside ourselves" (28). Projection operates partially or fully (in case of the paranoid), but it is not well understood why our psyche works this way. Meissner considers that Freud's pleasure principle has a possible explanatory connection to projection. According to Meissner, the organism projects the unbearable impulses and tensions to maintain an inner pleasurable state in the manner of aggression (29-30).

But it is well documented that this mechanism of projection operates severely when the self is in crisis. According to Linda Bamber's account in her study of genre and gender, for instance, each time the masculine tragic heroes encounter difficulty in constructing who they are, they project their weak and evil parts into the women, in

most cases, close to them. "Whether or not their losses are caused by women, their bitterness takes the form of misogyny and they associate their changing fortunes with the disgusting changes of woman's appetites" (18). The same mechanism of projection is most obviously manifested in the case of political conflict. The Cold-War consciousness, for example, transformed all the Russians (all the communists) into the pictures of the evil regardless of their ethnic behaviors, and the recent war on terrorism declares the redemption of "an axis of evil," the Islamic world. In the Seattle version of Undesirable Elements (1995), Leyla, who was parented by an Iranian Father and an American Mother, witnesses the hostile projection at the time of the Iranian Revolution and Iran's conflict with America. She recalls how the Anti-Arab sentiment persecuted her, even though she was American. "I see a sign in a restaurant window that says, 'We don't serve Iranians.' At school, my locker is toilet papered. I am very confused, I thought I was an American" (Undesirable Elements/Seattle, 39). This projective mode of thinking in the symptom of paranoia confuses immigrants with enemy aliens, and its homogenizing power is not a bygone story these days after the terrorists' attack of America on September 11. It returns like a ghost whenever the hegemonic Self feels threatened or in crisis. Rafael Moses provides this link between projection (projective identification) and political process, and I regard his focus on the phenomenon of the "demonization" of the enemy as precisely what Fanon's socio-diagnosis called the Manichean structure (134).

   In Kind Ness, Chong catches this violent scene of projection when Daphne, who claims to be 100% pure bred Anglo-American and joltingly later marries Buzz, is informed that her favorite brother has been killed in war in Korea. Daphne throws out

her anger and frustration to the others in her critical moments. Except for Buzz, the other schoolmates join Daphne in reciting the litany: "yellow-belly commies, gooks, dirty Chinese bastards, pinko chinko, commie bastards, greaseball, Arab wog bastards, scumbag, honky, nigger, spear-chucker, Irish mackerel snapper, jungle bunny, faggot, jigaboo, redneck Jew bastard, Turk, colonial imperialist, Yankee go home, Arab dogs, Polack, godam slant-eyes, wop, white-cracker assholes, Catholic, slopehead, spic, kike, nigger-lover, wetback" (Kind Ness, 85). Especially in the ethnic others listed above, what is conspicuous are the markers of identification in the form of bodily image and skin color.

Chong, however, complicates the binary division between the white European "species" and colored non-European "species" when he multiplies the differentiating factors in prismatic racism through such diverse reference points as ethnicity, nationality, class, gender, and sexual orientation.[15] In Kind Ness Dot's (a Jewish girl) blindness exemplifies that the concept of the other is not confined to the ethnic other. Dot is portrayed by Chong as the realization of otherness in a different way. Her blindness makes us recognize that our specular perception is a peculiar way to encounter the world outside. Furthermore, different perceivers may explore contradictory hierarchies of differentiation. As rich Daphne's 100% pure breed indicates, wealthy Anglo-Saxons are at the top of the hierarchy, but her assumed inferior gender status disrupts her class and ethnic status. Alvin's working-class background is treated as otherness to the extremely wealthy Daphne despite his French-Canadian heritage. Alvin, however, is the most annoying boy to his female

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[15] As much as "Black" is a myth, so is "White." Regarding mythic construction of "Whiteness" in popular representation, see Richard Dyer's The Matter of Images (Chapter 13, 14, and 15) and White.

schoolmates of the same class especially to the blind Dot (a Jewish girl) whom Daphne compassionately defends. Scene 9 "Bus Stop" illustrates the childish war between girls and boys, but the gender link in the complex web of hierarchies and diversity in <u>Kind Ness</u> is not much dealt with.

Chong became aware of the other world of the rich when he left Chinatown for the High School of Art & Design in midtown Manhattan. "Don't forget," he says to an interviewer, "that the high school was a stone's throw from Tiffany's and Sutton Place. I had never seen that kind of wealth before" (qtd. in Goldner, 6D). After the slide show of "likeness," the audience is reintroduced in "Daphne's Garden" scene to the theme of like/not like and harmony/dissonance in the divided worlds of Daphne and Alvin, the pure wealthy Anglo-American and the poor working-class French Canadian. Alvin's crush on Daphne cannot transcend the fissure between the two worlds they separately inhabit. Daphne feels it as a threat and is anxious to put him in his place by reminding him of their different social codes. This scene reminds me of Fanon's description of the double fantasy which he finds in colonial society. Alvin's lust expresses his "dreams of possession," and Daphne's excessive (hysterical) reaction typifies the paranoid fantasy using Fanon's words, "they want to take my place" (<u>Wretched</u>, 39). Daphne secures her position, beginning with her superior family background; "Let me explicate the situation for you…. My mother is a Johnson." Alvin transforms this serious statement into a joke (He says, "My mother is a house wife!"), starting a child's verbal war of conquest and resistance: "My family is coal in this country, Alvin. / My Uncle Emile, he died of black lung!" "Let's go swimming. / I don't swim, I sail." "I like polo. / My neighbor has polio." "Fool. / Asshole." "Alvin. / Daphne?" (<u>Kind Ness</u>, 65-66).

Here, the process of abjection is obvious, but it is the white's abjection of the

white. For Daphne (a wealthy Anglo-Saxon), Alvin (a poor working-class) is a "white

negro." The term like "white negro" interrupts the primacy of ethnicity in multiple

situations of abjection. According to McClintock, the phrase like "white negro,"[16] slips

the dichotomy of White/Black. The racist Manichean structure of "the good us and the

evil them" does not necessarily signify the homogenized binary division of White/Black,

West/the Rest, Europe/Non-Europe. These homogenized binaries themselves are a

mythic construction. In imperial hierarchy, the phrase "white negroes," McClintock

observes, were used "not only with respect to the Irish but also to the other 'white

Negroes': Jews, prostitutes, the working-class, domestic workers, and so on where skin

color as a marker of power was imprecise and inadequate" (51-52). For a wealthy white

narcissist like Daphne, red-necked Alvin is not the same white race. As a marker of

racial identity, like Buzz's tan skin color, Alvin's red neck is a stigma constructed by

racist epistemic violence.

4.8.   Racist Mirror Stage: Narcissism

The involvement of image (bodily outline in Lacan's mirror stage)[17] is one of the

conditions which Bhabha identifies in the process of projection. The given priority of

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[16] McClintock notes that "[Gustave de] Molinari's phrase 'white Negroes' appeared in translation in a leader in *The Times* and was consistent with the popular assumption after the 1860s that certain physical and cultural features of the Irish marked them as a race of 'Celtic Calibans' quite distinct from the Anglo-Saxons." Molinari, as a visitor to Ireland, commented as follow; "Shoes and stockings are seldom worn by these beings who seem to form a different race from the rest of mankind" (51-52).

[17] Freud already comprehended the projective identification in self-recognition as the projection of bodily surface. In The Ego and the Id, Freud remarks that "the ego is first and foremost a bodily ego; it is not merely a surface entity, but is itself the projection of a surface" (30). Lacan, in a more sophisticated embellishment, further developed Freud's notion of projection in his mirror stage. Lacan names this self's bodily outline (*gestalt*) as the Other since the self is not merely the surface of the body. The self, in this way, is identified by what it is not.

optics (looking) in the identification process, as Bhabha argues, is one of the

problematics that contribute to fix the others, blocking the social interactions between

the self and the other(s). This is why Bhabha primarily focuses on the nature of looking

in relation to the formation of an otherness in the identification process since "the

voyeuristic desire for the fixity of sexual difference and the fetishistic desire for racist

stereotypes" induce the problematics of politics of representation – including identity

politics (Location, 53). Lacan's mirror stage is useful in understanding the narcissistic

ego formation (self-identity) through abjection (difference), on which the discursive

regime of the myth of Man hinges. In "The Mirror Stage," Lacan introduces the concept

of *imago*, the ancient term for an image, maintaining that "we have only to understand

the mirror stage *as an identification*, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term:

namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image"

(Écrits, 2). He continues to note that "it is our privilege to see in outline in our daily

experience and in the penumbra of symbolic efficacity" (Écrits, 3). According to Lacan,

this theatre transpires not only in the primary identification (self-recognition) but also in

the secondary identification with the others.[18] According to Lacan, "the imaginary"[19] has

an empirical base in the mirror stage. During the formative mirror stage, the child learns

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[18] Refer to Lacan's diagrams introduced in Barbara Freedman's book Staging the Gaze (33 & 35). As for both the primary and the secondary identification process and their involvement of optics, Freedman (whose Staging the Gaze is an application of Lacan's theory to Shakespearean comedy) provides comprehensible explanation. According to Freedman's accounts, Lacan's experiment works as follows; "to the left of a spherical mirror sits a box whose open side faces the mirror and whose top reaches near its center. Within the box sits a bouquet of flowers; on top of the box is placed a vase. When we look into the mirror from the appropriate angle, the flowers appear right side up and contained by the vase" (33). If we follow Lacan's metaphoric formulation, the imaginary vase like the image of the body contains the bouquet of real flower, the self itself. The secondary identification with the other is more complicated, but the mechanism remains the same.

[19] The imaginary, the symbolic, and the real are the Lacan's three psychic registers that replace Freud's id, ego, and superego.

to perceive itself as a stable form through a projected bodily image, which is not truly

itself but Other; the perception is thus misrecognition. Next in a post-specular phase,

the child experiences a psychological dialectic or tension between the Ideal-I fashioned

during the mirror stage and demanding social construction. Using Lacan's words, the

post-mirror child is a split subject. "The symbolic Father (Law)" legislates the separation

of the child from "the imaginary," the world of the mother, and introduces the child a

permanent gap between desire and its object. In this way, the child enters into the

realm of "the symbolic," the Saussurean linguistic world of difference, what Lacan calls

"the name of the Father." Again, the child's identification process is procured by the

Other, the symbolic order constituted by language.[20] The child adapts to socially

constructed cultural practices, but the child's imagined desire for unattainable presence

of unity, fullness, and stability experienced during the mirror stage repeatedly infiltrates

into the realm of "the symbolic."[21]

Lacanian optics informed by Freud aims to reestablish a new idea of subjectivity

distorted by ego psychology, which is the scientific elaboration of the idea of Man.

According to Lacan, the ego expressed as "I" in the discourses and represented as

imago (Ideal ego) is not a true subject. Our eyes' paradoxical desire to look at itself is

what Lacan calls "the mirror stage": for Lacan the ego is the look and is associated with

the register of the imaginary whereas the subject is essentially desire, schism, or

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[20] For Lacan, the subject is not the cause of language but the effect of it. He contends that "the moment in which desire becomes human is also that in which the child is born into language" (Écrits, 103).

[21] Freedman points out, "the imaginary always already pervades the symbolic, reminding us of its mythic status, much as the symbolic necessarily pervades all constructions of the imaginary, thus accounting for its decided cultural and ideological bias" (60). This non-linear model of development (not a straight progression from "the imaginary" to "the symbolic"), which desire creates, I believe, explains why Lacan contends that the complete destruction of the narcissistic ego is hard, almost impossible, to achieve.

tension and is associated with the symbolic. While the ego's imaginary world represents our wish for a stable sign system in which meaning is totalized and fixed, the symbolic is a fluid system in which signification is contextually derived. Borrowing Barbara Freedman's accounts, the ego is not the subject of desire (drive) but it can pass itself as such; the ego is "a delusionary site of the unitary which always plays out its misrecognition" (Staging, 32).

This ego's delusionary misrecognition manifests itself as aggressive narcissism. Thus, in his essay, "Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis," Lacan maintains that "*aggressivity is the correlative tendency of a mode of identification that we call narcissistic, and which determines the formal structure of man's ego and of the register of entities characteristic of his world*" (Écrits, 16). Lacan eschews considering this narcissistic aggressiveness as human nature (genetic or atavistic among all humanity through history) but regards it as a characteristic of Western culture, where ego's delusionary and heroic autonomy is the foundational basis in constituting the idea of Man. Lacan asserts that "the pre-eminence of aggressivity in our civilization would be sufficiently demonstrated already by the fact that it is usually confused in normal morality with the virtue of strength. Understood, and quite rightly, as significant of a development of the ego, its use is regarded as indispensable in society, and so widely accepted in moral practice […]" (Écrits, 25).[22] Bhabha also views narcissism and aggressivity as "two forms of identification, which constitute the dominant strategy of colonial power exercised in

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[22] Similarly, cognitive scientists Lakoff and Johnson in Philosophy in the Flesh, attack the common mythic presumption of social Darwinism, in which self-interested rationality manifested as aggressive competition for survival and reproduction is the normative and natural selection of human evolution. "This folk theory is everywhere in our culture. It is used metaphorically to justify the forms of free-market economics, educational reform, the basis for legal judgments, and the conduct of international relations" (557).

relation to the stereotype" (<u>Location</u>, 77). Ego's narcissistic (mis) recognition and aggressiveness are the recurring thematic thread in Chong's fables of "culture and the other."[23]

In <u>Kind Ness</u>, in a star-gazing moment with Buzz, Daphne's mislocation of Cassiopeia (associated with a Queen), with which she identifies, suggests misrecognition of her ego's self image as 100% pure bred of Anglo-American. Daphne's narcissism is problematized as it is doubled with her abjection. Daphne's kind/ness is exclusively based on the logic of sameness and difference. When her self-identity as a superior race is threatened, Daphne's narcissism expresses its aggressivity through projecting (casting out) her own hatred into the other(s). Her marriage with Buzz is a surprise, in this context, but it makes sense that at least her narcissistic ego believes that Buzz is successfully assimilated into her world even though it does not seem so. In the last scene, it is shown that Daphne inhabits her ego's world of the imaginary so that she only sees her own pure narcissistic image in her compact mirror when she visits a zoo with Buzz and their baby. <u>Kind Ness</u> shows us the bleak picture of an aggressive ego-centered imaginary world, although Chong does not forget his antidote of humor and irony. The irony is that Buzz mimics her world values and lifestyles by putting on his white mask (as in Fanon's <u>Black Skin, White Masks</u>). Buzz's ambiguous mode of existence inhabits a place in between the ethnic stereotype and the resistive mimicry.

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[23] It was this aggressiveness that Chong had to face when he left the ghetto and found himself in a world he could not understand. Chong says that "the Western ethic is *more* [italics mine] aggressive" and "this is not a communally oriented society." Chong, to be sure, disavows the idea of Society based on individual ego's aggressive autonomy ("Chong's Angel," G1).

4.9. Racist Boundary Rituals: Fetishism

The theme of narcissistic abjection into the assumed inferior races (immigrants, working-class people, gays and lesbians, etc.) is repeated in the yuppies' fetishistic boundary rituals in Nosferatu. The desire and pleasure of the hegemonic power persistently fixes the flexible social boundaries into stereotypes through the process of abjection (purification). Stereotypes are produced as marginalized containers of the abject in that the self unifies and purifies itself through the mechanism of abjection (projection). Besides Kristeva, scholars like Foucault and McClintock view purification and its accompanying practice of setting boundaries as one of the modern obsessions. As Foucault's genealogy of madness, crime, and sexuality illuminates, modernity and its bio-power tried to sanitize social spaces from madmen, criminals, prostitutes, aliens, and the poor. McClintock's essay "Soft-Soaping Empire" contained in her book Imperial Leather is interesting in examining the modern imperialist obsession with cleanness in relation to the fetish ritual of soap and its commodification. She contends that soap "emerged commercially during an era of impending crisis and social calamity, serving to preserve, through fetish ritual, the uncertain boundaries of class, gender, and race identity in a social order felt to be threatened by the fetid effluvia of the slums, the belching smoke of industry, social agitation, economic upheaval, imperial competition, and anti-colonial resistance." In this way, soap promised the "spiritual salvation and regeneration through commodity consumption," which was believed to restore the threatened "imperial body politic and the race" (281). The rhetoric of the Pears' soap advertisement, McClintock exemplifies in her essay, shows how imperialists commodified racism and class denigration. The image of the advertisement shows in an upper frame, a black coal miner who is sitting in a bathtub and in the lower frame, his

lower body soaked in the soaped water turned into white. The ad surely aims to stimulate the desire and fantasy that the undesirable elements like black skin and industrial dirt can be purified through the fetish ritual of soap.

As McClintock recognizes, fetishes are constructed when people encounter threatening complexities and ambiguities of reality; therefore, a few graspable traits are sutured as the representative stereotype. McClintock's broad sense of the fetish is very useful to examine the process of multiple abjection (not only the ethnic abjection but also class and gender abjection) and broad social stereotypes in Nosferatu, even though Nosferatu focuses more on class distinction. McClintock, through the diverse genealogies of the fetishes beyond the Freudian phallic fetish, argues that unlike the negation of fetishism in civilized modernity, the imperial power relied on fetishism as "a discipline of containment" (182). Chong's insightful perception of Western fetishism resonates with McClintock when he claims that "even though the West is always talking about Third Worlds being superstitious and fetishistic, the West has a singular fetish – the intellect." For him, "it's a myth" (qtd. in Findlay, "Teeth," 16). According to McClintock, fetishism became an indispensable charm in identity formation of the free rational Man (male, heterosexual, and propertied Europeans). The historical contradictions internal to imperial liberalism, that is, the social distinctions between private/public, paid work/unpaid work, the male, bourgeoisie individual/possessed individuals (women, slaves, working-class and the colonized), and the rational/irrational, were contained "by displacement onto a third term: the term of race" (154). The split drawn through the invention of the zone of the primitive, which refers to such assumed inferior races as women, slaves, working-class, and the colonized, was believed to

secure the safety of urban industrial bourgeoisie families in empires. Imperialists could draw "the unfamiliar and unaccountable cultures of the world into a systematic universe of *negative* value" and they could represent "this universe as deviant and thereby undervalue and negate it" (188). This binary mechanism of fetishism in its logic of displacement, containment, reduction, and split recapitulates the mechanism of projection (abjection). Nosferatu demonstrates the link between the invention of private domesticity, public consumerist-market, and the racial (ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality) boundaries through the thematic thread of fetishes. The rhetoric inherent in fetish formation consists in metaphor and metonymy (displacement and reduction). Through this rhetorical power, the fetish creates an illusion of a unified whole, enabling the individual to gain symbolic control over the terrifying contradictions and ambiguities of life.

Before going into the themes of abjection, fetishism, and stereotype in Nosferatu, I will provide some background information about the production. Nosferatu was conceived by Chong in collaboration with Roger Babb, Jeannie Hutchins, Larry Malvern, John Fleming, and Louise Smith. It was directed by Chong, premiering at La MaMa E.T.C. in New York in 1985. That year, Nosferatu won the Maharam Design Award. Nosferatu, as Chong's other bricolaged narrative texts, is designed for a proscenium stage with no definite set construction. The minimal set and prop pieces that occupy the living room of the rich yuppies of the 1980s constitute the stage environments for the production. Along with the scene design, costume design plays an important role in indexing the social *mise-en-scene* in which the characters are situated. As Chong attempts to show through the lighting design in his experiments with the archetypal

image of brightness and darkness, his idea of darkness is not only social but also philosophical. The productions's ironic commentary is not confined to the dark side of American bourgeoisie. Nosferatu subversively retells the myth of fetishistic Western materialism and rationalism. Chong recycles the image of vampire to tell about the historical, social, and psychological abjection of a narcissistic culture that worships materialism and seeks global domination by reinforcing the values of "a white bourgeois elite" over other cultures and nations.

In the narrative text, the Harkers (Jonathan and Nina) are types from this vampire parable. The Harkers and their friends Arthur and Lucia do not know that they are the descendents of darkness (plague). Without knowing it, they cast away their darkness into the container of the undesirable others: "Red Bride," "Immigrant Wife," "Bum," "3 Skeletons," "2 Soldiers," "A Cook," "3 Cheerleaders," "Silverado Sign Man," "5 Spastics," "Victim," "Uncle Sam," "Bunny," "Cowboy," "Indian," "Groom," "Punk," "Cop," "Klansman," and "Reveller." Nosferatu begins with a prelude in which Chong creates imagery of the archaic split of brightness and darkness. On a dark stage in which only the platform is lit, two angels (in neutral masks and black costumes that are reminiscent of Raphaelite angels and Kabuki costumes) struggle in a very stylized manner against the sounds of crowds and battle music. According to Chong's stage direction, their movements are "*ferocious but also occasionally quirkily tender*" (Nosferatu, 1). One Angel takes a hairy black ball out of the body of the other. This staging of the birth of darkness evokes an uneasy feeling when the audience links it to their own everyday boundary ritual (containment ritual) through which they might project their own darkness to the others.

In Nosferatu, the chief yuppie characters, Jonathan and Nina, are possessed by what Karl Marx calls "commodity fetishes," feeling security by displacing social values with commodity values. Gussow in his review "Nosferatu, Eerie Drama by Chong" reports, "When they walk across the carpet of the hi-tech living room, they move with the synchronized grace of fashion models. They and their circle of friends are Calvin Klein ads come to life, but behind the pursuit of flair there is something sinister afoot" (71). Their ordered domestic setting protected by the fetishes of brand power is believed to be safe from the invasion of the anarchic and unclean others. To establish a clear boundary, racial fetishes are invented as the abject of the bourgeois domesticity. According to Chong's view, however, the clean and proper self is the carrier of modern plague, which Chong calls "corporate vampirism," and the other (the outsider) is the name for the abject. In Scene IX, while the living (the Harkers) have gone to a party, the Red Bride moves with the projected title, "The plague is here! Stay in your houses," waiting for her bridegroom and neighbor outsiders (Nosferatu, 28). In a vignette in Scene IX, titled "Day of the Dead," the stage with its dark light is overcrowded with the figures appearing behind bookshelves: "Immigrant Wife" carrying two babies, "Bum," "3 Skeletons," "2 Soldiers," "A Cook," "3 Cheerleaders," "Silverado Sign Man," "5 Spastics," "Red Bride," "Victim," "Bunny," "Cowboy," "Indian," "Uncle Sam," "3 Klansman," "Cop," and "Groom."

These dead living celebrate the wedding of the Red Bride and the Groom like the happy ending of conventional comedy. This carnivalesque wedding scene is inserted into the clean domestic setting of the yuppies; the Skeletons, of ambiguous sexual orientation, indulge in sexual orgy on the couch where the Harkers sit, but the living

death do not see or do not want to see these dead living coexisting with them. The Skeleton's ambiguous gender, sexuality, and death image suggestively allude to the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s. The yuppies' accompanying homophobia establishes the idea of "alien body" for gays and lesbians. The scene lampoons the yuppies' repressive imagination by which intimate human contacts are conceived as fatal actions. Jonathan and Nina appear very detached, but ironically, Nina's flirtation with the same "clean race" Arthur reflects her eruption of repressed sexuality. Thus, the yuppies' main outlet for human connection is an answering machine. In contrast to the celebratory mood of the dead living, the light treatment of the yuppie characters becomes ironic toward the end. They are horrified by a thick green light signifying sewage flowing on stage from the hallway leading to their bathroom. Their doom seems to echo in the ending of the scene: "Well, It's too late." "What?" "Come here Jonathan." "Oh, my God!" "It's all over the rug." "Honey, It's coming into the living room. Honey." "Jonathan." "Honey." "Jonathan? (*They are no longer visible. Lights fade to black*)" (Nosferatu, 32). In the last scene, Nosferatu eventually enters into the clean yuppies' private world, and hair-covered balls – the fetish symbolic of evil originally taken out from the heart of one of angels in the prelude of Nosferatu – roll from the doorways and cover the full stage floor.

4.10. Politics of Racist Mode of Representation: Stereotype

Examining the Manichean structure and its mechanism of projection of the racist (in a broad sense) consciousness can illuminate the conspiratorial connection between desire (pleasure), power, and knowledge (truth). I consider that stereotype intersects at these crossroads of desire, power, and knowledge. Using Foucault's terms, identity

politics that is based on the mythic construction of the stereotypical other is an apparatus or a discursive formation in which power and knowledge are always played out by the need of the dominant in specific historical moments. Barthes, referring to Nietzsche, also points out the ideological aspect of stereotype in textual representation, stating that "Nietzsche has observed that 'truth' is only the solidification of old metaphors. So in this regard the stereotype is the present path of 'truth,' the palpable feature which shifts the invented ornament to the canonical, constraining form of the signified" ("Pleasure," 406). Taking on the repetition and insistence of stereotype as the specific historical and cultural mode of representation, Barthes calls attention to its "nauseating impossibility of dying" ("Pleasure," 407). In this sense, stereotype is a pre-conditioned knowledge through fixed rhetorical formation forged by the dominant power that we pick up through the fables of identity heard over and over again from our childhood, and adopt to clarify identity and difference (i.e. to sort out kind/ness). As well the given stereotypes determine our encounter with the others, distorting mutual social interactions. For a specific example, in Orientalism, Said regards stereotypes as "lenses through which the Orient is experienced, since it shapes "the language, perception, and form of the encounters between the East and the West" (58-59).

Bhabha articulates stereotype as a mode of fetishist representation and an ambivalent knowledge that fixes the others on behalf of the self's comprehension. As Bhabha points out, this pseudo-scientific knowledge about other people is passed and consolidated through narrative forms. By the three qualities of "lack," "fixity," and "ambivalence," Bhabha identifies, "the same old stories of the Negro's animality, the Coolie's inscrutability or the stupidity of the Irish must be told (compulsively) again and

fresh, and differently gratifying and terrifying each time" (Location, 77). I will explore

Chong's use of stereotypical images in terms of those three characteristics (lack, fixity,

and ambivalence). Bhabha adopts Lacan's notion of "suture" to explain the first two

qualities of stereotype, but not in a comprehensible way. I will return to Lacan and

Jacques-Alain Miller who developed this concept of containing action.

For Lacan, the notion of "suture"[24] always accompanies the notion of "lack." As

Lacan's three major psychic territories demonstrate ("the imaginary," "the symbolic," and

"the real"), our desire's impossible strife for catching things themselves meets its failure

in the forms of representation. Thus, our recognition (identification) of things (and self)

produces lack. The imaginary catches our self and others in images and "the symbol

manifests itself first of all as the murder of the thing and this death constitutes in the

subject the eternalization of his desire" (Écrits, 40). Jacques-Alain Miller developed

Lacan's notion of suture by introducing mathematical analogy (zero as both lack and

number) to comprehend the subject's rhetorical formation through the function of suture,

that is, metaphor and metonymy. Miller postulates the process of suture not only as "a

stitching together of a subject position but also as a displacement of a lack in that

construction." "It both figures there," Miller remarks, "as the element which is lacking, in

the form of a stand-in" and refers to "the general relation of lack to the structure of which

it is an element, inasmuch as it implies the position of a taking-the place-of" (25-26).

Miller suggests an analogy between the subject's relation to signification and the zero's

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[24] According to Freedman, Lacan originally used the word "suture" to denote a pseudo-identification. This kind of identification exists between "the time of terminal arrest of the gesture" and "the moment of seeing" (qtd. in Freedman, 55).

relation to the progression of numbers. For Miller, like the zero number, the subject is a lack and a suture, in other words, it is both absence and presence.

In his articulation of stereotypical racial discourse, Bhabha also pays attention to the strategic rhetorical formulation of stereotype: the tropes of fetishism – metaphor and metonymy. Bhabha's definition of stereotype as a fetish, inspired from Freud, illuminates the triad connection of desire, power and knowledge. "Fetishism is always a 'play' or vacillation between the archaic affirmation of wholeness/similarity – […]: 'All men have the same skin/race/culture' – and the anxiety associated with lack and difference – […] 'Some do not have the same skin/race/culture'" (Location, 74). In this way, stereotype embodies the ambivalent state of pleasure/displeasure, mastery/defense, knowledge/disavowal, and presence/absence. In the racist stereotyping, the skin becomes the major signifier, "the most visible of the fetishes" (Location, 78). According to Bhabha, the stereotypical image as a fetish is a metaphoric substitution of the imaginary, "illusion of presence, and by the same token a metonym, a sign of its absence and loss" (Location, 51).

Like the zero number, it implies a lack, but at the same time, it sutures (surrogates) the void so that it emerges as a visible object. Suturing procures a visibility but it also points to a loss. This double attribute, lack and visibility, endows the stereotype the quality of phantasmagoria. In Chong's Elephant Memories, "the Other" appears like a phantom; the black mask-like face lacks eyes, nose, and mouth. The audience looks at just an outlined human body, in the way that zero outlines its absence and signifies its presence. It is revealing that the stereotypical images of the others are a part of the ego's imaginary identification process, that is, its ideological effect.

Bhabha calls this "metaphoric masking," which attributes to the stereotype both its fixity

and phantasmatic quality. As Lacan defines the Other as a lack, Bhabha regards the

stereotype as a mask or a veil, which sutures the lack. Such concepts as lack and

metaphoric masking are very useful to examine Chong's presentation of stereotypical

images in his fables. Thus, Buzz's gorilla mask (suit) in Kind Ness demonstrates how

the racist gaze murders a human being inside the mask for the sake of visibility and

comprehensibility.

