INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

UMI®

University of Alberta

Representations of Class Identity in Chinese Canadian Literature

by

Huai-Yang Lim ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

Department of English and Film Studies

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 2005

Library and
Archives Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

0-494-08680-7

Your file Votre référence
ISBN:
Our file Notre reférence
ISBN:

NOTICE:
The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:
L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

Canada

Dedication

To my Mom, Dad, and my sister Amanda for their love and support.

Abstract

In their considerations of how Chinese Canadian authors represent what it means to be Chinese Canadian, critics have examined how racial, ethnic, and gender markers inform characters' identities in these texts, but they have not extensively considered class as an identity marker. My analysis of Denise Chong's The Concubine's Children, Sky Lee's Disappearing Moon Café, Wayson Choy's Paper Shadows: a Chinatown Childhood and The Jade Peony, Yuen Cheung Yip's The Tears of Chinese Immigrants, Fred Wah's Diamond Grill, and Paul Yee's Breakaway explores how various configurations of class identity intersect with other identity markers, such as race, and inform characters' understandings of themselves as Chinese Canadians. Focusing on how these texts represent characters' class identities in the time period between 1923 and 1967, I will consider how "Chinese Canadianness" intersects with shared and contested ideas of class identity that manifest in the following ways: the memories their characters construct in relation to their experiences and shared cultural heritage; their characters' bodily and material manifestations of identity; the ways in which the workplace and its activities figure into their characters' identities; and the spaces that their characters inhabit, define, and use.

The basic assumptions behind my theoretical approach to class identity derive from ideas like Pierre Bourdieu's theories of class and Michel de Certeau's conceptualization of the "everyday." From their thinking, this study will highlight the importance of understanding identity as a material process that is grounded in individuals' daily thoughts and actions. At the same time, these texts may evoke configurations of class identity to which characters may not necessarily subscribe, but

which still impact upon their identities as Chinese Canadians and as people of Chinese descent. As such, my class analysis provides a way to think about "Chinese Canadianness" within the context of characters' individual lives: how class identity shapes their perceptions of themselves in relation to others of both Chinese and non-Chinese descent; how these class identities' meanings are contested and provisional in their daily lives; and how their actual class identities and perceptions of those identities shape the actions that they take to acquire agency.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Julie Rak for her extensive comments, suggestions, and support throughout the entire process of my thesis writing. I would also like to thank Dr. Teresa Zackodnik and Dr. Lahoucine Ouzgane for their suggestions on improving earlier drafts of my thesis. Finally, I would like to thank the rest of my examining committee, Dr. Jennifer Jay and Dr. Shaobo Xie, for their suggestions on improving the thesis during and after my thesis defence.

Table of Contents

Chapter One

Introduction: Class and Identity in Chinese Canadian Literature.................. 1

Theorizing "Identity" in Asian Canadian and Asian American Literary Criticism.......... 3

Analysing the Representation of Class Identity in Chinese Canadian Literature..........8

The Absence of Class Analyses in Chinese Canadian Literary Criticism.....12

Theorizing Class Identity..........16

Notes..........27

Chapter Two

Historical Context of Chinese Canadian Experience.......... 29

The Beginnings of Immigration..........31

Chinese Cultural Traditions..........33

Public and Governmental Attitudes Towards the Chinese..........38

Discriminatory Legislation and the Exclusion Era (1923-1947)..........45

Chinese Immigrants in the Exclusion Era..........52

Shifting Chinese-Canada Relations:
Chinese Participation in World War II..........54

Post-WWII Legislation: New Beginnings and Continuities..........56

Changing Demographics and Attitudes: Chinese Canadians in the Post-WWII Era.......... 61

Post-1967 Communities: Dispersal, Reconfiguration, and Reconstituted Identities.......... 66

Notes.......... 72

Chapter Three

The "Memory Work" of Class: Reciprocal Influences Between Chinese Canadians' Memories and their Current Class Identities................75

Class (Dis)satisfaction and "Memory Work": Representation of Chan Sam's Class Identity in Denise Chong's The Concubine's Children............77

An Inheritance of Class Ideals and Class-Implicated Shame: (Re)constitutions of Individual and Familial Identities in Sky Lee's Disappearing Moon Café.. 93

  Class-Based Memories: The Individual and Family Dynamics.................95

Notes.. 111

Chapter Four

Looking the Part: Bodily and Materially-Based Expressions of Class.......113

Theorizing Materially-Based and Bodily Expressions of Class................. 115

Imperatives to be a Proper Chinese Boy: Performing Class Identities in Wayson Choy's Paper Shadows: a Chinatown Childhood.................... 118

  Embodying the Part: Expressing Class for Public and Private Viewing...121

  Re-visioning Class Expectations from Childhood..................................129

Fusing Tradition and Modernity: Individual and Communal Ethics of Class in Yuen Cheng Yip's The Tears of Chinese Immigrants..................136

  Representational Snapshot of 1950s Canada.. 138

Notes.. 147

Chapter Five

Labouring an Identity: (Re)establishing Class Significations in the Workplace........149

Wah's Representations of Work: National and Economic Contexts..........153

Representing Himself in Diamond Grill........159

Representing Others' Identities in Diamond Grill........169

Ethical (Re)orientations of Class........179

Notes........187

Chapter Six

Appropriating and Signifying Space: Spatially-Based Class Identities......189

Theorizing Space and Class Identity........191

The Young Adult Character as Empowered Protagonist and Historical Agent: Spatial (Re)inscriptions of Class Identity in Paul Yee's Breakaway........194

The Politics and Ethics of Class Identities in Yee's Representations of Urban and Rural Space........197

Representing Chinatown as a Communal and Contested Space: Static and Shifting Class Identities in Wayson Choy's The Jade Peony........206

Notes........222

Chapter Seven

Conclusion: The Significance of Class Analyses for Chinese Canadian Literature........224

Works Cited........243

Chapter One

Introduction: Class and Identity in Chinese Canadian Literature

Reflecting on "Chineseness" as a category of identification and analysis in her essay "Can One Say No to Chineseness?" Ien Ang affirms that a static and reductive understanding of Chineseness is inadequate for interpreting what it means to be Chinese in places outside China. While she does not discount the importance of China for conceptualizing Chineseness, she problematizes essentialist approaches to Chineseness that constitute China as the centre and origin of "authentic" Chineseness. Such approaches, Ang contends, limit inquiry into what Chineseness can mean because they enforce an epistemological boundary between "Chinese" and "non-Chinese": these approaches legitimize a particular discourse of "authentic" Chineseness—a pre-existing framework of knowledge—that privileges a particular understanding of "Chinese" identity as the norm against which other possible views of Chineseness become constituted as lacking and, therefore, "inauthentic." Given the geographical dispersal of "Chinese" people to various parts of the world and the ways in which Chineseness will signify differently for their identities, Ang suggests that "Chineseness" needs to be understood as a flexible identity that is irreducible to a particular national space, a common Chinese culture, or a historical narrative that originates from China:

> Being Chinese outside China cannot possibly mean the same thing as inside. It varies from place to place, molded by local circumstances in different parts of the world where people of Chinese ancestry have settled and constructed new ways of living. There are . . . many different Chinese identities, not one. This proposition entails a criticism of Chinese essentialism, a departure from the mode of demarcating Chineseness through an absolute oppositioning of authentic and inauthentic, pure and impure, real and fake. ("Can One Say No to Chineseness?" 225)

Ang's views are indicative of larger theoretical developments in the study of identity, which recognize the need for approaches that account for not only the differences between individuals who may identify or are identified with a particular identity, but also the ways in which these identities shift in form and meaning from one context to another.

As Stuart Hall suggests, critics have challenged essentialist and reductive approaches to identity because they foreclose discussions of difference and disavow the differences among the people who construct and express the same identity. Part of a recent "discursive explosion" (Hall 1) around the concept of "identity" and its viability, these criticisms include deconstructionist critiques of these essentialist concepts, anti-essentialist critiques of ethnic, racial, and national conceptions of cultural identity, as well as "celebratory variants of postmodernism" that frame identity as something that signifies through its performance (Hall 1). These developments reconfigure the concept of identity and the possibilities of its emergence because they conceptualize identity as something that is provisionally constituted by several factors and contextually specific, rather than as something that signifies in an *a priori* fashion and separately from the people to which it may refer (Hall 3-4).

My analysis of how some Chinese Canadian authors represent Chinese Canadians' class identities in their literary works will contribute to these theoretical developments around the concept of identity. I foreground how the meaning of "Chinese Canadian-ness" is not something that can be simply defined by a perceived group of shared characteristics and applied to everyone who identifies, or is identified as, a "Chinese Canadian." Instead, an analysis of class identity in these texts highlights the internal differences between their characters' different understandings of what it means to be Chinese Canadian. The public recognition and academic study of Chinese Canadian literature—as a legitimate body of literature and valued area of study—has been assisted by the public's and critics' perceived *coherence* between literary works that become categorized with the designation of "Chinese Canadian literature." However, Daniel Coleman and Donald Goellnicht caution that such literary categories are far from coherent and must remain provisional, "even as they use the author's 'race' to determine their constituents" (21), because of the vast array of concerns addressed in this literature as well as the dependence of these categories upon the obscuration of these authors' different backgrounds. As such, analyses of Chinese Canadian literature need to continue formulating approaches that interrogate the various ways in which these texts represent Chinese Canadians' experiences, even as they work towards syntheses about how these representations work. As Roy Miki suggests, analyses of literary texts need to use "terminology and frames . . . [that] are open-ended and flexible enough to adjust to exclusions and blind spots when these become visible" (122).

Roy Miki's views lead me to form a question that will shape how I approach the representation of class identity in Chinese Canadian literature: How do these works of literature represent Chinese Canadian's class identities and what theoretical approaches can we use to sufficiently capture the various ways in which their identities signify and function in these texts? To situate my class analysis and the intervention that I will make into the existing criticism, I will first provide a brief overview of emerging theoretical developments in Asian American and Asian Canadian literary criticism and, after this, develop my analytical approach more specifically in the context of Chinese Canadian literature and literary criticism.

Theorizing "Identity" in Asian Canadian and Asian American Literary Criticism

Ien Ang's ideas about Chineseness emphasize the political importance of conceptualizing identity in non-deterministic ways. To conceptualize identity in a deterministic fashion from shared racial and cultural origins is to inscribe "the subject as passively and lineally (pre)determined" rather than as "an active historical agent" engaged in "multiple, complex, and contradictory social relations" (Ang, "Can One Say No to Chineseness?" 240). In other words, such idealized and coherent conceptions of racial or ethnic identity will fail to account for not only the distinctions among subjects, but also the ways in which these signify differently. Similarly, the current and ongoing reconfigurations of theoretical approaches to identity in the fields of Asian Canadian and Asian American literary criticism about how to define "Asian Canadian" and "Asian American" identity reflect ongoing attempts to redefine and extend the parameters of what it means to be Asian American and Asian Canadian. Critics in both fields recognize the inherent problems in essentialist, static, and nation-based paradigms of identity because they are inadequate for fully capturing the diverse meanings that Asian Canadian and Asian American identities can entail in literary representations: "As Asian North American communities expand and become more heterogeneous, the task of understanding the multiple intersections of power, representation, and subjectivity becomes crucial in increasingly multiracial, multiethnic, and multiply-oriented societies of Canada and the U.S." (Ty and Goellnicht 2).

Current theorizations of identity in the Asian North American context can be, broadly speaking, summarized as approaches that emphasize the provisional and fluctuating nature of identities, their contextual particularities and multiple meanings, and their manifestations across national and temporal boundaries.[1] Referring to the changing configurations of Asian American identity, David Li asserts that the current poststructuralist formulation of "difference" and Asian American identity constitutes an important departure from what he designates as "ethnic nationalist" conceptions of Asian American identity from the 1960s and its coding of "group difference primarily in terms of race" (192). Responding to the "history of exclusionary mapping of the nation and resonat[ing] with the contemporary movements of antiracism and anti-imperialism within the United States and elsewhere" (D. Li 186), these racial conceptions of Asian American identity aimed to mobilize a unified racial coalition that would contest Asian Americans' exclusion within American society's dominant national culture and its hierarchical cultural institutions. These nationalist formulations of Asian American identity politics did provide "insights about the hierarchy of social division and the necessity for broad social transformation" and also challenged "the dominant formation of the nation" by exposing the racist assumptions upon which it was based (D. Li 192). However, Li also recognizes that these forms of identity politics are limited in their ability to represent and address Asian Americans' various interests. Dependent upon an oppositional notion of difference that distinguishes Asian Americans on the basis of their marginalization from mainstream America, these formulations of identity are inadequate for addressing the differences among people who may identify themselves as Asian Americans and for accommodating to the emerging realities of increased opportunity and mobility for Asian Americans in the 1980s and 1990s (D. Li 190).

As a result of these factors, critics have shifted away from the notion of "racial collectivity" towards a notion of "intra-ethnic individuality" for conceptualizing Asian American identity. Addressing identity markers other than race and redefining the previously nation-based parameters of "Asian American-ness," these critical developments are indicative of a general push towards what David Li has designated as a present and ongoing "phase of 'heteroglossia'" (186), which includes the questioning of "'race' and 'nation' as essential components of Asian American construct" (186). For instance, Lisa Lowe's frequently cited conceptualization of identity and its "heterogeneity, hybridity, and multiplicity" reflected the assumptions of critical developments that emerged in Asian American and Asian Canadian studies over the past decade. Responding to earlier conceptualizations of Asian American identity in essentialist racial or ethnic terms, Lowe asserts that such conceptualizations provide an inadequate identity politics for addressing Asian Americans' marginalization within the dominant American culture: these conceptualizations constitute Asian Americans as a homogenous group whose identity depends on its opposition to the mainstream. Instead, Lowe foregrounds the internal diversity among people who identify themselves as Asian Americans, their different and unequal locations within existing socioeconomic relations and material conditions, and the ways in which processes of hybridization impinge upon Asian Americans' identities and acts of survival (Immigrant Acts 67).

It is important to note that the delayed development of Asian Canadian criticism as a cohesive field of academic study and the historical lack of institutional support for that study[2] has meant that critical work on Asian Canadian literature has often drawn upon Asian American critics' more substantive body of theorizing. Until recently, for instance, works by Asian Canadians were analysed by Canadianists and postcolonialists rather than by Asian Canadian critics (Ty and Goellnicht 6): examples of such works include Winfried Siemerling's edited collection Writing Ethnicity: Cross-Cultural Consciousness in Canadian and Quebecois Literature (1996) and Coomi S. Vevaina's and Barbara Godard's co-edited Intersexions: Issues of Race and Gender in Canadian Women's Writing (1996). Despite the smaller body of work that currently exists in Canada, critical trends in the Asian American context are mirrored in recent theorizations about the representation of identity in Asian Canadian literature. For instance, analyses of identity that have considered the collective and individualistic nature of identity formation appear in works such as Lien Chao's Beyond Silence: Chinese-Canadian Literature in English (1997) and Susanna Hilf's Interculturalism: Writing the Hyphen (2000), both of which examine the representation of Chinese Canadian identity in Chinese Canadian literature.

Similarly, global and diasporic formulations of identity in the United States have appeared in the work of critics such as Benzi Zhang. As Benzi Zhang asserts, diasporic theory provides a way to think about how Asian Canadian identity is continually resignified across spatial, temporal, racial, cultural, linguistic, and historical borders:

> [E]arlier conceptions of cultural/national identity are no longer adequate to describe the change in our sense of identity in its relationship to the global/local intersection . . . In an age of cultural diversity and transnational globality . . . forces of different national elements may emerge in a process of cultural trans(re)lation, which challenges the locality of a singular cultural dominance by relocating the site of identity articulation in a discursive domain of plural inter-relationships. Diaspora, as a trans-national process of cultural trans(re)lation, is a socio-cultural practice that thrives on a process of constant re-signification of the established assumptions and meanings of identity . . . [T]he study of identity in Asian Canadian diasporic literature must go beyond the quasi-geographical boundary into new dynamic systems of politics, economics, and culture, which are no longer "co-extensive with the borders of nation-states." ("Identity as Cultural Trans(re)lation" 35)

Indeed, diasporic theorizations of identity recognize "not only a process of migration, but also . . . a double-relationship between two different cultural homes/origins" (Zhang "Identity in Diaspora" 126). These theorizations recognize how identity does not signify independently of any context; rather, the interdependence and interaction between different influences shape what people's identities mean.