The Undesirable Elements series deal seriously with the problematics of

abjection and fetishist stereotypes. Nikki in the Seattle production of Undesirable

Elements (1995) narrates how she suffered an inferior complex enforced by

stereotypes. She says, "My mother begins teaching me Shirly Temple routines in

broken English. She rubs and rubs my legs so they won't be short and stout like daikon

ashi, legs like a Japanese radish. My Uncle rubs my nose so I won't have a fat

Japanese Peasant nose. My mother enrolls me in ballet class so I'll have straight long

American legs. I also take Japanese dance at the Buddhist Church. I experience a

strange kind of schizophrenia" (Undesirable Elements/Seattle, 14). Nikki's subsequent

story about Japanese internment camps during the W.W. II also narrates how her body

was terrified by the paranoid style of abjection. She reports, "I'm in Camp Minidoka. It's

one of ten relocation camps in the deserts and swamplands of California, Colorado,

Arizona, Utah, Arkansas and Idaho. It's 10 below in the winter, 100 above in the

summer and a sea of mud in the spring." But her story tells the irony of the idea of

internment since what the audience has typically heard about it is how the politicians

made the mistake of containing fellow American citizens. She continues, "Everyone in

America grows Victory Gardens for the war effort; we grow Victory Gardens. Uncle Sam wants you to buy war bonds, even a beauty pageant to elect Miss Minidoka. Even behind barbed wire we want to be America's Sweetheart. I became the Shirly Temple of the internment camp. My mother burns my hair trying to make Shirly Temple curls" (UE/Seattle, 18).

The idea of creating internment camps stems from the ideological confusion of the identity politics of the hegemonic power, which does not distinguish Japanese-American from Japanese. Nikki believes that this confusion has a historical basis in the racist exclusion of Japanese immigrants, manifestly expressed in the headlines of a newspaper written in 1907: "Japanese a Menace to American Women." "Yellow Men an Evil in the Public Schools." "Brown Artisans Steal Brains of Whites" (UE/Seattle, 11). Zola, an Afro-American, shares her experience of exclusion humorously with the other participants. "ALL: 1976. ZOLA: Coleman Elementary School. In elementary school I am put through a number of academic tests. I was screened for the gifted program. ALL: AGAIN, AND AGAIN, AND AGAIN, AND AGAIN. ZOLA: None of the white kids are tested more than once. My mother responds, NIKKI: 'They don't think a black kid could be that smart'" (UE/Seattle, 37). She was tormented by her friend because of her being smart; "You sound white, you act white, and you're just pretending to be smart, which is white" (UE/Seattle, 39).

All the participants narrate the neurotic effect of stereotyping and attempt to find ways to overcome this epistemic violence. Via a guessing game, they question the fetishistic representation of the culture of the others and they tell their stories from the other side of the wall to let people know the diverse sides of their culture. For instance,

Zola is asked what she thinks about the word, "African American." She says, "the first open heart surgeon […] inventor of the first incandescent electric light bulb […] my father – escaping the Kentucky of the 1950's, becoming a world traveler, speaking Japanese, making sacrifices for his family" (UE/Seattle, 28). Ivars, an immigrant from Latvia, asks the fellow participants what they think of when he says the word Latvia. The participants say, "Russia," "Eastern Europe," "politically unstable," and "caught between history." Ivars tells his stories of Latvia against the background of the global histories of domination and resistance, drawing the route of how he got to where he is now. Here, through the diverse stories (sides) of people and cultures, Chong attempts to demonstrate how politics of stereotyping has been incomplete and unstable.

Against this incomplete suturing in the formation of stereotypes, Bhabha deploys the idea of the internal slippage of stereotype. Bhabha remarks that "my concept of stereotype-as-suture is a recognition of the ambivalence of that authority and those orders of identification." The colonial authority as pseudo-scientific knowledge postulates such homogenized stereotypical representations as "degenerated negro," but, borrowing Freud's account, the fetishistic identification process is "a non-repressive form of knowledge that allows for the possibility of simultaneous embracing two contradictory beliefs, one official and one secret, one archaic and one progressive, one that allows the myths of origins, the other that articulates difference and division." Thus, "the black is both savage (cannibal) and yet the most obedient and dignified of servants (the bearer of food); he is the embodiment of rampant sexuality and yet innocent as a child; he is mystical, primitive, simple-minded, yet the most worldly and accomplished liar, and manipulator of social forces" (Location, 80-81).

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In Kind Ness, the imprecise characterization standing ambiguously between multiple stereotypes slips the singular fixity of stereotyping: "*Daphne, delicate, brunette; rich, vain and a little spoiled, but likable; a WASP,*" "*Alvin, lithe and lanky with black horn-rimmed glasses and black hair, a French-Canadian from Maine,*" "*Buzz, a good-natured and tolerant gorilla,*" "*Lulu, a dumb blond, but vulnerable; buxom and outgoing with a Barbie-doll quality; Irish, Catholic,*" "*Rudy, curly red hair, well-built; somewhat insensitive, a smart aleck, but likable; well-to-do; Irish Catholic,*" "*Dot, blind, awkward, heavy; olive skin; brainy, a little wacky in her own quick way; Jewish*" (Kind Ness, 57). Particularly, Buzz stands in the seemingly contradictory zone of multiple perceptions. He is both an animal with rampant sexuality and a good-natured innocent child. Adding in a historical aspect, the formation of stereotype becomes much less stable. Like the unity and the purity that camouflage the contradictions intrinsic in stereotypes themselves, the fixity is also a myth, in that it masks the historical transformations the stereotypes undergo, even though the replaced negative values are still persistent. For instance, the dominance of the stereotypical image of the Chinese-American as "opium freak" (which Chong deals with in Chinoiserie) a long time ago does not account for the contemporary Chinese-American stereotype.

4.11. Gaze: the Voyeuristic Eye and the Evil Eye

Borrowing Lacan's concept of "gaze" ("the return look"),[25] Bhabha further examines the correlated issues of looking, projection, stereotype, and resistance. I will

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[25] In Staging the Gaze, Freedman provides apt framework of the look and the return look, which Lacan named "gaze," to explore what it means to be a theatrical being differentiated from the cinematic. From its etymological root, *theatron* (theatre) denotes "seeing place." Freedman interprets this seeing as double: seeing and being seen. In other words, we, spectators, like to believe that we can posses the scenes from outside by our fixing look, but the eyes of the actors displace our spectatorship. In cinema,

briefly examine Lacan's concept of gaze and Fanon's clinical adaptation of this notion in colonial setting in order to enrich Bhabha's subversive use of this term in his concept of "mimicry," which is very useful to describe the subversive aspect of Buzz's mimicry. In his explanation of the significance of the mirror stage in identification, Lacan asserts that the self is confused with the outlined specular image of one's own body; the same optics operate for the secondary identification with the others. According to Lacan, in the Western sense of perception consciousness is apprehended as an apparatus functioning like a camera or mirror fixing or reflecting images. In this sense, for Lacan, the process of identification, at least at the moments of mirror stage, is theatrical, so that he uses the metaphors like stage, scene, and drama. Lacan clarifies this scene of the look and the return look, stating that "what determines me, at the most profound level, in the visible, is the gaze that is outside" since "in the scopic field, the gaze is outside, I am looked at, that is to say, I am a picture" (qtd. in Freedman, 63). Metaphorically speaking, according to Lacan, one can be both a camera and a picture.

Fanon's elaboration of Lacan's concept of "gaze" catches the theatrical scene of racism staged in our everyday life. "The Fact of Blackness" in Black Skin and White Masks describes this scene very vividly: "Look, a Negro! […] Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened! […] I could no longer laugh, because I already knew that there were legends, stories, history, and above all historicity […]. Then, assailed at various points, the corporeal schema crumbled, its place taken by a racial epidermal schema" (112).

the viewer is never disturbed by the eyes of the screen, but in theatre we, the audience, experience the return look. Freedman applies the concept of reversal of the look into Shakespearean comedies, illuminating how Shakespeare entraps the audience by his technique of displacement of spectatorship. For instance, the onstage audience in A Midsummer Night's Dream destabilizes the voyeuristic position of the view in a very subversive way. To add a contemporary case, Beckett problematizes the spectator's voyeurism by the actor's return look in his Catastrophe; with the gaze of the actor, the audience is displaced as a part of the scene.

Fanon seems to recall the moments of rage and despair when he writes that "I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects" (109). Fanon describes how the gaze (the white man's eyes) fixed him like a burden ("Look, a Negro!"), adding that "in the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema," which he defines as "implicit knowledge" that composes "myself as a body in the middle of a spatial and temporal world" (110-111). According to Fanon, without the bodily schema, colored people easily suffer the "inborn complex of inferiority" when they interject the imposed bodily images (stereotypical bodily images) into their own. For Fanon, the man of color in the white world either internalizes the otherness of the white or puts on a white mask to cover the colored skin, which Bhabha views as strategic mimicry. While Fanon writes about the racist look that fixes him as an object, Bhabha deploys what he calls "the evil eye" in relation to subversive strategic mimicry. Bhabha remakes Lacan's gaze as "the evil eye" in that "the play of the evil eye is camouflaged, invisible in the common, ongoing activity of looking – making present, while it is implicated in the petrifying, unblinking gaze that falls Medusa-like on its victims – dealing death, extinguishing both presence and the present" (Location, 56). According to Bhabha, the disavowal of the position of the marginalized in its very invisibility enables them to perform the act of revenge, the invisible evil eye's mimicry. In other words, the mimicry of the marginalized proves that they resist only being seen in the picture. It is their evil eye that looks.

In the vaudeville style dumb shows titled "Slapstick # 1" and "Slapstick # 2" in

Kind Ness, Chong allegorically contests the view that the marginalized are completely

fixed by the disciplinary power. By having the same actors who play Buzz and Alvin

play the role of the colonial subject and master in those scenes, Chong suggestively

links the colonial and postcolonial racism and resistance in terms of the Manichean

structure and subversive performativity. The segment "Slapstick # 1" is put next to

Scene 3, "First Day of School," where Buzz from Rwanda is introduced to his

classmates. Scene 7, "Slapstick # 2," comes next to Scene 6, "Introductions," where

Buzz is invited to the principal's house. In "Slapstick # 1," against the background

music of Jelly Roll Morton "*the actor who plays ALVIN enters as a white BWANA* [as an

allegorical figure of the colonizer]*. He wears Alvin's clothes, but has on a pith helmet

and a Groucho Marx nose-and-glasses. He carries a pair of binoculars and has a

banana in his pocket. He is followed, step by step, by an APE* [an allegorical figure of

the colonized]*, played by the actor who plays Buzz, wearing the same gorilla suit*" (Kind

Ness, 68). The Bwana keeps looking through his binoculars, but he does not notice the

tricks the Ape performs (stealing his binoculars, hiding his banana, making the shape of

a gun pointing at him, and pretending firing the "gun"). "Slapstick # 2" repeats the same

gag. In the scene, the Ape plays the trick around his master's folding chair. The baffled

Bwana is ridiculed by the Ape's performance in the sense that his belief in authority to

regulate the Ape is destabilized. The Ape's mimicry of his master (for example, looking

through the binoculars and using a gun) is tactically subversive. The Ape is not only

fixed by the hegemonic power as an ethnic stereotype, but also looks through his evil

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eyes. In his body, the regulative power and resistance are both in a performative mode, constantly enacting and being enacted.

Buzz's animality is one of the stereotypical images projected by the racist fixing look. He has been determined from the outside; that is, he has been somebody's picture. This is explicit in Scene 5 titled "Chez Buzz," where Lulu, "a dumb blond" with "a Barbie-doll quality," visits Buzz after high school graduation and has a chance to look at Buzz's photo album. Buzz is identified by the images in it, and the audience gets to know what the images are like only through Lulu's selective description of them. For instance, Lulu picks up the image of Buzz in which Buzz looks like "a regular California beach bum," so tan is he. Buzz's tan skin is a complex signifier. It is a marker of difference and inferiority to people like Mr. and Mrs. Conklin, the principal and wife whose stereotypical portrayal was inspired from the Archie comics of the 1950s. But for Lulu it entices her sexual fantasy toward Buzz. As Fanon's psychoanalytic account of the co-relation between Afro-American animality and fetishistic sexuality reveals, Buzz is fixed as a wild sex animal to Lulu. In this way, he has always been determined by other people. But Buzz's mimicry of American culture is partly a resistive act that defies the fixation as an ethnic stereotype. His mimicry is an alibi, where his evil eye is camouflaged behind his gorilla mask.

4.12. Mimicking Man In-Between

As McClintock argues, the varied degrees of violence and coercion in enforced hybridity bring forth different psychic tolls and political consequences. What I want to examine here is the culturally enforced hybridity which mimicry maneuvers. In order to get into the theme of mimicry and hybridity, I will first examine Josephine Lee's

application of culturally enforced "ethnic passing" in examining Buzz's hybrid mode of existence. Based on Fanon's notion of bodily schema and hybrid identity, Lee in Performing Asian America, analyzes several plays including Kind Ness. She contends that under the existing power, complex factors "continue to turn bodies into racialized, ethnicized, gendered, or classified signifiers." Even though, she remarks, recent social changes allow easier passage across the boundaries defined by the hegemonic power, "passage is not immediate or easy." Rather, "complex tensions, the legacy of these historical policings, arise to surround the act of crossing racial and ethnic boundaries" (190-191). I agree with her apt analysis on the power and its body politics, but I would argue that her idea of passing does not account for Buzz's fluctuating mode of mimicry at the border of inside and outside.

Buzz's interethnic marriage with Daphne makes us assume that Buzz transgressed the boundary, being completely assimilated into the white world. While Buzz identified himself with Tyrannosaurus Rex, which only kills, eats, and sleeps – Buzz now eats cheese, enjoys surfing, and love opera. According to Lee's notion of passage, Buzz is a transracial who transgressed the ethnic boundary. Therefore, when Buzz encounters a real caged gorilla at the zoo he does not associate himself with a wild animal, recognizing it as "big" and "ugly." Some critics interpret this ambiguous scene as Buzz's failure to acknowledge his former heritage, because he has been portrayed ambiguously between an animal and human. Buzz is treated by his schoolmates as if he were a human being, even though he does not have his own human voice. Buzz and the classmates communicate. But while they think they can comprehend what Buzz's gestures and gorilla grunting mean, an offstage voice

represents his inner thoughts, which are more often than not incongruent with what his schoolmates perceive and understand. Lulu's elaborate Western syllogistic inference, "all high school students are human beings. Buzz was a high school student, therefore Buzz is a human being" is the unsteady ground for their perception of Buzz as a human being (Kind Ness, 77). But, when the students are asked to describe their heritage, Buzz tells his childhood stories about how his father was a gorilla in Rwanda where he was captured and parts of his body sold for souvenirs to a traveling European – an account ambiguously reminiscent of the Rwanda genocide that made international news in 1986. Buzz's traumatic family history continues in his two brothers' death caused by pneumonia after being caught in a poacher's trap. But, as Lee accurately points out, this scene challenges our propensity to identify people based on the markers of skin colors and bodily images. Even though his former heritage is associated with a wild nature, Buzz is far from a gorilla; he is constructed as a gorilla-kind in racist politics of representation. For me, his negation signifies his not-belonging to his "origins." Buzz lives *with* his former heritage, but he does not let himself be ghettoized within the boundary. As Chong deliberately sets the scene in "zoological environments," another possible interpretation for Buzz's betweenness can be explained by Chong's view of liminality of a human being as a human-animal.

Like Buzz, Chong says that he does not allow himself "to be ghettoized as Asian-American Artist." "The irony to me," Chong notes, "is that now we are ghettoized ourselves by choice. I understand that this is an act of an affirmation of one's identity. That's important. But we have to be sensitive to each other's culture" (qtd. in Madison, 40-41). Chong, to be sure, here warns of the negative effect of multiculturalism, which

contains the possible danger of confining people in their own cultural niches. Like

Chong, Buzz lives a collaged existence on the boundary of two cultures: at the zoo, he

is between the caged gorilla and Daphne even though Daphne's narcissism

physicalized in her mirror viewing cannot recognize Buzz's difference, assuming his

complete assimilation into her world. But Buzz's contrapuntal vision in mimicry shatters

the unitary and neatly outlined bodily schema, creating a doubling mode of self-image.

Buzz, without effacing his former heritage (and his link to nature), adapts to the culture

he is destined for. His being is the consequence of natural adaptation, since nature's

diversity comes from the organism's adaptability to survive the environmental niches.

Chong's image of the gorilla on the tire swinging on stage and off (thus, between

the boundary of visibility and invisibility of the audience) suggests that Buzz's mimicry

eludes a direct passage from one boundary to another. Chong's use of a metaphorical

physical action image such as swinging goes beyond Lee's use of the term "transracial"

to label Buzz, since swinging (vacillating) is neither passing nor staying. It shows the

slippage of identity and difference and belonging and not-belonging. Buzz's borderline

identity resists the myth of assimilation and at the same time resists confining himself in

the closet of his former heritage. Buzz is caught in-between two cultures. He

demonstrates to us his subject/object double and his multiple/collage identity, heralding,

maybe, the emergence of a new man such as Fanon envisioned at the end of The

Wreathed of the Earth: "For Europe, for ourselves, and for humanity, comrades, we

must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new

man" (316). Buzz's silent resistance against the politics of fictional dividing finds its

resilient public voice later in the Undesirable Elements project through people Chong

calls, "in-between" (Herreras-Zinman, 9). Borrowing Bhabha's account, "these 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself" (Location, 1).

5.   CHAPTER FOUR: CHONG'S FABLES OF THE OTHER(S) – THE MYTH OF SOCIETY QUESTIONED

As I examined in the previous chapters, the thematic threads of culture, history, and the other are impossible to isolate. Consequently, chapters 4 and 5 are supplementary to chapter 3 in several ways, mainly regarding the scope, range, linkage, variety, and approach to the three correlated themes. First, in chapter 3, I dealt with Chong's narrative themes of the other(s) in relation to the narrow categories of American racism and assimilation by choosing exemplary narrative texts confined to domestic concerns and issues of American culture and politics. But, since Chong both synchronically and diachronically expands and extends the themes of "culture and the other" into global and historical horizons, it is necessary to deal with the themes of the other(s) through cultural and historical frameworks of global theories regarding complex links of globalization, (post-) modernity, capitalism, imperialism, and nationalism. In an interview with a critic conducted in 1982, Chong lays on stress on the necessity to view domestic problems in relation to global connectivity, stating that "it is important to see ourselves as global, rather than national" (qtd. in Abbe, 6). But Chong's scopic shift is not straightforward. Rather, this scopic shift fluctuates from local (national) to global and vice versa, and in many cases both scopic views coexist in one narrative text. As Sally Banes well observes, Chong's works operate "on a microscopic scale – hypnotically concentrating on the infinitely burgeoning moment – or as a global view of the village Earth" (Banes, "World," 83). In Nuit Blanche, for example, Chong's cinematic

techniques shift scopes back and forth from a bird's eye view (or an alien view outside of earth) to close-ups, as if a camera installed out in the universe keeps changing focus.

The emerging bodies of study on globalization provide useful frameworks to examine Chong's narratives on "culture and the other," not for their description of the world as a system operating by such unifying logics of capital, state power, or technology, but for their recognition of new social phenomenon of ever increasing global connectivity. As Frederic Jameson puts it, "globalization – even the term itself has been hotly contested – is thus the modern or postmodern version of the proverbial elephant, described by its blind observers in so many diverse ways" ("Preface," xi). But, whether globalism is described as "global village" by Marshall McLuhan with utopian aspiration or as a capitalist's disguise of imperialism (global domination) by David Harvey, the global impact is felt in every aspect of people's everyday lives. In its positive meaning, we are peace-loving citizens and neighbors in a global republic. In its negative effects in the contemporary world, however, the ever subtle but occasionally violent global domination breaks the illusion of global harmony based on the myths of a unified Society. For instance, the violent devaluation of assets, the so-called "structural adjustment" plan executed by the transnational World Bank, created mass unemployment, threatening the everyday survivals of huge populations in East and South-East Asia. Perceiving in this adjustment "the logic of capitalism," such scholars as David Harvey, Sherif Hetata, and Masao Miyoshi point out the masking rhetoric of structural adjustment backed by the IMF (International Monetary Fund), regarding it as "a potential economic genocide"[1] of global hegemony.

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[1] Sherif Hetata uses the term "a potential economic genocide" in his essay "Dollarization, Fragmentation, and God" in The Cultures of Globalization. He argues that "the dollarization of prices in the South means

Secondly, even though the issues of national (or ethnic) identity and politics provide focal points to discuss Chong's narratives on "culture and the other," they do not cover such other important themes as traveling culture, global culture (if any), cosmopolitan (local) identity, global market and cultural identity, and global violence and resistance. Furthermore, the themes of historiography into which Chong's recent narrative texts delve add insights to the global histories of racism (abjection) through the discussion of imperialist-historicist-humanist mythologies of the other. Lastly, I read Chong's narratives of the other from a position that bridges psychoanalysis and power analysis (focused on identity politics) by connecting desire, power, and knowledge – all three of which Chong's narratives engage globally. While I read Chong's themes of "culture and the other" through such narrative texts as Humboldt's Current (1977) and Nuit Blanche (1981), the themes of history, historiography, and the other will be discussed mainly through Nuit Blanche, Deshima (1990) and Chinoiserie (1994), the latter two early narrative texts of the East/West Quartet in which Chong seriously tries to decenter imperialist-historicist-humanist historiography.

5.1.   Traveling Cultures in Globalization Processes

As Janet Wolff in "The Global and the Specific: Reconciling Conflicting Theories of Culture" observes, "world systems theory, already equipped to provide an account of the complex interconnectedness of the global system, particularly with regard to its economic and political dimensions, has recently began to recognize the importance of

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raising these prices to world levels equal to those prevalent in the United States and Europe. However, average earnings in the South are seventy times lower than in the North. A retail salesman in the North receives a wage that is forty times more than a factory worker in Egypt" (276).

culture in these processes" (161). But, how can global (system) theories take account of social (globalization) process? Wolff suggests five problem areas in describing global interconnectedness: 1. "such binary concepts as West/Third World, center/periphery, metropolitan/local." 2. "an undifferentiated notion of culture." 3. ignorance of "the level of the economic and the social." 4. "indifference to the question of gender." 5. "pre-theoretical with regard to developments in cultural theory" that can explain "the integral place of culture *in* social process and in social change" (166-171). Reconsidering these problematics is useful to explore the global issues and themes Chong's fables of "culture and the other" address.

How can we eschew the fixed binary system to describe complicated global interconnectedness? To draw an analogy from science, quantum theory assumes a double behavior of matter: as both particles and waves in appropriate conditions and situations. According to quantum theory, paradox rises when one defines the rolling ball as only a fixed object or only as a wave. Similarly, in <u>Kind Ness</u>, Chong and his collaborators show this double mode of existence by using an ironic action image of the vacillation of a caged gorilla in a swing, whose image highlights the performativity of identification. This is a novel metaphorical formulation that decenters the desire for a stable container called "a fixed identity." Using the same figure of "doubling," Chong's narrative texts like <u>Nuit Blanche</u>, <u>Humboldt Current</u>, <u>Deshima</u>, and <u>Chinoiserie</u> embody the wave-like flows of people, goods, technology, and ideologies induced by the global dynamics of forces, interactions, and resistances. From this double perspective, Clifford's notion of "traveling culture" and his decentering of "the myth of traveler"

(gendered, propertied, and ethno-centric) offer an apt framework in discussing prismatic global culture in complex globalization processes.

Clifford, in "Traveling Cultures," postulates "culture as travel," remarking that "I have been talking about the ways people leave home and return, enacting differently centered worlds, interconnected cosmopolitanisms. I should add: cultures as sites traversed – by tourists, by oil pipelines, by Western commodities, by radio and television signals" (103). Following Clifford, I view culture as "dynamic space" in "the nexus of relations," a concept which can replace the dominant view of culture as an (organically) unified Society. As Clifford notes, the concept of "travel" is a fecund metaphor, which signifies different meanings to different gender, ethnicity, class, and political situations. Clifford problematizes the uncritically simplified positions of "traveling cultures" through such diverse factors as "class, gender, race, cultural/historical location and privilege" (105). I agree with Clifford that "culture as travel" neither privileges the figure of "traveler" over "native" nor sets the binary between traveling and dwelling. Rather, "the task is to focus on concrete mediations of the two, in specific cases of historical tension and relationship. In varying degrees, both are constitutive of what will count as cultural experience" (101). The concept "culture as travel" itself destabilizes the antithetical dichotomy between the global and the local in the sense that in traveling global culture (whether it is utopian or dystopian) one cannot just root in local culture. Also, taking slippage into consideration, the notion of "culture as travel" thwarts propensity to dichotomize global culture as the fixed binary of center/periphery. Within a fixed imperialist framework, however, the binary conceptualization is constructed through the mechanism of abjection of the other. Such narratives as Nuit Blanche, Humboldt's

Current, Deshima, and Chinoiserie examine how the mechanism of the other produces the binary conceptual pair of West (traveling center)/the Rest (dwelling periphery) through the itinerary of global (imperial) power and also complicate (contest) this binary mythic construction.

Historically speaking, discourses on globalization, transnationalism, and cosmopolitanism emerged from bodies of works describing capitalism. But the classical macro theories of Adam Smith and Karl Marx have been modified or contested by many scholars due to their totalizing cause-effect model of globalization process and also their emphasis on the accumulation of capital as the primary cause of the globalization process. For instance, while scholars like Frederic Jameson and David Harvey still argue the Marxist political economy and explain the contemporary postmodern culture as "the logic of late capitalism," from the poststructuralist position, Arjun Appadurai proposes the metaphor "flow" to describe the globalization process. Appadurai views the global culture as a series of flows of people, money, commodities, ideas, images, information, technologies, and ideologies, all of which interact in a very disjunctive mode. I agree with Appadurai that the economic is not the only determining factor but an important starting point. The ignored cultural factors need to be examined. Said's urge to pay attention to the cultural aspects of global domination, whether it is practiced in the form of expansionist imperialism or in the new phase of deterritorialized cultural imperialism, enriches the correlated discourses of globalization process and imperialism. Chong's narrative texts, Nuit Blanche, Humboldt Current, Deshima, and Chinoiserie, I propose, can be discussed by the complexity of such disjunctive flows as "ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, and ideoscapes" (Appadurai,

"Disjuncture," 296). What these narrative texts spell out is the clash of power in its forms of domination and resistance, which result in the economic, political, and cultural flows.

5.2.   Imperial Flows and the Myth of Traveler

Humboldt's Current demonstrates how the tripartite imperial discourses of desire, power, and knowledge, flow through ethnoscapes, finanscapes, commodityscapes, technoscapes, and ideoscapes during the course of European imperialist expansions in "the uncivilized parts of the globe." (The title is based on a cool ocean current in the Pacific Ocean which flows northward along the coast of South America known as the "Humboldt Current" or "Peru Current.") To discuss the theme of the myth of traveler in Humboldt's Current as well as such related themes as ethnographic writing and exhibition in imperial situations and conditions, I will begin with stage design and character introduction. Humboldt's Current is a bricolage theatre work by Chong. It premiered in the Daniel Nagrin Studio Theatre in New York in 1977, and that year, Humboldt's Current won an *Obie* Award. In 1979 and 1980, the production was presented respectively in the New Theatre Festival in Baltimore and the Holland Festival in Amsterdam. The play is conceived for a bare proscenium stage. There is a wall-to-wall scrim, which serves as a backdrop to the live performers and shadow plays. Slides are projected onto this backdrop with white light. The playing area is a long rectangular space with three sets of wooden folding screens evenly spaced on each side. On the front set of screens, stuffed parrots are dispersed here and there, and a shrine with a portrait of a bearded man (Humboldt) sits in front of the right hand screen. The shrine is very gaudy, like one that can be found in the Far East or South America.

Chong uses very broad strokes in drawing imperial paths both in time and across the globe. With Humboldt's ambitious adventure, the audience's virtual historical travel is launched. The narratives are told through dramatic presentation, slide projections, shadow plays, and a 16mm movie. The dramatic presentation is ambiguously set in a European colony during the 19th and the 20th century, where the complicated paths of personal travels, imperial expansion, and native lives intersect. By means of Chong's poetics of conflation, different time zones and locations blend and spill into one another. This ambiguity in setting and characterization is deliberate in the sense that the narrative text does not illuminate a biography of an individual. Rather, it deals with a certain historical sensibility in a great time of exploration, discovery, scientific and technological developments, and imperial domination. For this reason, Chong recycles excerpts from letters, diaries, and biographies of Charles Darwin's, Emma Darwin's, Pierre Renoir's, Alexander von Humboldt's, Lord Dufferin's, and Lord Curzon's amongst many. The narrative text also alludes to Edison's light bulb, Daguerre's photograph, Henry Ford's automobile, and Freud's psychoanalytical quest for human consciousness. Reminiscent of those collaged sources, Humboldt's Victorian sensibility is expressed as follows: "For 35 years I have searched for the beast. From the jungles of the West to those of the East […] I have combed every inch of brush and bush to find him and I have returned each time, empty handed" (Humboldt's Current, 1-2).

In "Prologue," the chief characters, Charles and Emma Humboldt enter in late 19th century dress as if they popped out of an old picture album. In the first scene titled "Museum Specimens, Shrine, Prayer Boats," the evoked past of Victorian domesticity represented by Emma and Charles Humboldt is juxtaposed with the slide projections of

19th century museum specimens of animals. These two museum images, the tableau of

Victorian domesticity and the diorama of nature, are also doubly juxtaposed with wild

nature, suggested by "*the chatter of jungle birds*" (Humboldt's Current, 1). Upon

completion of Humboldt's narration about his ambitious search for the existence of

darkness, the slide of a man-like beast fades into darkness. Evoking the Loy Krathong

Festival on the Mekong River (of Thailand), "*gradually a glow illuminates the darkness;*

tiny, prayer boats traverse the vast, dark space, lighting the way with their vigilant

candles. As the boats cross, Emma Humboldt enters and lights incense before the

shrine" (Humboldt's Current, 3). Humboldt is obsessed with his search for "the beast,"

leaving his wife Emma (who prays for him in the shrine) in solitary domestic life.