Besides their recognition of the heterogeneous influences upon people's identities, critics have also considered how they can productively analyse Asian Canadian and Asian American experiences together. For instance, Eleanor Ty and Donald Goellnicht note the benefits of looking at "Asian North American identity" and comparative perspectives between the two fields. Acknowledging the differences between racial minorities' experiences in Asian Canadian and Asian American contexts, Ty and Goellnicht assert that it is productive to conceptualize an "Asian North American" framework of identity because Asian subjects in both countries face many of the same issues "regarding identity, multiple cultural allegiances, marginalization vis-à-vis mainstream society, historical exclusion, and postcolonial and/or diasporic and/or transnational subjectivity" (2). Such considerations, Ty and Goellnicht assert, can promote the formation of coalitions and common identification among subjects who can work together towards common goals. Indeed, identity politics have been central to the formation of Asian American and Asian Canadian sensibilities because Asian subjects in both countries have historically used the identity categories of race and ethnicity as rallying points to mobilize their constituencies around common causes.[3]

While these theoretical developments can enhance our understanding of identity and its representation in Asian Canadian and Asian American studies, Sau-ling Wong's article "Denationalization Reconsidered" provides a cautionary note that remains relevant in the current theoretical context. Sau-ling Wong acknowledges the value of these theoretical developments, which she groups under the term "denationalization," because they provide understandings of Asian American identity that do not remain confined to domestic perspectives. For instance, diasporic perspectives "capture the complexities of multiple migrations and dispersed Asian-origin families" ("Denationalization" 10), which can give rise to identity formations that cross national and cultural borders. However, Wong also cautions that such theoretical moves must account for the real restrictions that may prevent someone from acquiring or exercising agency. This does not mean that Wong wishes to reinscribe a nationalist perspective that is similar to the cultural nationalist approaches of the 1960s and 1970s (which David Li discusses at length in Imagining the Nation), but rather to recognize that these processes of "de-nationalization" within Asian American criticism are limited in terms of the agency that they can provide for Asian American subjects. While theories such as diasporic understandings of Asian American identity may seem to provide a more flexible identity politics for challenging white hegemony, they also leave "certain segments of the Asian American population . . . without a viable discursive space" (Wong, "Denationalization" 16). Wong also problematizes these views of identity because they can potentially depoliticize and dehistoricize the concept of "Asian American identity," making it unworkable: "the idea of an 'Asian diaspora would be so inclusive as to be politically ungrounded (in fact ungroundable, given the vastly different interests and conflicted histories of Asian peoples), while the idea of an 'Asian American diaspora' is simply quite meaningless" (Wong, "Denationalization" 17-18). As a corrective to these theoretical movements towards "de-nationalization," Wong argues for the return of a more historical conceptualization of Asian American identity that recognizes and recuperates the national context as a continuing influence upon Asian American sensibilities and their identities.

Wong's cautionary article is relevant to the Asian Canadian context because she highlights the need to account for unequal possibilities of agency among Asian Canadians as well as the ways in which their identities can signify in relation to the national context. My analysis of class identity in Chinese Canadian literature navigates between these nation-based and "de-nationalized" perspectives and between collective and individualistic perspectives of identity that circulate in Asian Canadian and Asian American criticism. My conceptualization of class identity, which I will elaborate upon later in this chapter, remains conscious of the historical and material contexts in which class identities emerge, the individual differences between people of similar class status, as well as the possibilities for circumventing the limitations of one's circumstances and constructing empowering class identities. Recalling Sau-ling Wong's reservations about "de-nationalization," my analysis recognizes the impact of national legislation and class-based limitations upon Chinese Canadian characters' agency in Chinese Canadian works of literature. At the same time, I also recognize the possibilities of agency and formulations of identity that can arise from Chinese Canadian characters' individual and unique circumstances in these literary texts.

Analysing the Representation of Class Identity in Chinese Canadian Literature

Analysing Chinese Canadian writers' literary representations of Chinese Canadians' class identities contributes to these existing theoretical projects and trends of diversifying approaches for interpreting people's identities in literature. A class analysis will contribute to existing criticism on Chinese Canadian literature because it will foreground how Chinese Canadian writers' conceptions of identity are not just shaped by identity markers such as race, but also by class concerns that augment what these identities mean. By foregrounding the importance of class issues in defining Chinese Canadians' identities, my analysis correlates with Ien Ang's calls for approaches to interpreting

Chineseness that recognize the internal heterogeneity of the people to which such an identity marker may refer.

In my study, I will focus on how the following Chinese Canadian works depict Chinese Canadians' class identities in the historical period from 1923 to 1967: Denise Chong's The Concubine's Children (1994), Sky Lee's Disappearing Moon Café (1992), Wayson Choy's Paper Shadows: a Chinatown Childhood (1999) and The Jade Peony (1995), Yuen Chung Yip's The Tears of Chinese Immigrants (1990), Fred Wah's Diamond Grill (1996), and Paul Yee's Breakaway (1994). This time period's boundaries are legislatively marked by the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act and the 1967 Immigration Act. Depicting this era in their respective works, Chong, Lee, Choy, Yip, Wah, and Yee portray Chinese Canadian characters in their texts whose daily lives, and the class identities that manifest in those lives, are shaped by legislative, social, cultural, and economic conditions from 1923 to 1967. They represent how this era's societal conditions can affect their characters' ability to survive in and integrate into Canadian society, but they also stress that these conditions do not fully constrain what their characters can do in their individual circumstances. Instead, their characters can constitute empowering class identities that both resist and appropriate dominant class assumptions in the circumstances that they inhabit. This time period also reflects the shifting legal and social statuses of Chinese Canadians from their subordinate, marginalized positions in Canada's economy and society towards the public's and federal government's growing acceptance of their presence in Canada. In their depictions of this era, these authors do not simply depict Chinese Canadians as victims who succumb to their circumstances or who occupy the margins of nationalist discourses about Canada's history. Presented as valued and legitimate subjects, the characters in these texts are survivors and active participants who *make* history, appear as subjects worthy of public attention, and express class identities that define them both individually and collectively as Chinese Canadians in varying ways. These authors resist the enduring history of homogenizing and reductive tendencies of racist discourses in Canada and the ways in which these discourses have served to justify Chinese Canadians' past exclusion and marginalization. In their place, these authors represent Chinese Canadians as individuals who may have lived in similar historical contexts, but who possess different understandings of themselves as "Chinese Canadians" that are mediated by their perceptions of their class identities.

Chong, Lee, Choy, Yip, Wah, and Yee depict characters whose class identities signify out of their specific individual circumstances and the historical backdrop within which they appear. To an extent, these contexts do shape their characters' aspirations and opportunities for class mobility, their perceptions of their own class identities, and the choices they make to fulfill their class aspirations. However, these societal constraints do not fully control what the characters actually do or the outcomes that eventually emerge. While each of these texts suggest that their characters' class identities signify in relation to preexisting class ideals that already circulate within the contexts that they inhabit, each writer provides different representations of the extent to which these preexisting ideals impact upon their characters' identities and their self-perceptions. Some of the characters in these texts do not simply reject hegemonic identities that threaten to elide or erase their racial difference or reject class expectations that are upheld within the Chinese community. Instead, they choose to accommodate to and incorporate meanings from these dominant identities as a part of their understandings of their own identities. In contrast, other characters in these texts resist dominant class identities and constitute identities that affirm their racial distinctiveness, even as such actions may reinforce their marginalization or subordination in the community. With this brief example, I wish to highlight that these writers conceptualize class identity as something that is socially negotiated and concretely manifested in those characters' material circumstances, but also psychically perceived by their characters. Their class identities are not simply an objective "fact"; rather, each character's own interpretation of those identities endows them with significance beyond the effects that these identities may have upon their actual circumstances.

Here, I wish to raise an important question about the conceptualization of identity as a whole: how can we analyse any kind of identity without falling back into essentialist and reductive assumptions about it? My approach to class identity, which I will detail in a later section of this chapter, remains conscious of these problems and provides suggestions for addressing them. Briefly, my focus on Chinese Canadian writers' representations of class identity in their characters' everyday lives offers a way to think about identity that is not conceptualized abstractly and disseminated uniformly among Chinese Canadians. Such an approach allows me to conceptualize identity as something that is grounded in particular actions, thoughts, and material goods in characters' daily lives, which are economically informed in their meanings and effects. This foregrounds class identity and the process of constituting and identifying with particular class identities as a daily process that unevenly affects characters' lives and their self-perceptions. This is not to deny the importance of contextual influences upon their identities, but rather to recognize that these influences do not necessarily translate into similar class identities for Chinese Canadians who are represented in similar historical contexts. By thinking about identity as a "selective process . . . grounded in local contexts of power and meaning" (Chun 130) and as something that is "never singular but multiply constructed across different and often intersecting and antagonistic positions" (Hall 4), I suggest that we can acknowledge the importance of larger contextual influences upon characters' identities in these texts without eliding the different processes by which these identities come to materialize and signify for each character.

At the same time that I conceptualize a pluralistic approach to class identity, I would like to suggest that it is also important to recognize the ways in which essentialist and reductive understandings of identity may also be significant in these texts. For instance, not all of the Chinese Canadian characters in these texts accommodate to dominant class identities and reconfigure their understandings of themselves on this basis; some of them conceptualize who they are in essentialist and reductive ways that, in turn, signal and shape their acceptance of or resistance to particular class identities. Thus, my pluralistic understanding of class identity will avoid equating, in a simplistic manner, essentialism and reductionism with a loss of agency or accommodation with a greater acquisition of agency. As a more productive way of thinking about Chinese Canadians' class identities in these texts, I propose the following questions in order to emphasize that the characters' views of their identities are as important as what their identities mean: What class identities do these authors constitute for their characters and *why* do they signify in the ways that they do? How do these characters' understandings of their class identities inform the ways in which they perceive and act within their circumstances? This approach is more productive for analyzing Chinese Canadian literature's representation of class identities: it opens up ways of thinking about agency in relation to identity that does not necessarily or simply refer to the extent and ways in which particular constructions of identity displace dominant identities. Chong, Lee, Choy, Yip, Wah, and Lee represent Chinese Canadians whose class identities are not readily reducible to identifiable traits or forms of agency that are representative of their whole community. By emphasizing their characters' everyday uses of class identity, they resist homogenous representations of Chinese Canadians that elide their individual differences, even as they acknowledge their respective communities' influences upon how their identities signify for them.

The Absence of Class Analyses in Chinese Canadian Literary Criticism

In their evaluation of Asian North American literature, Eleanor Ty and Donald Goellnicht assert that a "sense of 'otherness'" (3) has been a defining and ongoing concern in both Asian Canadian and Asian American literature and criticism. In other words, the sense that Asian Canadians and Asian Americans are different from white Canadians and Americans, not only racially but also culturally and experientially, has provided the impetus for much critical work on that literature to emerge (Ty and Goellnicht 4-5). Yet, the existing criticism on the representation of identity in Chinese Canadian literature and, more generally, in Asian Canadian literature, still tends to focus on racial, ethnic, and gender identities. Critical assessments of extant Asian Canadian literary criticism fail to mention the inadequate amount of work that has been done on class identity, even in cases where they mention past elisions of other identity categories such as race (Beauregard 231).[4] When critics have addressed class issues in Chinese Canadian literature, these issues have been subordinated to or conflated with racial concerns rather than foregrounded as distinct aspects of Chinese Canadians' experiences in these literary works. This lack of class analysis in Chinese Canadian literary criticism contrasts strikingly to the fairly extensive body of work on class in historical and sociological studies of Chinese Canadians, which recognize that class discrimination and class distinctions shape their experiences and opportunities as racial minorities in Canada.[5]

I would like to suggest that this lack of critical attention to class identity in Chinese Canadian literary criticism arises from the institutional circumstances within which it developed. I do not wish to construct a simplistic causal relationship here, but I would like to propose that these institutional circumstances helped to foster critical approaches towards Chinese Canadian literature that emphasized its racial and ethnic qualities rather than the class issues that it raises. To explore these critical developments, I will situate the emergence of Chinese Canadian literary criticism within the broader context of Asian Canadian literature because the scholarly recognition of "Asian Canadian literature" as a legitimate area of study provided the institutional conditions for Chinese Canadian literary criticism to emerge.

In contrast to its American counterpart, Asian Canadian criticism is a relatively recent development because of a combination of societal circumstances and the lack of institutional support for that criticism. Despite the similarities between Canada's and the United States' treatment of Asian minorities, Canada had a significantly smaller Asian-origin population as well as a reputation as "a haven for racial minorities" (Goellnicht, "Long Labour" 4). Goellnicht stresses that Asian and African Canadians were not simply "passive or compliant victims of racism" ("Long Labour" 5), but rather that Canada's smaller population of racial minorities as well as its social and political climate both forestalled national attention to racial minorities' concerns. For instance, Chinese American literature grew out of the 1960s civil rights movement and sixties generation of Asian American activists who saw "the building of an Asian American cultural tradition, with its concomitant challenge to the Anglo-American canon, as an integral part of the group's larger struggle for a rightful place in [the United States]" (Wong, "Chinese American Literature" 40). In contrast, such activism and institutional support did not develop on a national level in Canada. Asian Canadians "never attained the status of a mass, panethnic social movement . . . [They] remained localized groups, primarily in Vancouver and Toronto, or focused on the issues of a single ethnic group" (Goellnicht, "Long Labour" 9). Whereas Asian American literary studies rapidly developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Asian Canadian literary studies lacked a "pan-Asian approach" (Goellnicht, "Long Labour" 17) to enhance its profile in educational institutions and among the general public:

> In Canada, we have no "originary" event to look back to with nostalgia as the founding moment of Asian Canadian studies, no 1968 university strike, no history of national panethnic activism like the Asian American Movement to claim a space for ethnicity designated as "Asian Canadian." Of equal importance, we lack the legacy of those historical events in the United States—ethnic studies programs, which include Asian American studies programs . . . With the exception of Native/indigenous studies programs, a tradition of ethnic studies programs has not been developed at Canadian universities—that is, programs devoted to the study of racialized minorities *within* Canada, as distinct from Caribbean studies or Asian studies, which treat societies at a geographical distance from Canada. (Goellnicht, "Long Labour" 23)

In the United States, Asian American criticism emerged in a context of racially charged events that instilled a collective consciousness among Asian Americans and prompted the proliferation of ethnic studies programs. In contrast, ethnic studies programs in Canada were aligned with federal governmental aims of maintaining a coherent national identity for Canada:

> Whereas ethnic studies in the United States developed out of radical, confrontational protests against Eurocentric curricula in universities, with "ethnicity" being equated with "race" and nonwhite culture, in Canada ethnic studies was closely allied . . . to the stated government aim of "the development of the multi-cultural nature of Canadian identity" (Malycky i) or the promotion of the "aspirations of all ethnic groups comprising the Canadian cultural mosaic" (Laychuk i). (Goellnicht, "Long Labour" 23)

Arguably, the federal government's multicultural policy promoted a message of tolerance and ethnic harmony that did help to legitimize and encourage the examination of Canada's diversity in literary and other scholarly contexts. However, I suggest that multiculturalism also diverts attention away from the material inequities and class inequalities that permeate Asian Canadians' lives because it constructs the illusion of an equitable society in which everyone, regardless of racial or ethnic background, has equal opportunities to participate. As Goellnicht asserts, multiculturalism has "assisted in whitewashing the asymmetrical distribution of power in society by entrenching the right of personal cultural choice for private individuals while making little concerted effort to change the values, practices, and policies of public institutions to reflect the racial and ethnic pluralism of Canada" ("Long Labour" 9). Multiculturalism's conceptualization of Canada's diversity ultimately maintains the hegemony of existing power relations.

The assumptions underpinning these legislative developments correlate with the assumptions that have shaped the literary criticism of Canadian literature as a whole. Historically, the nationalist orientation of Canadian literature and Canadian criticism has led critics to conceive of "other" literatures as subordinate and as subsidiary to a bicultural model of "Canadian literature." The process of legitimizing Canadian literature and literary criticism has been centrally "concerned with forging a distinct identity from the American and British traditions" (Koh 6). The academic institutionalization of CanLit and CanCrit, with a focus on the "Canadian-ness" of these texts as a primary characteristic of defining them and guiding criticism on them, has subsequently marginalized literatures that do not fit easily into this nationalist framework. As Roy Miki suggests, the trajectory of literary criticism has historically cemented "CanLit" at the expense of recognizing "other" literatures as equals: rather, they are positioned as subsidiaries to a nationalist model of literature that is ethnocentric in orientation (136). Racialized minority literature is not given much prominence except as "an example of English Canadian 'tolerance' . . . [this] has, until the past decade, allowed little room for alterity or has permitted difference only as long as it gets folded back into an all-inclusive English Canadian literary nationalism" (Goellnicht, "Long Labour" 20).

Due to these institutional circumstances, the inclusion of Asian Canadian literature in the existing literary criticism has been racially and ethnically informed rather than class-based in orientation. The inscription of Asian Canadian literature became a matter of breaking into this racial hegemony and gaining recognition for their voices and experiences, but lacked a concomitant class challenge to that hegemony. As a result, the emergence and recognition of Asian Canadian literature in academic and public circles has been closely identified with racial and ethnic politics, rather than class politics, because of circumstances that maintained their exclusion and, later, contributed to their subsequent inclusion and recognition.

Theorizing Class Identity

My theoretical approach for analysing Chong's, Lee's, Choy's, Yip's, Wah's, and Yee's literary representations of class identities in Chinese Canadians' daily lives will recognize the historical and cultural contexts that they draw upon to situate their characters and their class identities, but also the ways in which their characters are not wholly constrained by the predominant class ideals that circulate in those contexts. I approach class identity not only as something that is *already* shaped by particular circumstances that their characters do not necessarily control, but also as something that each character perceives and reacts to differently in their daily lives. These everyday manifestations of class identity are important because the Chinese Canadian characters in these writers' texts can exercise diverse forms of agency that do not necessarily depend upon concrete or lasting changes in their circumstances. I would like to begin with Karl Marx's conceptualization of class because it allows me to situate my approach in relation to a theoretical tradition that has subsequently influenced class theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu, whose ideas about class identity are, in part, a response to the deficiencies that he perceives in Marx's ideas. Marx's theorization of class identity and his material assumptions influences my own approach's assumptions to class identity, but I will also distinguish my approach from Marx's ideas. The Chinese Canadian writers that I will analyse are looking at class identities in ways that not only include, but also extend beyond, the realms of work and production. As such, my approach to class identity in these authors' texts extends beyond Marx's theorizing of the realms of work and production and considers how class identities can manifest in other ways in people's lives.

My theoretical approach shares one of Marx's central assumptions that class needs to be understood in relation to people's actual material circumstances and the processes of production that occur within these. These material circumstances do not arise in a random fashion; rather, they are shaped and regulated by dominant interests. This assumption is important for my analysis because it provides a way of thinking about Chinese Canadians' class identities that recognizes how their identities are not simply based on what they, or other people, think about and signify for those identities. As

Chong, Lee, Choy, Yip, Wah, and Yee all highlight in their respective texts, Chinese Canadians' class identities need to be thought about as identities that are grounded in actual societal conditions that materially shape their class identities and what these identities mean. Larger economic and legislative conditions in a particular historical era shape Chinese Canadians' access to particular material rewards and jobs that, in turn, affect the extent to which they are empowered or marginalized in Canadian society.

Indeed, for Marx, class identity is not something that simply signifies in the abstract realm of ideas, but rather something that signifies out of people's relations of production and their roles within those relations. Marx criticizes what he identifies as the Young-Hegelian ideologists, who affirm that reality can be altered by simply interpreting it in a different way. Marx deems such an approach to be insufficient because it does not address people's real material surroundings and it reduces reality to the realm of ideas:

> [A]ccording to [the Young-Hegelian ideologists'] fantasy, the relationships of men, all their doings, their chains and their limitations are products of their consciousness....This demand to change consciousness amounts to a demand to interpret reality in another way, i.e. to accept it by means of another interpretation....The most recent of them have found the correct expressions of their activity when they declare they are only fighting against "phrases." They forget, however, that to these phrases they themselves are only opposing other phrases and that they are in no way combating the real world when they are merely combating the phrases of this world. (German Ideology 6)

Marx's overarching premise for defining class begins with people's real material circumstances and the reproduction of these circumstances to meet their needs. Grounding his ideas of class in historically specific circumstances, Marx asserts, "The first historical act is thus the production of material means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself" (German Ideology 16). According to Marx, class refers to a particular set of productive relations between people that develop through their ongoing production of material life. He starts from the premise that human history develops from "the existence of living human individuals" who "produce their means of subsistence" (German Ideology 6). Their production of material life leads to a division of labour between people that solidifies in their unequal ownership of these productive forces, both of which come to permeate and structure the social structure and the State (Marx, German Ideology 8-9, 13). As he stresses, the people themselves form these societal structures that they then perpetuate through processes of material production (German Ideology 13). These divisions of labour then lead to the division of people into different classes (Marx, German Ideology 23).

Marx defines the working class on the basis of their subordinate and dependent relationship with the capitalist class. The relationship is dependent because the workers cannot be free and independent producers of their material life and subsistence. Instead, they can only sell their labour to the capitalists and, in exchange, acquire wages for purchasing the material commodities that are necessary for their subsistence: "But the exercise of labour power...is the worker's own life-activity, his own life. And this *life-activity* he sells to another person in order to secure the necessary *means of subsistence*" ("Wage Labour and Capital" 204). This relationship is undesirable for the working class because they are oppressed under the capitalist system. It is in the capitalists' interest to provide wages because they need the proletariat's labour to maintain and perpetuate these relations of production. However, as the capitalists want to increase their profits, they will keep wages to a *minimum* to ensure the workers' dependence on them ("Wage Labour and Capital" 206).

Marx's material and economic assumptions about class are particularly valuable, but his other ideas about class agency do not work as well for the texts that I am analysing because they suggest an inevitable trajectory of class agency that presumes the people of a particular class will react in the same way against the dominant class. Marx's formulation of classes seems to presume that the existence of classes are an objective "fact" of reality; that is, the individuals' relationships to the means of production produce these classes, which are independent from the question of whether the individuals themselves recognize that they share a similar class status. Marx's concept of "class consciousness" refers to this recognition, which is a part of his major premise that, "[l]ife is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life" (German Ideology 15). In the context of his views on the development of human history and economics, the workers' recognition of their common oppressive class status in the capitalist economic system will lead them to overthrow the capitalist system and establish a temporary dictatorship of the proletariat. Eventually, Marx proposes, they will abolish all classes and create an egalitarian society that is founded on a communal distribution of the means and products of the production process ("Class Struggle and Mode of Production" 220). In contrast to Marx's views of class agency, Chong, Lee, Choy, Yip, Wah, and Yee highlight how agency can take different forms among people who may share similar class identities and how that agency does not necessarily lead to a rejection of the larger material and economic circumstances under which they live. Rather, Chinese Canadian characters with marginal class identities can also acquire agency by working *within* these circumstances, even though they may be oppressive.

Another way in which Marx's ideas do not work for the purposes of my analysis is in terms of how he identifies the people who make up a particular "class." Marx's ideas of labour, production, and the person's position in the relations of production *do* provide the material conditions for signifying class, but these relations of production, in themselves, do not demarcate people into distinct classes. Marx seems to make a conceptual leap between the material circumstances and the existence of actual classes that posits a material and psychic unity among the people of a particular class. Such a leap, Pierre Bourdieu contends, serves to categorize people into classes without accounting for the processes by which these classes are constituted. As Bourdieu suggests, Marx's formulation of class commits a theoretical fallacy by "equating constructed classes…with real classes constituted in the form of mobilized groups possessing absolute and relational self-consciousness" ("What Makes a Social Class?" 7). His criticisms reveal that Marx's model elides the individual variations in people's material circumstances and that his ideas of class consciousness depend on a stable concept of "class," "working class," and "capitalist class" under the capitalist mode of production.

In contrast to Marx's conceptualization of class, a broader understanding of class is necessary for analysing Chong's, Lee's, Choy's, Yip's, Wah's, and Yee's texts because their portrayals of Chinese Canadians suggest ways of thinking about class identity that do not solely arise from the realm of work and the divisions of labour that circulate within it. These writers suggest how other aspects of their characters' lives, outside of work, help to shape what their class identities mean as well as what they think about those identities. Therefore, I wish to draw upon Pierre Bourdieu's broader definition of class because it *includes*, but is not limited to, a consideration of production in the economic sphere. Like Marx, Bourdieu acknowledges the economic realm of production as one site of activity in which class distinctions are constructed and enforced through divisions of labour, but he also considers how class identities are thought about and manifested in other aspects of people's lives: for instance, he looks at not only what people eat and what they wear, but also how these activities come to signify as indicators of particular class identities. To use Bourdieu's terminology, my study of selected works of Chinese Canadian literature will also focus on the characters' "work of class-making" ("What Makes a Social Class?" 8). I want to stress that class is constructed, both in terms of the actual characteristics that become ascribed to a particular "class" and in terms of the instances when people identify themselves with a particular class. In this respect, "class" is not a fact, although people's material circumstances do provide the conditions for classes to emerge. Class refers to the *values* that people ascribe to these material conditions; "material circumstances" includes labour conditions and production as well as other aspects of people's material lives, such as their material possessions and living conditions. These other facets of material life are not just byproducts or mirrors of the economic system and the classes that arise out of them; rather, they contribute to the actual process of defining "class" itself.

Bourdieu's two central concepts of taste (Distinction 174-175) and habitus (Distinction 101, 170, 172) provide a useful theoretical framework because my selected Chinese Canadian works emphasize the shifting and situational nature of their characters' class identities and depict the processes through which their characters signify those identities. Their class identities depend upon other people for their validation and power, even though they differ from one individual to another. Similarly, Bourdieu's two concepts simultaneously recognize the individualistic nature of class identity formation as well as the ways in which pre-existing class contexts can shape these processes of identity formation. He recognizes that people's class identities are not solely determined by others in positions of influence and that they do not signify uniformly for everyone, but he also recognizes that people's possibilities for constructing, signifying, and identifying with particular class identities are already constrained by the class ideals that already circulate in these pre-existing contexts.

Bourdieu uses the concept of "taste" to theorize how people's preferences, or distinctions, help to construct and signify different class statuses. Like Marx, he also refers to people's material circumstances but he uses them, along with other practices, as the starting point for theorizing class. Bourdieu recognizes the importance of a person's "position in the relations of production" (Distinction 102) and the role of work as a class indicator; however, he focuses on how people create, express, and perpetuate class differences through their distinctions and circumstances. Bourdieu uses the broad concept of "practices" to refer to the economic field of production as well as the activities and behaviours that make class a reality for a person: "Taste is the practical operator of the transmutation of things into distinct and distinctive signs...it raises the differences inscribed in the physical order of bodies to the symbolic order of signification distinctions" (Distinction 175). People's judgements of perceived differences in their practices take place in what Bourdieu calls the "habitus," which simultaneously provides the conditions for formulating, expressing, and enacting these tastes and constrains the conditions for manipulating these tastes in the first place. The "habitus" is, firstly, an overarching, preexisting structure of class ideas circulating outside the individual. Bourdieu seems to use the concept of "structure" here to refer to institutional, legislative, social, and other informal mechanisms that people in positions of power use to enforce desirable trajectories of behaviour and people's perceptions of those behaviours. The habitus, then, embodies a set of dispositions that are legitimized and concretized into a regulating class structure; this structure helps to promote and regulate a particular class hierarchy that stratifies people and creates unequal opportunities and outcomes for their lives.

Secondly, the habitus refers to the individual's state of residing in or inhabiting a particular material situation, within which particular practices circulate. Bourdieu suggests that the habitus conditions one's thinking because it makes one aware of the class distinctions that circulate in one's social world and of one's own class status within that world. These class distinctions, in turn, shape one's perceptions of that world:

> The habitus is not only a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices, but also a structured structure: the principle of division into logical classes which organizes the perception of the social world is itself the product of internalization of the division into social classes. Each class condition is defined, simultaneously, by its intrinsic properties and by the relational properties which it derives from its position in the system of class conditions, which is also a system of differences, differential positions. (Distinction 170)

Bourdieu's point about "relational principles" makes sense because one class is distinguished from another on the basis of their differences from each other. The relevance of one aspect of taste for determining a class identity's signification depends on whether that aspect is superior or inferior, more or less valuable, more or less prestigious than another aspect. While the habitus does shape the people's perceptions of their own "class condition" as well as the class condition of others, it does not fully dictate the actions that people may actually take in order to affirm or improve their social standing. In his definition, it may appear that Bourdieu privileges the group over the individual in his assessments of class because he mentions that a person's membership in a particular class will cultivate particular attitudinal and behavioural dispositions. However, he does stress that he does not want to over-determine the extent of the habitus's influence. Instead, we must account for the individual's unique circumstances and personality as the individual may deviate from prescribed class identities or the tastes associated with those identities; on the one hand, "[i]ndividuals do not move about in social space in a random way, partly because they are subject to the forces which structure this space," but on the other hand, these people can also "resist the forces of the field with their specific inertia" (Bourdieu, Distinction 110).

Beverly Skegg's focus on the emotional aspects of people's class identities complements Bourdieu's ideas of "taste" and "habitus" because she highlights the ways in which people may identify with, or resist, particular class identities. She approaches identity as something that cannot simply be defined according to particular indicators and meanings because such a static conceptualization fails to account for the actual people to whom those identities may refer. Class identities are not just "reflections of objective social positions" because they are "continually in the process of being reproduced as responses to social positions" (Skegg 94). People's emotionally informed reactions to their class identities—the ways in which they make sense of their identities and act on that basis—inform the identities that they wish to emulate or aspire to.[6]

Kevin Hetherington's discussion of marginalized people in society complements Bourdieu's and Skegg's ideas about how identities signify and how people perceive those identities. Hetherington stresses the importance of avoiding interpretations of people with similar identities that erroneously group or homogenize them. People may share similar class identities, but their individual circumstances and the ways in which other identity markers signify in them will shape how each person experiences and reacts to a particular class identity. While people have been in positions of privilege and marginality, Hetherington states that we must avoid essentializing or homogenizing the state of "marginality" because "difference is a condition in which everyone has some experience" (26). Using the example of working-class black men, he mentions that a black man's racialized class identity locates him on the margins of mainstream society; however, he occupies a less marginal position than a black woman does. Thus, Hetherington emphasizes, we must examine a person's "degrees of difference and marginality" in local and specific contexts (26). Like Hetherington, I wish to emphasize the differences between Chinese Canadians with similar class identities in Chong's, Lee's, Choy's, Yip's, Wah's, and Yee's texts. These authors represent some characters who have similar class identities in certain historical contexts, but they also suggest that other identity markers and their characters' individual circumstances mitigate their identities' meanings. For instance, these texts suggest that racial and gender markers affect how Chinese Canadians' class identities signify; in turn, their racialized and gendered class identities affect the material rewards and social recognition that they can hope to acquire.

Similarly, it is important to think about class identity in ways that move beyond recognizable categories. For instance, the commonly used class categories of "upper class," "middle class," and "working class" are useful insofar as they can facilitate ways of thinking about people's class identities in a capitalist economic system. However, Donald Ellis notes that class categories "may be useful for theoretical discussion...[but]

their measurement is too difficult for refined distinctions" (191). Taking Ellis's lead, I would like to look at class as a concept that operates on a continuum rather than as a concept that is divided into strict class categories. Drawing upon Stuart Hall's conceptualization of identity, I will consider people's class position as a "strategic and positional" state (3). This modification is important as I am focusing on how and why particular class identities signify differently for the people in these texts instead of simply ascribing class identities to them that derive from commonly used class categories. I will emphasize the relational quality of class by using designations such as "higher class" and "lower class," but I will use the commonly used class categories when they are meaningful for the Chinese Canadian characters in these literary works and when they are useful for locating their class identities. But in either case, this will only be an initial step for thinking about what class means for these characters.

Michel de Certeau's focus on the everyday, which he defines as "'ways of operating' or doing things" (xi), complements my synthesis of Bourdieu's and Skegg's ideas on class identity and forms the third major component of my theoretical approach. His approach furthers Skegg's "subjective" understanding of class and Bourdieu's distinctions of class through taste and habitus by epistemologically extending the concepts of identity and agency to people's daily lives. Following de Certeau's approach to the everyday, I think that identity is not just something that people create and articulate, but also something that embodies itself daily and that people experience in their daily activities and behaviours. Initially, it appears that de Certeau's approach to everyday life is incompatible with Pierre Bourdieu's class model as he asserts that "[i]t is in any case impossible to reduce the functioning of a society to a dominant type of procedures" (48). However, we can integrate both views because de Certeau's ideas complement Bourdieu's views of how class structures influence the meanings' of people's class identities. Like Bourdieu, de Certeau does acknowledge that societal "structures" exist, referring to these as "strategies" that manage particular modes of behaviour. These strategies remain dominant because people in positions of privilege perpetuate them by constructing a narrative that legitimizes its dominance and by using incentives to encourage people's conformity to them: "I call a *strategy* the calculation (or manipulation of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power...can be isolated" (36). Even though there are certain rewards that encourage them to adhere to these structures' norms, people are not obliged to follow these procedures. Instead, as de Certeau affirms, there are fissures and gaps in these structures where one can engage in activities beyond the seemingly pervasive influence of these structures. He does not discard Marx's thinking as he recognizes the importance of production; he is, however, more interested in the micro context of people's lives and the everyday possibilities for agency, which differs from Marx's focus on collective class action and the overthrow of the capitalist system. De Certeau wants to examine the people who actually use the produced goods because it is through such use that people can achieve certain effects: "The presence and circulation of a representation [and more generally, a product]...tells us nothing about what it is for its users. We must first analyze its manipulation by users who are not its makers" (xiii). People are not simply "passive and guided by established rules" (xi), but rather producers in their own right (xvii).