Without recognizing that the beast in the darkness is his own double (his own nature),

Humboldt continues his quest.

　　　In subsequent newsreel slides, the irony of what we will ultimately identify as

global nuit blanche (white night) is suggested in images of the modern invention of the

electric light bulb and nightfall over Kilimanjaro. In a manner of documentary

presentation, the newsreel slides provide the audience with projected texts, which are

historically contexualized and juxtaposed with the narratives being told: "*THE*

ELECTRIC LIGHT BULB IS INVENTED", "*LORD CURZON IN HIS FAR EASTERN*

PROBLEMS CRITICIZES MISSIONARY METHODS IN CHINA", "*NIGHT FALLS OVER*

KILLIMANJARO" (Humboldt's Current, 3). The second set of newsreel slides are

presented after a dramatic presentation of the transactional encounter between

Humboldt and Signora Hanes (Humboldt's financial sponsor), which ends with

Humboldt's narration about his travel by steamer. As if the audience traced the imperial

paths through Humboldt's travel by steamer, several historical events are noted, which

expand and extend the locations and the historical periods of the dramatic presentation:

"*THE HEROES OF THE 16TH OF NOVEMBER HOTEL IS INAUGURATED*", "*THE*

QUESTION MARK IS INVENTED", "*APARTHEID IS BANISHED FROM SOUTH*

AMERICA", "*THE LOY KRATHONG FESTIVAL BEGINS ON THE MEKONG RIVER*,"

"*THE SUN ALSO RISES*" (Humboldt's Current, 7). In the third set of newsreel slides,

which are presented after a silent scene in which a miniature 19th century vessel

traverses the stage to the medieval pilgrimage song called Stella Splendens, the

audience non-logically but suggestively arrives at the location of domination and

resistance during the Vietnam War: "*LORD DUFFERIN IN HIS LETTER FROM HIGH*

LATITUDES, SAYS, THAT A TAME ARTIC FOX WAS THE MOST CHARMING PET

HE EVER POSSESSED", "*PHNOM PHEN FALLS . . .* ", but "*CHRISANTHEMUMS*

BLOOM" (Humboldt's Current, 10).

Slide projections also provide the spatial and temporal backgrounds that are not

available through the dramatic presentation and necessary information for the stories

told. For example, the audiences just hear voices of Humboldt and Foghetti (an Italian

adventurer and Humboldt's trusted secretary) against "*slides of 19th century exploration*

accompanied by the throbbing of a train and native music" in Scene 9 (Humboldt's

Current, 11). The audience is prompted to imagine Humboldt and Foghetti on a train or

a baggage car, a traveler's home. In the scene "The Great Museum," the slides offer

the audience information about the Great Museum and the death of Monsieur Fouquet

(the curator of the Great Museum). Meanwhile, through two shadow plays, the stories

from different time frames are told: Humboldt's childhood episode related to his

obsession with "deep woods" (Scene 8) and his vain achievements in his old age

(Scene 14). In the last scene (Scene 15), to Bach's Bist du bei mir (sung by Meredith

Monk),[2] a 16mm movie of Humboldt and Emma at a seaside grand hotel is shown,

"*when they were very young and full of God's grace*" (Humboldt's Current, 15). In the

home movie (which is created by Monk), "the lovers stand, wave, clown around, drink

wine" (Metha, 169). Their smiling faces, however, evoke the feeling of loss.

The ethnoscapes, commodityscapes, technoscapes, and finanscapes of

Humboldt's Current is constituted through the itineraries of Charles Humboldt, Emma

Humboldt, Foghetti, Signora Hanes, Sister Anna, and the natives in a European colony.

A Victorian woman, Emma Humboldt, suffers the imprisonment of the ideal Victorian

Home, while her explorer husband chooses to travel worldwide to find a beast. In the

colony, Humboldt and his secretary, Foghetti, meet Signora Hanes who will be a long-

time sponsor for their exploration. She suggests to Humboldt that he should visit

Monsieur Fouquet, curator of the Great Museum who is also obsessed with finding "the

beast." In a later scene, it is revealed that Monsieur Fouquet "*dismembered himself so

that he may be cast in stone and be immortalized in the Hall of Stone Personages*"

(Humboldt's Current, 12). Missionary Sister Anna (who believes in her way of assisting

"the savages") is added to this list of characters, which evoke the narcissistic mode of

thinking and actions toward the other(s).

The myth of traveler is exemplified in imperial ethnoscapes, commodityscapes,

technoscapes, and finanscapes in Humboldt's Current. Clifford's problematization of

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[2] In the production, various styles of music are used – Tibetan popular music (Pre-set), medieval pilgrimage music (Scene 7), and such classical music as Samuel Barber's Adagio (Scene 14) and Bach's Bist du bei mir (Scene 15).
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the myth of traveler is illuminating when examining the fecundity of the meaning of "traveling culture" in different situations and conditions. According to Clifford's observation of the uncritically simplified descriptions of traveling cultures, "good travel (heroic, educational, scientific, adventurous, ennobling) is something men do. Women are impeded from serious travel. Some of them go to distant places, but largely as companions or as 'exceptions' […]. 'Lady' travelers (bourgeois, white) are unusual, marked as special in the dominant discourses and practices" ("Traveling," 105). In Humboldt's Current, for example, while her husband is known as a scientific adventurer, Emma Humboldt is seen as merely his companion. In contrast to Emma, Signora Hanes is comparatively free to travel by her capital privilege. But her class privilege does not completely erase her "inferior" gender situation. In fact, more often than not, Victorian lady travelers like Signora Hanes were forced "to conform, masquerade, or rebel discreetly within a set of normatively male definitions and experiences" ("Traveling," 105). Regarding the dystopian aspect of ethnic situations of traveling cultures, Clifford notes that "Victorian bourgeois travelers, men and women, were usually accompanied by servants, many of whom were people of color" and "these individuals have never achieved the status of travelers" ("Traveling," 106). This is evident in Humboldt's Current, when a series of black and white engravings of Romantic exploration accompanied by the sounds of speeding trains, drums, and braying Tibetan horns illustrate what coexisted doubly with this romantic sentimentality: blacks carrying whites through baroque jungles, blacks carrying luggage, and blacks clearing brush. It is conspicuous that the myth of traveler is complicit with prismatic imperialist abjection in its complex factors of ethnicity, nationality, gender, and class.

5.3.   Imperialism: Traveling Narcissism and Racism

Imperialism masks its naked desire and power, Harvey notes, in its most sophisticated rhetoric of narcissism and racism.[3] The same good "us" is formulated out of performing abjection onto the evil "them" as beasts, strangers, and inferior, e.g., the primitive and hysterical women. Thus, as McClintock observes, under the imperial Manichean structure of racism (in a broad sense), the images of the abject (animal, women, the native) are often conflated. Women and natives are stereotypically portrayed as irrational animals, the native's sexuality is often feminized, and women and natives are viewed as the same inferior "race." According to McClintock, under imperialism, as one of the "white negroes," "white women were seen as an inherently degenerate 'race,' akin in physiognomy to black people and apes." For instance, McClintock notes that "Gustave le bon, author of the influential study of crowd behavior *La Psychologie des Foules*, compared female brain size with that of the gorilla and evoked this comparison as signaling a lapse in development" compared to the adult civilized man (54). In this way, the racist Social Darwinism based on pseudo-scientific anthropology marked the superiority of the white man of civilization as the end of human evolution.

Humboldt's Current demonstrates the conspiracy of imperialist anthropological cultural representation via its contribution to the binary conceptualization of the private (domestic)/the public, the inside/the outside, the irrational/the rational, the civilized/the primitive, and West/the Rest from which the idea of good, strong, and infallible self and the evil, weak, and incompetent other evolved. As Humboldt's Current points its teasing

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[3] See his recent book New Imperialism.

finger at, it was the obsessive "will to know" the others that prompted the desire and

power to dominate the others. The Victorian obsession with the unknown and its

consequential manifestation in the forms of the intellectual smugness and imperialist

territorial domination is well illustrated in the second and fourth scenes titled

respectively "First Village" and "Village of the Blind" in which anthropologist-explorer

Humboldt is teased with the great humor of an ironist. Humboldt's typical

anthropologist-explorer image is as a man who is bearded, bespectacled, with a

compass hanging around his neck, always making notes. Scene 2 evokes Clifford's

suggested irony in the binary model of inside villagers and outside anthropologist. In

"Introduction: Partial Truths" in Writing Culture, Clifford examines the signifying practice

of ethnographic writing, posing his question about the binary model embedded in most

studies of the culture of the others. He problematizes the anthropologist position as an

outside observer unaware of what Lacan calls "the returning look" of people whom s/he

observes. The anthropologist is also observed by the villagers.[4]

In Scene 2, Humboldt's outsider observation is compounded by "the returning

look" of the villager and even he is closely observed and touched by one of the villagers.

"*Two half naked natives, one woman, one man sit on their haunches beating something*

(grain? herbs?); one of them periodically peers over his shoulder." Humboldt observes,

"*but does not intrude*" this time. He gives the native woman a set of tin measuring

spoons. Humboldt writes in his notebook: "*I have gained their trust. First exchange of*

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[4] "In Bronislaw Malinowski's Argonauts of the Western Pacific," Clifford describes, "where a photograph of the ethnographer's tent among Kiriwinan dwelling is prominently displayed, there is no revelation of the tent's interior. But in another photo, carefully posed, Malinowski recorded himself writing at a table. The tent flaps are pulled back; he sits in profile, and some Trobrianders stand outside, observing the curious rite." Clifford proposes that "we begin not with participation-observation or with cultural texts (suitable for interpretation), but with writing, the making of texts" (Writing Culture, 1-2).

trinkets" (<u>Humboldt's Current</u>, 4). In Scene 4, Humboldt's obsession gets aggressive, resulting in intrusion. Three blind villagers are assembling flashlights, and Humboldt is curious as to what they are doing. He observes the blind villagers from a distance as if he studied an inferior animal, but eventually he intrudes on their private territory. "*Humboldt studies the flashlight looking so closely at it that he could never realize it was a flashlight.*" He examines a battery with tweezers and then snatches a handful of flashlight parts to carry back to the museum for further study. When one of the blind villagers feels Humboldt's presence, "*this villager snorts, alerting the rest to the alien violator of their privacy*" (<u>Humboldt's Current</u>, 8). In this scene, Humboldt's perception of the world anchored in optics is contrasted with the blind villagers' other sensory explorations. Can we say that Humboldt's perception is bright and the blind villagers' is dark? Chong seems to tell us that brightness is just the other side of darkness.

Crucially, this scientific and academic channeling of energy to conquer the unknown (darkness) finds its outlet through the mission of civilizing the unknown others and other cultures, which often results in colonization. Sister Anna's mission statement well proves the points under scrutiny. Scene 5 of <u>Humboldt's Current</u> titled "Sister Anna; The Missionary," presents Sister Anna's mission statement for the underdeveloped people, which in its excess undermines its humanitarian rhetoric and reveals her smugness toward the culture of the others. The nuit blanche (white night) of her attitude is starkly imaged: "*the harsh white light of the slide projector exposes Sister Anna sitting in a mission chair looking straight out at the audience. Throughout this scene the slide projector will go black and then white light, black and then white, etc.*" (<u>Humboldt's Current</u>, 8). Regardless of the questions of the interviewer, Sister Anna

regurgitates what she thinks about the mission of civilizing "primitive" people. For

example, when the interviewer asks why she chose to come there, she answers instead

that "developmental aid, you know, derives from the principle of justice, but on these

hills, that justice is not strong enough. What is needed is of a very different nature"

(Humboldt's Current, 9). The interviewer asks about the disappearance of Humboldt.

But she says, "there is no more land. What we need to do now is to intensify the

agriculture, to increase the yield. We need to develop techniques that will reduce

losses caused by rats and insects" (Humboldt's Current, 9). What is phenomenally

intensified here is the gap between her knowledge of the other(s) and her belief in

superior technology of her civilization, what Hannerz calls "the narcissistic streak."

Sister Anna's rhetoric also expresses what Spivak calls "epistemic violence" and

Emmanuel Levinas calls "ethical violence" toward the others.

But Humboldt and Sister Anna's excessive desire to contain the unknown others

reveals its own ambivalence of pleasure/displeasure, avowal/disavowal, abjection/awe

toward the others. These dual ambivalences are an ironic commentary on the

hierarchical Victorian duality expressed in contradictory views toward (the unknown)

nature. Rationalized in a miniature displayed in a Natural History Museum, nature was

considered to be comprehensible. Critic Erika Munk reports the antiquated feel of

nature presented in the first scene, "Museum Specimens, Shrine, Prayer Boats,"

remarking on "the slide sequence of mole, fox, turtle, weasel, in old prints whose effect

is like the dioramas in the Museum of Natural History: so stiff, you know nature is dead"

(77). But rationalized nature coexisted with the feeling of awe toward the unknown

nature, as Darwin's scientific explanation of nature in <u>Origin of Species</u> coexisted with (Alexander von) Humboldt's embrace of the complexity of nature in his <u>Kosmos</u>.

In this respect, it can be said that Humboldt's obsessive masculine gaze reveals the same ambivalence as his mixed senses of mystery and abjection toward the "savages," since for Victorian males, the feminine is considered the unknown territory of nature. In Scene 12, titled "Emma's Madness," Emma acts out her hysteria reminiscent of Freud's formulation of the feminine nature of irrationality. This scene demonstrates an example of Victorian male rationality both abjecting and beautifying the unknown feminine territory. In the scene, "*she* [Emma] *knots his* [Humboldt's] *white shirt, loops and knots until it is a ball and no longer a shirt*" and "*in a slowly rising move of her arm, she smashes the shirt into the ground and falls screaming to the ground*" but "*just as quickly she begins to laugh and chatter in Spanish*" (<u>Humboldt's Current</u>, 14). This scene portrays an image of Emma as an irrational force, which sight Humboldt would observe at a distance as if he examined a rare bird. As in the case of nature, Victorian man's view of woman was contradictory: awe coexisting with abjection and mystery with domination. Following McClintock's accounts, through the imperialist boundary rituals, animals, "primitives," and women were contained in the same territory of nature, demarcated from that of the civilized white men, even though the ambiguity always haunted the borders. The irony of the Victorian duality reappears in the later scenes where the Victorian bourgeoisie's public success in technological and scientific developments, war, and colonization cost the loss of love, family, and self in the private sphere. Humboldt's quest results in losing everyone he loves: Emma and Foghetti.

5.4. Imperialism and the Spectacle of the Other

Humboldt's Current shows how practices of travel writings and exhibitions in the time of modern European imperialism,[5] which later served as grounding discursive formations in such human sciences as anthropology and ethnology, parallel the imperialist cognitive itineraries, in the sense that the desire involved in such signifying cultural practices was marked as a possessive performance toward the mastering the other(s) and the other cultures.[6] Henrietta Lidchi, in her essay "The Poetics and Politics of Exhibiting Other Cultures," focuses on the political side of museum as "the institution whose activities of collecting and curating cease to be neutral or innocent activities but emerge as an instrumental means of knowing and possessing the culture of others" (154). Lidchi builds on G. W. Stocking's argument on the political signification the disciplinary human science of anthropology sustained in the time of European imperialism. According to Stocking, Lidchi notes, "it is a discipline which codified knowledge in such a manner that it could be called upon as moral as well as scientific justification for the often bloody process of imperial expansion" (186). That is to say, what Foucault calls the "will to know" (power to knowledge) the other(s) engendered one of the outlets for imperialist-humanist myths of the same and the other through

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[5] As Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett notes, in her book Destination Culture, "museums have long served as surrogates for travel, a particularly important role before the advent of mass tourism." Like the private bourgeois cabinets of curiosities, "they have from their inception preserved souvenirs of travel, as evidenced in their collections of plants, animals, minerals, and examples of the arts and industries of the world's cultures" (132).

[6] According to Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, the desire for visibility (the voyeuristic desire for seeing the others) is intrinsic in any kind of exhibition, whether it is a represented or lived one. As she puts it, "exhibitions are fundamentally theatrical, for they are how museums perform the knowledge they create" (3). "Even when efforts are taken to the contrary," Kirshenblatt-Gimblett observes, "live exhibits tend to make people into artifacts because the ethnographic gaze objectifies" (55). This gaze fixes museum objects through rhetorical construction by means of metonymy and mimesis, whose powerful displacement transforms the whole culture into fetishist parts.

museum display. A British "cabinet of curiosities" or "closet of rarities," Lidchi notes,

were precedents of this imperialist-motivated displaying project in its systems of

classification and representation, normalizing a classificatory system which relies on the

binary of the normal/the abnormal.[7] Regarding the museum's dominant classificatory

system, Ivan Karp distinguishes two main strategies in representing the other cultures in

museum exhibition: what he calls "exoticizing" the other(s) and "assimilating" the

other(s). In the former, the same (the self) excludes differences as the exotic other and

in the latter, the same colonizes the other, integrates it into the same.[8]

In Humboldt's Current, as an allegorical figure of imperialist finanscapes, Signora

Hanes is a connective thread of knowledge, institution (museum), and finance. She is a

wealthy woman who is traveling around the world. She collects rare and exotic things

like Turkish turbans for her own "cabinet of curiosity" or to sell to wealthy people.

Signora Hanes is connected to the curator of the Great Museum, Monsieur Fouquet. It

is she who recommends Humboldt to Monsieur Fouquet, because Humboldt can

contribute to the accumulated knowledge of the institutionalized museum. The

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[7] As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett indicates, museum exhibition depends on fragments, and there are two distinct styles of display: *in-situ* and *in-context*. By the realist poetics of metonymy and mimesis in *in-situ* exhibition, these fragments represent the whole, constructing a microcosm of the culture or the nature they suggest. In this realist style of representation, best seen in diorama display, there lies a convincing belief that the whole can be grasped by the fetishsized (essential) parts. Unlike *in-situ* exhibition, *in-context* style of exhibition acknowledges the constructed nature of the knowledge presented in the exhibition, engaging the audience to recognize the arbitrary nature of the representation. But, as Ivan Karp puts it in his introductory essay "Other Cultures in Museum Perspective," "no genre of museum is able to escape the problems of representation inherent in exhibiting other cultures" (378).

[8] According to Karp, whereas the strategy of exoticizing is grounded on the logic of difference, the more subtle assimilating strategy is based on the logic of similarities. But, recalling the discussion of Foucault's "murmuring resemblance," which encompasses the differences, I consider that these two seemingly oppositional strategies emerge from the same binary logic of sameness and difference. Karp concludes that "the two perils of exoticizing and assimilating can be found in the exhibitions of virtually every museum that devotes any part of itself to exhibiting culture. Nor are museums that restrict themselves to examining diversity within their own societies able to escape the difficulties described above" ("Other Cultures in Museum Perspective," 378).

encounter of Humboldt and Signora Hanes signifies how knowledge can be traded with money. When Signora Hanes recognizes Humboldt's expertise on the natives and their cultures, she writes a check to buy his knowledge, since she needs a connoisseur to distinguish and judge the things that she wants to collect. For example, Scene 3 delineates the nature of the cultural transaction as a trope of imperialism. A native enters, carrying a bone in one hand and a huge wooden bowl on his head. Signora Hanes says to Humboldt "I bet you know what tribe he is." Humboldt responds that "as a matter of fact I do." "*Another native cuts in on this conversation and tries to sell them something*," reads the stage direction. Signora Hanes asks Humboldt if she can believe the native. Humboldt says yes. Signora Hanes purchases from the native (Humboldt's Current, 6). Subsequently she funds Humboldt for his exploration. Suggesting their transaction (of knowledge and money), their encounter is significantly set in a dockside[9] where the freights of importing and exporting commodities and raw materials busily run. The scene is accomplished with theatrical economy via audio-visual images: "*traffic can be heard and cows mooing nearby. Humboldt wakes. A coolie enters with some fancy luggage and sets it down, downstage left. The stage manager brings on a paper mache cow, the coolie brings more luggage, the stage manager brings more cows*" (Humboldt's Current, 5). This dockside scene suggestively alludes to the situation of brutal economic appropriation in imperialist commodityscapes.

Meanwhile, Scene 9 ("19th Century Exploration"), Scene 10 ("Great Museum"), and Scene 11("Delirium") connect the practices of travel and museum as institution in their desire to possess the other visually. In Scene 9, through slide projection, several

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[9] Some critics say that the dockside is reminiscent of a dockside in Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness.

19th century Romantic engravings portraying imperial exploration are shown. These

engravings provide temporo-spatial background for Humboldt and Foghetti's excessive

desire to put the other into visibility. Scene 10 is constructed as projected texts and

slides through which the audience is virtually introduced to the labyrinthian cellars of the

Great Museum, to the inside of the Hall of Stone Personage where the dismembered

Fabrise Fouquet (the curator of the Great Museum) is said to be cast in stone. In Scene

10, the Great Museum is portrayed as an allegory of imperial authority, by which the

curator is represented as "*father, guiding light, the foundation block, and Maestro*"

(Humboldt's Current, 11). This scene demonstrates the irony of the modern museum

institution (and modern imperialism) in the way in which the scene narrates how the

layout of the Great Museum is incomprehensible in contradiction to its purpose in

ordering things (the world) for maximum comprehensibility. The sixth slide reads, "*A*

comprehensive map of the Great Museum has been in the works for the last forty years"

(Humboldt's Current, 11). It seems to indicate the irony of the imperial rationality in its

ambiguous obsession with the fetish, a world map. Another irony that the will to know

(will to classify) living nature leads to the death of nature is highlighted with the text;

"*One of the potted plants lining the museum wall has been seriously neglected by the*

night guard. The board of trustees has been seriously considering the dismissal of the

night guard" (Humboldt's Current, 12). The eighth slide describes how the institutional

museum reconstructs the collected objects into ethnographic artifacts; "*Three new*

acquisitions will be unveiled at the Gala benefit for the reconstruction of Hue"

(Humboldt's Current, 11). This museum activity is allusively related to the imperial

exploitation of cultural artifacts of the colonies and the reordering of the colonial world

through spectacle. Slide # 11 indicates the imperial usage of the institutional museum as a body of authorized knowledge in such a way as "*an inner city program on Modern Art has been arranged for colored children by Mrs. Ellyce Bendel, a volunteer for the Great Museum*" (Humboldt's Current, 12). The imperial rationality, culminating in the institution of museum, is further undermined in the subsequent scenes. In Scene 11, the mutilated apparition of Fabrise Fouquet (the curator of the Great Museum) gives Humboldt instructions on finding "the beast" with which Humboldt is obsessed, saying "listen closely, I haven't much time. Along the highlands of Central Asia, 18,000 feet high ascend the narrow north face. There in the sacred place, make the descent into the maelstrom and there you will find the holy scriptures leading the way to the beast" (Humboldt's Current, 13). But, in a later scene (Scene 14), it is revealed that Humboldt follows his instruction, only to lose Foghetti in this exploration. Ironically, his ambition to put the invisible other into the representable field of imperial spectacle costs Humboldt the life of his closest friend.

In representing the others (and the cultures of the others), with the aid of the rhetorical construction of metonymy and metaphor, the ethical (political) violence of both exoticising and assimilating the other hardly avoids the pitfalls of stereotypes of the other. The museum exhibition's classificatory system is also conducted through the narratives of how it defines the anomalous, which are excluded as nature's mistakes, freaks, and horrors from the normative. Like the aberration of a freak show, colonial spectacles displaying "primitive" and "savage" people and villages provided the mythic narrative of social Darwinist distinction of the civilized self and the degenerated

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other(s).[10] But it is an irony that the curator of the Great Museum in <u>Humboldt's Current</u>,

the representative of civilized rationality, installed his own freak show in order to be

memorialized as a museum spectacle – he dismembered himself to be immortalized in

the Hall of Stone Personages. This theme of ambivalence of brightness/darkness (the

rational/the irrational) is related to the theme of global nuit blanche (white night) in <u>Nuit

Blanche</u>.

5.5.   Global Nuit Blanche

In <u>Nuit Blanche</u>, which premiered at La MaMa E.T.C. in New York in 1981, the

global flows are not so much explained as presented through simultaneously ordinary

and allegorical objects and people. For detailed discussion of the thematic flows

involved in <u>Nuit Blanche</u>, I will succinctly sketch out its stage configurations as

allegories of spaces and locations along certain time lines. Since the production heavily

relies on photographic and cinematic projections, it is mounted on a bare proscenium

stage. There is a large rear-projection screen lit with lights. The first scene happens in

a congregation hall. Without specific set pieces and props, the stage turns into a

congregation hall where a politician (or an international blackmailer) appears to present

his political views on geopolitics, asking aid for his country, undergoing political

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[10] In regard to contemporary geopolitics, as much as the radical forms of fundamentalism and terrorism is based on the rhetoric of incompatible antagonism of the self and the other, this logic of exclusion and abjection in the myth of the social Darwinist evolution still seems to mobilize the travel and flow of armies and high-tech military industries. For example, according to Harvey, under the double standard of the idea of liberty and democracy (which only concern the liberty of domestic home), while masking imperial intent, American political intervention overthrew the democratically elected Mossadegh government in Iran (1953) for its self-interests derived from the demand for economic and political control of the Middle East, which is considered significant to American global hegemony. The success of the political intervention brought a secure position to US oil companies, increasing their control of Middle Eastern oil reserves while reserves under British control significantly decreased (<u>New Imperialism</u>, 20).

upheaval or revolution. The audience is treated as if they were participants in this

political event. After a slide projection entitled "Murmurs of Earth," the third scene is set

on a South American plantation ranch in the 1800s. Chairs and a table found in a

typical living room of that period evoke the scenic environment. The scene is played

entirely in Spanish. The next scene happens in the same living room, but six years later.

Scene 5 is set on the same Latin plantation, but a year later. Scene 6 begins as a slide

sequence of cave drawings in close-up, a grouping of cave drawings on a wall, and the

inside of a cave near the opening. Shadow plays about prehistoric men and their first

murder begins against this rear projection. Time jumps to a contemporary American

suburb in Scene 7. The scene is set in a small private laundry room in North Carolina.

In Scene 7, the scene environments are suggested only by an ironing board, clothes

basket, and a metal stool with a pullout stepladder. The eighth scene shows the second

slide sequence entitled "Murmurs of Earth II." Scene 9 is set in a resort hotel in a

South-East Asian country called "The Haven of Peace." In this scene, lighting

demarcates the spaces (hotel rooms) where the characters stay. Three rectangular

lighting pools indicate the three different rooms. The overall effect is a cinematic effect

by which the audience can simultaneously see what happens to the characters in

different locations. Scene 10 is set in an airport in a very minimal way. The sounds of

airplane engines, flight announcements, and the tails of airplane metonymically present

the airplane setting. The last scene shows a sacrificial ritual in a South-East Asian

country, which is the background for the resort hotel scene. On stage, there stands

blinking Christmas lights, and under the lights, there is a huge beast dying. As the title

suggests (<u>Nuit Blanche</u>), the brightness and the darkness of our global situations are

juxtaposed. Two puppeteers handle the beast's neck. The entire cast comes in as the participants of the ritual. They lay out candles, fruit, incense and paper money. A politician from the country throws money on the dying beast, and a film of the moon, seen through branches of a tree, is projected into the screen.

As the stage direction indicates, it is "*the peculiarities of earth life*" that <u>Nuit Blanche</u> shows and tells (<u>Nuit Blanche</u>, 9). This show and tell takes a variety of human life in history through audio-visual materials like the NASA tape of Neil Armstrong landing on the moon, projections of earth from a satellite, a shadow play enacting pre-historical cave men and their first murder, dramatic presentations about colonial plantation, North American suburban life, and a luxurious tourist hotel in South-East Asia. The audience encounters historical figures such as Richard Nixon and Neil Armstrong (through a slide projection), and fictive personas such as a person who died of Smallpox (Abigail Smith), a plantation owner, a slave, lovers (the plantation owner's daughter and her American suitor), a laundress (Miss B) and her neighbors, an itinerary laborer (Miss B's husband), a singing nun, a resort owner, a politician, a mercenary, terrorists, tourists, a waiter. This variety and complexity of man-made situations of power, in its loss of connection, is the negative side of radical multiculturalism.

As Chong expresses in the preface, this complexity of the global reality seems to reflect our dismay from learning the fact that it is not possible to map out and comprehend this reality. <u>Nuit Blanche</u> embodies the ambivalence and complexity not only in the intersections of all aspects of the global, the national, and the local but also in the intersections of ethnicity, class, nationality, and gender. This complexity and ambivalence may explain the embarrassment the readers or the audiences first

encounter with the strangely non-linear, multiscopic, multilateral, multireferential

bricolage. This kind of complexity and ambivalence contributes to many critics'

comments on the mysterious quality of the narrative, despite of the absence of manifest

surreal stylization, which Chong often tried in his earlier narrative texts. To the contrary,

the described mundane everyday lives the characters live appear magically real

(Chong's affiliation with magical realism) in their fantastic complexity and ambiguity.