With Luce Girard and Pierre Mayol, Michel de Certeau provides further insight into the everyday in his second volume of The Practice of Everyday Life. In it, they localize and concretize the notion of everyday by examining intricate aspects of the person's daily life such as the processes of cooking, shopping, and socializing in public settings. By stressing how people engage in these processes, de Certeau presents possibilities for agency, resistance, and self-assertion, even when a person may be marginalized in more prominent ways. For instance, a Chinese male immigrant may be marginalized in the job market but his daily act of living constitutes a form of resistance in itself because he reaffirms his physical presence in a society that is ambivalent towards his presence. Extending de Certeau's and his associates' thinking, I suggest that class identity can be understood as an experiential concept. In other words, class identity can be thought about as something that is experienced in people's daily lives. It operates in terms of how people interact, consume material goods for purposes of survival or entertainment, and speak about the world around them. This means that class is socially performed and can be used to successfully, or unsuccessfully, reaffirm one's class identity in relation to other people with whom one interacts.

De Certeau's ideas, then, provide a way of thinking about class identity that recognize the possibilities of innovation in people's manifestations and expressions of their class identities. He recognizes how people with particular class statuses are not necessarily precluded from attaining agency in ways that may seem unavailable if one were to simply consider their actual material circumstances. Rather, de Certeau stresses that people can use what happen to be at their disposal in innovative and unpredictable ways. At the same time that I recognize the value of de Certeau's ideas for my analysis, I wish to avoid suggesting an overly optimistic view of class agency that deemphasizes or elides the real constraints upon people's agency. Overemphasizing the "everyday" can potentially depoliticize people's class identities and relegate their manifestations to the realm of individual behaviour. In contrast, the representations of Chinese Canadians' class identities in Chinese Canadian literature suggest that larger societal conditions also affect their identities and extent of their agency.

In analysing how Chong, Lee, Choy, Yip, Wah, and Yee represent class identity in their literary works, I recognize that it is important to avoid reductive conclusions about how these texts portray Chinese Canadians in the historical period from 1923 to 1967. While these texts do represent Chinese Canadians who deal with some similar and related issues in the historical period that they live, they portray Chinese Canadians as individuals with their own unique sensibilities and idiosyncrasies. As such, my analysis will be grounded in the specificities of the historical period, but also in the Chinese Canadian characters' experiences and differing relationships to their racial and cultural heritage as people of Chinese descent. Though the meaning of Chineseness fluctuates and signifies differently for each individual, I suggest, in the context of my study, that particular values of traditional Chinese culture, such as the focus on family and collective well-being, play a significant though variable role in defining the person's class identities, aspirations, and lived experiences. While the exact configuration of these values and their actual effects upon the characters vary, they expose the temporal contingency of class identities and the fluidity of its significations. Discursive tensions arise out of these significations and incommensurabilities between perceived and actual class identities; these tensions are further exacerbated by the conflict between the characters' differing conceptualizations of "Chinese" and "Canadian" culture, both of which also affect how they respond to their current class identities. In the next chapter, I will first provide an overview of the historical period from 1923 to 1967, which will detail the history of Chinese Canadians, the circumstances that led them to immigrate to Canada, the legislation that targeted them, and the ways in which they coped with their circumstances in Canada.

Notes

1 As Eleanor Ty and Donald Goellnicht assert, literary and cultural critics' considerations of Asian American and Asian Canadian identities are influenced by other postmodernist, feminist, postcolonialist, and psychoanalytic theories as well as by theories of globalization and diaspora (3).

2 Donald Goellnicht discusses this issue extensively in his article "A Long Labour: The Protracted Birth of Asian Canadian Literature." As an indication of the delayed development of the field of Asian Canadian literary criticism, Daniel Coleman and Donald Goellnicht affirmed "the return of 'race' to Canadian literary and cultural discussions" (1) in their recent article "Introduction: 'Race' into the Twenty-First Century." In contrast, race is already a central aspect of Asian American studies.

3 For instance, Asian Canadians have mobilized their respective communities around causes such as Asian Canadians' acquisition of civil and legal rights after World War II, Japanese Canadians' successful redress settlement for their World War II internment, and the more recent Chinese Canadian head tax redress movement. In the Asian American context, racial identity politics manifested in the 1960s civil rights movement and sixties generation of Asian American activists: they saw "the building of an Asian American cultural tradition, with its concomitant challenge to the Anglo-American canon, as an integral part of the group's larger struggle for a rightful place in [the United States]" (Wong, "Chinese American Literature" 40).

4 Sustained attention to class was also slow to develop in the American context, although more critical work on class identity currently exists. Just a decade ago, Peter Kwong was still able to assert the privileged attention that critics had given to racial rather than class concerns, but he acknowledged that this was, in part, due to the prominence of race as a defining feature of Asian Americans' experiences of discrimination (75). Attention to class issues in Asian American literature appears in recent critical works such as Wendy Ho's In Her Mother's House: The Politics of Asian

American Mother-Daughter Writing (1999) and Viet Nguyen's Race and Resistance: Literature and Politics in Asian America (2002). Both Ho and Nguyen recognize that "Asian Americanness" is not simply a racial identity, but also an identity that signifies in relation to characters' economically defined class positions and the class expectations that impinge upon their self-perceptions.

5 These include Kay J. Anderson's Vancouver's Chinatown, Peter S. Li's The Chinese in Canada, B. Singh Bolaria and Peter S. Li's "Capitalist Expansion and Immigrant Labour: Chinese in Canada," Anthony B. Chan's Gold Mountain, W. Peter Ward's White Canada Forever, Paul Yee's Saltwater City: an Illustrated History of the Chinese in Vancouver Anthony B. Chan's "The Myth of the Chinese Sojourner in Canada," Gunter Baureiss's 'Chinese Immigration, Chinese Stereotypes, and Chinese Labour," Jin Tan's "Chinese Labour and the Reconstituted Social Order of British Columbia," and Gillian Creese's "Organizing Against Racism in the Workplace: Chinese Workers in Vancouver Before the Second World War."

6 Beverly Skegg criticizes Bourdieu because he focuses more on how these class distinctions get formed rather than on how people feel about their actual and perceived class identities: "[He] code[s] behaviour in a cold and mechanical classificatory manner which does not bring out the pleasures and pain associated with . . . class" (10). However, Bourdieu's notion of habitus does acknowledge that people can deviate from the norms that circulate within a habitus. Instead of regarding Bourdieu's categories as strict and absolute classificatory schemes, I believe that his categories are more of a *guide* to probable and encouraged patterns of class distinctions.

Chapter Two

Historical Context of Chinese Canadian Experience

In her evaluation of Canada's national identity and international reputation, Eva Mackey asserts that "the story of Canada's tolerant nationhood has often been framed in terms of its policy and mythology of 'multiculturalism,' a policy defined in official government ideology as 'a fundamental characteristic of Canadian heritage and identity'" (2). Yet, such a narrative of Canada's tolerance towards diversity belies the ways in which whiteness dominates as an unmarked and normative category of racial identity and the ways in which that dominance has the effect of eliding and excluding Otherness. Initiatives such as multiculturalism may signify an acceptance of diversity at the legislative level, but they also implicitly assume "the idea of a core English-Canadian culture . . . other cultures become 'multicultural' in relation to that unmarked, yet dominant, Anglo-Canadian core culture" (Mackey 2). As a result, whiteness and its association with Anglo-Canadian culture circulate in dominant discourses about Canada's national identity, contributing to the construction and privileging of particular subjects that do not threaten this racial and cultural dominance. An integral part of Canada's history, Chinese Canadians were represented in discourses of nation and national identity, which the Canadian public and government have historically used to justify their treatment of Chinese Canadians.[1] A contradictory, yet complementary, relationship between inclusive and exclusive rhetoric emerges in the ways that the Canadian public and government represent Chinese Canadians from 1923 to 1967: they defined Chinese Canadians not only in terms of the perceived benefits that they brought to the nation's economic development, but also in terms of their perceived threats to Canada's national identity, racial composition, and social well-being. Thus, Chinese Canadians are depicted as subordinate class subjects who contribute to Canada's economic progress, but they are also depicted as foreign racial subjects whose presence threatens the nation. The coexistence of and contradictions between these various representations of Chinese Canadians suggest how Otherness occupies an uneasy and shifting position in those representations and how class and racial meanings intersect in them.

Literary representations can challenge these dominant representations and their exclusionary assumptions by depicting Chinese Canadians as heterogeneous and complex individuals whose identities cannot be readily defined by preconceived ideas of race or class. Representing Chinese Canadians within the period of time between 1924 to 1967, Denise Chong, Sky Lee, Wayson Choy, Yuen Cheung Yip, Fred Wah, and Paul Yee constitute identities for their characters that are shaped by the historical contexts in which they live, but that are also constructed and negotiated among individuals in their everyday lives. In her analysis of some Chinese Canadian writers who portray Chinese Canadian predecessors' pasts, Jennifer Jay suggests that local-born writers such as Sky Lee, Fred Wah, and Paul Yee "hope to reclaim the history of early Chinese Canadians and their Gold Mountain's Chinatown ghetto, and to incorporate it into mainstream Canadian history" (14). These writers configure Chinese Canadian identities that centre "around their ancestors' Gold Mountain injustices in Canada (Jay 2). While it is true that Chinese Canadians' early immigrant history informs the texts that I am analyzing, it is important to qualify Jay's suggestions that their ancestors' injustices are central to their depictions of Chinese Canadian identities because they also represent their Chinese predecessors' more recent history from the end of the Second World War until 1967, during which Chinese Canadians encounter different kinds of injustices that differ from those experienced by Chinese immigrants in the Exclusion Era and earlier. Moreover, the writers that I am analyzing (most of them local-born) configure understandings of "Chinese Canadian-ness" that not only centre around their Chinese predecessors' injustices, but also their successes and attempts to integrate into mainstream Canadian life. Thus, a class analysis of Chinese Canadian literature provides a useful way to think about its representations of Chinese Canadians' identities because it highlights how these identities are shaped by economic and material aspects of characters' lives, which manifest themselves in their daily struggles to survive as well as their successes in improving their current circumstances. Chinese Canadian writers do represent how injustices inform their characters' self-perceptions in their respective texts, but their characters also have class-based aspirations that, regardless of whether they succeed in realizing them or not, inform their understandings of themselves as Chinese Canadians.

Chong's, Lee's, Choy's, Yip's, Wah's, and Yee's textual representations of particular moments of history become opportunities for them to envision ideas of "Chinese Canadian-ness" that include, but also negotiate and resist, dominant ideas of "Chinese Canadian-ness" that their immediate community and the larger society circulate and enforce. They suggest that class significations inform, and are informed by, what it means to be Chinese Canadian for their characters. However, the ways in which class signifies differ from one character and context to another. Thus, a consideration of the historical context of Chinese Canadian experiences provides a starting point for thinking about how Chinese Canadian authors depict shifting and multiple meanings of class from Chinese Canadian characters' perspectives. Chinese Canadians may have fewer opportunities for class mobility in the Exclusion Era and greater opportunities in the post-World War II era, but these class contexts influence their characters' lives differently in each text. Chong, Lee, Choy, Yip, Wah, and Yee depict characters who succeed, in various ways, within the limits and possibilities available to them in their personal lives and the larger historical circumstances that they inhabit. Their characters exercise agency over their lives and the class identities that they construct in their daily lives. In doing so, these writers simultaneously acknowledge, resist, and reconfigure the dominant class ideals and attitudes that their Chinese Canadian characters encounter.

The class concerns shared by Chong's, Lee's, Choy's, Yip's, Wah's, and Yee's works highlight how Jay's distinctions between local-born and immigrant authors need to be qualified. Jay suggests that immigrant authors have different motivations in their writing from those who are local-born because they are "not particularly interested in the early immigrants" (Jay 9). They "draw upon their Chinese cultural and literary traditions" (2) and are more interested in constructing "a Canadian identity by appropriating the maple leaf and other icons of Canadian nationhood in their writings" (9). My analysis mainly focuses on Chinese Canadian authors who are born in Canada, but Yuen Chueng Yip is an immigrant author whose work The Tears of the Chinese Immigrants also represents an earlier generation of Chinese Canadians and depicts how class markers inform his characters' identities. In addition, all of these authors' texts, depict class identities for their characters that are informed by their perceptions of their Chinese cultural heritage as well as their experiences in Canada.

In my overview of the historical context of Chinese Canadians from 1923 to 1967, I will illustrate some general trends in Chinese Canadians' societal opportunities and their relationship to internal changes within Chinese Canadian communities and the external conditions of the larger society. In doing so, I will discuss the effects that these trends had upon the Chinese Canadian population as a whole. The boundaries of this era are legislatively marked by the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act and the 1967 Immigration Act. During this time span, discriminatory immigration policies and other racially and class-based forms of legislation perpetuated unequal opportunities and outcomes in areas such as the Chinese population's work and social lives. These policies adversely affected the Chinese population's ability to integrate into Canadian society by contributing to their racial exclusion and class subordination between 1923 and 1967. While these legislative conditions did not fully dictate their daily actions, they did influence their aspirations for class mobility and the means by which they could survive and participate in Canadian society.

The Beginnings of Immigration

Examinations of the historical movement of immigrants from China to Canada and the experiences of immigrants and their descendents in Canada must consider factors that derive from both countries' political, economic, and social conditions. These factors suggest that economic concerns shape Chinese Canadians' pragmatic and personal reasons for emigrating to Canada and the class identities to which they aspire. It was not only China's societal conditions that prompted Chinese people to emigrate, but also their personal desires for economic advancement and their idealized perceptions of Canada as a country in which such opportunities were available.

For instance, some of the reasons that compelled immigrants to migrate were economic and cultural in orientation. These reasons derived from the immigrants' families and the cultural significance that they attached to them. They wanted to secure an economically prosperous existence for their families and communities back home and, perhaps more importantly, to maintain their family's patrilineal line of descent (McKeown 318-319). By succeeding abroad, immigrants could also contribute to their relatives' and ancestors' prestige back home (Chow 116). Chinese immigrants perceived

Canada as an attractive "land of opportunity" (Chan, GM 32) in which they could realize their desires for economic prosperity. While Chinese migration to North America had already occurred prior to the mid-nineteenth century, two events—the discovery of gold in British Columbia's Fraser valley in 1858 and the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway from 1881 to 1885—accelerated their immigration to Canada (Bolaria and Li 102). Most of the Chinese who migrated during this early period came from the southeastern part of China, which was "just one stream in a larger pattern of movement to cities, frontier areas, and other localities throughout China, and into northern lands like Mongolia, Siberia, and Manchuria" (McKeown 314). While some of these immigrants came from merchant backgrounds, most of them were male peasants and labourers who possessed limited wealth and education (P. Li 23). Some had worked as hired labourers in the country or owned some tracts of land, while others had worked in the cities and took on service and trade occupations such as peddling and cobbling (Yee 10). The wealthier immigrants could finance their own journey abroad but others had to sell land or acquire familial or clan assistance for the voyage; as a result, they tended to emigrate alone because they could not afford to bring their families with them (P. Li 63).

The chaotic societal conditions within China further prompted some Chinese people, particularly those in destitute circumstances, to seek better lives and economic fortunes overseas. These resulted from such events as the Opium War (1839-1842) between China and Britain and the internal rebellions between the 1850s and 1870s (McKeown 313), along with overpopulation, poverty, and prolonged periods of social, economic, and administrative instability in south-eastern China (Tian 69; Dawson 187). As a result of these societal problems, some people survived by turning to banditry, smuggling, or other criminal activities, but others who did not favour these kinds of lives emigrated to Canada instead (Chan, GM 30-31).

Canada's economic incentives and China's chaotic conditions were not the only factors that would provide the impetuses and opportunities for their emigration. Instead, as Adam McKeown asserts, emigration also depended on "stability, precedent, and opportunity" (315), which took the form of pre-existing migratory connections and networks. Nineteenth-century developments that would facilitate Chinese immigration included the expansion of trade networks through economic hubs such as Hong Kong and treaty ports after the Opium War, which allowed local merchants to connect with overseas economic opportunities and facilitate access to labourers from the south China region (McKeown 313). These connections and networks were "established through a long tradition of migration and exchange with non-Chinese that gave people in South China the experience and means to take advantage of the opportunities presented by a changing Pacific economy" (McKeown 315). Networks constructed over time would facilitate the transmission of Chinese labour overseas to other countries that required it. For instance, the British acquisition of rights from the Burlingame Treaty[2] gave them access to Chinese labour for the construction of the national railway; subsequently, they used a contract labour system that centred around Hong Kong, Victoria, and British Columbia to transfer 15,000 labourers from China to Canada (Chan, GM 43).