Like Chong's other narrative texts, Nuit Blanche does not have a comprehensible

dramatic arc so useful to realists and historicists in describing the deep meanings of our

reality and history. (In some narrative texts, Chong borrows the conventions of realism

for ironic commentary on them.) In Nuit Blanche, meanings are not so much *produced*

by gripping underlying depth (as root, origin, or cause) as they are attached bilaterally to

what the audience witnesses and experiences.[11] The narrative text deliberately disrupts

the audience's grasp of the "telos" of the actions described in the scenes. In so doing,

the narrative text denies the connective casualty and consequently the audience

constantly asks why. Eventually, the audience reaches a sense that our reality and

history cannot be fully grasped. The narrative text (and such other historical narratives

as Snow, Maraya, and East/West Quartet) neither boosts humanity's pride in its unique

strength and intellectuality nor records the progress of human history. To the contrary,

it seriously narrates how human history repeats mistakes and errors of destruction and

agressiveness.

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[11] Foucault's genealogy proposes the possibility of (historical) interpretations without excluding the workings of signification through the concept of doubling. By contrast, some radical postmodern trials (for example, in case of Baudrillard) eliminate the concept of depth and nihilistically affirm pure surface and appearance. Chong's poetics of doubling can be understood less as a hierarchical causality than as a bilateral signification we endow to social actions and phenomena.

Chong's inspired choices in selecting histories, locations, and life styles capture fantastical aspects of the reality of power dynamics in very mundane settings. He traces back the routs of global violence (aggressiveness) through the technoscapes of weapons (spear, knife, gun, and bomb), caught through settings of a cave man's dwelling, a plantation ranch, an American suburb, and a resort hotel. Thus, one object that constantly reappears regardless of locations and periods is a weapon. In the scene titled "Estanica La Mariposa [a South American plantation]," a plantation owner gives his daughter a knife as a gift. Later, in a shadow play, the audience witnesses the imaginary re-enactment of the first murder among cave men in which the visual motif of a spear can be connected to Frederic's (Miss B's young neighbor and customer) obsession with his knife collection in the suburban neighborhood in America, the stabbing and a ticking bomb in the hotel in South-East Asia, and the sporadic sounds of gun-shots throughout the production. The weapons allegorize a violence that appears through the diverse modes of global flows, ethnoscapes, commodityscapes, technoscapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes.

Nuit Blanche allegorically charts the violent paths of imperialism through the itineraries of two characters, Señor Ortega (the plantation owner in 1890's Latin America) and Bernice Harps (the slave on the plantation). The plantation owner loses his plantation at the gambling tables, but he mysteriously reappears as the owner of a resort hotel (Papa Willie) in a 20th century South-East Asian country. Having experienced various geopolitical circumstances, his global journey is induced by the nationalist movement of the nation where he runs his resort hotel. Meanwhile, the slave girl, Berenice, migrates to 20th century North America. Her servitude registers the

slavery system which provided the labor for the production of raw materials sent back to factories in the European empires. Reminiscent of Jean Genet's The Maids or Fanon's description of the desire (fantasy) of the colonial subject toward the master's privileged (material and cultural) position,[12] right before her migration to North America, the slave girl ritually performs the master's position, "*sitting in her mistress's chair*," and "*mimics her mistress in conversation with a person in the opposite chair*" (Nuit Blanche, 12). Berenice's migration to North America, which is now embodied in Miss B's lowly social status (laundress) in the mundane setting of her small private laundry room, indicates the reverse path of imperialism, the historical construction of the ethnoscape (so-called) from South to North. As the audience gathers through Miss B's sad murmuring – "I thought he'd gone on down to Galveston, y'know, to work on that oil rig down there – they make a lot of money" (Nuit Blanche, 16) – her husband is an itinerant laborer.

Miss B is about to make her next move, but the audience doesn't know exactly whether she travels in order to find her husband or whether the Nun's phrase "Life is too short" invokes pain and prompts her decisive move onto the next journey. She simply addresses the audience with "'cuz I'd always… wanted to travel" (Nuit Blanche, 17). I consider that even though contingency at a certain point[13] (in case of Miss B, the Nun's phrase) contributes to people's actions, decision-makings toward specific ends are not

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[12] This mimicry differs from Bhabha's "strategic mimicry in that Berenice appropriates the other (her master) to assimilate her own difference. Borrowing Fanon's account, under the coerced forces of colonial power, the colonial subject internalizes the master's cultural values.

[13] Critic Mel Gussow interprets Miss B's decision to move as a chance event in as much as he conceives history as the conglomeration of chances. Certainly, there are clues which illuminate the operation of chance as it moves history. As Gussow points out in "'Nuit Blanche,' A Ping Chong's Collage," the background voice announcing the bingo game in a church in which the donation begging Rose-Colored Nun might serve seems to say that our life and history is contingent, as at the bingo table. But, I interpret the scene differently. For me, this scene is about a materialized and secularized American life style.

mere practices of chances. It seems that Miss B's complex situations (her lonely life,

insecure economic status, and the feeling of imprisonment, etc.) indicate why she

constantly needs to move: to search for an economic and political security, that is to

say, to leave an old home to make a new secure home. Whereas Miss B and her

husband are vulnerable in that they have to constantly move against their will, Papa

Willie's (the owner of the resort hotel) cosmopolitan journey is freely chosen by

comparison. On her way to Ireland, in an international airport, Miss B (Berenice) has a

mysterious rendezvous with the former plantation owner played by the same actor who

played Papa Willie. Miss B is played by the actress who played the role of the slave girl

in the plantation scene. Papa Willie's reappearance suggests the continuing but

dwindling (European) imperialist power in different global situations. The last words of

Miss B and Papa Willie at their encounter – "Bon Voyage" – may thus signify the end of

imperial power or may indicate ironically that they both move to an uncertain future (<u>Nuit</u>

<u>Blanche</u>, 27).

Commodityscapes as important facets of imperialism and economic domination

are obvious throughout <u>Nuit Blanche</u>. In the first scene, set on a Latin plantation, the

luxurious life style of a European family is allegorically suggested through the plantation

owner's gifts to his daughter (a delicate tea set, a knife, and a movie box). In the

laundry room scene, through the same poetic strategy of allegory, popular American

commodities (Coca-Cola, crossword puzzle, color tv, etc.) index materialized and

secularized American culture. Miss B is holding a bottle of Coca-Cola while she is

doing a crossword puzzle. The singing Nun who is obsessed with donations is

concerned less with spiritual bliss than such material prizes as a remote control and a

color tv as the reward for charity. Most people in the scene are indulging in games

(children doing games, Miss B's crossword puzzle, the bingo game in the background of

the scene, etc.). Miss B's young neighbor, Franklin, is seduced by the beauty and

strength of a knife. When Miss B is asked by the Nun how she is doing, she responds

that "Oh, business is fine…How's God? I am sorry, that was sacrilegious" (Nuit

Blanche, 15). This peculiar privilege of the materialized American life style is presented

through the material and cultural prestige of the American Woman and the American

Beach Comber in the resort hotel scene, set in a luxurious resort hotel in a South-East

Asian country on the verge of (socialist) revolution. The scene is an allegory of

fantastical contemporary geopolitics drawn in the mundane niche of a tourist hotel. The

fictitious setting combines two actual historical events that happened at the time Chong

conceived the narrative text: the socialist revolution in Cambodia and the American

hostages crisis in Iran. American tourists are killed one by one while they are puzzled

by the hotel's changing (American style) furniture. When the American tourist woman is

asked about the hotel, she tells her mother in America by phone that "Well, we're in a

hotel… oh, it's all right, you know, it's the same all over" (Nuit Blanche, 18), but the

changing furniture clearly signifies that the American "home away from home" is being

swept by socialist nationalism.

Local/global interactions can be facilitated not only by the physical movement of

people or commodities but also by traveling images, information, and ideologies through

media. As Clifford contends, people who are kept in their locations by various

constraints also have a local/global sense; they do hear radio and they watch tv (and

some use computers).[14] In the opening of the resort hotel scene in <u>Nuit Blanche</u>, the audience watches a comparatively long segment where the American Woman calls her mother in America in order to let her know what is going on in the hotel in which she lodges. Meanwhile, she constantly checks the radio to learn what is happening in that foreign country. Along with the telephone conversation between Armstrong and President Nixon which was presented with Armstrong's moon landing shots, this scene briefly indicates global technoscapes and mediascapes.

Communication and media technologies (positively or negatively) constitute *parts* of important global connectiveness. In the preface to <u>Nuit Blanche</u>, Chong expresses utopian hope in the goodness of human-kind in its neighborly connection in rhetoric familiar at the time Chong conceived this narrative text (1981): "It's more and more important for us not to feel so foreign with one another. The electronic age is tying us all in, and the inclination of human history is to conglomerate into larger and larger republics. If we don't ruin the planet first, it's likely we will someday belong to one enormous republic" (<u>Nuit Blanche</u>, 5). Chong suggests McLuhanesque utopian global harmony, but, as I mentioned, the time-space compression (proximity) and connectivity of the globalization process cannot be described alone by discourses on the evolution of technology which ignore migrating people, capital transfers, political interventions, information and communication networks, and traveling images and ideologies. As Una Chaudhuri in <u>Staging Place</u> points out, even though the global connectivity mentioned in the preface of <u>Nuit Blanche</u> was much informed by McLuhan's view of technological determinism, Chong acknowledges "the contradictory pull of cultural difference and

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[14] Refer to James Clifford's essay "Traveling Cultures" in the <u>Cultural Studies</u> edited by Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula A. Treichler (103).

what he calls 'global harmony'" in the complicated interconnectivity of social relations (240). Furthermore, his positive sense of electronic connection is rethought in his later narratives when he realizes aspects of technological manipulation through electronic networks of communication and information.

Meanwhile, as Chong writes in the preface, his utopian aspiration toward "one human republic" is expressed in relation to concerns with the preservation of our planet. The silenced existence and inhabitance of animals (horses, cattle, birds, etc), trees, sky, clouds, water, rocks, and wind murmurs throughout the narrative text. It begins like a camera zooming in from outer space. The first sound the audiences encounter is Irving Berlin's ballad "Blue Skies" and against this background the spectators see an image, which is not recognizable immediately; "*it seems to be a picture of clouds, or maybe water, a horse's head, or perhaps two figures on a country road*" (Nuit Blanche, 7). And each scene's environment is characteristically described by a soundtrack of both natural and man-made sounds like intoning bells, baby squall, foreign language (the second scene is entirely played in Spanish), gunshots, the singing of a nun, zither music, a piano and synthesizer score, radio music, the ticking of a time bomb, a flight announcement in various foreign languages, an eerie moan of a dying beast, etc.

This Utopian hope for global harmony among people and the green Earth freezes when it encounters the bleak pictures of the dystopian global struggle. The name of the resort hotel, "The Haven of Peace," is ironic like the "global neighborhood," which appears to be constantly agitated by global domination, global terrorism, nationalist resistance, and revolution. In contrast to the political domination of the old empires based on territorial colonies seen in the plantation scene, the deterritorialization of

global hegemony mainly works through the economic and cultural domination of production and consumption. The "international division of labor,"[15] the term used by Hannerz and Spivak to designate the uneven global production and distribution, is allegorically presented through the resort hotel run by the European Papa Willie/the plantation owner. The native waiter Luis' servitude provides the main source of labor. Natural beauties, cultural exotics, and native services are consumed by the tourists, "American Woman" and "Beach Comber." Harvey calls the uneven distribution of wealth enabled by the merged power of transnational capitalists and politicians of the so-called First World "accumulation by dispossession." And this is found in the same mechanism of "the extraction of tribute from the colonies in some of the most oppressive and violently exploitative forms of imperialism ever invented" (Harvey, 45). In the scene "The Haven of Peace," the cosmopolitanism of Papa Willy is expressed through his mastery in shell collecting and his international taste in importing goods such as the Tang drink from America and quality tobacco from Belgium, which suggests the continuing uneven exchanges between the so-called First World and the Third World.

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[15] Critiquing transnational capitalism, Masao Miyoshi exemplifies the global division of labor through the case of Nike shoes. According to him, Nike replaces unionized and expensive employees with cheap overseas workers who are unprotected from any social concerns (civil rights, environmental concerns, feminist consciousness, etc.). The production is subcontracted to Korean entrepreneurs, and the subcontractors operate their factories in Indonesia, Thailand, and China. According to his report, the young women who work in Indonesia all day long sewing these shoes get about $1.80 a day, and the contractors charge $6.50 a pair to Nike. Then, Nike sells them in the United States for $50 to $100. Surprisingly, "the entire Indonesian operation that employs 30,000 women cost Nike less than what it pays Michael Jordan for his endorsement of the brand, some $20 million" (257).

5.6.   Global Market and Cultural Identification

Papa Willie's display of his cultural identification through the imported Western commodities foregrounds the political economy in which capitalist products are defined on the basis of use and exchange values. Do the political economic flows of finance, commodities, natural sources, and labor forces determine global culture as the consequence of the global political economy? Our cultural identity clings to what we consume: to exaggerate a little, we are what we eat, wear, and drive. Jean Baudrillard's theories of consumer societies supplement Marxian political economy in their cultural and semiological planes and will provide a useful framework in examining the global market, cultural identity, and desire. But I adopt Baudrillard to go beyond his acceptance of the homogeneity of capitalism in postmodern hyper-consumption, aiming to sketch out the different strategies of consumption in the histories and conditions of communities and nations. Following Mike Featherstone's rejection of the universalizing propensity in the discourses of modernization, I would similarly like to use the category, "postmodernity," as not only a temporal term but also a spatial term, since postmodern phenomena appear unevenly in the global culture. In this sense, I disqualify the singular and even process of a clear progression from pre-modern, modern, to postmodern, in a way similar to Williams' description of the coexistence of "dominant," "residual," and "emergent" cultures.[16] Whereas in some countries the shift is gradual, others go through radical changes.

Some social commentators today stress the American material culture as the expression of global homogenization, taking examples of global proliferation of such

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[16] See Raymond Williams' "Dominant, Residual, and Emergent" in <u>Marxism and Literature</u>. I have already explained these concepts in the Endnotes # 6 of Chapter 2.

American goods and cultural products as Coca-Cola, McDonald, Nike, CNN, Disneyland, and Hollywood movies. It is right to say that the changes in life style which they bring forth are significant, since those imported commodities, technologies, and cultural products bring with them specific ways of life, styles, and values. Thus, they seem to say that American culture is equivalent to global culture. But others describe the global flows differently. According to them, foreign things and products are not immune to the hybridization process with indigenous things, since the culture, ideology, and desire of the indigenous lands also determine consumption. If we define, as Hall notes, culture as "signifying practices" (the term coined by Kristeva to refer to language as socially communicable discourse),[17] it can be said that the ways we consume foreign imports have different social significations from that of their origins.[18] David Howes, for instance, argues that the worldwide ways people consume Coca-Cola claimed to be an icon of American material culture, demonstrate the point of creolization, which transforms the standard or imagined ways of consumption. "It can smooth wrinkles (Russia)," Howes informs, "it can revive a person from the dead (Haiti)," and "it can turn copper into silver (Barbados)." Howes notes that "Coke is also indigenized through being mixed with other drinks, such as rum in the Caribbean to make *Cuba Libre* or *Aguadiente* in Bolivia to produce *Ponche Nigro*" (6). And, I recall that my mother in South Korea used it as a supplement for her bad digestion.

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[17] For Kristeva, language is processed by two modes, "semiotic (psychic and libidinal drives)" and "symbolic (nomination, sign, syntax; the sites of positions and judgment)." She contends that these two modes can be combined in different ways to constitute different types of social discourse. Refer to her book Revolution in Poetic Language.

[18] Stuart Hall's and Paul Gilroy's discussion of diasporic culture and creolization make this point clear.

I agree with Howes that global culture is not all homogenizing. For instance, the concepts of hybridization, transformation, mutation, syncreticism, and mimicry, which I examined in the previous chapters, also contain resisting acts in many cases. There are always pulls, pushes, and shifts in globalization processes. Thus, the global flows are always multifold processes. But, on the other hand, the hybridization process should be examined under the scrutiny of power dynamics among different cultural elements. Blind cultural appropriation as both the colonizing and colonized form of hybridization is nothing but the violent mechanism of cultural imperialism. I appeal neither to nationalist and patriotic sentiment nor avow the uncritical nostalgia toward exclusive traditionalism and localism. But I felt dismay when I read a newspaper article about some wealthy parents in South Korea who are willing to buy their children a thumb-sized Gucci brand eraser for more than $100. (The eraser is covered with a leather case inscribed with the Gucci brand name.) Also in South Korea, a new expression in the vocabulary of consumption, "prestige product" (in Korean translation meaning close to "masterpiece"), usually refers to imported brand products from America, France, Italy, England, Swiss, Japan, etc. What I want to recapitulate here is that examining global flows of production and consumption of commodities, cultural products cannot be discussed by focusing exclusively on such discourses as capitalism (base on political economy), imperialism, (post-) modernity, and nationalism. The parents who pay for the $100 eraser buy the social prestige attached to the imported product. Papa Willie's superiority over the native politician in the scene of "Heaven of Peace" is partly expressed through the commodities he uses (American Tang and

Belgium tobacco) and the native's nationalist rebellion starts with replacing foreign (American) style furniture in the hotel.

In <u>Nosferatu</u>, Chong comes to terms with the imagined hierarchical social distinctions and values distinguished mainly by material commodities. The luxurious life style of the yuppies in <u>Nosferatu</u> is referenced by brand-named products from all over the world. Their dinner table is distinguished from others with the expensive foreign wines they enjoy. As Bourdieu describes it, "class" determined *habitus*[19] distinguishes itself by engaging a specific set of products, activities, and a life style. But, Jonathan Friedman argues that beyond Bourdieu's economism, we need a new model to take account of "the more spectacular capitalist consumption in general, based on the desire for new identities and accompanying strategies that render any particular set of consumer-based distinctions obsolete after relatively short periods of stability" (313). Even though Baudrillard exaggerates the aspect of our desire for social prestige in consumption, his insight into a new phase of analysis on capitalism echoes in Friedman's argument. The yuppie personas in <u>Nosferatu</u> do not just buy the commodities for their use and exchange values, which classical Marxists conceived as the determining factors in changing social modes of production. Rather, they buy superior social identity through the brand-named products. Hyper-consumption of Gucci clones in the global market, for instance, seems to indicate the one direction of

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[19] According to Bourdieu, "the habitus, an objective relationship between two objectivities, enables an intelligible and necessary relation to be established between practices and a situation, the meaning of which is produced by the habitus through categories of perception and appreciation that are themselves produced by an observable social condition" (<u>Distinction</u>, 101). Against Kantian "pure" aesthetics, through the notion of "habitus," which emphasizes the relationship between social condition and practices, Bourdieu argues that such practices as art and good taste are primarily the habitus of those who have the economic and cultural capital. Refer to his book <u>Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste</u>.

global homogeneity of capitalism, whose dominant mode of simulation Baudrillard regards as a global mutation of capitalism in the new age of postmodernism. But, as Friedman sharply points out, the strategies of constructing selfhood by consuming otherness (imported commodities and cultural products) are very heterogeneous among different ethnic groups based on the historical conditions in which they are situated: economic and political contexts, the workings of traditional cultures, and social movements.

I will conclude with my anecdotal reference to this subject. McDonald's hamburgers in South Korea do not always pass simply for a fast food. They have also a sign value as an index of modern urban life style, that is, American style. I can identify from my youth in the 1980s three currents aspects to the story of how world markets effect cultural identification. My generation in South Korea associates specific memories around a pair of Nike shoes. In the early 1980s, as much as luxurious imported sports cars nowadays are symbols of social superiority among youth, at that time Nike shoes were much more than shoes. A pair of Nike shoes for our generation conveyed such values as superiority, wealth, and progress. (It was believed that technological and scientific advancements factored in the design.) We felt our desire for superiority and power in the capitalist commodity fetish, whose sign value is still seductive. But there were countertrends. On the one hand, there was an impulse to decenter the desire woven into ideologies of domination by incorporating indigenous cultural elements. For example, some students with nationalist propensity lampooned blind Nike passion by wearing rubber shoes with exquisitely drawn Nike brand icons. White rubber shoes were usually worn by the poor and the old living in both big cities

and countryside since the dawn of modernization in Korea. They retained the design of the expensive traditional leather and cloth shoes they replaced. Our generation invented the hybrid "Nice" brand as a resisting act. But my youth culture was also inspired by the socialist, student movement hybridized with nationalism and traditionalism. For example, through my college years, inside and outside the university campuses, extra-curricular clubs that aimed to transmit Korean traditional dances, songs, mask dance dramas, and arts were highly appealing to students. Thus, Nike passion, which I exemplified, brought forth the issue of our desire fulfilled by appropriating (consuming) the cultural prestige of otherness inscribed in the imported commodities and things. But the same Nike passion called forth indigenous strategies of resistance to (homogenizing) globalism.

5.7.   Global Dynamics: Twofold (Multifold) Processes

As Mike Featherstone notes, we can imagine a global culture not in terms of a fixed world system but through "cultural integration and cultural disintegration processes which take place not only on the inter-state level but processes which transcend the state-society unit and can therefore be held to occur on a trans-national or trans-societal level" (1). But it is misleading to mystify the global flows as something transcendental like "an invisible hand" secretly working in our everyday lives, inasmuch as such territorial sovereign states, national and local corporations, culture industries, social movement groups, and ethnic and religious traditions play their parts in a disjunctive and complex way. Thus, Featherstone argues that it is erroneous to postulate the binary conceptualization of the deterritorial/the territorial, integration/disintegration, unity/diversity, and homogeneity/heterogeneity since "at best these conceptual pairs

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work on one face only of the complex prism which is culture" (2). What I register in Chong's narratives of "culture and the other" is this deconstructive standpoint whereby these conceptualizations constitute reference frames, but, in return, describe their own paradoxes and ironies. In contrast to his utopian hope of global harmony expressed in the preface, in Nuit Blanche Chong draws the diagrams of global interactions and tensions between global homogenization and global heterogenization by following the routes of imperialism and the counter-paths of (Third-World) nationalism and localism. Nuit Blanche embodies the impact of global connectivity in the forms of global hegemony (capitalist and imperialist) and transnational networks of communication and transportation upon local people in their assimilation and resistance.

Does the (American) standardization of hotels and airports portrayed in Nuit Blanche mean a homogenized global culture (Americanization)? Regarding this question, John Tomlinson notes, it is "a little like arriving by plane and never leaving the terminal, spending all one's time browsing amongst global brands of the duty-free shops" (6). The standardized resort hotel and airport portrayed in Nuit Blanche show just the façade of global culture. Beyond the terminal locations, Chong guides the audience to walk through the heterogeneous locations of traveling culture. The hotel scene, indeed, suggests a situation beyond homogenizing Americanization, weaving the complex and multifold dynamics of global power clashing in a local setting. As much as the homogenizing forces are powerful, so are resistances. The American Woman's ignorance of the local culture and language and Papa Willie's mastery and competence of the cultures of the others, displayed by his expertise in shell collecting, illustrate what

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Ulf Hannerz calls cosmopolitanism's "narcissistic streak."[20] Nevertheless, there are

people who resist homogenization – a terrorist, a mercenary, a nationalist politician, and

a native laborer. The indigenous waiter, Luis, recites socialist and nationalist slogans

reflecting his nation's political upheaval, allegorically suggested by the changing

American style furniture in the hotel. Like the imported Western products (Papa Willie's

American Tang juice and Belgium tobacco and American style furniture), nationalism

and socialism in Luis' country are imported products that construct the global

ideoscapes.

   Historically, America has been differently imagined as regards how Americans

redefine national integration in terms of unity (the same or the universal) and diversity

(the different or the particular). Chong's narratives on "culture and the other" challenge

the underlying assumption of homogenization in the agendas of Anglo-conformity and

melting pot assimilation and cast suspicion on the rise of multiculturalism in its negative

conjunction with radical particularism (ghettoization) and fundamentalism. When the

same logic of the same and the other, unity and diversity, or homogenization and

heterogeneity are revisited in a global context, it seems natural to draw a linkage

between the aspects of the national and global in the simple scopic shift: nation-states

writ large. But, as Johann Arnason argues, the linkage is much more complex than it

appears. Such discourses as (post-) modernity, differentiated historical phases of

capitalism, and imperialism are complicatedly interwoven with the periodic

reappearance of nationalism. According to Arnason, nationalism and globalization are

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[20] Borrowing Hannerz's account, Papa Willie's "willingness to become involved with the Other, and the concern with achieving competence in cultures which are initially alien, relate to consideration of self as well": Papa Willie's construction of self-image as superior race (Hannerz, 240).

not separate but correlative processes. If nation-formation is one of the characteristics

of the modernization process marking a definite shift from ethnic tradition to nation, it

should be remembered that it is diffused and engendered through imperialist projects.

Whether in the original Western types or in the derivative forms of colonies,

modernization processes were global phenomena. Meanwhile, in reverse gear, there is

the contemporary resurgence of ethnic traditions and national homogenization. As well,

(neo) Marxism notes that the capitalist strategy of political solidarity backs class

interests and undergirds the global phenomenon of modern nation formation. Chong's

narrative texts like <u>Nuit Blanche</u>, <u>Humboldt's Current</u>, <u>Deshima</u>, and <u>Chinoiserie</u> show

not only the scopic shift but also this complex linkage and interaction between

differentiated scopes of national (local) and global.

Do these texts suggest that transnationalism can solve the national problems we

confront, or vise-versa? Chong regards these vectors as dynamic, I consider, since his

narrative texts on global connectivity do not relate them as dialectical or antithetical, but

correlative. Any form of transnational alliance aims to overcome national or local

boundaries, but this should not enforce the priority of the global against the national or

local. Furthermore, transnationalism need not dissolve nation-states or local cultures.

To the contrary, transnational homogenization stimulates a simultaneous counter-flow of

radical particularism in the forms of nationalism, religious fundamentalism (Hindu,

Islamic or Christian), localism, and traditionalism. But, as many scholars like Said, Hall,

and Harvey warn, and we have already experienced, radical nationalism (often

expressed as ultra-patriotism) and religious fundamentalism do really serious harm to

global harmony. Ann Cvetkovich and Douglas Kellner note, "it would be a mistake to

theorize the global as merely homogenizing, universalizing, and abstract in some pejorative and leveling sense in opposition to a more heterogeneous, particularizing, and concrete local sphere." Globalizing forces such as human rights can be progressive in some local contexts, and indeed "the local has often been the site of most oppressive, patriarchal, and backward forms of domination against which more global and universalizing forces have progressive effects in eroding domination and oppression" (13). In the same vein, Appadurai's "grassroots globalization" is exemplary in its brighter side: for instance, Appadurai's example of "the inability of the Polish state to repress its own working-classes" ("Disjuncture," 308) and Miyoshi's instance of American NGOS' (Non-Governmental Organizations) pressure to raise the Indonesian minimum wage (257). Taking account of transnationalism, nationalism, and localism in isolation cannot capture the interruptive interactions of the global, the national, and the local. I maintain that what is needed for analysis is not so much the dialectic of the global and local as the power dynamics intersecting among different nations, ethnic and religious groups, classes, and gender. Furthermore, the uneven production and distribution of wealth and power doubly drives global homogenization and fragmentation.

5.8. Cosmopolitanism and Cultural Fundamentalism: Global Unity and Diversity

Appadurai notes, "the central feature of global culture today is the politics of the mutual efforts of sameness and difference to cannibalize one another and thus to proclaim their successful hijacking of the twin Enlightenment ideas of the triumphantly

universal and the resiliently particular"[21] ("Disjuncture," 307-308). As Appadurai sharply

observes, the issues of universality and diversity constitute important aspects of cultural

frameworks in the discourses of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. I will position

Chong's cosmopolitanism, postulated in the preface of Nuit Blanche, in relation to other

discourses on cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism (interculturalism), examining how

his cosmopolitan views inform his idea of global connection as the basis of global

harmony. The assertion of universality in global culture has been expressed to be a

counter-reaction to cultural fundamentalism (the negative side of multiculturalism). In

our traveling cultures, such theories as hybridization, creolization, and syncreticism

seem to reconfigure the problematics of the exclusive binary logic of the same and the

other expressed in cultural fundamentalism. In some uncritical reflections on

interculturalism, however, the existing power hierarchies are not of concern at all. As a

form of knowledge, the specific discourses of interculturalism mask the desire for

mastering the cultures of the others. In this kind of discourse, what Patrice Pavis calls

the "imperialism of interculturalism," the cultural specificity of the others is suppressed –

thus its tendency is to universalize (essentialize and naturalize) a specific set of values

into the cultures of the others. Pavis, at the end of his introduction to The Intercultural

Performance Reader, asserts that "if there is one attitude that we must move beyond, it

is that pan-European self-protective huddling which is only interested in Europe in so far

as it forms a barrage against the rest of the world" (19). Pavis selects diverse

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[21] The globalization process is not unitary. As Hetata notes, global homogenization and fragmentation are the two faces of the same coin called "globalization process." In a sense, the issues of global homogenization manifested through cultural imperialism or Americanization and cultural particularism expressed through the rhetoric of diversity and fundamentalism through the rhetoric of antagonistic difference repeat the discourses on the national harmony and cultural diversity in America dealt with in Chapter 3.

discourses on interculturalism, suggesting a new way of configuring cultural exchanges through intercultural projects.

Taking power dynamics into consideration, for instance, Richard Schechner's concept of "culture of choice" as the basis for interculturalism does not take into account different situations and conditions among different ethnicities, genders, classes, nationalities, political orientations, and religions in discussing global culture. In "Interculturalism and the Culture of Choice: Richard Schechner interviewed by Patrice Pavis," published in 1996, Schechner maintains that "people will wish to celebrate their cultural specificity, but increasingly that will be a choice rather than something into which you are simply born automatically" (49). He situates the site of cultural exchanges and accompanying ethics in individuals' possibility of a "culture of choice" in a kind of world monoculture" (according to Schechner, at the technological level). Schechner's liberal-humanist cosmopolitanism claims that the advancements of air-travel, communication and information technologies enable people to travel at ease and choose cultures to their likes. Contrary to Schechner's claim, cultural hybridization, however, is not like mixing and matching things from a duty-free shop. As Hannerz well observes, tourism aims for "home plus" in the forms of leisure, shopping, and exotic sightseeing, by contrast, migration in the forms of political exile, refugee, and labor force convey the combination of voluntary and unavoidable situations behind leaving the home. In Nuit Blanche, for instance, all the privileged travels, practiced by the American Woman, the American Beach Comber, and Papa Willie, are different from Miss B's travel for survival. If it is asserted that intercultural interactions are matters of choice (though obviously not for the marginalized) based on the universal claim that human

individuals are free to choose (travel), imperialism reveals the most unmasked dystopia of traveling cultures.

Phillip Zarrilli, from a different perspective, deploys his ideas of interculturalism against cultural universalists who presuppose the universal culture based on universal human values. Zarrilli argues in his essay on intercultural production, perception, and reception, "[Peter] Brook problematically assumes that if one can erase all the cultural codes in the way of reaching a hypothetically universal 'reality of zero common to all humanity,'" then, we can solve the problems of communication barriers from different cultural codes and conventions (26). Brook's search for "a universal theatrical language" through his intercultural projects mimics a metonymic and synecdochycal Euro-centric humanist strategy in that "for Brook art means extracting essence from very detail so that the detail can reveal itself as a meaningful part of an inseparable whole" (26).[22] According to David Williams, for Brook myth is the site of transcultural (universal) commonality by which all human cultures can be connected, and Brook's story-telling strategy of "zero degree" (a universal ground that overcomes cultural fundamentalism) arises from his convictions which "form part of the radical Utopianism and deep-seated humanism that have colored every aspect of his work with his international Center" (71). Brook's universalist cosmopolitanism is conspicuous in his notion of the "culture of links," which Brook defines as "the force that can counterbalance the fragmentation of our world" (66). In comparison with Brook's universalist intercultural project <u>Mahabharata</u> (1985), Zarrilli describes the <u>Kathakali</u>

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[22] David Williams, the complier of critical anthologies on Brook's work, in his essay on transculturalism and myth in Peter Brook's Theatre, makes it clear that Brook's view of the universal realm of communication comes from the continuing humanist tradition.

King Lear intercultural project (1989), a South Indian dance drama version of King Lear choreographed and staged by Australian playwright/director David McRuvie and French actor-dancer Annette Leday with a group of highly regarded senior *Kathakali* artists. He observes that Kathakali King Lear was a meaningful intercultural production in "its collaborative process of creation and its *respect* [italics mine] for the *kathakali* aesthetic," even if it did not reach what Brook calls "hypothetically universal realm of communication" (36).

This idea of universality (if essentially ethnocentricity) in culture echoes what Barthes calls the humanist myth of "the Family of Man," the ambiguous myth of the human community.[23] According to Barthes, this myth functions in two stages; human diversity is asserted and then "from this pluralism, a type of unity is magically produced: man is born, works, laughs and dies everywhere in the same way; and if there still remains in these actions some ethnic peculiarity, at least one hints that there is underlying each one an identical "nature," that their diversity is only formal and does not belie the existence of a common mould" (Mythologies, 100). Such universalizing ideas of rationality, individuality, liberty, truth, and progress shape "the common mould." Borrowing Barthes arguments, the cosmopolitanism and humanism involved in Schechner's individual liberty of choice and Brook's universal reality are actually grounded on the ethno-centric conceptualization of "the same and the other" violently exercised through imperialist projects and historiography. As I examined in considering the concept of "traveling culture," European global expeditions and expansions were

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[23] Barthes' essay "The Great Family of Man" was written after he attended an exhibition of photographs held in Paris, whose aim was "to show the universality of human actions in the daily life of all the countries of the world." Barthes criticizes this signifying practice as "an alibi to a larger part of our humanism" (100).

mobilized not only by technological means and labor forces but also by the myth of the Family of Man. As British imperialism unfolded, the idea of liberty politically embodied in the regime at home ironically demanded domination abroad. Centering on a historical example from 19th century (British) imperialism, Humboldt's Current narrates the darker side of the cosmopolitan sensibility in the Victorian era expressed in the mastery and grasping of the other(s) and other cultures. Nuit Blanche charts the itineraries of global violence and resistance in longer timelines, criticizing the narcissistic idea of liberty inherent in the ethno-centric cosmopolitanism.

Chong's cosmopolitan view has a positive side conspicuously manifested in his statement in the preface of Nuit Blanche: "In spirit I'm close to my Chinese roots but in practice I'm very far from them. As another way of trying to feel positive about what I had lost when I left Chinatown, I began to think of the entire world as my culture" (4). But, whereas Brook's optimistic cosmopolitanism aspires to find a universal ground, Chong's cosmopolitanism expressed in Nuit Blanche seeks a unity in cultural diversity – even though like Schechner's aspiration of "monoculture," Chong's cosmopolitanism in this phase is partly based on technological evolution. As Chong recognizes the problem of cultural fundamentalism (the negative side of multiculturalism), if there is universality in Chong's cosmopolitanism, it does not refer to the universal culture, but to *universal facts* of birth, labor, and death, despite diverse ways of life. In the existence of global power dynamics, universality on a cultural level, as Barthes argues, masks ethno-centric privileging of certain values as universal.

The selected peculiarities of the people exemplified in their diverse factors of ethnicity, nationality, gender, and class are connected in Nuit Blanche through the

underlying universal facts of life, death, and war. Chaudhuri rightly observes in her book Staging Place that "Ping Chong's Nuit Blanche seeks to find the means to show and tell its audience – or, perhaps more precisely, it tries to *find* the means to show and tell its audience – that beneath all cultural difference lies a universal and fantastical reality in which we are all, humans and beasts, terribly vulnerable" (239). What Nuit Blanche showcases, I argue, is the universality of facts that we humans are mortal beings, but that humans are born and die in culturally and historically peculiar situations. These situations are engendered not only by natural causes but also by man-made power dynamics. In Nuit Blanche, Abigail Smith (her name appears just once in the beginning of the slide projections) dies of disease, Gloria Ortega (plantation owner's daughter) dies in childbirth, a cave man dies from a violent clash, and an American beach comber is killed by a terrorist. All are equally dead, but as Barthes rightly points out, our diverse actions of birth, death, and labor should not be cloaked in "the common mould" called humanity, since such a conception eschews the problematics of inequality and injustice. While Chong's affirming cosmopolitan view is spelled out in the preface, conversely Nuit Blanche illuminates the destructive power of domination intrinsic in cosmopolitanism. The contradiction arises when Chong's utopian cosmopolitanism is a counter-reaction to ethno-centric practices. Chong's revised cosmopolitanism exposes the complicity between the self-centered idea of liberty and the silenced injustice of the other(s), suggesting diverse human cultures in which people respect one another and their cultures.

5.9. Global Harmony: Connection

Chong's narratives on human connectivity seem to say that if we can find the underlying connectivity among human species, it is probably because we humans share a common biochemical DNA structure and physiological performance. As a common human species, we all share the same gene pools. In Nuit Blanche, the universality and diversity of earth life is expressed in a slide sequence in the scene "Murmurs of Earth," inspired by Carl Sagan's book Murmurs of Earth – "*a chronicle of the sounds and images sent, as a record of life on earth, into outer space on the Voyage II spacecraft headed for Jupiter.*" "*The images selected for the sequence include natural and man-made structures, diverse animal and human groupings in color and in black- and-white*" (Nuit Blanche, 8). These diverse images of earth life and environments were presented against black-and-white grid slides and images of close-up and long shots of the moon's surface and its topography, as the audience hears the NASA tape of a phone conversation between Armstrong and President Nixon. Nuit Blanche renders the most distanced outsider view of earth life through the eyes of an astronaut at the historical moment when his small footstep was wished to be a leap for a mankind.[24] As the satellite images of earth life were intended to be caught by other extra-terrestrial beings, the slide sequence using those images is expected to render the simple fact that we, all

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[24] When the moon landing scene was aired on tv and radio all around the world at that time, as Armstrong stressed, it seemed that it was not only the achievement of the United States but men of all nations. But it was also noted that the American flag on the moon's surface inscribed the privilege of America in building colonies in space – a concern revived when recently President Bush's administration proclaimed the resumption of exploration of the moon after noting China's moon project. This historical moment seemed to bring forth the great effect of being connected under the common species of mankind. If Chong uses the particular example of MacLuhanesque technological evolution (the American moon-landing shot) as signifying unity (connection) among mankind in Nuit Blanche, toward his later career, Chong seems to reconfigure the negative side of techno-utopia. Against the positive aspect of communication and technical networks in Nuit Blanche, Elephant Memories (1990) exemplifies how technological evolution can be utilized to dominate antagonistic groups and nations, and Reason (2002) illuminates the irony of technological connectedness resulting in social alienation.

earth life including animals and plants, share a precious environment called the Earth. Thus, Chong states in the preface that "we are all together on this one little planet. It's more and more important for us not to feel so foreign with one another" (<u>Nuit Blanche</u>, 5).

As in science fiction, to aliens we are all just earthlings. In this biological view, the differences between animals and humans are less remarkable than most humanists presume. In the humanist image, Man resembles God. But Chong offers us the doubling Janus image of a human being, one side looking to God and the other side turned to the animals. Physiologist Jared Diamond notes, in his book <u>Third Chimpanzee</u>, humans are unique in a sense that "we talk, write, and build complex machines," but "we're also unique in darker behaviors, including genocide, delight in torture, addiction to toxic drugs, and extermination of other species by the thousands." Meanwhile, "we obviously are animals, with the usual body parts, molecules, and genes." According to Diamond, genetically speaking, the seemingly unbridgeable gulf between humans and chimpanzees results from less than 2% differences in DNA structures, whose genetic distance is "even smaller than the distance between such closely related bird species as red-eye and white-eyed vireos." Recalling the alien perspective of <u>Nuit Blanche</u>, Diamond remarks that "a zoologist from Outer Space would immediately classify us as just a third species of chimpanzee, along with the pygmy chimp of Zaire and the common chimp of the rest of tropical Africa" (1-2). Many people would reject this evolutionary description of human origin by suggesting the superiority of human mind, that is to say, human consciousness. But many cognitive psychologists like Edelman assert that even though the human's higher consciousness

in its functions of reflexitivity and language acquisition is unique, a more notable fact is that human brains share remarkable commonalities with animal brains; "primary consciousness is required for the evolution of higher-order consciousness" and "an animal with primary consciousness sees the room the way a beam of light illuminates it" (Bright, 122). Chong's other narrative texts such as Skin (1989) and Race (1983) respectively display frog-like beings and an alien race inspired by the bizarre, insect-like behavior of the naked mole rat to depict humans as creatures similar to animals, and invoke our "in-between" status as human-animals.

Nuit Blanche also shows and tells of our darker behaviors in terms of "cyclical destruction." Chong in the preface states, "Nuit Blanche was informed by the fact that I was reading books by Shiva Naipaul and V. S. Naipaul. It was the first show I did with the theme that has echoed over and over again in my later works: the vulnerability of human beings and the recurrence of destruction" (Nuit Blanche, 4). Why do we try to trace our destructive qualities to our animal origins? "If they really are part of our evolutionary heritage," Diamond states, "that seems to say that they are genetically fixed and hence unchangeable" (4). In terms of the theme of human destruction, which is also underscored in Nietzsche and Foucault's historical discourses, Nuit Blanche and Chong's many other narratives render pessimistic and even nihilistic views of human history. But the assertion of innate animal instincts to murder strangers or sexual rivals does not mean that the attempts to thwart those instincts are helpless or useless. As Nietzsche, Foucault, and Diamond would all agree to the contrary, Chong's narratives give us the most bleak pictures of human destruction in history to make us avoid repeating the same mistakes and to be aware of how violent rhetoric appropriates the

"law of the jungle" to justify the systematic use of destructive power. Furthermore, if we say that *all* humans are aggressive, we commit the same error of totalization. The gift of the movie box given to Gloria Ortega (the daughter of the plantation owner) by her father, in Nuit Blanche, depicts this "law of the jungle" in which a tiger violently kills a chimpanzee, scaring Gloria with the horrible pictures. But the tiger does not kill the chimpanzee just because it is a different species, or it is delightful to kill. And dividing the categories of "tiger race" and "chimpanzee race" among human species manifested in social Darwinism are a mere construction. The succeeding scenes in Nuit Blanche revert this social Darwinist view of culture and history: the evolution of human culture from the primitive to the civilized. According to Chong's narratives, we are all primitives; "by presenting humans as very primitive creatures I was saying how vulnerable we really are, how small our universe is" (Nuit Blanche, 4).

Our small universe, however, is likely to have too many gulfs and boundaries to cross. In the second sequence of the slide projection, "Murmurs of Earth II," the images of earth life are similar to the first sequence, but without grids and moon-landing shots, which seem to signify the underlying unity among mankind – to aliens we are all just earthlings. Consequently, "the tone of the second grouping, though varied, has a latent feeling of war, destruction and death" (Nuit Blanche, 17). Chong's dystopian vision of contemporary global politics is described in situations as the "international division of labor," "global domination," and "the reappearance of nationalism." The last scene titled "A Tropical Sacrificial Place" is based on a Cambodian news item Chong Scene 9 "The Heaven of Peace." This resort hotel and its residents allegorically exemplify such global collected for the bricolage of Nuit Blanche. The program notes describe the Cambodian

tradition by which Cambodians believe to prevent darkening during an eclipse by making noises to drive away the legendary monster Rehou, who is the malevolent brother to the sun and the moon. Chong took it as the narrative source for the ending scene of <u>Nuit Blanche</u>, since for him it seemed to be "a mirror of human beings and our superstitions" (<u>Nuit Blanche</u>, 4). The construction of the imaginary monster is what our desire and power do with the impassioned fetishes through projection (abjection). The native politician, played by Chong, in a ritualistic scene with all the cast members, "*throws the money in the air*," "*to land on the dying beast*," which signifies the commemoration of a successful burial of the sacrificial evil (<u>Nuit Blanche</u>, 28). While Chong destabilizes the binary of abjecting West/abjected East, the last scene seems to suggest the dying beast (the fetish of darker instincts) is inside whoever or whatever projects their own evil onto the other(s). The destructive power of the darker instincts on a global scale, as Chong recognizes, demands the examination of the global histories of the tripartite complicity of desire, power, and knowledge.

6. CHAPTER FIVE: CHONG'S FABLES OF THE OTHER(S) – THE MYTH OF HISTORY DECONSTRUCTED

Nuit Blanche is the precursor to Chong's later, more historical, narrative text. "I wanted to do a piece that covered a lot of timelines in human history" (Nuit Blanche, 4). In the preface to Nuit Blanche Chong states how his attempt at mapping out our world inevitably failed without taking account of history: "I collect newspaper clippings of everything that happens to ring a bell. I was looking through them one day, and got the idea for a piece that would be a select view of earthlings. It was going to be a kind of global newspaper, though it didn't come out that way" (Nuit Blanche, 4). Nuit Blanche narrates not the "roots" but the "routes" of global power dynamics, which are allegorically presented with the life paths of two characters, the plantation owner Señor Ortega and the slave girl Berenice, who meet again in the airport as the resort owner and laundress Miss B. Without abandoning the surreal and mysterious quality, his allegorical mode of narrative presentation shifts to a more concrete and specific historical mode. "In the past, my work had a surrealistic edge," Chong states, "but I find now that history is surreal" (qtd. in Harris, "Tackling," 2:25).

In Nuit Blanche, human aggression (destruction) is described from two different perspectives, instinctual but at the same time historical. We humans are potentially beasts, but this does not mean that *all* humans are beasts. Chong pays attention to how, historically, this darker desire to dominate and eradicate what is conceived as the threatening other manifests through the outlets of systematic power. Thus, for Chong,

fascism and imperialism are not merely Western problems of human (ir)rationality, but the problems of the complicity of desire and power the modern world shares. Chong especially warns us of the danger of fantasy projection onto the others, though social repression is also problematic. In the case of the Cambodian fetishist ritual at the end of Nuit Blanche, the beasts inside are harmlessly transposed into the imaginary abject, the fetish of the moon-devouring monster. But, in such historical circumstances of racism, imperialism, and terrorism, the beasts are projected into the antagonistic other, in an extreme case, leading to horrendous genocide (Nazism). I examined in the previous chapters that this abjection is produced by the centered subject (the narcissistic ego). But, as Lacan's critique of modern ego psychology culminating in atomic individualism points out, even though he views it as the grounding of Western civilization, this narcissistic ego formation is historically consolidated (normalized) through the modern myth of Man. Furthermore, scholars like Spivak suggest that "the subject is always centered," but "this centering is an effect" ("New," 279). McClintock's formulation of the "Man of the Family" demonstrates how the myth of Man is born and nourished through the historical formation of the male-centered, propertied class. Therefore, Foucault's condemnation of ethno-centric humanism declares the death of the "Man of I" for a rebirth of the subject as a historical agency. This possibility of subjectivity as a political and ethical agency, as a corollary, points to the problematics of the concept of History as metaphysical entity and of the ontological postulation of the other in the transcendental dialectics of "Master and Slave," on which Hegelian historicism is fundamentally grounded.

6.1. The Concept of History and the Other

For Derrida, "the ego is the same" and "the alterity or negativity interior to the ego, the interior difference," is but "an illusion." Since the same does not think about the other, it does not have time and without time it does not have history (<u>Writing</u>, 91). Thus, the metaphysics of history freezes time as the same moves between presences from "origin" to "telos." Derrida's deconstruction aptly recognizes that the concept of History has been in complicity with the philosophy of presence. Derrida maintains that history consists of "a concept which has always been in complicity with a teleological and eschatological metaphysics…. History has always been conceived as the movement of a resumption of history, as a detour between two presences" (291). In <u>Of Grammatology</u>, Derrida clearly rejects the possibility of a metaphysics (ontology) of history, arguing that "historicity itself is tied to the possibility of writing […]. Before being the object of history – of a historical science – writing opens the field of history – of historical becoming" (27). In <u>Writing and Difference</u>, following Emmanuel Levinas' thoughts (acknowledging "the Greek domination of the Same and the One" in European thought), Derrida sets out his task of deconstruction as decentering the epistemological/ethical violence of "the Same and the One" (83). Derrida's deconstruction of the presence of metaphysics (logo-centrism), in the sense that its focus is on logocentrism's ethnocentrism, can be described as a search for the other. Similarly, Chong in his recent historical narratives shifts his concern on metaphysics of history (e.g., the Zen-Buddhist's perspective on history and time in <u>Maraya</u>) to the politics of historical writing. Chong's deconstructive historical narratives like <u>Deshima</u> and <u>Chinoiserie</u> explore how the aggressive ego recorded in dominant historiographies

masks its dark sides as a form of abject (the other) in the modern formation of racism, imperialism, and capitalism.

As I mentioned before, deconstruction has a political and ethical aspect. Spivak clarifies the political/ethical nature of Derridean deconstruction in imperial contexts, asserting that "the planned epistemic violence of the imperialist" is also backed up "by the planned institutional violence of the imperialist power" ("Rani," 131). In the context of Derridean deconstruction tightly connected to ethics, I set Chong's textual deconstruction in relation to his political activism and ethical thoughts regarding the problematics of the other. Chong's political activism, attempted in the Undesirable Elements project is grounded in an ethics of the other compatible with that of Levinas. My examination of Levinas' ethical approach to the problematics of the other follows Robert Young's comprehensible explanation in his book White Mythologies. Young introduces Levinas' problematization of the ontological postulation of the other, which is driven by the epistemological possibility of possessing the other, that is, of completely grasping (knowing) the other. This ontological/epistemological violence, indeed, turns into an ethical violence toward the others (assimilation based on exclusion of the other) in its orientation to assimilating all particular people, cultures, and histories into a universal Man, Society, and History, which is conceived as resembling nature. According to Levinas, Young notes, the ethical violence backed up by the narcissistic ego's idea of liberty imposes power on the underprivileged and violates the liberty of the others. Levinas rejects the self-centered idea of freedom in exchange for justice, which respects the alterity of the others and can be proposed through dialogue (12-15).

6.2. The Myth of History and the Problematics of the Other

As Chong's historical narratives problematize the complicit link between the historicist ethno-centric myth of progress and imperialism, I will examine and demonstrate how his (counter-) historiographic fables destabilize the authority claim backed by the discursive regime of the dominant historiography.[1] Regarding historicist historiography and abjection, de Certeau contends that in dominant Western historiography, "intelligibility is established through a relation with the other" in asmuchas "it moves (or 'progresses') by changing what it makes of its 'other' – the Indian, the past, the people, the mad, the child, the Third World" (Writing, 3). As Young notes, the problematics of historicist forms of knowledge are the logical corollary of the universalizing Enlightenment's idea of History as Progress and are tightly linked to the problematics of imperialism.[2] In this context, I will discuss the complex links of humanism, historicism, and imperialism through the examination of Fanon's, Said's, and Spivak's contemplation on "the other" problem.

Chong, in a personal conversation with the author several years ago, stated that his anti-colonial (anti-imperialist) thoughts were much influenced by Said and Fanon. Said confronted the conundrum in representing others and their cultures and attacked Orientalism as a totalizing habit of historicist-imperialist historiography in Orientalism. He suggested "human encounter" and "personal, authentic, sympathetic, humanistic knowledge" about other cultures as the solution of the problem (Orientalism, 197). In Orientalism, Said seems to hold Foucault's genealogy as a theoretical means on one

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[1] I have already discussed the political implication of the historicist myth of Progress through the thoughts of de Certeau, White, and Bhabha in the poetics part.

[2] For a detailed discussion, see Chapter 1 "White mythologies" in White Mythologies; Writing History and the West.

hand and his humanistic inclination on the other when he remarks that "I have been able to put to use my humanistic and political concerns for the analysis and the description of a very worldly matter, the rise, development, and consolidation of Orientalism" (27). Clifford labels Said's humanistic inclination as liberal-humanism in his reading of Orientalism, but, for me, Said's (anti-colonial) humanistic inclination is close to extentialist humanism, which came out of the critique of the ideas of Man and History.

Fanon in his early career hoped to destroy the antagonistic bipolar division between the self and the other by erasing the division itself. Fanon once articulated what Young called a "new humanism" in appealing to Sartre – "why not the quite simple attempt to touch the other, to feel the other, to explain the other to myself?" (Black, 231). But, as Bhabha interrogates, is the door of every consciousness open to recognize the others as similar human beings?[3] When Fanon realizes mutual recognition between the self and the others is not possible in uneven power relations and becomes squarely pessimistic in his perception of the Manichean world around him, he later negates this possibility, stating that "since the other hesitated to recognize me, there remained only one solution: to make myself known" (Black, 115). I consider Fanon's insight into the "recognition" of the others as the key moment in identification providing the springboard for resistance, his voicing back to the Manichean world. "The silenced evil animals" demand to be treated as human beings and start to speak in human voices.[4] As Fanon's anti-colonial thoughts and actions become intensified, his

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[3] Bhabha dismisses Fanon's humanistic inclination at the end of Black Skin, White Mask, instead, focusing on Fanon's later emphasis on racist antagonistic Manichean structure. See "Interrogating Identity: Frantz Fanon and the postcolonial prerogative" in the location of culture.

[4] Levinas' opposition to the assimilation of the others into the same, likewise, presumes the recognition of the others as the basis for respect for the others, which can initiate the dialogue between the self and the others.

decolonizing tactics rely on forceful violence, which aims at "the abolition of one zone, its burial in the depths of the earth or its expulsion" (<u>Wretched</u>, 41). But this anti-colonial violence against the established hierarchies or for the eradication of one side reinforces the problematics of the binary division based on the logic of totalization.[5]

The contradiction of Fanon's anti-humanist humanism, indeed, comes out of ignoring the diverse ideas on human beings, societies, and histories within humanist discourses themselves. Turning our attention to the genealogies of humanist discourses, I would like to point out the danger of homogenizing such diverse discourses.[6] Confusing diverse discourses of humanisms is like undifferentiating historicism in its old and new forms. Old and new historicisms can be claimed similar in that they reject the idea of Man, which does not take account for historical alterity, but they can be radically different in their view of the concept of history. New historicism is clearly an anti-historicism in its textualism. As White notes, "the New Historicists have advanced the notion of a 'cultural poetics' and by extension a 'historical poetics' as a means of identifying those aspects of historical sequences that conduce to the breaking,

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[5] Via Fanon's confrontation of the problem of the other, but, from a deconstructionist perspective, Bhabha disturbs the problematics of the other in historicist historiography in colonial contexts, targeting the authority claim of the hegemonic power in historical writing by showing its ambivalence and slippage. Likewise, Chong's deconstructive tactics destabilize the hegemonic authority which produces the myth of the homogenized Other. But, as I stressed, Chong's political activism, realized through the <u>Undesirable Elements</u> project, originates at the point where his deconstruction is supplemented with political/ethical performance that restores, what Chong calls, "the secret histories of the other." Chong does not suggest that he presents the truthful version of history. By using his notion of "secret histories," he contends that his historiographic projects aim to correct the hegemonic authority of "one history" (Personal Interview, July 2004).

[6] Young points out the ineptness of totalizing rhetoric, arguing that "taking Althusser's strategic homogenization of all humanisms into one on trust, it altogether neglects the Marxist-humanist attempt, by Lukacs, Sartre, and others, to found a "new humanism" which would substitute, for the Enlightenment's conception of man's unchanging nature, a new "historical humanism" that would see man as a product of himself and of his own activity in history" (121). These new humanisms, Young notes, provided the basis for critiques of Fanon's "new new-humanism." For the new Marxist-humanism, the concept of history is still based on the dialectical progress of history: Marxist historicism.

revision, or weakening of dominant codes" ("New," 301). For me, the opposing gulf between humanism and anti-humanism can either be radical or less fundamental than the differences between the different ideas deployed by humanisms and posthumanisms.[7] My concern is not to determine whether Chong's narrative texts are humanistic or not, but to examine how Chong's narratives contest the myths of Man, Society, and History through the deconstruction of the binary logic intrinsic in them. (Chong says that he is a humanist, but what he describes as humanist values challenge the universal ideas of Man, Society, and History.) In what follows, I will discuss how the idea of History manifested through its binary hierarchies in West/the Rest, the Advanced/the Degenerated, and the Civilized/the Primitive, essentializes diverse histories into the myth of Progress, whose transcendental status is utilized as the racist's naturalizing rhetoric in colonization, imperialism, and superior leadership in domination.

6.3.   Historiography in a Dialogic Mode: Subaltern Voices and Listening

What Fanon and Said actually problematize is eurocentrism (the Euro-centric ideas of Man, Society, and History), the schematic version of narcissism historically consolidated through the modern European imperialism. By examining multiple frames (ethnicity, gender, and class) of the modern Narcissus myth, in the broad spectrum from postcolonialism to Marxism to feminism, Spivak's interrogation of Western historiographies demonstrates how the racist-masculinist-capitalist imagination of History excludes subaltern singularities of events and experiences. When Spivak

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[7] Posthumanisms radically contest the idea of a human being as the center of things.

despairingly declares that the subaltern cannot speak, she contends that by "speaking" she means "a transaction between the speaker and the listener." According to Spivak's "rhetorical anguish," the subaltern cannot speak since "even when the subaltern makes an effort to the death to speak, she is not able to be heard, and speaking and hearing complete the speech act" ("Subaltern," 289-292). Desire and pleasure for power and privilege create the enormous gulf between the speakers and the listeners. But Spivak, departing from this dystopian vision, suggests the continual trial of the complete speech act by unlearning our privileged positions in gender, class, nationality, and ethnicity. "To unlearn our privileges means, on the one hand, to do our homework, to work hard at gaining some knowledge of the others who occupy those spaces most closed to our privileged view. On the other hand, it means attempting to speak to those others in such a way that might take us seriously and, most important all, be able to answer back." Spivak advises her students to investigate what it is that silences them, "rather than take this deterministic position – since my skin color is this, since my sex is this, I cannot speak" ("Questions," 62).

Spivak proposes this demanding dialogism with the others, and I consider this is what Chong attempts in the <u>Undesirable Elements</u> project. In regard to the nature of the <u>Undesirable Elements</u> series, Chong says, "It's an oral history project. How are you going to know what it feels like to be different if you don't hear it from them" (qtd. in Minis, 7A). Like an historiographer-editor, he collects, selects, and arranges the buried secret (hi)stories provided by the participants who did not have public voices and like a community facilitator/activist, he coordinates the collaborated authorship of the participants, preparing a space for social dialogues between those who are in the social

margins and borders and the audience who might have or might not have experienced

being in those liminal (marginal) sites. Breaking the repressive silence, the participants

of the project voice their desires for a mutual recognition through their stories. By

having chances to speak out the abjection at the hands of bio-techniques of power[8] and

to articulate their own desire, the participants share moments of "connection." Chong

lays stress on listening in the constitution of subjectivity, saying that "in order to become

truly well-rounded you have to embrace other's stories, let them actively impact you, not

just pass over you" (qtd. in Wolff, 9).   Thus, the acts of telling and listening inspire

social interaction to reach reciprocal recognition. But this ideal of mutual recognition is

hard to achieve in a racist society where the tendency of the ego's aggressive

narcissism is obvious in its projection onto the others in the mode of stereotype.