Chinese Cultural Traditions

Chinese immigrants' experiences in Canada and, more importantly, their perceptions of those experiences are shaped by their immediate circumstances and their memories of their lives back in China. As such, the cultural context to which they are accustomed in China influences the identities that they constitute in Canada. In order to interpret Chinese Canadian authors' representations of class and class identities, we need to consider the cultural traditions that have shaped the lives of people in China. Chinese Canadian writers draw upon this historical knowledge to portray tensions and conflicts that their characters experience because of their class identities and the differing significations that they attach to them. I will elaborate upon these tensions and conflicts in my later chapters, but I will initially suggest here that Chinese Canadian characters' knowledge of Chinese culture and its impact upon their everyday lives shapes how they signify their own class identities in relation to other people and the actions that they take to improve their own class statuses. Chinese cultural traditions permeate the everyday lives of characters in my primary texts, either directly through their immediate family, relatives, or friends, or indirectly through other encounters. They shape the roles and expectations they are expected to play and dictate a class structure that discourages unrestrained mobility and encourages mobility within a framework of kinship or familial and communal relations. This is not to suggest that the cultural traditions that they experience are identical in their actual content and methods of dissemination, nor is it to suggest that these cultural dynamics function in the same fashion in each case. Rather, each character's unique circumstances and class identity are contingent and continually negotiated. My selected authors avoid establishing a simplistic and causal relationship between Chinese cultural traditions and class identities. They depict characters whose knowledge of Chinese cultural traditions influences their aspirations for class mobility and the class identities that they express, but they also depict other characters who reject these cultural traditions in favour of Westernized cultural influences or who transform them in the Canadian context and construct class identities that signify out of these different and sometimes hybridized cultural frameworks.

Another important issue here is that Chinese Canadian authors situate their characters in the Canadian context because they want to represent what it means to be Chinese outside of China and how cultural traditions from China shape these characters' understandings of Chineseness. However, Guang Tian and Peter Li both affirm that the process of transplanting cultural traditions from one place to another does not occur in its entirety or in an identical form because societal and personal conditions will prevent some traditions from being practiced. In other instances, traditions may be modified to suit the host country's different societal conditions. Chinese cultural traditions encouraged particular social and class structures and forms of organizing aspects of individuals' lives, particularly their family life. While immigrants brought these cultural practices over to Canada, certain cultural practices could not be reenacted because of the immigrants' distance from their land of immigrant origin and the lack of a replicable social structure. This was exacerbated because there were far more men than women in the Chinese Canadian population, which diminished the possibilities for stable family structures and the relationships that these structures helped to define between these immigrants and their relations back in China. The person's immigration to Canada would also detach that person "from his social milieu as well as from expectations and norms of his native society" (Chow 126). As a result, Chow suggests, the social pressures that dictate Chinese immigrants' behaviours in China may also function in Canada, but not necessarily in the same way because Chinese immigrants may reconfigure their expectations and norms to suit their present circumstances (126).

Following from Chow's point, I wish to emphasize the importance of avoiding a static view of Chinese culture because its traditions have evolved over time. Instead, I suggest that we should conceive of these cultural traditions as recurring tendencies and as particular dispositions towards one's surroundings that coalesce around shared ideas, values, and behaviours. I will use the notion of "cultural traditions" by drawing upon Guang Tian's use of the word "traditional": "By 'traditional' Chinese cultural systems I refer to these organizations along Confucianist principles, i. e., those of the pre-communist world or in other words, Chinese cultural systems prior to being impacted on by the forces of industrialization" (56). I recognize the potential problems in Tian's use of the word "traditional" because, for him, it signals a particular temporal relation between the co-existence of Chinese culture with a particular stage of China's economic development. Despite these problems, I will continue to use his general designation, "traditional," because it usefully draws attention to a pattern of cultural systems that have persisted in the past and that continue to exist today in modified forms.

Guiding principles for traditional Chinese societal structure grew out of Confucianism, which stressed the importance of kinship relations and, more specifically, the family as an important unit for the building and maintenance of one's society. Promoted by Confucius during his lifetime from 551-479 BCE, Confucianism is "a worldview, a social ethic, a political ideology, a scholarly tradition, and a way of life" (Tu 112). With its emphasis on the clear delineation of roles and modes of conduct for people, Confucius's The Analects affirmed that such a form of social organization would lead to harmony, stability, and progressiveness in the society as a whole. Confucius's texts promoted "a community of trust based on social responsibility" and emphasized the cultivation of a "duty-consciousness" that would direct the individual's appropriate actions (Tu 124). The central tenets of Confucianism included the development of a hierarchical system that outlined role obligations, descent, and inheritance patterns on the basis of generation, gender, and class. Consequently, traditional Chinese society was organized according to a system of patrilineal kinship practices that defined rules of authority, descent, and inheritance. The gentry class of scholars and landowners were at the top of the societal class structure and "often acted as an informal government in the countryside" (Yee 10), whereas the merchants and peasants resided below them but were both valourized as contributing members to that society. For instance, the peasants were "idealized as sturdy and virtuous yeoman with a simple reverent attachment to the land" (Yee 10).

Similarly, the historical development of the Chinese family consisted of a particular mode of organization that revolved around class- and gender-implicated cultural practices. The justification for these derive from notions of descent, ethics, authority, and property, and included "the use of patrilineal surnames, the worship of recent patrilineal ancestors, the belief in the need for a male heir to continue the sacrifices, and the organization of kinsmen on the basis of common patrilineal descent" (Ebrey 200). Thus, an important feature of this patrilineal organization of traditional Chinese society was that families were concerned about continuing their family lines (Tian 57). Family life was organized and influenced by Confucian principles, the most significant of which was filial piety. The practice of filial piety designated, according to one's seniority and gender, the appropriate roles and behaviours that one should enact as part of the family unit. The patriarchal system in the traditional Chinese family consisted of key features that included the precedence of the father's authority over that of the women and children, which was reinforced by the idea that women were "morally and intellectually less capable than men" (Ebrey 204). As a result, women occupied a subordinate status in relation to men—defined by both gender and class assumptions—that was further reinforced by the lack of occupational choices outside of marriage. Other occupations that women could select from included "becoming a slave, servant, prostitute, medium, buddhist nun, or courtesan" (Gallagher 92). Women would only choose these occupations when they had no other choice because these occupations were, in comparison to marriage, "generally worse in terms of income, prestige, safety, or security" (Gallagher 92).

The male head of the household had the authority to arrange marriages for his children through matchmaking practices, as well as to sell his children for labour when necessary. Emphasis on "the social and political importance of correct behavior" (Ebrey 202) extended from the family to the larger society itself and also helped to reinforce communal class structures. The division of people on the basis of surnames in traditional Chinese society exemplifies these structures; as W. S. Chow states, people who possessed the same surname were regarded as patrilineal relations. These surnames demarcated people into different clan groups that were, in turn, further segmented into various local groups. The local groups "often occup[ied] a single village or groups of villages, [and] had an organized structure under the leadership of a recognized head" (125).

Besides its role in maintaining the social order of the larger community, the family functioned as an economic unit that would look for ways "to enrich itself, protect its interests, and enhance future prospects" (Yee 11). In this sense, marriage functioned as an economic strategy because it allowed people to reinforce and enhance the prestige of pre-existing social and familial structures. Marriage practices included a dowry exchange between two households, whereby the bride's household would give wealth to the prospective groom's household; in exchange, the bride would move out and marry into the groom's household (Ebrey 205). These marriages and the dowries were both strategies for people to reinforce connections between themselves and others of similar or different class statuses and, in some instances, to increase their class status in the community as a whole. In both China and Canada, matchmakers played an important role in arranging some of these marriages between Chinese households and were often women who were acquainted with several families. Arranging a good marriage would not only profit both of the households but also benefit the matchmaker because she would receive social recognition for her success (Chan, GM 104). Similarly, becoming connected to a prestigious clan would enhance one's class status and, in turn, the clan heads would strengthen the members' ties to the clan by engaging in activities that would reflect well on all of its members (Yee 11). At a practical level, officials and aspirants to governmental office would forge these social and familial connections in order to "to facilitate promotions, to gain allies in factional disputes, and so on" (Ebrey 210).

Ancestor worship, which developed over a thousand years ago in China, also reinforced one's connection to one's patrilineal heritage and would take the form of offerings and homage in everyday occasions and at appropriate times of the year. For instance, festivals such as the Qing Ming Festival allowed people to pay homage to their ancestors by offering food and burning false money to ensure that the ancestor will have enough money to spend in heaven. The people involved would usually hold a ceremony at the ancestor's grave (Dawson 82). Other celebrations such as Chinese New Year were times when families and clans celebrated. Chinese New Year was, and continues to be, one of the most important Chinese festivals; during this time, people would reinforce social ties by absolving debts to each other and mending strained relations (Dawson 83-85).

Guang Tian states that because these cultural influences directed the family lives of Chinese immigrants, they simultaneously served as obstacles to and incentives for migrating overseas. It is interesting to note that Confucianism discouraged movement abroad, for the Confucian filial duties consisted of ideas such as, "While father and mother are alive, a good son does not wander far afield" (Tian 69). Yet, these Confucianist ideas about filial piety would evolve over time because some immigrants would eventually have to migrate out of necessity so that they could better provide for their families. Other immigrants, on the other hand, would migrate to another country that appeared to have greater economic opportunities than the ones in China.

However, once they were in Canada, such familial ties would help immigrants to adapt because family members could provide immigrants with emotional support and update them, through letters, about life back in China (Tian 57). These familial connections would reinforce the immigrants' sense of obligation to those back home and shape, to an extent, the ways that they would use the money that they acquired in Canada: "they remain bound by ties of expectation and obligations to provide a better life for those family members left behind" (Tian 59). In addition, the immigrants' transplanted cultural traditions would help them to survive in a discriminatory atmosphere that overtly persisted for the first half of the twentieth century.

Public and Governmental Attitudes Towards the Chinese

From the end of the nineteenth century, with the implementation of head taxes that specifically targeted incoming Chinese immigrants, the federal and provincial governments identified the Chinese as a group that they would target through discriminatory forms of immigration legislation. This legislation was in force until the rescinding of the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act in 1947, but racial discrimination persisted in Canada's immigration policies until the 1967 Immigration Act's equalization of criteria for all immigrants. I will expand on the specifics of these Acts and other federal and provincial legislation in the next section; right now, I would like to focus on people's attitudes towards the Chinese that compelled and justified the passage of these policies.

Discriminatory legislation not only marginalized the Chinese population and restricted its ability to fully access the services and rewards available to the non-Chinese population; it also contributed to the government's and public's construction of Chineseness. Their understanding of the "Chinese people" as a race simultaneously "informed government practices and conditioned the territorial arrangements through which racial concepts were inscribed and reproduced" (Anderson, VC 246). Consequently, these views justified their antagonistic treatment of Chinese immigrants and reinforced these immigrants' marginality from mainstream life. The Chinese population's marginality itself became part of the Canadian government's justification for dealing with them because their numerical presence, along with their seemingly high immorality and foreign cultural practices, appeared to threaten the Canadian state's integrity and its national identity. The public perceived the Chinese as "inveterate gamblers" and Chinatown as a "lawless" place of pestilence, prostitution, opium addicts, and "evil and inscrutable men" that threatened the societal order (Anderson, VC 92). Consequently, anti-immigrant factions constructed them in an Orientalist fashion: the Chinese became epistemologically defined through the lens of white, Christian ideals and values, which reinforced their cultural Otherness from the white population. Moreover, the category "Chinese" functioned as a racial signifier that served to deny the individuality of the Chinese immigrants by eliding their differences in cultural and economic background and grouping them into a single entity. This created a binary that racially and spatially differentiated the Chinese from "'whites' and white domains" (Anderson, VC 168).

Thus, Chineseness became part of discourses about Canada's national identity because its national identity depended upon a privileging of whiteness and the exclusion of others who did not conform to that ideal. Within this conceptualization of national identity, the Chinese population became defined as a foreign and inferior group that did not belong in Canada. At the same time, these racist views of the Chinese people were mediated by the economic benefits that they could provide with their labour. Thus, tensions arose because the government's and the public's desire to construct a strong national identity coincided with the government's recognition that they needed immigration to develop Canada, both demographically and economically. In the first half of the twentieth century, those with power and influence in the public and governmental spheres promoted the notion of whiteness as a racial ideal: against this, they would judge other races and act appropriately to ensure that they assimilated into this ideal or, when this was not possible, to ensure their marginalization and exclusion from this vision of national identity. As a result, nationalist discourses constituted "race" and "nation" as interchangeable terms (Anderson, VC 110). Consequently, the federal government reinforced, legitimized, and perpetuated notions of Chineseness, which cemented the power relations that depended on beliefs about the Chinese population's irreducible difference (Valverde 246).

Fostered from the early days of Chinese immigration, this anti-Chinese sentiment developed into what has been termed the Anti-Chinese Movement (Dawson 28) and acquired solid support in both Canada and the United States. Although it was a less significant force by 1910, its influence signaled the public antipathy that would persist in the coming decades: "[T]he Chinese were singled out for substantial abuse on all fronts . . . [and] were subjected to concerted attacks by labor lobbies; disgruntled working-class dissidents; crowd-pleasing politicians; and an odd assortment of ideologues espousing insular and ethnocentric arguments against Chinese immigration" (Dawson 28). One such group consisted of social reformers, who fostered discriminatory attitudes towards the Chinese as well as other immigrants and working-class populations. Well-educated, urban English Canadians led these movements and took their inspiration from English and American sources, but tensions persisted because these English Canadians did not simply want to emulate these examples. Instead, they wanted to establish a unique national identity and societal structure for Canada (Valverde 16-17).

What was problematic, however, was that their conceptions of national identity were still predicated upon the perceived superiority of whiteness over the perceived inferiority of the Chinese people and other non-white groups. Proponents of the social reform movements asserted a Canadian nationalism that affirmed the superiority of Anglo-Saxon racial characteristics (Valverde 113) and, more generally, emphasized the moral purity of whites over degenerate non-white populations. Within this racialized conceptualization of Canada's people, these proponents saw the Chinese as an inferior people because of their race and class; in addition, they associated their race with presumed moral and sexual deficiencies that made them inherently or potentially abject. Constructing their physical inferiority and moral deficiency through the lens of race, these movements' proponents used physiological traits to evaluate their psychological makeup: "People of colour were assumed to be potentially if not actually depraved" (Valverde 119). These views of depravity operated alongside a related movement comprised of concerned evangelicals, policy makers, and concerned citizens who felt that the country's morals were slipping and argued that the government should assess all incoming immigrants in terms of their ability (or inability) to conform to Canada's moral ideals. The pervasiveness of this racism would appear in "the economics, politics, and social policy of early twentieth-century Canada" (Valverde 194). The image of the "yellow peril" helped to fuel support for immigration policies because it represented the Chinese as a homogenous, racially threatening group that would numerically and culturally displace the white population if immigration were left unchecked. In this context, British immigrants were the most favoured group because their racial and moral makeup were perceived as the most conducive elements for Canada's national identity. However, the tensions among infusing moral values from Britain, carving a distinct Canadian identity, *and* creating a sense of autonomy within the British Empire meant that Canadian nationalists had to find "specifically Canadian cultural traits" (Valverde 107).

People's racial views of the Chinese immigrants extended to their views of China as an inferior geographical entity. This image of China further justified the exclusion of Chinese immigrants because it defined them as a homogeneous race whose national origins correlate with their inherently undesirable traits. By viewing the Chinese immigrants as a "hopelessly degenerate" people who come from a "nation in evolutionary and moral decline" (Valverde 111), the government could justify their head taxes and the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act, both of which aimed to prevent Chinese labourers from setting up permanent families and communities in Canada. In addition, the legislation affirmed their marginal status in Canada and reinforced the societal myth that the Chinese were sojourners who would eventually return home to China. As Anthony Chan notes, despite the racism that pervaded Canadian society during the first part of the twentieth century and the attempts by Chinese associations to discourage immigration (due to the perceived lack of jobs for those who would arrive), Chinese emigrants still found Canada attractive and wanted to make it their home ("Myth" 38). Thus, underlying the myth of the Chinese sojourner were negative assumptions about the Chinese people's nationalist loyalties and economic goals, both of which various interest groups would use to support their calls for their exclusion from Canada. According to such assumptions, the Chinese were more attached to China as a country, which was supported by the fact that they continually sent remittances back home; in turn, this was financially detrimental to Canada's economy and exemplified the Chinese people's "selfish ends of financial aggrandizement" (Chan, "Myth" 39). This sojourner image also elided the fact that most of these immigrants could not afford to visit their families or to bring them over from China. Conceiving of Chinese immigrants in this manner would solidify the impression that they were unassimilable (Baureiss 23) and would be used as reasons for the exclusionary immigration policies and domestic legislation that prevented them from accessing certain jobs.