Chong sets his task as "creating a bridge between the audience and their fellow

Americans" (Thomas, 5C). Borrowing Gilroy's jazz term derived from African folk

chanting, Chong aims to create a dialogical antiphonic "call and response"[9] between the

participants and the audience members. As I discussed in the first chapter,

McConachie's articulation of "the underlying structure of feeling" in community-based

theatre enables us to describe the dynamics of this invisible flow of dialogue between

the participants and the audience members in the Undesirable Elements series. And I

consider that this model of performance, which embodies the dialogue between the

performers and the audience contests the fixed notion of performance that is frequently

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[8] Foucault calls modern state power as bio-power since he views that it is bodies that are regulated or resist. Thus, his concepts of "docile body" or "desiring body" should be understood in relation to power. I have already discussed the relation bodies have to power in Chapter 1 "Theoretical Approaches."

[9] Gilroy's concept, antiphony (call and response), refers to the non-hierarchical mode of dialogue music performs. For Gilroy, antiphony is the musical principal that bridges the self and the others and "the structure that hosts these essential encounters" (Black, 79).

accused of monologic domination over the mute (inactive) audience members. To draw

a parallel between this theatrical performance and our everyday performances in the

political realm, a dialogue based on mutual respect between the speaker and the

listener is the basic idea in performing democracy, which I regard as one of the best

solutions for peace and harmony we have come up with so far. But this utopian vision

of democracy evaporates when we encounter the dystopian intervention of the

hegemonic power, which disavows this basic idea of dialogue while disguising its

domination by elaborated and systemized rhetoric. Thus, as the subaltern

historiographer listens to the silenced voices and tries to help make them heard, the

activist/facilitator Chong helps to investigate what silences their voices – whose desire?

whose pleasure? whose history? Then, through their resistance, the marginalized

become subjects of their own desires and actions. Their political and ethical codes are

concerned with the liberty of the others as well with their political languages of respect,

responsibility, and justice. The emerging new political/ethical agency of the

marginalized enunciates "forgotten things" in dominant historiographies.

6.4.   Genealogy and Dispersion of Forgotten Things: Inclusive Historiography

In his increasing concern with power analysis, Foucault's method shifts from

archeology to genealogy, but it does not mean that he drops his theoretical framework

of "discursive formations." In its extension of historical horizon, the genealogical

analysis describes a series of effective formation of discourses. This archeological

demonstration of discontinuity and shifting meaning plays an important role in

genealogical aspects of analysis since the genealogist seeks discontinuities while

others find progress and continuity. Through the notion of Nietzschean genealogy,

Foucault articulates his themes of power, knowledge, and the body in his essay on

genealogy, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History." I will examine this essay in order to

illuminate the themes of power, knowledge, the body, racism, and imperialism in

Chong's historical narratives, Deshima and Chinoiserie. Even though Hall and Bhabha

complain of the absence in Foucault of an explicit discussion of Western colonization,

his vigorous critique of Euro-centric historicism and humanism, Young notes,

problematizes the relation of the Enlightenment idea of universality with the history of

European colonialism.[10] Foucault's new method of genealogy contests the dominant

historiographies of historicism, whether liberal-humanist or Marxist, in which "only a

single drama" of progress is ever staged "by the endlessly repeated play of

dominations." For Foucault, genealogical analysis "shows that the concept of liberty is

an invention of the ruling classes." Regarding the truth-claim of authority of the

hegemonic power, Foucault opposes genealogy to the metaphysics of history, arguing

that genealogy does not search for "a timeless and essential secret," but reveals that

behind things "they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a

piecemeal fashion from alien forms." Thus, a genealogist does not try to record the

identity of the origin as essence in a teleological movement, but "the dissention of other

things," that is to say, the "dispersion of forgotten things." In this way, "history becomes

'effective' to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our very being – as it divides

our emotions, dramatizes our instincts, multiplies our body and sets it against itself."

For Foucault's genealogy, the body (or, more precisely, bodies) is "the locus of the

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[10] For a detailed discussion, see Young's discussion of Foucault in "Foucault's Phantasms" in White Mythologies. Young remarks, "Foucault objects to historicism and Western humanism to the extent that they assume a continuous development, progress, and global totalization" (70).

dissociated Self " and "a volume in perpetual disintegration." "Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history." And, for Foucault, the body is the site which is molded by "a great many distinctive regimes" but at the same time "constructs resistances" (139-154).

Chong and his co-authors in their East/West Quartet deal with the orientalist construction of the imaginary East as well as the imaginary West, whose authority Said in Orientalism struggles to destabilize. I will briefly examine Said's adoption of genealogical methods in Orientalism in relation to the issue of historical representation of the others, not because I want to demonstrate how Chong's Deshima and Chinoiserie are influenced by Said's analysis, but to show how Chong's historical narratives on the problematics of West/East depart from the point where Said encountered difficulties representing diverse human cultures and histories. Said takes a seemingly incompatible hybrid perspective regarding representing the culture of the other. On the one hand, he deploys Foucault's methodological tools such as "discursive formation" and "genealogy" to examine the traditions of systematic Orientalism, which problematically dichotomizes and essentializes in its representation of the others; on the other hand, he offers an extentialist human encounter and sympathy to comprehend and converse with the others. But, his main position in Orientalism is oppositional. Said views Orientalism as "not an airy fantasy about the Orient, but a created body of theory and practices […] as a system of knowledge about the Orient, an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness" (6). In examining the diverse traditions of the oriental discourses, however, Said himself dichotomizes the diversity into "good Orientalism" and "bad Orientalism," which presuppose the antagonistic binary

of West/East. For instance, in Said's early critique of Louis Massignon's orientalist discourses on Islamic mysticism, Massignon's exoticizing the Orient as a by-product of his will to know the Orient on his behalf is erased by his "transcendent humanist standard." According to Said, Massignon's Orientalism shows "the extent to which his ideas about the Orient could transcend the local anecdotal circumstances of a Frenchman and of French society" (274).

As Clifford well observes, for Said, Massignon's good Orientalism rises "above his culture," but "the privilege of standing above cultural particularism, of aspiring to the universalist power that speaks for humanity, for the universal experiences of love, work, death, and so on, is a privilege invented by a totalizing Western liberalism" (Predicament, 264-265). In this sense, according to Clifford, Said's basic values are cosmopolitan. (I discussed this universalizing propensity as the negative side of cosmopolitanism regarding Chong's views on global harmony in Chapter 4.) Despite his brilliant observation into the complicity of power and knowledge in Orientalism, Said is attacked for the same reason (the dichotomous construction of West/East) for which he attacks Orientalism. As Young sharply points out, "his own dismissal of deconstruction as a merely textual practice means that he is himself at a loss when faced with the complex conceptual dialectics of the same and the other." Young contends that "Said cannot get out of the Hegelian problematic he articulates, and indeed tends himself to repeat the very processes that he criticizes" (11). Said's realism also contributes to this dichotomy. Said's power analysis in Orientalism is based on Foucault's earlier version of power as disciplinary and regulatory, so that for Said, the "real East" is conceived as completely oppressed by the "real West." Contradictory to

his own articulation of "Orient" as a fantastic construction, Said presumes the existence

of the "real East" stating that "the phenomenon of Orientalism as I study it here deals

principally, not with a study between Orientalism and Orient, but with the internal

consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient (the East as career) despite or

beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a 'real' Orient" (5). It is this

construction of totalizing binary of the aggressive and civilized West/the victimized and

barbarian East that Chong's genealogical narratives of Deshima and Chinoiserie

deconstruct. Chong and the co-authors incorporate such diverse factors as ethnicity,

nationality, gender, and class to destabilize the authority of the centering in the binary

conceptualization of West/ East.

Against this theoretical backdrop, I will examine Deshima and Chinoiserie. But I

do not claim that these historical narratives write "authentic genealogies" of dissention

of the other(s). Rather, I focus more on Chong's genealogical methodology to weave

historical narratives. As I mentioned in the introduction, even genealogical inclusion

cannot escape exclusion, since genealogy is also a representation, whose concept

relies on fetishist parts. Critic William Harris states that Chong recognizes the issue of

inclusion and exclusion as a key point in his weaving of diverse histories in Chinoiserie:

"figuring out what themes to include and exclude from the piece has been tricky" ("Ping,"

29). For example, though Chong focused on immigration laws in relation to identity

politics, he lamented "unfortunately, I can't get all of that into the show" (qtd. in Harris,

"Ping," 29). Deshima and Chinoiserie trace the present problems of racism and

abjection in America to the global routes and historical effects of imperialist power and

through the global flows of imperial armies, tributes, people, trade, finance, religion, and

racism, from the early encounters of West/ East (as early as 16th century) to contemporary geopolitics.

As many scholars of globalization recognize, colonial histories are part of national histories. Chong and his co-authors attempt to destabilize the authority of the unbroken History of America by including the "dispersion of forgotten things" such as colonization. In this inclusive historiography, consequently, America emerges as a nation whose diverse voices resonate in its divergent cultures and histories. Decentering the dominant historiographies of liberty, progress, and civilization, Deshima and Chinoiserie record the silenced echoes of the marginalized whose abjected bodies are the embodied ironies of such conceptualizations as universal History and Progress. In Deshima and Chinoiserie, the voices of the marginalized keep echoing, "Whose history is this?" (Chinoiserie, 4). My main focus in this chapter thus is how the myth of Progress is complicatedly linked to the history of colonialism, imperialism, capitalism (or, for that matter, communism, which is also based on the Marxist myth of the dialectical progress of human history), and racism and how Chong's historical narratives, Deshima and Chinoiserie, deconstruct this myth of Progress.

6.5.   Progress Myth of the Civilized West/the Barbarian East

Deshima was commissioned by the Mickery Workshop as part of the 1990 Spring Dance Festival in the Netherlands to commemorate the centennial of the death of Vincent Van Gogh. It was presented in the Sterrenbos Studio. The American premiere was in La MaMa E.T.C. in 1993. The production was brought to Japan and performed in Nagoya and Nagasaki in 1995 and participated in the Singapore Festival of Arts 1996, one of the few festivals of international performing arts in Asia. Deshima was

conceived for a large-scale proscenium stage. The stage forms a box type whose back

and two sides are elaborately installed with Japanese *shoshi* screen walls. On a bare

stage, on this huge canvas for lighting, slides, films, and videos are projected. When

Chong's life size version of Van Gogh's "Crows in the Cornfield" is projected on the

screen walls, the whole stage turns into a large piece of pictorial artwork, whose

peculiarity consists in living figures (performers) in the picture. Deshima is an

interdisciplinary work in which dramatic presentation, recorded and projected texts and

images (Van Gogh's painting), and various forms of dance (Javanese court dance,

Jitterbug, and Waltz) poetically construct the (hi)stories of the encounters among

cultures of Japan, the Netherlands, Indonesia, and America. The narrative text unfolds

the global itinerary paths of trade, politics, religion, art, imperialism, and racism from the

16th century to the present, through the motif of Van Gogh as the signifier of the other.

The first scene is set in 16th century Japan. In the scene, a lesser-known

(hi)story about the containment of Dutch traders by the Japanese aristocracy is

portrayed. The actor who plays "Japanese Daimyo" brings in an elegant red mat, sitting

on the mat with his fan against the lit *shoshi* screen wall. His exercising of power is

metaphorically suggested through his fan (Deshima literally means a fan-shaped island

constructed to quarantine the Dutch traders.) The only character that is in

contemporary dress is "Japanese Servant," since the performer who plays the role of

the Narrator also plays the Japanese Servant. Scene 2 is set in 16th century Japan

where the stories of the martyrdom of Japanese Christians unfold. This scene is not

about a dramatization of their victimization. Seen from a contemporary point of view,

the interrogation of a Portuguese priest by victimized Japanese Christians reveals the

irony of Christian martyrdom in imperial situations. Time jumps to the Pacific War in Scene 3, which is set in 1941 America. There are a bunch of dance contestants and a radio show host who is played by the Narrator. A spinning psychrorama evokes the scene of a dance contest. The Japanese-American dance contestants are juxtaposed with Javanese court dancers in 19th century Indonesia in Scene 4. The narrative temporo-spatiality moves to Indonesia in the 20th century in Scene 5 in which a Dutchman and the Javanese Regent are in serious conversations about brutal colonial policy. The story of the decent Dutchman deconstructs the totalized narration that *all* Dutchmen in this colonial period were evil. The Narrator plays the role of Van Gogh in this scene. Scene 6 is set in a colonial ballroom in 20th century Indonesia. The male dancers are in military uniforms (Dutch rulers and Indonesian officers) and the female dancers are in a 19th century European-style attire. Scene 7 opens with the transitional period of Indonesian history in which power was transferred from the Dutch to the Japanese empire. In this scene, "Dutch Governor," "Japanese General," and "Indonesian Nationalist" present speeches with nonsensical rhetoric used to justify their desires and power. The scene shifts again to contemporary America. In Scene 8 and 9, secret (hi)stories about Japanese-American internees in an interment camp in 1942 are told. The last scene is set in an ambiguous (coexistence of the past and the preset) timeline. It shows a contemporary corporate world in which an American businessman is in conversation with a Japanese businessman. The Narrator plays both the role of the American businessman and the Japanese businessman, and subsequently, a poor artist of New York who reminds the audience of the deprived Dutch artist Van Gogh. This scene segment segues into a film shot in which a contemporary artist and such

figures from the past as a sower (played by the Narrator), three female French peasants, and Japanese farmers appear in Van Gogh's painting "Crows in a Cornfield" – the degenerated "race" marginalized through the myths of Progress.   .

Myths of Progress, from the Enlightenment to Hegelian and Marxist dialectics of History are based on the logic of binary antagonism and exclusion. To establish the description of the unbroken History of Progress, the terms East, Slave, and Woman in the binaries of East/West, Slave/Master, and Woman/Man not only must be marginalized but also often conflated. Therefore, the East in orientalist discourses more often than not appears as a feminized, victimized, and inferior barbarian. The first scene in Deshima titled "East Meets West" contests this binary logic of the Civilized West/the Barbarian East. In this scene, lesser-known historical events surrounding the fan-shaped Deshima island in Japan were adapted by Chong and his co-author Michael Matthews and included into the genealogy of "dissention of the others." First, the translating Japanese Servant executes his imposing power on the body of the Dutch trader when he "addresses him curtly" by forcing the Dutch trader into submission – "stand up, don't slouch, smile, turn around," "sit down," "take off your hat," "stand up, dance," "stop, sit, write your name," and "pick it up, hand it to me" (Deshima, 4). (The Servant is played by Matthews, the Afro-American performer and the co-author of Deshima, who also plays multiple roles of "Narrator," "Van Gogh," "American Businessman," "Japanese businessman," "Sower," and postcard-selling artist.) Then, the Daimyo manifests his power by characterizing the Dutch trader as a barbarian, asserting his superiority through devaluing of the Dutch cultural practices. The Daimyo asks why people of his culture hide private parts while bathing and why they write from

left to right. Meanwhile, the simultaneous process of abjection between the Daimyo and

the Dutch Trader is drawn in a short segment in which their asides reveal their desire to

fix each other into fetishist stereotypes. While the Dutch Trader essentializes the image

of the Japanese as "a cannibalistic monster" who has "no nose," "slanted eyes," and

"black greasy hair," the Japanese Daimyo fixes the foreign trader into a "man-eating

beast" who has "a huge nose," "eyes like a fish," "red hair that flies everywhere"

(Deshima, 6).

But at the end of the scene, their ethnic differences are temporarily erased when

they engage in their business deal. As I examined in Chapter 2, the little-known black

slave trade between the Netherlands and Japan disrupts the unified binary of the

aggressive West/the victimized East. The play's notes insist on incorporating Africa,

which interrupts the dichotomy of West/East: "It is integral to the production concept that

the role of the narrator be played by an African American man and the others by Asian

American actors and dancers" (Deshima, 2). After the deal, the Daimyo reclaims his

political power, declaring that "we shall quarantine the Dutch. We shall build an island

for them off the coast of Nagasaki" and "it shall be called Deshima" (Deshima, 7). This

destructive idea of exclusion of the bodies of the others reappears in the text's

subsequent depiction of the internment of Japanese-Americans in America at the time

of Japan's attack on America. The Daimyo hints at this disjunctive continuation in his

last aside when he says that "they are not nearly as troublesome as the Americans will

be 200 years from now" (Deshima, 7). The scene thus portrays less a simple West/East

antagonism than a more complicated clash of desire and power.

The historical narratives in <u>Deshima</u> are layered and sequenced like our memory functions in an associative way. <u>Deshima</u> is called a "poetic documentary" due to its associative way of historical construction. The play's notes clearly discriminate among the text's self-conscious poetic construction of histories, when the authors note that <u>Deshima</u> is "a documentary because each element in the production – the text, choreography, sound and visual design – is inspired by an incident in the complicated history between Japan and the West."[11] It is "poetic," they write, "because the form is associative not narrative" (<u>Deshima</u>, 2). For the authors, documentary narrative style is considered as a subversive tactic to contest the realistic progression of dramatic arc. In a personal interview, Chong clarifies his incorporation of documentary materials as a Brechtian political strategy, stating that "in the late 1980s, I started to use documentary material and historical events as a strategy for making art. The term 'poetic documentary' was intended to capture the artistic and historical aspects of <u>Deshima</u>. Similarly, 'docu-concert-theatre' was intended to describe the qualities of <u>Chinoiserie</u>, particularly the word, 'concert,' as I did not want anyone to come expecting an 'opera' or 'music theatre' as these terms are commonly applied" (Personal Interview, July 2004). The new way Chong and his colleagues construct historical narratives, their poetics, reflects their changing political view on dominant historiographies. One historical moment evokes the next one in the murmuring similarities of destructive desire and power.

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[11] They use the concept "West," but, at the same time, they attempt to deconstruct it. The mythic construction of West/East is insidious even to a person who tries to deconstruct the binary construction. This is why Derrida and Spivak point out that more often than not deconstruction is complicit with the hegemonic mythic construction. As Foucault also acknowledges, our meaningful actions (including deconstructive speech acts) are squarely clouded by the unthought. My adoption of deconstruction as a meaningful action consists not in its claiming of correctness but in its acknowledgment of its own complicity.

Unlike the unified narrative dynamics driven by the logic of causality in historicist historiographies, each narrative sequence in Deshima points in multiple directions. Whereas the first scene will be thematically recalled later in the Japanese American internment scene (dealing with the same theme of containment of the other), it is also juxtaposed with Scene 2 "In God We Trust" whereby the Christian-humanist idea of History as providence formulated in Christian mission is implicated in the imperialist destruction of the culture of the other(s). As "Dies Irae" is heard, the Narrator begins: "The Portuguese had no shame in telling of their pillage." "They destroyed the rich ports of Africa, America and Asia on the slightest of pretexts," the Narrator continues, "burning and slaughtering their inhabitants, butchering the crews of captured Moslem ships, cutting off the hands of their captains and sending them to the local dignitaries to be curried and eaten as desserts" (Deshima, 8). The rhetoric of God's Will to civilize "savages" in support of the Christian progress myth was used again to justify American intervention in Asia in the 19th century. In the slide sequence presented next to the scene about Dutch imperiality (Scene 5 "Nuit Blanche: A Tropical Night"), in order to demonstrate the complicit link between the Christian progress myth and imperialism, Chong reuses the lines of Commode Matthew Perry of the U.S. Navy from Sondeheim's Broadway musical Pacific Overture; "1854, it was God's Will that America should have a foothold in Asia" (Deshima, 17).

6.6.   The Myth of Progress; the Myth of Purity and Continuity; Hybrid Subjects

The historical narrative of the Christianized Japanese who were also victimized among the power clashes told in Scene 2 "In God We Trust: Night" is doubly connected to the ironic destiny of Japanese-Americans in time of the Pacific War in Scene 8

"Internment Camp." As hybrid subjects, like the Christianized Japanese, the Japanese-Americans in the time of the Pacific War suffered exclusion and abjection due to perceived ethnic stigmas threatening the integrity of "pure Americanness." Scene 3 titled "Let's Dance," in which Japanese-American teenagers are shown to enjoy their American culture, prepares for the internment scene, whose theme is the ironic confusion of the Japanese-Americans with the Japanese aggressors of the Pacific War. In both scenes, the audience cannot easily determine the Americanness of the characters played ambiguously by Asian-American performers. The narrative deliberately confuses the audience in terms of the identity of the American teenage dancers in order to highlight the essentialist fallacy, which asserts a biological factor as to what determines the cultural identification, and the racist binary exclusion (Asian bodies [Japanese bodies]/American bodies). Are the Asian-American performers playing "Asian (Japanese)" or "American"? What this scene narrates is the displacement of bodies (bodies between cultures) as signifiers of identification. The audience is led to discover that the unity of Americanness might be said to consist in the collage of diverse cultural identities.

The idea that cultural identification is like a performance in which we as performers can pick or abandon wigs and costumes whenever our roles and situations require is reinforced by the layering and undressing in the beginning of Scene 7 "Dutch Surrender Noon." One couple from the previous ballroom scene (Scene 6 "Indonesia; A Waltz Into The New Century") remains and the man undresses his partner (it is not specified if she is "Lady 1," "Lady 2," or "Lady 3" in the text), but "under the bodice she wears the Javanese court dance costume" from Scene 4 "Javanese Court Dance" and

"she pulls the colonial wig from her head to reveal her own black hair" (<u>Deshima</u>, 21).

Indeed, the Asian-American actresses who play "Lady 1," "Lady 2," and "Lady 3" whose frivolous conversations highlight the narcissism of the Dutch upper class, come out of their roles to speak as themselves in a Brechtian manner. The actress who plays "Lady 1" says that "today I was supposed to be in Indonesia, where my grandmother would have had her hundredth birthday. She died four weeks ago." "The costume designer wanted me to wear pink in this scene," the actress who plays "Lady 2" complains. She is displeased with the pink dress since she thinks that pink does not go well with her brown skin and black hair. The actress who plays "Lady 3" tells how she got cast for the role. "I am a quarter Indonesian. They say I look Japanese. That's why I am in this performance" (<u>Deshima</u>, 18). The performativity of identification is clear in color-blind casting by which the performers cross all the boundaries of distinctions of ethnicity, class, and nationality, with the sole exception of gender in this production. The Asian-American and Afro-American performers play the roles of victims as well as the aggressors. The idea of the aggressor West/the victimized East is thus further disrupted by the multiple roles they play.

The matter of hybrid identity raised in Scene 7 (the theme of hybrid identification as layering) is associated with the next scene "Internment Camp," whose theme of confused cultural identity is also related to the Jesuit scene (Scene 2 "In God We Trust"). This internment scene demonstrates, like the other scenes, that cultural identity is not something given, but is an articulating process among the global clashes of bodies, desires, and powers. Karen Shimakawa sharply observes that "the Asian Americanness Chong's works produce is a signifier of multiple, sometimes

contradictory, identity formations; Asian Americanness emerges as an embodied site of contestation and possibility rather than bodied essentialization" (133). But I would like to point out that the "Asian Americanness" Shimakawa mentions is also problematized in Deshima and Chinoiserie. Chong, rather, deals with Americanness in relation respectively to *Japanese*-Americans and *Chinese*-Americans.

The Narrator as an American soldier reports the political determination of the internment of Japanese-American based on this bodied essentialization. "February, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt orders the evacuation of all American citizens of Japanese *ancestry* [italics mine]." He continues, "They were imprisoned – through they were not called prisoners – in 10 relocation centers – not called concentration camps – in remote and desolate parts of the country" (Deshima, 27). The anxiety over purity of blood to maintain unbroken History is highlighted in the American soldier's next announcement. "All persons possessing one-half, one-quarter, one-eighth, or one-sixteenth Japanese blood will be henceforth relocated to government sanctioned internment camps in the states of Wyoming, Montana, New Mexico and California" (Deshima, 28). But, one of the evacuees tells this political internment was also an economical exploitation. The character "Japanese American 1" recalls when her mother destroyed all her valuable 12 piece dinner set of blue and white porcelain rather than sell it to an opportunistic antique dealer. When her mother heard that the antique dealer would offer only $17.50 for the entire dinner set which cost at least $200.00 at that time, "she hurled it at the floor." "The man [the antique dealer] leaped back shouting, "Stop! Stop! Those are very valuable dishes lady!" (Deshima, 29).

6.7. The Conspiracy of Imperialist Myth and Capitalist Myth of Progress

Scene 4 "Javanese Court Dance" is related to the complicated historical narratives on imperialism and capitalism between the Netherlands, Japan, and Indonesia in the subsequent scenes – Scene 5 "Nuit Blanche: a Tropical Night," Scene 6 "Indonesia: A Waltz into the New Century Evening," and Scene 7 "Dutch Surrender." Scene 5 "Nuit Blanche: A Tropical Night" disrupts the dichotomy of West/East in that it includes divergent discourses on the East within European nations. The scene represents a conversation between the Indonesian Regent and a Dutchman, whose dialogue is drawn from a Dutch novelist by the authors. The Regent starts the conversation, saying that "too often all we Javanese see in the Dutch officials is the arrogance of power." He continues, "I know you recognize true nobility in our people, you always have, but I fear you are a rare example." The Dutchman expresses his negative thoughts on the matter of the arrogance of the Dutch, who refuse to admit that they can learn from the Javanese people – responding that "the Dutch that you speak of will never acknowledge nobility in poor people, not even in their own country" (Deshima, 15). The unity of West/East here is intersected by the hegemony of the privileged class across the ethnic and national boundaries. Later in Scene 7 "Dutch Surrender," this interruption becomes more conspicuous when the Indonesian nationalist justifies the annexation of Indonesia by the Japanese imperialist army for the nation's progress and for the co-prosperity of Asia instigated by Japanese imperialism. The Regent then asks, "Will a man ever learn from only looking?" (Deshima, 15), problematizing the desire to fix the other(s) in the activity of seeing itself.[12] The Regent points out that social

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[12] I examined the nature of looking as fixity in relation to identification process when I introduced Lacan's critique on ego's imaginary identification (image formation) in Chapter 3.

interaction is necessarily based on the respect of the culture of the others. "When I look at you I see a Dutchman who could teach his people so much more about the Javanese." Thus, the Regent wants the Dutchman to visit the small huts and everyday life of the common people to be seen behind the touristic/voyeuristic façade. "Come with me," the Regent says, "to our *campong* and *desa*; let us visit the small huts and the people." "Let us listen to their speech, seek out their thoughts" (Deshima 15). Listening will prevent the others from being assimilated, exoticized, and sympathized as the oppressed "savages."

At the end of the scene, the Dutchman's attempt to respect the culture of the others is allusively connected to the Dutch artist Van Gogh who did not try to transgress the boundary of the culture of the others but instead attempted to build the image of Utopia inspired by the culture of the others (Japan) within European nations. The Narrator as Van Gogh states, Arles is "a place where the grand spectacles of nature could be viewed and cherished. A place both complex in its simplicity and simple in its spectacle. A place not unlike Japan. Arles will be the Japan of the future MARK MY WORDS!" The enlightened views of the Dutchman and Van Gogh toward the others are included into the genealogy of the other(s). In this inclusive historiographic narrative, the totalizing idea that the others are always the objects of disavowal is deconstructed by incorporating the forgotten or ignored things as rare examples. The Narrator further complicates the unified West view of the East when as Van Gogh he talks about Paul Gauguin: "I invited Gauguin, Bernard and those other assholes down to Arles to see my Japan but only Paul came. I mean, Paul's a nice guy, but lately he's become a little too… *I don't know* [italics mine], Tahitian" (Deshima 16). In this case,

the Westerner (Gauguin) is assimilated into the culture of the other. What I want also point out in Van Gogh's statement is that Gogh's acknowledgement of "I don't know" destabilizes the all-knowing subject whose possessive attitude toward the others forces them to visibility in the fetishist forms of stereotypes. As the Indonesian Regent points out, it is the gaze that fixes the others, and the violent invasion of the others is historically manifested in colonization and imperialism.

6.8.   Imperialism, Nationalism, and Racism

In Nuit Blanche, the charted imperial route engages the simultaneous pulls of homogenizing global hegemony and diversity expressed as domination and as the resurgence of nationalism in the so-called Third World. As many scholars observe, nationalism is not merely oppositional or antithetical to imperialism. The periodic reappearance of nationalism and imperialism is more complex than it seems. According to Harvey, 19th century European imperialism and nationalism were bridged by tribal nationalism and racism. Historically, Harvey notes, after the transnational alliance attempted in the Second Socialist International collapsed when each national branch turned its back on supporting its country in the World War I, as a consequence, "a variety of nation-based and therefore racist bourgeois imperialisms evolved (British, French, Dutch, German, Italian)." Harvey points out that classical Marxists overlooked the actual dangers of racist imperialism in their analysis of class struggle and possible alliance among the proletariat. Meanwhile, "industrially driven but non-bourgeois imperialisms also arose in Japan and Russia." These different imperial forms, as Harvey contends, demonstrated the same doctrines of racial superiority backed by the views of social Darwinism (44-45).

This operating racism is conspicuous again in what Arnason describes as "the mutation of nationalism to fascism" and the rise of fascist domination over the other ethnic groups and nations, as Nazism historically demonstrated. For Arnason, European fascism is an imperialism brought home (216). In the contemporary configuration of geopolitics, scholars like Hall and Harvey observe that, for example, in the peculiar politics of Thatcherism and Reaganism, global domination is often colored with nationalist tones.[13] Nationalism, in this case, is not one that is antithetical to imperialism, but is the engine that drives global domination. Meanwhile, the resurgence of nationalism in the decolonizing processes, which was modeled on European nationalism, is also problematic. Fanon recognizes "the pitfalls of national consciousness" in the time of decolonizing from oppressive European imperialism. According to Fanon's accounts[14], before independence the leading elite of the colonized countries embody "the aspirations of the people for independence, political liberty, and national dignity," but as soon as independence is declared, they are often complicit in the positions of co-prosperity with foreign profiteers and politicians to sustain their

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[13] As I discussed in Chapter 3, drawing on George Owell's Animal Farm, futuristic science fiction, the Broadway musical, and popular entertainments, Elephant Memories (1991) tells the fantastical stories of a fictitious fascist nation, which allegorically alludes to the Reagan-Bush era. The virtual nation portrayed in Elephant Memories had been engaged in "the long war" (the Vietnam War) and people report the breakout of a new war against the world's evil (the first Gulf War).

[14] McClintock questions the gender construction in such concepts as nation and nationalism. She argues that with "the notable exception of Frantz Fanon, male theorists have seldom felt moved to explore how nationalism is implicated in gender power" (353). But, according to McClintock, despite Fanon's insight into the complicated themes of nation, nationalism, imperialism, race, class, and gender in his brilliant analysis of the Algerian revolution and women's role in it, Fanon does not proceed to investigate the possibility of woman as national agency. McClintock notes that "women's agency for Fanon is thus agency by designation." "At the beginning," McClintock asserts, "it was the married women who were contacted" and "later, widows or divorced women were designated." In this sense, in the revolution, "women's first relation to the revolution is constituted as a domestic one" (366).

hegemony ("National," 157). Against this background, I will discuss how in <u>Deshima</u> the national and imperial myth of Progress is based on racism.

Scene 6 "Indonesia; a Waltz into the New Century" portrays how the Indonesians were reduced to inferior natives by the Dutch officials in Indonesia. "Lady 3," who is invited to the dance ball complains, "Can you believe it, they've invited a native, a native. What is this world coming to?" But the logic that all Indonesians are antagonistic to the Dutch proves wrong, since the invited native is pro-Dutch and has an official post in colonized Indonesia. At the end of the waltz scene, the Narrator's elegy to Dutch paternalism {"I love you more than all the gold in Siam […] but will you still love me […] when the sun has set over the Empire […] when you are free to choose my love?" (<u>Deshima</u>, 20)} hints at the surrender of the Dutch. When the elegy is close to the end, all the couples at the ball but one exit. The man embraces and begins to undress the woman, and beneath her ball gown she is wearing the traditional Javanese costume from Scene 4 "Javanese Court Dance." She slowly pulls the colonial wig to reveal her own black hair and then "walks a very slow cross, that will take almost the entire next scene to complete, from downstage left to upstage right before she exits" (<u>Deshima</u>, 21). It signifies the exiting of one moment of history replaced by another. But the disappearance of the woman seems to suggest that Indonesian history passed from the imagination of masculine invaders to a conspiracy of male nationalists. During the very slow cross, the Narrator tells of the diplomatic negotiation between Dutch Governor General Tjard van Starkenborgh Staghouwer and Japanese Lieutenant General Immamura.

Scene 7 "Dutch Surrender Noon," narrates the historical irony of Indonesian nationalism, which justified the interests of the few in power by replacing the ruler from the foreign Dutch with the Japanese army, who were welcomed for their grand idea of an "Asia co-prosperity sphere." The persona "Indonesian Nationalist" ironically foreshadows the pitfalls of nationalism led by the elite, stating that "our aim is to liberate ourselves from Dutch rule for the freedom of our people and the happiness of Moslems" and "we believe that the Japanese Army is a righteous army which can help us achieve our aspiration" (Deshima, 23). For the Indonesian Nationalist, the Dutch is the Western oppressor, the other, but the Japanese are the same Asians. Thus, he justifies his privileged position in the new Japanese empire as follows: "In our country a prophecy has been passed on for hundreds of years that people of *the same race* [italics mine] would come one day to restore the freedom for Indonesia." The Japanese General, in return, responds, stating that "the Greater Asian co-prosperity sphere was created to free Asia from European and American dominance. Let us move together to create one united Asia" (Deshima, 24).

The invented idea of "Asia" is based on the idea of family, in which the paternal figure of the Japanese emperor protects his native sons from the evil Western domination.[15] The trope of family and its immanent concept of hierarchy in the imperial narratives of colonial power as father figure and the natives as its sons rhetorically naturalize imperialist domination and appropriation as destined Progress. It is worth

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[15] McClintock notes, the family trope in the National Family of Man is important for nationalism. "First, it offers a natural figure for sanctioning national *hierarchy* within a putative organic unity of interests" and "second, it offers a natural trope for figuring national time." For example, after the advent of social Darwinism, "Britain's national narrative took increasing shape around the image of the evolutionary Family of Man." "The family offered an indispensable metaphoric figure by which national difference could be shaped into a single historical genesis narrative" (357).

noting here that the Confucianist idea of nation, which provided the fundamental basis for a unified nation in Asian countries such as China, Korea, and Japan, naturalizes the familial, social, and national hierarchy through the metaphoric "Oneness" of emperor, (male) teacher, and father. "Japanese General" starkly registers Japan's politico-military domination in his affirmation of the Japanese way as follows: "From now on, you will perform saikeirei: a ritual bow toward the emperor in Tokyo at public assemblies"; "The local calendar will be changed to the Japanese"; "The Japanese language will be promoted as the lingua franca of the new Imperium" (Deshima, 24). The Japanese way of "Asian co-prosperity," indeed, was based on Japan's superiority over the other, inferior Asian countries in terms of their presumed advances in modern technology, military systems, capitalist markets, and so on. This scene demonstrates the slippage of Japanese imperialism in the binary of the aggressor West/ the victimized East.

Meanwhile, in the same scene, the performer who plays the role of "Indonesian Nationalist," a descendent of Dutch-Indonesian parentages, narrates the pain her father (Dutch-Indonesian) suffered during the Japanese invasion because of his Dutch blood, even though he must have been treated as an Indonesian during Dutch colonization. Due to the impurity of the hybrid subject, the Dutch-Indonesian could belong neither to the Dutch nor to Indonesians, and his identification was defined arbitrarily in accordance with who has power (Deshima, 24). In a Brechtian manner, through the voice of an Indonesian actor who played the Indonesian Nationalist, this complicity between the Japanese ruler and the Indonesian elite nationalists was juxtaposed with the suffering and pain the Indonesian-Europeans had to endure. The actor dedicates the performance to his late father who was killed by the Japanese imperialists.

6.9.   The Capitalist Myth of Progress

The imperialist power clash between the Netherlands and Japan recurs as contemporary economic war when a Japanese company buys Van Gogh's painting, Sunflowers, at a record-high price. As Gussow observes, it is a historical irony that Van Gogh regarded his utopia Arles as the Japan of the future in that it is "*in* the Japan of the future" ("Performance," C16).[16] As the commodification of Van Gogh's artwork exemplifies, Chong regards the Japanese obsession of purchasing Western things, whether buildings or artworks, as Japanese economic imperialism. In the last scene (Scene 10), the new economic war between America and Japan is portrayed. The threat of Japanese economic revitalization poses to American corporations is evoked by the case of the Japanese company's purchase of a Western masterpiece, Van Gogh's Sunflowers. This scene, however, does not suggest the overturn of the hierarchy between West/East in terms of hegemony in the global economy. Rather, it demonstrates how capitalist greed crosses national boundaries, victimizing the underprivileged like the poor artist Van Gogh. In this scene, the Narrator plays the roles of "Japanese Businessman" and "American Businessman." When his role turns into the American Businessman, the Narrator tells the imaginary Japanese Businessman that "you purchased this Van Gogh painting for 83 million dollars, but I've sold 150 million exemplars of this painting at $1.50 each, yes, $1.50 each, (stamps not included)" (Deshima, 33). Like the economical deal between the Japanese Daimyo and the Dutch trader, their indiscriminating economic interests erase the mutual abjection of business

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[16] Refer to his newspaper review on Deshima titled "A Performance Montage of East-West Troubles." The New York Times. 6 Jan. 1993: C16.

partners. The American Businessman says that "money is color-blind […] so let's put our differences on the back burner and get down to brass tracks" (Deshima, 33).

The related theme of the myth of capitalist progress and exclusion in the time of hegemonic transnational capitalism is portrayed against what Appadurai calls "grassroots globalization" (transnational alliance among the underprivileged) at the end of Scene 10, and Deshima ends with an epilogue referring to the global inclusion of the marginalized. The second scene segment of Scene 10 is set as a film in which Van Gogh's portrayals of peasant lives in Sower and Cornfields provide significant backgrounds. The Narrator enters into the frame (Van Gogh's Cornfields) as a sower with a hat on and a seed bag, and after his exit, three 19th century "French Peasant Women" enter with church books in their hands, singing. After the French peasant women exeunt, "Two Japanese Farmers" enter, carrying wood on their backs. The stage is metonymically set to evoke this scene of peasant life; "*a miniature train moves from right to left, across the tops of the cornfields*" (Deshima, 35). The farmers take off their bundles and they hear the sound of a train. This scene of peasant life is connected to the life of the deprived artist in the Epilogue. Several performers in contemporary dress enter and dance. While they dance upstage, the Narrator who played the role of a sower in the previous cornfields scene enters as a contemporary artist. As the conflation of Van Gogh and a contemporary New York artist, he tries to sell his original signed postcards. Then, all the actors in the Epilogue dance as "Voice" speaks out the grassroots alliance of love among the marginalized across the national boundaries. "We love you, Italians, we love you. We love you Brazilians, we love you

[…] We love you French, we love you […] We love you Sudanese, we love you. We love you Chinese, we love you" (<u>Deshima</u>, 36).

6.10. The Genealogy of Chinoiserie

As the diverse histories narrated in <u>Deshima</u> exemplify, histories do not progress as we are led to believe. The second historical narrative in the East/West Quartet, <u>Chinoiserie</u>, intervenes in the historicist imagining of History, rewriting it as the genealogy of the forgotten others. <u>Chinoiserie</u> is conceived and directed by Chong in collaboration with composer Guy Klucevsek and performance artist Michael Matthews. The production was produced in association with Yellow Springs Institute, the State University of New York at Buffalo, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Walker Arts Center and the Lied Art Center at the University of Nebraska, where the work premiered in 1994. This "docu-theatre-concert-lecture" form of a music theatre needs a large-scale proscenium stage. Like Chong's other theatre works, the stage is bare except for three rear screens for projection. The screen in the center is used for projection and the smaller scale screens beside it are used for lighting purposes, providing a beautiful backdrop for the performers. The performers sing and recite the lines by using microphones, facing the audience in line in front of microphones. They stand in front of the left hand screen, intricate with chinoiserie designs. When they dramatize scenes and dance, they come forward to the platform in the rectangular playing area center stage. The platform is lit when they perform there.

There is little sense of conventional characterization. For example, in a scene segment in which the (hi)stories of George MacCartney and his counter-part, Lian Kentang, are told and presented in the hybrid musical forms of Western Opera and

Chinese Opera, the performers sing MacCartney's part in the beginning of the scene segment "The Ballard of Lord MacCartney," and the lyrics about Kentang are sung by two performers, Chen and Keane. In the staging of the scene segment in the playing area, Chen plays the Chinese Emperor, Keane plays Kentang, and Oquita plays MacCartney. Chong, as the Narrator (like a lecturer at the corner of stage right using a lectern and a microphone), translates lines spoken in Chinese, explains the slides projected, comments on the historical events presented on stage, and inserts his autobiographical episodes into the global histories that transpired among China, Britain, and America from the 16th century to the present.

Inspired by the term chinoiserie in its ambiguity (fascination with and objection of Chinese cultures), Chong explores the complicatedly woven histories among China, Britain, and America to trace backward the paths of desire and power to contain the other(s) found in present racism and xenophobic immigration laws. The public relations materials for Chinoiserie note how the production investigates the different meanings the term "chinoiserie" has in different contexts. According to its account, the word referred to all things Chinese in the 18th century when "the European aristocracy's hunger for new diversions transformed Eastern culture into Western fashion with the willing assistance of Chinese merchants." "The West's fascination with China, however, masked an equally powerful countertrend turning the Chinese into the exotic, or the mysterious 'other.'" In Chinoiserie, as in Deshima, Chong and his co-authors (Michael Matthews, Regina Anna Seckinger, and Ric Oquita) deconstruct West/East dichotomy by including Africa and diverse factors such as ethnicity, nationality, class and gender.

Also, the purifying boundary ritual of writing West/East and hybrid subjects provide important themes in <u>Chinoiserie</u>.

The narrative text traces the global routes of desire and power from the early imperialist practices of trade and war between Britain and China to contemporary Chinese labor migration and the struggle to assimilate in America. Broadly, <u>Chinoiserie</u> examines the dominant historiographies drawn from a textbook, a play, and a tv series in which Chinese-Americans are reduced and abjected as stereotypes. Chong and his co-authors rewrite the dominant historiographies of Chinese-American in America by restoring silenced voices in their adaptations of these historiographies. This subversive act is designed to thwart the totalizing logic of exclusion embodied in the abjected Chinese-American. As <u>Deshima</u> is called a "poetic documentary" due to the authors' imaginative interruption of dominant historiographies in an associative way, <u>Chinoiserie</u> also takes counter-ideological positions in what Chong calls "docu-concert-theatre-lecture" format. <u>Chinoiserie</u> borrows conventions from Chinese Opera, whose self-conscious theatricality facilitates the deconstructive interrogation of the dominant historiographies. The performers (Ping Chong, Shi-Zheng Chen, Aleta Hayes, Michael Edo Keane, and Ric Oquita) sing and dance and play roles from texts ranging from "authentic" history textbooks to a racist play.

<u>Chinoiserie</u> is constituted of 40 scene segments enacted as concerts alternating with Chong's several spoken autobiographies. Chong's autobiographical episodes regarding racial abjection further destabilize the dividing line in the totalizing inclusion and exclusion of the aggressor European-American/the victimized Chinese-American. In his autobiographical narratives, Chong is very self-reflexive on his own actions. As

the Narrator, he tells his own stories as a victim, an observer, and a perpetrator of racism. Racial abjection crosses both ethnicity and nationality and transpires in the plural conditions and situations of power dynamics. But, I do not mean that Chong's personal memories are "truer" than dominant historiographies. Rather, forgotten or ignored memories should be included in the diverse histories of nations. In the introduction, I briefly discussed the relations of memory to history. Nora highlighted memory as dominant shift in the hierarchical relation between memory and history, as Le Goff further pointed out the ineptness of the antithetical view on history and memory.[17] I agree with Le Goff that "memory is the raw material of history." Thus, "whether mental, oral, or written, it is the living source from which historians draw" (xi). Chong in many interviews claimed the importance of individual memory as "the repository of history" and pointed out the politics of exclusion of subaltern memories in dominant historiographies (qtd. in Chang, 18). The real issue here is not the preference of memory to history or vice versa, but *whose* memories weave the historical narratives of nations and the world. Throughout the production of Chinoiserie, the audience keeps hearing self-reflexive voices that point out the ironies in dominant historiographies; "Whose history is this anyway?"

6.11. Dominant Historiography and the Other

Chinoiserie starts with Chong's own encounter with the racist exclusion of Chinese Americans, which happened in Pittsburgh, 1987. He was having a dinner with

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[17] Le Goff remarks that "recent, naïve trends seem virtually to identify with memory, and even to give preference in some sense to memory, on the ground that it is more authentic, 'truer' than history, which is presumed to be artificial and, above all, manipulative of memory" (xi).

a curator and the curator's lady friend in a Chinese restaurant. When the lady friend

opened her chopsticks, she pouted and frowned and she said, "Why don't they use

knives and forks? This is America. Why don't they stop using chopsticks?" Even

though he was insulted, in accordance with the Chinese honor code, Chong as a guest

did not embarrass his host. But he wondered who she thought "they" were. He smiled

and changed the subject. So the rest of dinner went smoothly to the end. In the end,

his fortune cookie said, ironically, "You believe in the goodness of mankind" (Chinoiserie,

2). The narrative text unfolds this interrogation of "who *they* are" through the historical

itineraries of imperialism and Chinese diaspora.

As I discussed earlier, European imperialism is the tripartite coordination of the

bourgeoisie's economical interest, the territorial violation of European state powers, and

the rhetorical justification and dissemination of Euro-centric (also phallo-centric, and

propertied-centric) cultural values. Chinoiserie traces the genealogy of ethnic and

national abjection through the global trade routes of tea and opium between China,

Britain, and America from the early 17th century, when tea was introduced to European

countries from China, to the 20th century opium den in America, and to the

contemporary economic war between China and America. At the end of the production,

a slide reads as follows: "*Microsoft mogul Bill Gates and venture capitalist Warren*

Buffet go to China. When they get there, they will see a clock in Tiananmen Square

counting the hours and minutes until Hong Kong is returned to China on June 30, 1997,"

suggesting the constant pulls and pushes of global domination and resistance in a new

phase of deterritorial transnational capitalism.   And the last slide reads, "*To be continued into the 21ˢᵗ century*" (Chinoiserie, 33).[18]

After Chong's first autobiographical episode, the performers tell how the political tension between Britain and China started with the commodityscape of tea. One of the performers, Oquita, explains that "the English addiction to **TEA** becomes a severe drain on the royal treasury," while Chen as a Chinese officer claims "our Celestial Empire posses all things in prolific abundance and lacks no product within our borders. There is no need to import the manufactures of outside *barbarians* [italics mine]" (Chinoiserie, 3). Like the first scene in Deshima, mutual ethnic/national abjection is set around cultural difference. America is introduced into this commodityscape. Keane, Chen, and Oquita narrate this triangular relation between America, Britain, and China around the culturally different ways of consuming tea: "In America, puritans drank bitter **TEA** with butter and salt. New Englanders preferred their tea with saffron, iris or gardenia petals." Meanwhile, "the British drank **TEA** with milk and sugar or **TEA** with lemon," believing "only barbarians drink tea any other way" (Chinoiserie, 3-4).

Chinoiserie then alludes to a familiar historical event and complicates its familiar interpretation as only an example of the political tension between the mother country and the colonies in America. Hayes explains that "a group of men including silver smith

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[18] As one of the biggest global economic centers, Hong Kong's return to China is both an economic revitalization and a political recuperation for China, since Hong Kong was ceded to Britain as the consequence of the Opium War (1839-1842). The partial introduction of capitalist markets and capital, rich raw materials, and cheap labor allowed China to ascend to the privileged position in the contemporary geopolitical landscape. Many scholars and experts acknowledge the fact that China has become the number one nation which America fears most in the future battlefields of global hegemony. In some possible scenarios about the American occupation in the Gulf, its political/economical meaning is interpreted as a strategic containment of China by controlling oil reserves on which China's economy is heavily dependent. As the formation of modern European imperialism demonstrates, the American occupation in the Gulf confirms how economical and cultural wars can be readily transformed into territorial colonization.

Paul Revere, disguised themselves as Mohawk Indians, boarded English ships and

threw 342 chests of tea into Boston Harbor." Keane states, "This is commonly referred

to as the Boston *TEA* party in American history books. For many years British history

books referred to this as a terrorist act against the Crown" (Chinoiserie, 4). The irony

emerges through the fissure of power struggle, which strives to describe the same

historical event completely different ways. The performers ask whose history this is. At

the end of this scene, the sounds of a cannon shot and a baseball being hit are heard,

and these sound effects are associated later with the Opium War and the murder of a

Chinese-American, Vincent Chin, who was beaten to death by a baseball bat. The

sound of the cannon (a war image) accompanied by the repeating rhythmical sound of

"boom boom boom" describing men fighting expresses the intensified economic and

political tension between China and Britain. (According to Shimakawa's accounts, the

sound of "boom, boom, boom" is drawn from a witness of the murder incident of Chin in

the documentary film Who Killed Vincent Chin?.)

6.12. Narcissistic Monologues in World History Drama

Chong also uses an autobiographical episode to connect the ethnic abjection of

the Chinese-American to the ethnic abjection of Afro-American. His narrative goes back

to 1956, New York City. Chong as a ten-year-old boy observes racist arrogance when a

white man in a Cadillac says to an elderly black man panhandling the passing cars that

"every white man should have a nigger slave" (Chinoiserie, 5). Then, the narrative's

temporality jumps back to at the end of 18th century China. Chong as the Narrator

reads that "on September 26, 1792, Great Britain, a nation of eight million, sent an

envoy of seven hundred men led by Lord George MacCartney to China, a nation of

three hundred and thirty million" (Chinoiserie, 5). The scene segment titled "The Ballad of Lord MacCartney" starts from MacCartney's self-introduction (sung by the performers in Western Opera style), which is a salient convention in Chinese Opera; "I am Lord George MacCartney." The performer, Keane, asserts that "to understand the ballad of Lord MacCartney, one must also understand the ballad of his Chinese counterpart" since "then *we will have drama*." Keane's pointing at the logic of narcissistic exclusion in the world drama called History is decentered by the logic of inclusion. Chen sings the counter-ballard of Kentang in Chinese Opera style, introducing the Chinese counter-part; "I am Lian Kentang" (Chinoiserie, 6). Keane intervenes Chen's singing and sings the rest of the lyrics about Kentang. When Keane's introduction of Kentang gets too long, this time, another female performer, Hayes, interrupts and Keane responds that "I will be done very shortly," but "this is how characters are introduced in the Chinese Opera" (Chinoiserie, 7).

Borrowing from the theatrical conventions of Chinese Opera, the narrative text consistently evokes its own constructive nature. This self-reflexive narrative construction seems to be designed to say that, like their non-realistic theatrical performance, historiographies are fictitious constructions of historical events. This poetics most effectively touches the theme of exclusion in dominant historiographies. The next scene segment highlights the mutual abjection between the British envoy and the Chinese host reinforced through their self-centered rhetoric of their being the center of the world. By doing so, it is suggested that the myths of progress of both the British and the Chinese partially induce their mutual abjection. Meanwhile, Keane's insertion of contemporary commodity items such as kleenex, bandaids, lemonade, wash & dry,

along with tigermilk in the list of Emperor's gracious offer to the envoy significantly

draws the paralleling trade dispute and mutual abjection between the past and the

present. Then, Hayes as a Chinese officer reports the envoy's ill-manners to the

Emperor. "Instead of kowtowing nine times before the gracious letter you sent – like

everyone should – MacCartney & company just tipped their hats." Chen as the

Emperor says that "they have no manners" in Chinese (Chinoiserie, 8). Like the earlier

scene portions in which Chen speaks Chinese – Chong as the Narrator translates his

speech into English – the insertion of foreign language shows not only the more

inclusive geopolitical landscape of the globe but also makes the American audience feel

what it is like to be the other(s) behind the language barrier.[19] Hayes' intended

misunderstanding of the Emperor's speech makes Chen repeat it several times in

Chinese, intensifying the audience's emotional awareness of being the other. Hayes'

"aaaaaaaah" in her line "Aaaaaaaaah – they ain't got no manners" also ironically

expresses the audience's displaced positionality (Chinoiserie, 8).

The encounter between Liang and MacCartney, in its contradiction of

grammatical politeness and bad intention toward the other, is a crouching tiger and

hidden dragon struggle. MacCartney played by Oquita dissembles: "we particularly are

delighted by the sunsets too. And sunrises. And the moonrises. Of course, we only

have the perspective of this confinement. An elegant confinement, to be sure. May we

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[19] In regard to Chong's multi-language use, I quote Noël Carroll. Carroll says that "Chong's dialogue is often multi-lingual, casting the English-speaking spectator in the role of outsider" and "the view that all human behavior, once looked at apart from its cultural context, is ultimately and irreducibly strange is vividly evoked through the spectator's experience of the play" (75). I consider that by inserting multi-languages Chong destabilizes the monolithic dominant language and culture, reminding the audience there are many other worlds and cultures. In Humboldt's Current, "there was German and Latin; in Nuit Blanche scene was played entirely in Spanish; in Fear and Loathing in Gotham Chinese, English, and 'a kind of Mickey Mouse speech with a translator'" (Abbe, 7).

not wander through your city and flirt with your women?" He continues, "may we not walk as far as the bell tower and observe your people? Survey your land should we need to use force against you one day?" Liang played by Keane responds: "tell me, in your country, if you come as uninvited guests to a home, do you have the right to demand a room?" (Chinoiserie, 8-9). The segment ends with MacCartney's narcissistic abjection of Kentang juxtaposed with Kentang's same self-centered arrogance. MacCartney declares, "he who controls trade, controls the world's wealth and therefore the world itself." Kentang also claims that "we are the center of the civilized world" (Chinoiserie, 9). Female performer Hayes' sound effect "boom boom boom," inserted throughout this power game, is a critical commentary on this phallo-centric power struggle.

The sound of the cannon is heard to signify war; it is later heard again and again in the segments on the Opium war, the murder of Chin, and the contemporary trade dispute between China and America. The narcissistic masculine Self claimed as the center of the world by MacCartney and Kentang is, however, interrupted by the feminine other, Mrs. Chin (Vincent Chin's mother). Mrs. Chin's body unrealistically embodied by an Afro-American actress, Hayes, may be described as a site where all kinds of abjection (in terms of ethnicity, nationality, gender, and class) transpire. Her persona is based on "Renee Tajima's and Christine Choy's Academy Award-nominated 1989 documentary, Who Killed Vincent Chin?" (Shimakawa, 153). But Chong and his co-authors modify this documentary film on the murder incident of Chin in their transformation of the realistic presentation of Mrs. Chin. Shimakawa remarks of this adaptive transformation that "performed by Aleta Hayes, a tall, young, classically trained

female performer of African descent, with a deep, strong voice, she is a stark contrast to the somewhat frail, middle-aged Lily Chin, who often falters in her responses in the film, speaking in a mix of Cantonese and heavily accented English." "Hayes does not signify 'Chineseness' in any overt or obvious way," Shimakawa continues, "although Chong retains the grammatical structures of Lily Chin's speech, Hayes does not attempt to mimic her accented English or her gestures" (155). This ambiguity, as I also argued in the ambiguous presentation of Japanese-American teenage dancers in <u>Deshima</u>, aims to change the audience's unconscious expectation of "Chinese-Americanness" based on bodily essentialization. Also, Chong remarked that the ambiguous black body of Mrs. Chin underlines "the fact that Vincent's murder was a racist act, part of a continuum of such acts in American culture" (qtd. in Shimakawa, 156). The tension between the imagined body of the character and the performer's body thus makes the audience pay attention more to the pain and anger the sad-voiced mother of a victim addresses. In this way, Chong and his co-authors restore the silenced voices of the marginalized. Like Keane's claim ("Then, we will have drama"), Ms. Chin's included speech acts (performances) complete the drama of the murder of Vincent Chin.

6.13. Stereotype in Dominant Cultural Representation

Chong's next autobiographical anecdote about his "Little Italy" neighborhood in New York City in 1989 is related to his childhood abjection of a poor Italian girl. Through these episodes, Chong contests the totalizing logic in which all European Americans are viewed as aggressors and all Chinese Americans as victims. Chong's multiple positionality as a victim, an observer, or a perpetrator of racism suggests how a person can play multiple roles in the drama called racism. Chong's "Little Italy" episode

begins as follows: There are a bunch of Chinese immigrants repaving the sidewalk and two young Italian bakers who are watching the Chinese workers. Passing the Italian bakers, Chong overhears what one of them saying – "Look at those monkeys. Why do they come here? They don't even know how to speak English." Chong says that he thought to himself – "Do you think your great-grand-parents from Italy spoke English when they first came here? Did you know congress wanted to prevent the dirty wops' from entering the United States?" (<u>Chinoiserie</u>, 11). Later, in a childhood anecdote in 1957, Chong in turn confesses his own ethnic abjection of a poor Italian girl. He recalls that when the Italian girl is introduced at school, "all 23 Chinese faces look up with jaws dropped to see a Sicilian country girl, her head dripping with sausage curls, dressed in an old-fashioned cottonprint dress with white lace frills." Chong continues, "her name is Philomena – she is a vision from another planet. She can't speak a word of English. We torment her for the rest of the year" (<u>Chinoiserie</u>, 18).

After the autobiographical "Little Italy" episode, Chong and his co-authors examine the stereotypical representation of Chinese immigrant workers in <u>The Chinese Must Go</u>, written in 1879 by Henry Grimm. But, they adapt the original version to restore the silenced voices, which couldn't be enunciated in the past. There are two Chinese immigrant characters, Sam Gin and Ah Coy, in the scene. While the characters speak English with heavy Chinese accents and broken grammar, they also speak words (in italic in the script) with an accusing tone, directly addressing the audience and restoring lost voices. For example, Ah Coy says that "I tell you, white man big fools; eaty too muchee, drink too muchee, and talkee too muchee." Sam Gin responds that "white man catchee plenty money. Chinaman catchee little money.

Cheap labor" (Chinoiserie, 11-12). Ah Coy says that his owner did not pay them last month, and Frank the owner's son even cunningly tries to exploit them when he says that "if I squeeze the six dollars out of the old man [his father] that Chinaman has to pay me commission, that's business." While Lizzie, the owner's daughter, shows sympathy, she is not aware of her own contradiction in a sense that she also enjoys the stereotypical representation of Chinese immigrants portrayed in such popular movies and tv series as "Broken Blossom," "Shanghai Express," and "Kung Foo Fighters." Their father, William, treats Sam Gin and Ah Coy as money-obsessed "miserable dog(s)" and "breeder(s) of ruin and desolation," who destroy his young daughter with an opium addiction (Chinoiserie, 12-13).