These racist views of Chinese immigrants influenced Canada's governmental legislation continually, but economic considerations also mediated these racist views and influenced the extent to which Chinese immigrants were allowed into Canada. Like the Royal Commission of 1885 that assessed the Chinese immigrants as an inassimilable "race," Sir John A. Macdonald adopted similar attitudes towards the Chinese. He simultaneously recognized their economic necessity and their cultural and racial undesirability for Canada's largely white population. Consequently, he admitted the Chinese into Canada as labourers because he recognized the importance of building a national railway that would connect the eastern provinces to British Columbia on the west coast. At the same time, Macdonald assured opponents of the Chinese's presence that the government would provide safeguards against unfettered Chinese immigration because "It is not advantageous to the country that the Chinese should come and settle in Canada, producing a mongrel race" (qtd. in Boyko 17). As a result, racism at the communal level and governmental attitudes towards Chinese immigration reinforced each other and evoked discourses of moral and sexual degeneracy:

> Despite some efforts to turn the discourse of degeneracy around, the hegemonic idea of Canada was that it was already a very pure nation, and that the challenge of non-Anglo-Saxon immigration had to be met mainly by Canadianizing and Christianizing the strangers—two processes that in practice merged into a single one. . . . Patriotic religiosity characterized not only the racist right wing but also the benevolent current of the missionary movement. (Valverde 118)

Subsequent immigration policies also promoted exclusionary attitudes towards Chinese immigrants and, more broadly, people of non-white descent. For instance, the federal immigration minister Frank Oliver (1905-1917) placed a high priority on prospective immigrants' ethnic and cultural origins and their class backgrounds. He was concerned about admitting immigrants of impoverished or undesirable racial backgrounds because they would "deteriorate rather than elevate the conditions of our people and our country at large" (qtd. in Knowles 82). By discriminating among immigrants by their race and class, these kinds of immigration policies also promote an exclusionary racial and classed vision of Canada because they envision an economically prosperous nation that privileges whiteness and Western culture and excludes immigrants who are non-white or culturally different.

To justify their exclusion of Chinese immigrants, the Canadian federal government rationalized their immigration policies by constituting the Chinese people as a threat to Canada's social fabric, economic prosperity, and citizens' lives. As a result, the Chinese population became a scapegoat for societal problems such as poverty, immorality, and illness. Propped up by supposed scientific fact, racial ideologies further cemented the perceived superiority of the white "master race." Up until World War II, discussions of immigration and other governmental policies were sympathetic to eugenicists' ideas. While Canada did not possess an internationally recognized authority on eugenics or a unified movement, eugenics proponents proposed ideas that would appeal to the English Canadian public and government sympathizers who, "imagining the [white] race to be threatened with 'degeneration,' to turn to eugenics as a guide for defensive action" (McLaren 11). Like the social reformers and evangelists' criticisms of the Chinese, Chineseness became racially implicated in questions around national identity and became defined as something that threatens the white race's integrity, moral, and bodily purity. Eugenics supporters believed that understanding heredity could provide the means for improving public health (McLaren 29). For instance, people in academia and the scientific community, particularly the medical profession, helped to confirm that biologically inherent inequality existed among people, which would justify particular actions for "improving" the makeup of Canada's population (McLaren 26-27). These supporters saw science as the means to ensure Canada's survival and, based on their results, proposed that the government should restrict immigration and sterilize the population's poor and ill (McLaren 166-168). Health-related arguments helped to justify the exclusion of the Chinese people by asserting that their perceived lack of sanitation made them vulnerable as potential carriers of disease (Ward 52).

I suggest that these eugenicists' views are reflective of public and governmental concerns in the first half of the twentieth century about the direction that Canada's immigration policy should take as well as the national identity that it should promote. Thus, Chinese immigrants occupied an uneasy and shifting position in these discourses. While they were admitted to Canada because they were seen as valuable contributors to Canada's economic development, the federal government also used their racial difference and the attendant deficiencies supposedly associated with it to justify their exclusion from Canada. The media's negative accounts of Chinese residents would further contribute to the public's fears that Asian immigrants threatened the makeup of Western civilization" (Dawson 120) and helped to justify the treatment that they received, both officially and unofficially because they were not "real" Canadian residents. Reinforced by the provincial and federal governments, sympathetic sectors, willing participants from the public, and the media, these stereotypes implicated class, race, and ethnicity, and gender, and often focused on presumed personality and cultural traits that were essential aspects of the Chinese person's psychology.

For instance, the media contributed to these negative images of early Chinese immigrants by reporting negative incidents in Chinatown such as murders and police raids on gambling dens and by asserting that Chinese were "immoral heathens, opium smokers, thieves, gamblers, filthy, stupid and insensitive, and [that] dealing with them was thought to invite evil results" (Baureiss 23).[3] Kay J. Anderson's comments on the

Chinese population's marginalization in Canada are useful because they highlight that this marginalization is not solely the result of exclusionary practices such as discriminatory labour rates and exclusion from certain jobs, both of which reduce their ability to access and consume certain goods. Instead, their marginalization is also a consequence of how they get represented to and by the public. These representations separate the "Chinese" from the "non-Chinese" population by fixing the significations of Chineseness and reinforcing the image of Chineseness as a discursive Other. In her discussion of Vancouver's Chinatown, Anderson suggests that the oppression of Chinese immigrants arises through racial ideologies that are concretized through particular significations of place, for "it is through 'place' that it has been given a local reference, become a social fact, and aided its own reproduction" ("Idea of Chinatown" 229).[4] As such, Chinatown's discursive construction is as important as its physical creation and operates in a reciprocal fashion. It justifies and reinforces pre-conceived perceptions of Chinese immigrants as foreign Others, which allows the government and public to continue the exclusionary practices that maintain the discursive construction of Chinatown itself and the marginalization of its inhabitants in mainstream society.

Discriminatory Legislation and the Exclusion Era (1923-1947)

The federal and provincial governments' Exclusion Era legislation illustrates how racial and class ideas inform the governments' justifications for this legislation as well as its effects on the Chinese population. Excluding them on the basis of their supposedly irreducible racial difference and their supposedly adverse impact upon Canada's economy, this legislation affirmed the superiority of whiteness and privileged the protection of white Canadians' interests. As a result, this legislation had racial and class effects for Chinese immigrants because it prevented them from integrating into Canadian society and maintained their class subordination by denying them the economic opportunities to increase their class statuses.

The "open door" policy of the early years of Confederation was accompanied by governmental and public reservations about "the type of society that would emerge in English-speaking Canada" (Palmer 4). These decisions shape and are shaped by "various public-interest grounds such as moral, economic, social, and demographic" (Suyama

117). As Nobuaki Suyama explains, Canada's immigration programme was historically carried out through two operational activities—recruitment and selection, and enforcement and control—that simultaneously reflected a desire to encourage immigrants to Canada who will assimilate or integrate easily into Canadian societal life, yet also a desire to keep out immigrants who are contrary to national interests. The national interests of economic development were driving factors for this immigration, so capitalist proponents desired Chinese immigrants because they provided cheap labour and would maximize business profits (Suyama 122). Despite anti-Asian attitudes that existed prior to 1923, the Canadian government allowed large numbers of Asian immigrants into Canada because they provided cheap labour for the country's nation-building projects. One of the most important projects was the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the commercial and military benefits that would accrue from it (Suyama 122). These immigrants were also a necessary component of the labour force at this time because no one else wanted to take on particularly dangerous jobs, such as the use of explosives during the railway construction era.

However, after Chinese labourers helped to complete the transcontinental railways in 1885, the federal government "came to follow faithfully the negative public attitudes *vis-à-vis* non-European immigrants" (Suyama 122). Yet, it is important to note that the public was far from homogeneous in their attitudes and that the government simultaneously responded to and shaped public attitudes. Some people justified the exclusion of the Chinese in cultural and economic terms by asserting that the Chinese were morally corrupt, culturally inassimilable, and physically inferior to themselves. Economically, they believed that the Chinese took jobs away from the white population because they worked for lower wages (Yee 17; P. Li 30) and that their remittances back to China adversely affected Canada's economic growth. In contrast, other segments of the white population stressed these Chinese immigrants' positive attributes, such as their industriousness and their economic contributions to Canada (Yee 19). Despite these advocates, the federal government aligned itself with the public's negative views and passed the first of several anti-Chinese legislations in 1885. The Chinese Immigration Act of 1885 stipulated that each Chinese immigrant had to pay a head tax of fifty dollars to enter Canada and also prohibited inbound ships from carrying more than one Chinese person per fifty tons. To further control immigration, the government raised the head tax to one hundred dollars in 1900 and to five hundred dollars in 1903 (Yu 115). Those Chinese who could afford to bring their relations over to Canada would, in some cases, use forged documents to do so. These people became known as "paper" relations because the forged documents created fictional familial relations between them and Chinese people who were already in Canada. The migration process itself became a lucrative business that consisted of false identities, steamer tickets, witnesses, employment opportunities, the provisions of credit for those who wanted to emigrate but lacked the immediate funds to do so (McKeown 320).

Other domestic events around the early 1920s contributed negative opinions towards the Chinese population and helped to foster the image of the Chinese as outsiders who did not belong in Canada. Between 1919 and 1922, another economic recession occurred because of the post-war reductions in production and wages; soldiers who returned to Canada found themselves out of work. Even though the recession also affected the Chinese population's jobs, the Chinese were singled out because of their race by the veteran's organizations, trade unions, and other sympathizers. Accusing them of taking away the jobs that rightly belonged to whites, they organized anti-Chinese rallies and displayed signs that said "Canada first—China last" and "Why not take care of our own homeless, starving, and unemployed?" (Yee 52). I suggest that these signs emphasize the Chinese population's social and cultural separation from the white population. In doing so, these signs evoke an image of the Canadian nation that defines itself by the Chinese population's exclusion from it. As the Chinese people are not part of "our own," they are, by implication, a people whose presence threatens the interests of other Canadians who wish to assist the economically marginalized. Ironically, this group of economically marginalized people does not include the Chinese, which illustrates how class interests can also be racialized in ways that fail to acknowledge visible minorities' difficulties.

Due to negative public sentiment, the British Columbia government pressured the federal government to stop immigration from China. The federal government responded by passing the Chinese Immigration Act in 1923. Locating the Immigration Act in a larger context, Valerie Knowles notes that this Act was consistent with the federal government's overall shift in immigration priorities after the First World War had ended.

Economic concerns guided its immigration policy before the war, but post-war immigration policy gave priority to the "prospective immigrant's cultural and ideological complexion" (Knowles 107). As a result, the government targeted and encouraged immigration from the white Commonwealth countries, the United States, and those of northwestern Europe. In contrast, it viewed immigrants from Asian and African countries as less desirable applicants (Knowles 107).

The passage of the Act virtually stopped all immigration from China until 1947. Only merchants, students, children born in Canada, and Chinese related to diplomats or aligned with other administrative capacities would be considered for immigration; however, even their entry would not be guaranteed (Knowles 107; Dawson 197). The government hid these considerations for their admission from public scrutiny and left them to the immigration officers' discretion. As this was allowed under Section 10.2 of the Act, officers would use them to restrict the entry of most Chinese immigrants: "The examination of [applicants] seeking entry to Canada shall be separated and apart from the public and in the presence of such persons only as the Controller shall permit" (Dawson 197). Immigration officials only allowed forty-four Chinese to enter over the next 24 years (53).

The Chinese Immigration Act significantly affected the Chinese community's demographics by perpetuating an imbalance of males and females that was significantly higher than the national average. During the 1920s and 1930s, "there were 12 to 15 times more Chinese males than females in Canada" (P. Li 65); this imbalance would decrease slightly over the years and accelerate after immigration barriers were lowered in the various post-World War II Immigration Acts, but the overall gender imbalance only equalized in 1981 (P. Li 65). Besides these restrictive immigration laws, further legislation excluded Chinese immigrants and their descendents from participating in mainstream public life and exacerbated their economic and social marginalization. These included the Dominion Elections Act of 1920 and its 1929 amendments, which stipulated, "in addition to having provincial voting rights, all voters must be British subjects" (P. Li 34). These conditions prevented the Chinese population from voting in federal elections until their post-World War II enfranchisement in 1947.

Besides the 1923 Immigration Act, other repressive policies targeted the Chinese who were already in Canada. All facets of the Chinese population's life were affected—socially, culturally, politically, and economically—by the legislation. The 1923 Immigration Act included provisions that prevented Chinese immigrants from acquiring Canadian citizenship, which confirmed their foreign, outsider status in Canadian society. In addition the Immigration Act stipulated that "all Canadian residents of Chinese descent, including Canadian citizens, had to register with the government and obtain a certificate to this effect—or face heavy fines and/or imprisonment up to one year" (Dawson 197). They also lacked many civil rights such as the right to vote, to work in particular occupations, and to move freely in and out of Canada. Their status under the 1923 Immigration Act disallowed them from voting in some provinces; for example, they could not vote in federal and provincial elections in British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Their inability to vote resulted in the subsequent loss of other rights that required the franchise, including their access to professional jobs. Since professional associations in Canada required their members to "be registered on provincial voting lists," the Chinese in these provinces were barred from occupations like pharmacy, law, teaching, and chartered accountancy (Dawson 196). Curtailment of job opportunities for the Chinese had already occurred in 1921 when Prime Minister John Oliver decided to "re-enact an old (1902) order-in-council which excluded Chinese . . . from employment on government contracts" (Anderson, VC 113).

These initiatives were justified on the basis of criticism from white entrepreneurs that the Chinese people provided unfair economic competition, which depended on characteristics that they attributed to their race and culture. According to such arguments, the Chinese people's frugal lifestyle would allow them to work for lower wages that would, in turn, "offer more competitive prices, and reap greater profits" (Anderson, VC 112). As a result, the initiatives that curtailed their mobility were to preserve "a racialized occupational hierarchy that put [them] strictly in a position of service of whites, not profit-making from whites" (Anderson, VC 112). Even when Chinese people had jobs that were comparable to those of white workers, they received lower wages. Yet, some employers were willing to reverse their stances on employing Chinese when the need arose and when it benefited them; in some cases, employers profited by using them as cheap seasonal labourers and strike breakers (Baureiss 27, 36). Because they also lacked the support mechanisms that other non-Chinese workers possessed, such as union membership, Chinese labourers had no access to collective bargaining and wage protection; this made them vulnerable to labour exploitation and wage discrimination and made them unable to compete with white workers in the mainstream labour market. Consequently, Chinese immigrants had little choice and had to find jobs in the service sector, including laundries, restaurants, and domestic services. However, the Chinese could survive in this job sector because of "the low social status of these occupations, together with the lack of competition with white workers [in this area]" (P. Li 104).

The provincial governments also passed other pieces of legislation to ensure the Chinese population's subordinate class position within the service sector. Seeing Chinese businesses as threats to English businesses' profitability, provincial governments considered proposals to exclude Asians from the restaurant business. Such laws that targeted Chinese employers and employees had already developed in the 1910s, when the B.C. government passed laws against Chinese pedlars in 1913 and barred Chinese from employment on all liquor-licensed premises in 1916. In the 1910s to the 1920s, the provincial governments of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and British Columbia passed laws that made it illegal for white women to work in Chinese restaurants and other small businesses run by Chinese. These adversely affected small Chinese restaurants because they could not afford to pay a lot for restaurant help; they could, however; afford to hire white waitresses (Con et al. 120). The 1919 Women and Girls Protection Act in B.C. outlawed white women's employment on Oriental restaurant premises (Anderson, VC 159), but this was sporadically enforced until a white waitress who worked in a Chinatown restaurant was allegedly murdered by a Chinese person in 1931. This reinforced the image of Chinatown as an immoral place and led to a more concerted enforcement of the 1919 Act; as a result, several restaurants were given notice to dismiss their white restaurant help (Anderson, VC 160).

Residential arrangements reinforced the unequal and exploitative social relations between the Chinese and non-Chinese population by spatially isolating Chinese from the rest of the community and excluding them from housing opportunities in the predominantly white neighbourhoods outside the Chinatowns (Anderson, VC 28-29). This segregation derived from an "officially sanctioned process of race definition" (Anderson, VC 29) that manifested itself in both formal and informal initiatives at the local level (Anderson, VC 126). To contain Chinese class mobility, the government maintained the Chinese population's subordinate position in the mainstream racial and class hierarchy with further legislation in the employment and housing market. By spatially and occupationally limiting their mobility, the federal government would curtail the economic influence of the Chinese and the Asian population as a whole by granting provinces the power to pass property laws. As a result, in 1922, the B.C. parliament passed laws that prohibited "Asiatics from acquiring proprietary interest in any form whatsoever" (Anderson, VC 116). In the case of the Chinese, they were tolerated so long as they remained within the parameters of Chinatown.

Thus, Chinatown was more than a geographically defined space that delimited the Chinese immigrants' physical mobility. More importantly, it was a racially and class-based spatial construction that epistemologically identified the Chinese as a homogenous group of people whose alien culture threatened to contaminate the white character of Canadian society. The construction of "Chinatown" spatially fixed the Chinese people into a bounded, marginalized space of society (Anderson, VC 30) and helped to promote debilitating stereotypes about them. The jobs that Chinese engaged in further fostered the recognizable, static image of Chinese as laundrymen and grocers (Baureiss 27). In turn, the Chinese population's physical separation from the rest of society, which contributed to their unknowability among the white population, would provide the very justification for additional measures to reinforce their marginal economic position.