"Opium freak" is the stereotypical Chinese image strongly associated with Chinese Americans at that time. Thus, Chinoiserie traces the global routes of the opium trade and the consequent Opium War. Due to the Chinese addiction to opium smuggled into China illegally, in 1839, commissioner Lin, appointed by the Emperor to deal with the illegal Opium trade, ordered 20,000 chests of Opium to be dumped into the sea. Reminiscent of the contradictory views around the "Boston Tea Party," Keane asks, "Was this a patriotic act or an act of terrorism?" Hayes' comment on the British side shows the complicity of political power with the economic greed. "Although the British Parliament sent confused and confusing comments about the inacceptability of the *Opium* trade, it didn't matter as long as it turned a healthy profit." Chong, as the Narrator, adds his comment, remarking that "The British had found a way to balance their budget" (Chinoiserie, 25). The economic and political tensions develop into The Opium War (1839-1842). A slide projection reads that "*China loses the war. Hong*

Kong is ceded to Britain for 99 years and 21 million dollars in indemnities are paid.

China's humiliation is complete." A sign outside a British country club in Shanghai

reads "No dogs or Chinese allowed" (<u>Chinoiserie</u>, 26). The totalizing logic of exclusion

metaphorically indicates that all Chinese people are dogs.

  This club's ethnic exclusion is associatively related to Chong's restaurant

anecdote from 1994, San Francisco. In a stylish restaurant, while Chong waits for his

bill, he observes a tall man with a crew cut in full camouflage refused service in the bar.

The tall man in camouflage looks at a black couple sitting opposite Chong, as if to say

"you serve niggers here." And he looks straight at Chong as if to say "you serve gooks?

We used to kill gooks and you serv'em here" (<u>Chinoiserie</u>, 27). Chong thinks that the

man's persecuting gaze and attitude express honestly how he feels about the other.

But Chong chooses to close this sequence on a positive note. First, a slide projection

mentions the Chinese Exclusion act of 1882, the first immigration law to exclude

individuals from America based on ethnic identity.[20] Then, another slide shows two men

(several photographs taken in 1908), identified as Walter Scott and Wong Kee, eating

outside. Chong narrates; "1908. Walter Scott and Wong Kee tried to have lunch

together. No one would serve Wong Kee. Walter Scott and Wong Kee sat in the sun

instead and ate together" (<u>Chinoiserie</u>, 16).

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[20] Refer to William Harris' review "Ping Chong Inside Out." <u>Brooklyn Bridge</u>. (November, 1995): 29.
According to Chong's account in the interview with Harris, "it was continued until 1943 just after the
Japanese were interned, but only one hundred and five Chinese were allowed. And the restriction wasn't
lifted until 1965" (29).

6.14. Diverse Histories and Home Called America

As with The Chinese Must Go, Chong and his co-authors add contemporary Chinese-American sensibility in their adaptation of A Chinese English Phrasebook of 1875 written by Wong Sam and his assistants. When Chong recites the phrases from the book, Hayes interjects contemporary cultural references, while the other two performers (Keane and Chen) perform accompanying actions drawn from Asian martial arts and modern dance. For example, Chong reads as follow: "He took it from me by violence. Claws. He claimed my gold mine. Soup. He cheated me out of my wages. Kick step." Then Hayes asks, "Was Coolie High a film about inner city Chinese youth?" When Chong reads, "Can I sleep here tonight? Peek-a-boo," Hayes sings "take me out to the ballgame." Chong reads, "An unmarried man is called a bachelor. Woman thinking." Hayes says, "Nigger, kike, chink, wop, gook, spic." "The United States has many immigrants. Steps," Chong says. Then Hayes replies "and they are all so happy" (Chinoiserie, 16).   Shimakawa notes the signification of these sets, "the audience must assimilate multiple citations of Chineseness: the implied historical experience evoked in Wong Sam's text, the various contemporary figurations of Chinese Americans (situated among other 'immigrant' signifiers) listed by Hayes, and the bodies in motion that sometimes do, and sometimes do not conform to the spoken text" (150). The performativity of "Chinese-Americanness" is highlighted here.

Hayes as a Chinese immigrant tells of her experience of exclusion in a baseball game, which is mentioned as one of the indexes of Americanness. "We go to baseball game very American but they kick and curse us" (Chinoiserie, 18). There is a fecund metaphorical connection among a baseball game, home, and exclusion. A baseball game is about "home." Players have to hit the ball in order to return to their home base.

Oquita's enactment of a sportscast demonstrates how this idea of "home" is constructed

through the idea of the other, with China as the conspicuous signifier of the other in the

racist construction. The sportscast announces that "Johnson bashed out two homeruns

that probably ended up somewhere in China!!! and you know what they say – if you dig

a hole deep enough, you come out on the other side in China!!!" (Chinoiserie, 18). It

was a baseball bat Ebens swung "as if a baseball payer was swinging for a home run,"

to kill Vincent Chin whom he misrecognized as a Japanese immigrant. One of the

witnesses reported, "I heard Ebens say it's because of you little Japanese

motherfuckers that we're out of work with GM." As contemporary voice of Mrs. Chin,

Hayes embodies the silenced demand of justice when she says that "I want

JJJJJJustice for my son for mmmmy Vincent my precious bit of light and heaven

dragged out of my heart in murder." After this, a slide projection appears, reading that

"*Vincent Chin's murderers never served any jail term. They were fined $3780 and

released on probation*" (Chinoiserie, 29-30). Also, Chong's poetics (politics) of inclusion

presented as the insertion of the excluded Chinese work forces into the photograph

taken to commemorate the completion of the first transcontinental railroad "East meets

West" strongly indicts the injustice committed by people of authority. In the face of such

home, we remember that Chong's despair in domination and abjection, but at the same

time, hope for equality, respect, and justice is ironically expressed in his Chinese

fortune cookie prediction, "you believe in the goodness of mankind" (Chinoiserie, 2). At

the end of the narrative text, the projected text reads, "*You believe in the goodness of

mankind*" (Chinoiserie, 33).

7. AFTERTHOUGHTS

I will conclude this dissertation by examining "the goodness of mankind" sentiment appearing in the last slide projection in <u>Chinoiserie</u> in terms of global connectivity and the possibility of a political/ethical alliance of the marginalized based on performance of respect, justice, and equality. Is our contemporary global interconnectedness merely the binary antagonism of global domination and local resistance? Cannot globalization mean resistance? <u>Deshima</u>, I have suggested, alludes to what Appadurai calls "grassroots globalization" or "globalization from below." As Appadurai observes, the brighter side of globalization is, indeed, "in the growth of a wide range of progressive, transnational alliances ("Disjuncture," 308 & <u>Globalization</u>, 16). According to Appadurai, grassroots globalization is recognizable in institutions like NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) in the areas of labor, suffrage, and civil rights, concerned with matters of equity, access, justice, and redistribution of resources to the poor. In this way, Appadurai notes, NGOs sometimes have historical links to the socialist internationalism of an earlier era.

When the rosy rhetoric of global harmony expressed in the United Nation's "Our Global Neighborhood" shows its ugly and helpless face through the hegemonic national interests pursued in the recent political intervention in Gulf area, grassroots globalization seems to appear as the counter-globalization against the globalization from above. Whenever global hegemony rejects respect for other cultures, there is simultaneous resistance. In this context, Appadurai suggests or shows the workings of

transnational alliance among the marginal as the counter-flows of intervention. I

contend that Chong's positive international views engage these upward movements of

people in the margins of the globe. His community-based project, the Undesirable

Elements, in both its local and transnational performance in the cities like Tokyo (1995),

Rotterdam (1997), and Berlin (2002) crosscuts national boundaries, thus showing the

possibility of transnational alliance of the people on the margin. But, as Chong realizes,

the financial, organizational, and technical difficulties are great obstacles as in the case

of any transnational alliance of the marginalized. Thus, his activism is often associated

with localism.

As I stressed in the previous chapters, any form of alliance and connecting unity

must consider the multiple factors of class, gender, ethnicity, nationality, generation, etc.

Without reconsidering global situations in terms of those complex factors, grassroots

globalization can be easily led to another form of domination by the tyranny of totalizing

logic. Chong's narratives on global connectivity are concerned with those multiple

factors. It is likely that contradictions will come up when one describes phenomena of

complexity and ambivalence by a single grid endowed and impassioned with fetishist

power. For instance, in the area of transnational environmental activism, one of the

distinguished areas of grassroots globalization, restricting laws and regulations on

limited and endangered natural resources does not solve problems without tension:

somebody's green peace (in the so-called First World) might threaten someone else's

survival rights (in the so-called Third World). Also nongovernmental transnational

organizations in the area of human rights (mainly in the so-called First World) might be

unintentionally serving to justify political intervention in the so-called Third World.

Concerning ethnic diversity, scholars like Gilroy point out the primacy of Africanism in regard to the diverse ethnic routes in transnational black cultural alliances. Even though on matters of globalization and culture some male scholars like Clifford and Hall began to become concerned with the question of gender (and sexuality), Wolff pointedly notes the indifference to the gender factor in major global theories. Most global theories continue to fail to "connect the public world of politics, economics, and institutions with the domestic sphere and with the sexual division of labor" (170). As Wolff emphasizes the connective threads of the singular factors, feminist scholars like Spivak and Trinh T. Min-ha question the privileged position of so-called First-World feminism in describing and inviting the so-called Third-World women to the transnational alliances among marginalized women. Spivak also observes the gender inequality in transnational labor alliances, reporting the eventual defeat of women workers by male labor forces in the resolution of the labor strike in South Korea supported by international labor alliance. Furthermore, if we adopt Hannerz's stress on "the international division of labor," nationality, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality are so complicatedly interwoven that the totalizing partial grip of single factors easily leads to erroneous description of global interactions.

What I want to stress here is that such ideas as transnationalism, nationalism, and localism alone cannot serve to solve the problems everyday lives encounter in complex relation. Chong's narrative texts on global (local) interconnectedness are ambiguous in the same way in which the lurking irony lampoons the blind man who is convinced that the elephant's leg he touches is *the* elephant (the Jamesonian metaphor for globalization). His narratives do not lead the audience to comprehension of the

world; rather, they demonstrate that one cannot completely and neatly map out the world. Nor can possessing the will to know, the liberty to know, solve the global problems. But Chong's narrative texts on global connectivity seem to suggest the ethical and political premises of global alliance and harmony: respect and love of the others. In the last scene of <u>Deshima</u>, the way of love as inclusive act of the others invokes the recent focus on the discourses on love as ethical/political responsibility, in contrast to autonomous freedom, by such French feminists as Cixous, Kristeva, and Irigaray.

I will end this dissertation with Irigaray's concept of love as a responsible speech act. If Levinas' ethical imperative on respect for the other presumes the separation between the self and the others to prevent the violence of assimilation of the others, for Irigaray, love is the only way to come close to the others without violating them. For Irigaray, love is the bilateral proximity for dialogue. Loving, that is, "advancing toward the other," Irigaray remarks, "is not carried out, for all that, in a blind and mute immediacy," rather, "it requires a different way of speaking than the one we currently know." As Spivak lays stress on the mode of listening in political speech acts as important and as what is missed in the speaking that we currently know, Irigaray argues that we have to reinvent a site where we can discover "how speech can help to change levels – vertically and horizontally," "how to attain oneself the springing forth of the intimate and how to say it, to communicate it, without obstructing the path to return back to the source" and "how to listen to the other, to open oneself, horizontally, to the other's sense, without preventing the return to oneself, to one's proper way" (<u>Way</u>, 57-59). Love, here, endows a meaning to the ignored idea of listening ears that are concerned

with others' desire, despair, and hope. As Irigaray suggests, isn't it necessary to rebuild

a site where people can learn how to speak and listen to the others in a time when a

narcissistic monologue of hegemonic power is too loud to listen to resisting voices on

the globe? Chong's narrative texts on (local, national, and global) connection

investigate the violence of this narcissistic monologue and the possibility of

political/ethical agency of the marginalized as a speaking subject, which is regarded as

the best possible way toward dialogue for the harmony of the imagined "one human

republic."

APPENDIX : PING CHONG AND COMPANY HISTORY AND PRODUCTIONS[1]

Ping Chong was born in 1946 and raised in the Chinatown section in New York City. He studied film-making and graphic design at the School of Visual Arts and the Pratt Institute. Ping Chong began his theatrical career as a member of Meredith Monk's The House Foundation. He collaborated with her on several major works including THE TRAVELOGUE and THE GAMES, for which they shared the Outstanding Achievement in Music Theatre Award in 1986.

In 1972, Ping Chong gathered a group of artists at Meredith Monk's loft in New York City to create LAZARUS, his first independent theatre work. Since then, he has created over twenty-five major works for the stage including HUMBOLDT'S CURRENT (Obie Award, 1977), A.M./A.M.–THE ARTICULATED MAN (Villager Award, 1982), NOSFERATU (Maharam Design Award, 1985), ANGELS OF SWEDENBORG (1985), KIND NESS (USA Playwright's Award, 1988), BRIGHTNESS, which garnered two 1990 Bessie Awards, DESHIMA, CHINOISERIE and AFTER SORROW. In 1998 he created KWAIDAN, his first full-length puppetry work, in collaboration with Jon Ludwig and Mitsuru Ishii, which won a UNIMA-USA Citation of Excellence. His work has been performed at such major New York venues at The Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival, The Joyce Theatre, La MaMa E.T.C., St. Clement's Theatre and The Central Park Summerstage, as well as at major museums, theatres and festival in North America, Europe and Asia. In recent years he has expanded the range of his explorations to include video and visual arts installations. Winner of prestigious OBIE and BESSIE Awards, today Ping Chong is recognized as one of our country's most significant Asian-American artist.

Ping Chong and Company, originally The Fiji Theatre Company, was founded in 1975 to explore the meaning of contemporary theatre and art on a national and international level. Today, the company creates unfailingly innovative works of theatre and art for modern, multi-cultural audiences in New York and throughout the world. Ping Chong and Company is a modestly sized, not-for-profit experimental arts organization. The Company is artist-run and maintains a small full-time staff, offices and storage facilities in New York City. In addition, the company provides an artistic home and professional base for a multi-racial core group of performers, designers and theatre artists who collaborate with Ping Chong on a project basis.

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[1] The history and the up to date list of productions of Ping Chong and Company was provided by Ping Chong and Company in June 2004.

PING CHONG AND COMPANY PRODUCTIONS

BLIND NESS: The Irresistible Light of Encounter
In collaboration with Michael Rohd

La MaMa E.T.C., New York, NY	6/04
Kent State University, Kent, OH	4/04

UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS / Pioneer Valley

New World Theatre, Amherst, MA	9/03

UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS / Berlin

House of World Cultures, Berlin, Germany	6/03

CHILDREN OF WAR

National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington DC	7/03
Nathan Cummings Foundation, New York, NY	6/03
World Refugee Day, Washington, DC	6/03
World Bank, Washington, DC	3/03
Theater for the First Amendment, George Mason Univ., Fairfax, VA	12/02

UF 92/02

Lille 2004 Festival, Lille, France	12/03
La MaMa, E.T.C., New York, NY	10/02

UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS / Hanover

Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH	8/02

OBON: Tales of Rain and Moonlight

Rittou Geijutsu Bunka Kaikan Sakira, Shiga, Japan	11/03
Kani-shi Bunka Souzou Center, Gifu, Japan	11/03
Tsukuba Capio Hall, Ibaraki, Japan	11/03
Satagaya Public Theatre Theatre Tram, Tokyo, Japan	11/03
Fukuno Bunkasouzou Center/Helios, Toyama, Japan	11/03
Crossland Oyabe, Toyama, Japan	10/03
Miikawa Bunka Hall, Toyama, Japan	10/03
Spoleto Festival USA, Charleston, SC	5-6/02
Seattle Repertory Theatre, Seattle, WA	4-5/02

REASON

Market Theater/Harvard University, Cambridge, MA	2/02

UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS / Atlanta
Youth Art Connection & 7 Stages, Atlanta, GA   9/01

EDDA: Viking Tales of Lust, Revenge and Family
The Faroese International Art Festival, The Faroe Islands   08/02
Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland, OH   03/02
Perth International Arts Festival, Australia   1-2/02
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at U of MD, College Park, MD   11/01
Williams Center for the Arts Lafayette College, Easton, PA   11/01
Lincoln Center Festival, New York, NY   7/01
University Musical Society, Ann Arbor, MI   4/01

SECRET HISTORIES / Charleston
Spoleto Festival, Charleston, SC   6/01

UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS / Madison
University of Wisconsin – Madison, WI   3/01

SECRET HISTORY
Ohio Theatre, New York, NY   11-12/00

UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS / Washington DC
Gala Hispanic Theatre, Washington DC   6/00

UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS / APA
Connecticut College, New London, CT   9/00
Gene Frankel Studio, New York, NY   4/00

TRUTH & BEAUTY
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and Sate University, Blacksburg, VA   10/99

POJAGI
La MaMa E.T.C., New York, NY   2/00
DMZ 2000 Festival, Imjingak, South Korea   12/99
Institute on the Arts and Civic Dialogue, Harvard Univ., MA   7/99

KWAIDAN
In collaboration with Jon Ludwig and Mitsuru Ishii
Freud Playhouse, UCLA Performing Arts, CA   11-12/00
Byham Theatre, Pittsburgh, PA   11/00
Kennedy Center, Washington, DC   11/00
New Victory Theatre, New York, NY   10-11/00
The Barbican Center, London, UK   9-10/00
Lied Center of KS, Lawrence, KS   8/00
Center for Puppetry Arts, Atlanta, GA   8/00

Shinminato Culture Center, Toyama, Japan	11/99
Helios, Toyama, Japan	11/99
Nikawa Mirage Hall, Toyama, Japan	11/99
Spoleto USA Festival, Charleston, SC	6/99
Duke University, Durham, NC	10/98
Staller Center at SUNY Stony Brook, NY	10/98
Hopkins Center at Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH	10/98
Culver Academies, Culver, IN	10/98
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL	10/98
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN	10/98
La MaMa E.T.C., New York, NY	9/98
Center for Puppetry Arts, Atlanta, GA	6/98

SlutForArt
In collaboration with Muna Tseng
1998-99 The Bessie Award for Outstanding Creative Achievement

La MaMa E.T.C., New York, NY	10/02
Central Park Summerstage, New York, NY	8/99
Harkness Dance Center / 92nd Street Y, New York, NY	3/99

UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS / Hamilton

Hamilton College, Clinton, NY	2/99

UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS / Chicago
1999 "After Dark" Award, Gay Chicago magazine

University of Illinois, Chicago, IL	9/99
Chernin Center for the Arts, Chicago, IL	5/99

UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS / Newark

Bloomfield College, Bloomfield, NJ	3/99
New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Newark, NJ	11/98

AFTER SORROW
In collaboration with Muna Tseng and Josef Fung

Festival of Asian Arts, Hong Kong	10/98
University of Texas, El Paso, TX	4/98
Rockford College, Rockford, IL	2/98
Hamilton College, Clinton, NY	10/97
Dance Place, Washington DC	10/07
Theater of Nations Festival, Seoul, Korea	9/97
California State University, Long Beach, CA	7/97
La MaMa E.T.C., New York, NY	1/97

NOCTURNE in 1200 SECONDS

Hong Kong Arts Festival, Hong Kong	1/98

UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS / Rotterdam
Cosmic Illusion, Amsterdam, Holland   1/98
Stadsschouwburg Utrecht, Utrecht, Holland   1/98
Schouwburg Rotterdamse, Rotterdam, Holland   11/97

UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS / Long Beach
California State University, Long Beach, CA   7/97

98.6: A CONVERSATION IN 15 MINUTES
In collaboration with Muna Tseng
Center for Creative Photography, Tucson, AZ   10/97
Asia Society, New York, NY   5/96
P.S. 122, New York, NY   4/96

GAIJIN (UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS / Tokyo
1995 Yomiuri Theatre Award, Best Play, Japan
Tokyo Metropolitan Art Space, Tokyo, Japan   2/95

UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS / Seattle
The Group Theatre, Seattle, WA   2/95

UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS / Twin Cities
Illusion Theatre, Minneapolis, MN   1/95
Illusion Theatre, Minneapolis, MN   10/94
Production continues to tour regionally

INTERFACING JOAN
In collaboration withLouise Smith
Illusion Theatre, Minneapolis   7/97
Festival Centroamericano de Teatro, San Salvador, El Salvador   7/96
La MaMa, E.T.C., New York, NY   3/96

CHINOISERIE
In collaboration with Michael Matthews and Guy Klucevsek
Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, NY   11/95
Williams Center for the Arts, Lafayette College, Easton, PA   11/95
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN   11/95
Kimball Hall, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE   9/95
Center for the Arts, SUNY Buffalo, Buffalo, NY   9/95
Yellow Springs Institute, Chester, PA (work in progress)   7/94

PURSUATION
University of Minnesota, MN   5/94

UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS / Cleveland
Kent State University, Kent, OH	1/94
Performance Art Festival, Cleveland, OH	3/93

UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS / New York
Staller Center, SUNY Stony Brook, NY	9/94
West Kortright Center, East Meredith, NY	8/94
Art Awareness, Lexington, NY	8/94
Theatre Communications Group Conference, McCarter Theatre, Princeton, NJ	6/94
American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY	1/94
Henry Street Settlement, New York, NY	10/93
Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ	3/93
Artists Space, New York, NY	10/92

AMERICAN GOTHIC
New York University, New York, NY	4-5/92

I WILL NOT BE SAD IN THIS WORLD
Improv Unlimited, College Park, MD	3/91

ELEPHANT MEMORIES
IV Festival Iberoamericano de Teatro, Bogota, Colombia	3/94
Northeastern University, Boston, MA	10/91
Carver Theatre, San Antonio, TX	2/91
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN	1/91
La MaMa E.T.C., New York, NY	11/90
Yellow Springs Institute, Chester Springs, PA (Residency)	9/90

DESHIMA
Singapore Festival of the Arts, Victoria Theatre, Singapore	6/96
Lied Center, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS	4/96
Tokyo Metropolitan Art Space, Tokyo, Japan	10/95
Nagasaki Public Theatre, Nagasaki, Japan	10/95
Nagoya Citizens' Theatre, Nagoya, Japan	10/95
Weis Center, Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA	3/95
John Jay College Theatre, New York, NY	12/93
La MaMa E.T.C., New York, NY	1/93
City of Culture Festival, The Tramway, Glasgow, Scotland	6/90
Springdance Festival, Sterrenbos Studio, Utrecht, Holland	4/90

4AM AMERICA
Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Milwaukee, WI	12/90-1/91
Theatre Institute at Storm King, NY	8/90
Stiemke Theatre, Milwaukee, WI	3/90

BRIGHTNESS
1990 Bessie Awards: Louise Smith, Performer; Matthew Yolobosky,
Set & Costumes
La MaMa E.T.C., New York, NY   11/89

NOIRESQUE – THE FALLEN ANGEL
Pan Asian Repertory Theatre, New York, NY   5/89

SKIN – A STATE OF BEING
La MaMa E.T.C., New York, NY   1/89

SNOW
Illusion Theatre, Minneapolis, MN   6/88

QUARTETTO
Rotterdamse Schouburg, Rotterdam, Holland   4-5/88
De Salon, Amsterdam, Holland   6/88

MARAYA – ACTS OF NATURE IN GEOLOGICAL TIME
Montclair State College, Montclair, NJ   1/88
Apple Corp Theatre, New York, NY   1/88
The Mickery Theatre, Amsterdam, Holland   1/87

WITHOUT LAW, WITHOUT HEAVEN
On the Boards, Seattle, WA   12/87

KIND NESS
1987 USA Playwright's Award
Seattle Group Theater, Seattle, WA   4/93
Illusion Theatre, Minneapolis, MN   4/92
Theatre 95, Cergy-Pontoise, France   4/92
District Curators, Washington DC   5/91
University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE   3/91
Trinity College, Hartford, CT   1/90
Painted Bride Art Center, Philadelphia, PA   1/90
Amherst College, Amherst, MA   2/89
Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY   2/89
Lafayette College, Easton, PA   2/89
Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Milwaukee, WI   11/88
Central Park Summerstage, New York, NY   8/88
La MaMa E.T.C., New York, NY   5/86
Northeastern University, Boston, MA   4/86

ANGELS OF SWEDENBORG
Srpsko Narodno Pozoriste, Novi Sad, Yugoslavia   10/89

Croatian National Theatre, Zagreb, Yugoslavia	9/89
Cankarjev Dom, Ljubljana, Yugoslavia	9/89
23rd BITEF Festival, Belgrade, Yugoslavia	9/89
Wadsworth Theatre, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA	10/88
Marvin Center Theatre, Washington, DC	3/88
Theatre Festival of the Americas, Montreal, Canada	6/87
Carnivale '87, Venice, Italy	2/87
Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA	11/86
Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, NY	10/86
Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati, OH	3/86
St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, MO	3/86
Illusion Theatre, Minneapolis, MN	10/85
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN	5/85
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL	4/85

NOSFERATU

La MaMa E.T.C., New York, NY	12/91
Lafayette College, Easton, PA	4/91
Illusion Theatre, Minneapolis, MN	2/87
La MaMa E.T.C., New York, NY	2-3/85

ASTONISHMENT AND THE TWINS

Central Park Summerstage, New York, NY	8/87
University of Maryland, Catonsville, MD	2/86
Teatro dell'Arte, Milan, Italy	1/86
Marquette Museum of Art, Milwaukee, WI	11/84
Art Awareness, Lexington, NY	7/84

THE GAMES
In collaboration with Meredith Monk
Outstanding Achievement, National Institute of Music Theatre

University of California, Berkeley, CA	2/86
University of California, Los Angeles, CA	2/86
Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, NY	10/85
Schaubuhne am Leniner Platz, Berlin, Germany	Fall 1983

A RACE

La MaMa E.T.C., New York, NY	3/84
ON the Boards, Seattle, WA	Summer 1983

ANNA INTO NIGHTLIGHT

University of Maryland, Catonsville, MD	2/83
La MaMa E.T.C., New York, NY	10/82

A.M./A.M. – THE ARTICULATED MAN
Villager Award

First Night, Boston Shakespeare Theatre, Boston, MA	12/85
Osaka Theatre Festival, Osaka Rodo Kaidan, Japan	8/85
Togamura Theatre Festival, Suzuki Company, Japan	7/85
Wadsworth Theatre, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA	11/84
Northeastern University, Boston, MA	10/84
On the Boards, Seattle, WA	1/83
Portland Center for the Visual Arts, Portland, OR	1/83
Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada	1/83
Spirit Mickery Theatre, Amsterdam, Holland	4/82
La MaMa E.T.C., New York, NY	1-2/82

RAINER AND THE KNIFE

The Kitchen, New York, NY	12/82
Moming Dance and Art Center, Chicago, IL	3/82
Moming Dance and Art Center, Chicago, IL	5/81

NUIT BLANCHE

La MaMa E.T.C., New York, NY	1-2/85
La MaMa E.T.C., New York, NY	1/81

HUMBOLDT'S CURRENT
Obie Award

Holland Festival, Amsterdam, Holland	1980
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN	12/79
New Theatre Festival, Baltimore, MD	6/79
La MaMa E.T.C., New York, NY	4/78
Daniel Nagrin Studio Theatre, New York, NY	4/77

FEAR AND LOATHING IN GOTHAM

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN	2/82
Moming Dance and Art Center, Chicago, IL	2/82
University of Maryland, Catonsville, MD	2/82
World Theatre Festival, Nancy, France	10/81
Les Ateliers, Lyon, France	1981
Maison de la Culture, Nanterre, France	1981
Theatre Quotidien, Montpellier, France	1981
Centro di Ricerca Per Teatro, Milan, Italy	1981
Cabaret Voltaire, Turin, Italy	1981
Ohio Performance Space, New York, NY	1981
Washington Project for the Arts, Washington, DC	1981
American Theatre Laboratory (DTW), New York, NY	2/80
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY	1/80
Jean Cocteau Theatre, New York, NY	1/75

I FLEW TO FIJI, YOU WENT SOUTH

Silver Whale Gallery, New York, NY	10/73

LAZARUS

Tour, Holland	1980
The Mickery Theatre, Amsterdam, Holland	1979
The Wilma Project, Philadelphia, PA	1979
The Open Space, New York, NY	11-12/78
American Theatre Laboratory (DTW), New York, NY	3/78
Daniel Nagrin Studio Theatre, New York, NY	1972

Performance Works Created in Collaboration with Meredith Monk

VENICE/MILAN

Joyce Theatre, New York, NY	1978
Kennedy Center, Washington, DC	1981
University of California, Los Angeles, CA	1979
University of Texas, Austin, TX	1978
Dance Umbrella, New York, NY	1977
Williams College, Williamstown, MA	1977
George Washington University, Washington, DC	1976

CHACON

Joyce Theatre, New York, NY	1987
Dance Umbrella, New York, NY	1977
Rotterdam Dance Festival, Rotterdam, Holland	1977
Sigma Festival, Bordeaux, France	1977
Cornell University, Ithaca, NY	1975
Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH	1974
St. Peter's Church, New York, NY	1974
CT College Theatre Festival, New London, CT	1974

PARIS

Joyce Theatre, New York, NY	1987
Brooklyn Academy of Arts, Brooklyn, NY, *Bessie Award*	1985
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN	1982
Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH	1979
University of Ohio, Columbus, OH	1979
York University, Toronto, Canada	1978
Museum of Contemporary Art, Montreal, Canada	1978
Washington University, St. Louis, MO	1978
CalArts, Valencia, CA	1977
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC	1977

University of Albuquerque, Albuquerque, NM	1976
San Jose State University, San Jose, CA	1976
University of Maryland, Catonsville, MD	1975
Cornell University, Ithaca, NY	1975
The Mickery Theatre, Amsterdam, Holland	1975
Festival D'Automne, Paris, France	1974
Salvatore Alla Gallery, Milan, Italy	1974
The American Center, Paris, France	1974

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