Therefore, class and racial significations informed the government's and public's justifications for discriminatory legislation and the legislation's effects upon the Chinese population's spatial containment in the housing and employment sectors. Nationalist justifications for their segregation would also relegate the Chinese to the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder: "the Oliver government confirmed that the 'Chinese quarter' had become for white British Columbians a maximum entitlement beyond which Oriental strains threatened to taint, and Oriental competition disturb, a natural Darwinist order" (Anderson, VC 116). As such, the federal government's class suppression of the Chinese population worked alongside, and was justified by, their racial suppression. Local initiatives further enforced their segregation. For example, in Vancouver, constitutional limitations delimited the residential areas' and the city council's powers, but they desired to "seal the limits of the Chinese claim to Vancouver at Pender Street, and . . . began investigating ways of achieving a form of spatial segregation of the Chinese and European populations" (Anderson, VC 126). Racial segregation also occurred unofficially among residents in particular neighbourhoods, who circumvented these constitutional limitations by establishing "gentlemen's agreements" or unwritten rules to prevent the Chinese from acquiring any more property. This was based on the belief that the white population constituted a community that required "firm boundaries and strong safeguards against loss of its standards" (Anderson, VC 127). In this case, the standards reinforced racial and moral ideals that the Chinese would supposedly erode because of cultural vices such as their involvement in gambling and prostitution.

Chinese Immigrants in the Exclusion Era

Chinese immigrants' cultural differences from the rest of the community, exacerbated by leglislative and institutional exclusion and the anti-Orientalist atmosphere, prevented them from integrating into the European-dominated communities across Canada and forced them to seek refuge in Chinatowns and more isolated, rural areas.[5] Due to the combination of formally entrenched (in law) and informally regulated forms of institutional, economic, and social discrimination, Chinese immigrants looked to their own communities for assistance and sustenance. Even though these Chinatowns were products of institiutional, legal, and social pressures by the white population, they still functioned as "ethnic enclaves" and "refuges" (Dawson 76-77) where Chinese could reside and acquire support and sustenance from other community members. These included people from the merchant class, Chinese employers, and community organizations, all of which played a significant part in the Chinese population's life prior to and during the exclusion period from 1923-1947. Most of the early Chinese communities had a class structure that consisted of a small elite of merchants, who controlled the community associations, trading companies, and other major economic institutions within Chinatown, and a large pool of labourers and miners who used

Chinatown as a base when they were unemployed (P. Li 84). Due to legislation and the discriminatory social atmosphere, Chinese immigrants were excluded from social institutions and culturally segregated from the white population. These community organizations functioned as alternative institutions that offered comparable forms of assistance for their respective communities, providing "some relief from hardship and some alternatives to blocked opportunities in Canadian society" (P. Li 77). They provided social services and financial aid, mediated disputes between community members, and built separate schools to educate the Chinese communities' children. Socially, they helped to arrange entertainment venues and other communal leisure activities.

In part, these organizations arose out of necessity because of institutional racism and legal exclusion, but they also arose as diasporic extensions of organizations that already existed back in China. The first Chinese organizations in Canada were fraternal associations that originated in China's secret societies (P. Li 78). Later, clan and locality associations formed, which were based on a common surname or home county in China. Besides providing economic assistance, these associations were also part of the larger diasporic networks that had been previously established in the nineteenth century. They helped to reinforce the Chinese population's ties with the Chinese homeland through the circulation of news from their villages, the channelling of money back home, and the shipping of the deceased back home. In addition, they "met with fellow migrants who provided mutual aid and mutual pressure to maintain village morality and live up to village standards of success" (McKeown 320). Politically, the associations functioned as diasporic extensions of the Chinese nation-state and helped to promote its politics and nationalist sentiments. As nationalist vehicles, these organizations helped to circulate nationalist ideals about the "homeland" and what it meant to be Chinese, which consequently came to signify more than one's origins of migration. Rather, Chineseness was defined according to interpersonal links that were based on a fusion of "race, culture, history, and affection" (McKeown 323). Such connections between Chinese people in Canada and those in China would appear prominently in World War II, during which Chinese associations would help to raise and channel funds for China's war against the Japanese.

Therefore, these Chinese immigrants did form a sense of community within Canada and transnationally with their relatives back in China; this helped them to cope with their personal hardships. In this sense, most Chinese immigrants and their descendents during this era did share commonalities in their experiences because of their legislative and social exclusion from mainstream society. However, I want to stress that the extent to which their exclusion affects their daily lives and, by extension, their expressed and imagined identities is more heterogeneous and less directly consequential. Communal activities, for example, can provide relief from their hardships, but the *kind* of relief that they derive will depend on their own circumstances. Similarly, their familial connections to China may lead them to identify strongly with it, but it should not be assumed that China is equally significant, or in the same way, for the persons involved. The Chinese person's possibilities for agency in localized spaces or through the acquisition of particular types of capital, such as economic, are indeed limited but variable within the spaces that they can exercise that capital, or where that capital is recognized by others.

Operating businesses within Chinatown provided the means for Chinese immigrants' economic survival as well. In Vancouver, for instance, "Chinatown's sub-economy kept many labourers in jobs, and there was also work in suburban market gardens, in the wholesaling and distributing of produce, in various unskilled capacities around the city, and increasingly in service industries such as restaurants" (Anderson, VC 150). However, living conditions varied widely between the merchant and the labouring classes (P. Li 85). Most of the men were separated from their families back in China and had few social options outside the Chinatowns because of official restrictions in some mainstream leisure venues; as a result, they engaged in activities such as gambling and opium-smoking to gain temporary relief (P. Li 86).

Shifting Chinese-Canada Relations: Chinese Participation in World War II

Due to the Japanese attacks on China during World War II, conflicts between different political and class factions of the Chinese Canadian communities were replaced by a nation-wide, concerted support for the war effort. War became a locus for nationalist identification and a personal identity that derived from one's shared ancestry with others and one's linkage to the common geographical space of "China." From 1937 to the end of the war in 1945, organizations and individuals campaigned across Canada's Chinatowns to raise funds and other necessities for the war effort in China. These included campaigns "for military expense money, for direct aid to troops, for refugee relief, and for the purchase of ambulances and aircraft. Methods included pledges, bazaars, banquets, parades, tag days, theatrical performances, and campaigns to sell Chinese war bonds" (Con et al. 189). In total, they would raise one million dollars for China over these years (Yee 99).

However, the Chinese Canadians also saw the war as an opportunity to enhance their public image so that they could advance their claims to legal rights that other Canadian citizens already possessed. To demonstrate their loyalty to the Allies and to Canada, they contributed extensively to the Victory Loans campaigns (Anderson, VC 171-172), to blood donation drives, and as labour in the war industries. In addition, Chinese Canadian farmers donated one hundred tons of potatoes to Vancouver's service units (Yee 99). Their desire to enlist in the army, however, was initially refused by the federal government. Some of the politicians' resistance towards Chinese participation in the armed forces stemmed from the precedent that was set after the B.C. legislature's one-vote margin granted the franchise to former World War I veterans of Japanese descent in 1931. Fearing the possibility of this same outcome for the Chinese, Vancouver city council carried a motion in September 1940 to ensure that any Chinese service in the armed forces would not lead to their acquisition of other privileges like the vote (Anderson, VC 170). Consequently, most Chinese were unable to enter the draft until the summer of 1944, when Vancouver's Mobilization Board "desperately needed men and . . . war workers complained of being drafted while Chinese Canadians were not" (Yee 103).

Due to China's resistance to Japanese aggression and Chinese participation in Canada's draft, "a new, positive image of the Chinese as allies began to blossom in Canada, especially after Pearl Harbor. Now, money sent to China did not provoke the age-old accusation that the Chinese in Canada were sojourners, interested only in China" (Chan, GM 145). The public became less likely to regard these remittances as indicators of the Chinese immigrants' foreignness or lack of loyalty to Canada; instead, Chinese immigrants who would later emigrate would become "a part of the popular image of fighting China and the heroic allies in Asia" (Chow 119). Thus, the war helped to foster public sympathy towards China and, by association, towards Canada's Chinese immigrants: "Sympathy for China had been developing since the Manchurian Crisis in 1931; after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941, it grew rapidly" (Tan and Roy 14). Growing numbers of the public also began to accept the Chinese population and to take pride in its ethnic diversity; in later decades, the mainstream public would help to recognize the Chinese community's contributions to Canada and the suffering that they experienced (Lai 121). The emergence of family life and higher living standards among the Chinese Canadian communities helped to improve public perceptions of them and the Chinatowns in which they lived; this operated in sharp contrast to earlier public views of the Chinatowns as morally blighted, godforsaken areas.

Other factors within and outside of Canada would further prompt the federal government to change its immigration laws and other policies for the Chinese. China's alliance with Canada during the war helped to instigate public sympathy and openness towards them (Lai 102). At the diplomatic level, relations between Canada and China similarly improved. Canada and China became war allies in 1941 and by 1942, their diplomatic relations increased to ministerial and ambassadorial status (Con et al. 197). Moreover, the prolonged, mass destruction of the war and horrors of the Holocaust significantly reduced the public popularity of hereditarian and racial doctrines (Dawson 212). Indications of their reduced popularity appeared in British Columbia, where such overt references to race would no longer guarantee political votes. Other factors outside Canada, such as the African independence movements in European colonies, the formation of the United Nations, and the creation of the UN charter (that Canada would also sign) made it increasingly difficult for the federal and provincial governments to justify their voting legislation and other overtly racist policies towards the Chinese (Con et al. 201). Consequently, opponents of Chinese enfrachisement were reduced to a fringe group (Anderson, VC 172).

Post-WWII Legislation: New Beginnings and Continuities

After the war, the federal and provincial governments slowly dismantled the legislative barriers that barred the Chinese population's full participation in mainstream society. Their rescinding of exclusionary legislation suggests that the status of the Chinese people as a foreign and unassimilable group had changed and that the Chinese people were now recognized as a group legally entitled to the same rights as other Canadian citizens. However, it is important to note that racialized assumptions about Chinese Canadians still persisted in the federal government's post-war immigration policy and public attitudes about the desirability of Chinese Canadians' presence in Canada. The Chinese Canadians' new legal status in Canada did not necessarily translate into attitudinal changes towards the presence and acceptability of Chinese Canadians in Canada. Post-war attitudes reflected the white Canadians' essentialist views of Chineseness from the Exclusion Era because these attitudes still assumed that Chinese Canadians were inherently different from white Canadians and that this inherent difference manifested in the same way among all Chinese Canadians. As such, the acceptability of Chinese Canadians in Canada remained tenuous at both the governmental and public level and was shaped by people's perceptions of Chinese Canadians' perceived economic benefits for Canada, their suitability for life in Canada, and their desirability for Canada's national identity. Their perceived racial difference would continue to inform the federal government's immigration policies around desirable immigrants from 1945 to 1967, but it would also inform some citizens' views that Chinese Canadians' difference could benefit Canada's economy. Ironically, then, the racial assumptions that justified their exclusion from Canada during the Exclusion Era would also become part of an economically driven discourse that accepted their presence by promoting their "inherent" differences.

This is not to suggest that Canada's post-war legislative changes were insignificant because these changes did allow Chinese Canadians to integrate more readily into Canadian society. People of Chinese origin gradually acquired the legal rights that they had been denied for so long, which included the "equal opportunit[y] to become citizens and, thereby, to send for their wives and children outside Canada" (Dawson 213); those who were not already Canadian citizens could apply for naturalization. This became possible when the government rescinded the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act and passed the Canadian Citizenship Act in 1947; the Canadian Citizenship Act went into effect at the beginning of that year and defined the franchise as a right that came with one's citizenship status. Provincially, similar legislation followed when the B.C. legislature voted to amend its provincial elections act in order to grant Chinese and East Indian Canadians the vote. In 1948, the federal passage of the Dominion Elections Act "extended the federal vote to all British subjects by birth or naturalization . . . [F]inally, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and Vancouver city council recommended without dissent in 1949 that the legislature remove the disqualification of 'Orientals' from the Municipal Elections Act" (Anderson, VC 173). Acquiring the vote constituted a significant step in the public's perception of Chinese immigrants as well as the Chinese population's perception of themselves because the Chinese population "had been relieved of the most obvious official marker of outsider status . . . [F]inally[,] they fel[t] a sense of permanency" (Anderson, VC 173).

In that same year, the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act was replaced by the 1947 Immigration Act, which permitted family reunification for current Chinese Canadian residents. However, the new act still racially discriminated against the numbers and the eligible types of immigrants who could actually emigrate from China. The new Chinese Immigration Act and Order in Council P.C. 2115 that "governed Chinese immigration policy from 1947 to the 1960s, underscored the government's determination to maintain the racial character of Canadian society" (Tan and Roy 15). While the Chinese were no longer specifically targeted as a group to be excluded from Canada, they were still categorized under the general category of "Orientals"—which included Asians as a whole—and were restricted in their entry (Anderson, VC 175). Prime Minister MacKenzie King affirmed that immigration was a privilege instead of a right and that Canada had a right to restrict immigration so that it would not change the "fundamental composition" of its society (Con et al. 210). The legislation still emphasized the assimilative and integrative ability of the new immigrants to Canada's way of life and continued to favour immigrants from Britain and other European countries; consequently, King's views would persist in the immigration policies of subsequent federal administrations until the end of the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker eras of government in 1963 (Con et al. 209). In contrast to these restrictions for Chinese immigrants, the government encouraged and provided more leeway for European immigrants through policies such as the Close Relatives Plan, which allowed European Canadians to sponsor and bring over immediate family members and relatives. Another federal initiative called the Group Movement Plan allowed Canadian Immigration Labour Teams who travelled around Europe to select immigrants on the basis of recognized manpower needs (Lai 103).

The revised Immigration Act of 1952 continued to discriminate against Asian immigrants as a whole because it "continued to restrict the definition of 'relatives of Asians' to Canadian citizens' wives and their children under eighteen years old" (Anderson, VC 181). The governor-in-council would have complete power in selecting and admitting prospective immigrants and could legally prohibit them on the basis of factors such as "nationality, ethnic group, occupation, lifestyle, unsuitability with regard to Canada's climate, and perceived inability to become readily assimilated into Canadian society" (Knowles 138). As part of the 1952 Act, the government would have the power to grant loans to cover immigrants' cost of transportation and expenses on their way to Canada. In 1953, the government legislated the Assisted Passage Loan Scheme to specifically target Europeans who possessed desirable skills for Canada's economic development but who could not cover the cost of emigration by themselves (Knowles 138).

Moreover, while the public's views of the Chinese became more favourable after their participation in the Second World War, Kay J. Anderson notes that, in some respects, their views had not changed because they still coexisted alongside the enduring notion of "a separate, if not inferior, Chinese race" (VC 176). For example, this view would set the tone for media representations and public restructuring of Vancouver's Chinatown, such that Chinatown became promoted as an exotic part of Vancouver's post-war tourist industry. While this differed from the negative images of Chinatowns that I referred to earlier, these comparatively positive images of Chinatown reinscribed its Otherness within a framework of its economic profitability. As a result, Chinatown, like the Chinese citizens who lived inside and outside of it, "still embodied for the city's white community the essence of an alien culture and people" (Anderson, VC 177).

The public's favourable views also shifted during the Korean War and the Cold War of the 1950s and 1960s. They reinscribed the stereotypes of Chinese people as the threatening, unassimilable Other and "created a new wave of Sinophobia that was in part prompted by fear of communism. Fear of communist infiltration became another convenient excuse to restrict the entry of Chinese to the immediate family members of citizens" (P. Li 93). As a result, Chinese immigrants' racial complexion became conflated with the political orientation of China's new communist government; this became the basis for proponents to justify their exclusion from Canada because they "represented a potential threat to the 'free world.' Canada's guarded immigration policy . . . was in part a reflection of this political mentality, and in part a continuation of the historical racial bias against the Chinese" (P. Li 142). Valerie Knowles acknowledges the increased importance that immigration assumed in the governmental agendas of the 1950s, but notes that some members of the government and public disagreed about its role in Canadian society or remained ambivalent towards new immigrants (144). For instance, a poll in 1954 indicated that "only 45 percent of Canadians looked favourably on immigration" (Knowles 144). Consequently, selections of immigrants for entry would reflect these racial and ideological biases; those with undesirable political stances, which often meant left-wing and Communist sympathizers, were denied entry because the government saw them as threats to Canada's security (Knowles 133). Due to these obstacles, some resorted to illegal methods after the Communist government took power in China because they wanted to bring their relatives over to Canada (Tan and Roy 16).

The federal government passed new immigration regulations in 1962 that reduced the importance of the applicant's country of origin. However, this distinction between immigrants of Asian and African origin and all other immigrants, in terms of sponsoring relatives, continued to exist in these regulations until the 1967 Immigration Act. The 1967 Act reflected a shift away from race as an explicit basis for evaluating the immigrant's suitability and emphasized the immigrant's personal characteristics and skills instead. Giving less discretion to immigration offices, the new act incorporated a points system of evaluation for assessing all potential immigrants (Con et al. 245). Immigrants would be evaluated in nine categories that would demonstrate their suitability for settling in Canada. These nine categories included "education, employment opportunities in Canada, age, the individuals' personal characteristics, and degree of fluency in English or French" (Knowles 158). If they achieved equal to or higher than fifty points out of one hundred, immigrants would get a passing mark.

Changing Demographics and Attitudes: Chinese Canadians in the Post-WWII Era

Post-WWII immigration legislation dramatically changed the demographics of the Chinese Canadian population. These changing demographics, coupled with the growing accessibility of Canadian society to Chinese Canadians after the Exclusion Era, resulted in an increasingly heterogeneous Chinese Canadian population with different backgrounds and interests, an acceleration of the Chinese Canadians' integration into Canadian society, and a steady decline of Chinatowns and traditional Chinese associations as important aspects of their everyday lives. Due to these changes, struggles over what it meant to be Chinese developed within the Chinese Canadian community. This is not to suggest that these struggles over Chineseness were nonexistent before the Second World War, but I wish to emphasize that the post-war era's circumstances contributed to these tensions among Chinese Canadians. These circumstances divided them along generational lines as well as between those who emigrated to Canada after the war and those who emigrated to Canada before the war. The post-war circumstances highlighted the significant disjuncture between Chinese Canadians' legislative status in the Exclusion Era and the post-war era, but also the disjuncture between Chinese Canadians' strategies for survival in the Exclusion Era and the inadequacy of those strategies for addressing Chinese Canadians' needs and desires in post-WWII Canada. As I will discuss below, class and economic concerns shape Chinese Canadians' understandings of Chineseness in the post-war era, but these understandings are also mediated by static conceptualizations of Chineseness that, paradoxically, mirror the racial attitudes that justified Chinese immigrants' exclusion in the Exclusion Era. This suggests that Chineseness needs to be understood as something that is mediated in its meanings by other factors, such as economic concerns, and by the historical circumstances in which Chineseness is evoked.

Post-war Chinese immigrants were likely to have more in common with non-Chinese immigrants than with the people who had emigrated from China before the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act. As a whole, the post-war immigrants of the late-1950s and 1960s were more heterogeneous in cultural background and country of origin, "with a greater diversity of skills and training and widely varied intended occupations, which were by and large more urban than rural in character" (Knowles 143). Indeed, a majority of the earlier immigrants came from rural China, but many of the new ones were urbanites from Hong Kong and Taiwan (Bolaria and Li 118) who could converse fluently in English and had achieved a higher level of formal education (Chow 130). After the 1949 communist revolution, "[m]ainland China ceased to be the major source of Chinese immigration to Canada . . . in part because of the hostile relationship between China and the West during the cold-war years" (Bolaria and Li 118). These class and cultural differences contributed to the Chinese Canadian population's growing heterogeneity. In addition, the historical concentration of Chinese Canadians changed because both the older and newer generations of Chinese immigrants were less likely to live in Chinatowns after the Second World War (Chow 131). Instead, they began to seek living standards that were comparable to those of white Canadians and moved into middle-class neighbourhoods. Growing numbers of Chinese Canadians settled in urban centres instead of Chinatowns because of the increased economic, social, cultural, and political opportunities. Generational gaps became more prevalent as Canadian-born Chinese were less interested in Chinese culture and were more open to Western cultural influences such as Christianity. As a result, some community members blamed the "Canadian-born disinterest . . . for the lack of Chinese New Year celebrations in Chinatown in the early 1960s" (Yee 126).

> The second generation of Canadian-born Chinese was better educated and better off economically. With diminishing discrimination, these people had moved out of Chinatown to better residential neighbourhoods . . . the importance of Chinatowns was declining as the Chinese no longer segregated themselves. The third and later generations and postwar immigrants did not regard Chinatown as their home at all, since they had not been brought up there. (Lai 123)

Besides these demographic shifts away from the Chinatowns, several other factors contributed to their physical demise and their decline as centres of Chinese Canadians' everyday lives. Fires, the development of large metropolitan cities, slum clearance, land speculation, urban renewal, and public works projects of the 1950s and 1960s also threatened to destroy Chinatowns across Canada. Campaigns against their destruction appeared in the larger cities, where the Chinese communities were larger and more vocal (Lai 125). For instance, two of the most concentrated areas where Chinese Canadians resided were Vancouver and Toronto, both of whose Chinatowns were threatened for these reasons. Toronto's Chinatown was significantly reduced after the war because the city council wanted space for the new City Hall and Nathan Philips Square. Furthermore, speculators already owned about 58 percent of Chinatown's land, which contrasted to only 42 percent that was owned by the Chinese residents (Lai 146). However, support from community leaders and Chinese associations helped to keep the remainder of the Chinatown intact. Vancouver's Chinatown was another major Canadian Chinatown that was also threatened by city council proposals to replace the old buildings with "a carefully zoned complex of private dwellings, light industries, and government-subsidized public housing projects" (Lai 126). In contrast to the fate of Toronto's Chinatown, Vancouver's Chinatown remained largely intact because of the citizens' and community leaders' successful resistance; this led to a renewal of Chinatown in the 1970s, with the assistance of local organizations (132). As David Lai speculates, Vancouver's Chinatown is "the only Chinatown in Canada which has not been drastically reduced by postwar urban renewal programs" (126).

The push among concerned Chinese Canadians for the preservation of these Chinatowns demonstrated that these places were sources of cultural pride and history that needed to be preserved. In addition, these areas became commercial sources of revenue for the Chinese Canadians, city councils, and businesses; each of these places underwent a transformation from an isolated residential and economic enclave into a location that is more economically receptive and oriented towards potential consumers outside of Chinatown (Yee 121). However, despite these positive public attitudes towards the Chinatowns, "many Canadians still regarded Chinatown as a mysterious and exotic neighbourhood where gambling clubs proliferated" (Lai 122). Indeed, the Canadian public and city councils would start to look more favourably upon the Chinatowns as tourist attractions whose attractiveness could be enhanced through redevelopment programs (Chow 131). In this respect, the interested parties have retained and reconfigured the exotic image of Chinatown in the context of its new economic possibilities, which it will help to promote through its physical and cultural distinctiveness. Furthermore, Chinese culture itself became a marketing tool to attract tourists to Chinatown (Yee 121). Ironically, these interpretations of Chineseness parallel the essentialist views of Chinese immigrants and Chinatowns that circulated in the Exclusion Era and justified their economic subordination and exclusion. However, the difference between the ways in which these views of Chineseness are deployed in the Exclusion and post-war eras is that both white Canadians and Chinese Canadians in the post-war era are promoting these views of Chinatown and Chinese culture for their *mutual* economic benefit. The growing demographic presence and increased economic clout of the Chinese Canadian population, benefited by post-war opportunities and immigration, have caused mainstream businesses to recognize them as a profitable resource. Seeing the potential in expanding their appeal to the Chinese Canadian community, several companies, ranging from businesses to airlines, have helped to fund these activities in subsequent decades (P. Li 127-128).

However, Chinatowns played a significantly less central role in Chinese Canadians' post-war lives. As barriers fell in the job markets and residential areas, many Chinese Canadians moved away. The new generations of Chinese, either who newly emigrated or who were descendents of the older generation prior to the Exclusion Era, were generally better educated, more affluent, and less likely to view Chinatown as an important source of social and economic activity (Lai 123-124). The dismantling of barriers in other spheres of activity also reduced the possibilities for recruiting younger members to Chinatown's associations and clans or drawing them to its social activities. Reduced trade and commerce followed as businesses that were originally based in Chinatown migrated to outlying areas, taking the patrons with them. The shifting demographic concentration of the Chinese Canadian population across Canada contributed to these changes. Victoria and Vancouver historically served as the hubs of Chinese Canadian activity (Chan, GM 147), but this changed after the rescinding of the 1923 Immigration Act in 1947. Increasingly, Toronto and Toronto's Chinatown became the new economic and political centres of Chinese Canadian activity because of the influx of new immigrants, the growing concentration of Chinese people in eastern Canada, and the city's geographical location in the "industrial heartland of Eastern Canada" (Chan, GM 148). The people in Toronto's Chinatown could also acquire "[the] necessary white support because the image of the Asians as an economic rival had less of a hold on the eastern imagination" (Chan, GM 148).

The decline in the significance of the Chinatowns also paralleled the decline of traditional associations that were based in those areas, illustrating a departure from an understanding of Chineseness as a collective identity that derived from one's nationalist origins and one's affiliations with particular associations. The new immigrants' cultural background and the more receptive societal climate towards Chinese Canadians problematized, and rendered irrelevant, these associations' pre-World War II roles as providers of economic and social support. Clan and locality associations experienced similar declines in participatory involvement (Con et al. 230). In contrast to the pre-1923 wave of Chinese immigration, these new immigrants were less likely to adhere to the traditional concepts of surname, clan, and territorial ties and were more likely, instead, to be " concerned with governmental contributive welfares and government assistance programs" (Chow 132). People's political differences increased this disunity. For instance, after the Communist government established the People's Republic of China in 1949, some associations refused to recognize it and focused on acquiring overseas support for its overthrow instead of focusing on the welfare of community members in Canada. As a result, these associations lost their clout with Chinese Canadians as some distanced themselves from these stances and formed new community associations that better reflected their views (Lai 124). Some of these old associations tried to make themselves relevant for the newer, more educated generation of Chinese; for instance, Vancouver's long-standing Chinese Benevolent Association (CBA) changed its organizational structure in the 1960s, but it still reinforced "a traditional conception of the community " that did not invite newer Chinese associations, such as the "dynamic (and non-traditional) Elks, Lions, and the Chinese Veterans Association[,] to sit on the revamped CBA board" (Con et al. 223).

As a result, most leaders among the new generation were excluded from these traditional leadership positions, became "increasingly dissatisfied with the [Kuomintang] domination of the CBA and the hard-line, Cold-war attitudes" (Con et al. 223), and wanted to reconfigure the leadership of Chinese Canadian communities so that they fit with the new realities of Chinese Canadians' lives: "[A]ctive and vocal groups of second-generation Chinese Canadians . . . were veterans . . . who wished to participate fully in the economy and society of a Canada that they believed was different from the Canada of their fathers' and uncles' generations" (Con et al. 221). Consequently, these various developments led to the emergence of two major streams of politics in Canadian Chinese communities by the late 1960s:

> One was firmly rooted in the older community organizations and was dominated by older men whose consciousness was marked by discriminatory rules and regulations and who saw accommodation, not confrontation, as the most effective strategy. A second version was dominated by younger, professionally oriented members of the communities, who were willing to use the system and, if necessary, challenge it. (Con et al. 256)

Post-1967 Communities: Dispersal, Reconfiguration, and Reconstituted Identities

Canada's 1967 Immigration Act officially removed discriminatory practices from the consideration and admission of all classes of immigrants. These included previous considerations of preferential and favoured immigrant source countries, nationality, and racial and ethnic origins. Immigrants in professions and technical and skilled occupations would now have greater chances of entering because the revised assessments of the immigrant's suitability for admission would now emphasize individual merit in areas such as education and occupation, useful skills, and the nation's economic needs (Kalbach and Kalbach 3; Indra 167-168). The 1967 Immigration Act also introduced a new class of eligible immigrants under the category of "nominated relatives" and its provision that allows visitors to apply for immigrant status (Knowles 160).

While racial discrimination is no longer present in Canada's post-1967 immigration policies, I suggest that the economic considerations guiding these policies are racially informed because Asia's economic importance makes immigration from that part of the world a more attractive and necessary prospect. Indeed, Peter Li notes that these revisions to Canada's immigration policy responded to labour needs that arose out of post-war industrial expansion that the current pool of skilled workers could not fulfill (137). These new considerations significantly increased immigration from previously restricted countries and regions, which contributed to geographical shifts in the sources of immigration and, consequently, to demographic shifts in Canada's ethnic and cultural composition. Between 1951 and 1998, the top ten immigrant sources shifted from predominantly European countries to non-European ones. By 1998, non-European countries became the primary sources of immigration and included China, India, Hong Kong, Philippines, Pakistan, Taiwan, Iran, and Korea (Kalbach and Kalbach 4-5).[6]

Thus, the identity category "race," upon which previous exclusionary legislation was based, continues to influence the ways in which the federal government addresses Canada's economic concerns after 1967. Whereas it was concerned in the past about the economic threat that Asian immigrants posed to Canada's economy and white Canadians' jobs, the federal government now considered the economic benefits that Asian immigrants could provide for Canada. As Doreen M. Indra suggests, the importance of Asian trade coincides with the increase of immigration from Asian countries. The immigrants' national origins reflect the countries that are economically important to Canada: "Social relations between Canada and its trading partners are changing to reflect these developing economic relations [with Asian countries], and clearly changes in immigration flows are one result of this new economic order" (Indra 175). Nevertheless, as Indra suggests, race is configured so that it does not threaten the status quo because "Asian immigrants will continue to be from cultural backgrounds which continue to reflect many Western ideas, institutions, and ways of doing" (Indra 177). As such, the government's approach to immigration signifies "race" in positive and negative ways: it accepts the presence of racial difference in Canada by allowing immigrants from Asian countries to enter the country, but it also resists the presence of that racial difference by privileging immigrants who come from sufficiently Westernized backgrounds.

Similarly, the identity category of "race" influences the federal government's treatment of immigrants in Canada. In contrast to pre-1967 legislation, the federal government also took a more active stance in helping Chinese immigrants adapt to Canadian life, which suggests a changing view of Otherness that works towards its inclusion, rather than its exclusion from, Canadian society. Whereas the earlier generations of immigrants had to depend upon the associations and community members for assistance, these new immigrants had more options. For instance, the government's formation of the 1972 multicultural centres program was used to create organizations that would serve Chinese Canadians and help new arrivals adjust to life in Canadian society (Chow 132). Arguably, these centres constitute a step towards alleviating discriminatory views towards immigrants by seeing them as people who can belong in Canadian society, rather than as a threatening group who does not. However, it is important to qualify these centres' benefits for immigrants because they reflect an approach to addressing "difference" that depends upon its assimilation. I suggest that these centres exemplify persistent historical views of immigrants as foreigners, but regard them as people who can be socialized into Canadian life and Canadian society's dominant expectations. Therefore, such an approach does not adequately address the actual problems of racial discrimination that immigrants may face; it focuses on the immigrants themselves, rather than on the larger social and economic conditions that may contribute to immigrants' problems or to white Canadians' discriminatory views against them.

Besides these reconfigurations of Canada's national identity in the post-1967 era, the trends that began with the post-war changes in immigration laws (and continued in the post-1967 era) also contributed to changing understandings of Chineseness and "Chinese Canadian-ness" among Chinese Canadians that cannot be readily defined by their allegiances to a particular country or by their common racial and cultural heritage. Instead, I suggest that the increased immigration and available opportunities for class mobility in the post-1967 era both contributed to Chinese Canadians' differing views of themselves, which their individual circumstances further informed. The exclusionary circumstances of the Exclusion Era may have necessitated and contributed to a strong sense of collective identity among Chinese immigrants, but the post-1967 wave of Chinese immigrants was markedly more diverse than those who immigrated prior to 1923 (Con et al. 248). In contrast to the rural background of most of the pre-1923 Chinese immigrants, post-1967 immigrants differed on the basis of "[s]ocial class, point of migration, and date of migration . . . [T]he fundamental distinction inevitably related to immigration history, and the division between pre- and post-sixties migrants became the critical one" (Con et al. 248).[7] This post-1967 generation of Chinese immigrants had more opportunities for upward mobility and, in contrast to the older generation of Chinese immigrants, was far less likely to work in service occupations or in menial jobs such as laborers, janitors, and laundry and restaurant workers (P. Li 119-120). Increased stratification and heterogeneous identities developed from these differences: "Ironically, mutual participation in nationalist activities was also an intersection at which constructions of common national heritage simultaneously fragmented into new and hostile identities shaped by class, occupation, and education. These interactions often transformed mutual ignorance into mutual suspicion and distaste" (Con et al. 324). English-language career possibilities further separated people from "traditional" Chinese culture that the earlier generations of immigrants imported from China, as well as its adherents, because their Chinese cultural traditions became less essential for them to function in Canadian society.

Similarly, the Chinatowns that had been central to Chinese Canadians' survival and collective identity during the Exclusion Era became less central to the daily lives of many Chinese Canadians, particularly those who immigrated after 1967. Even though Chinatowns were not residentially attractive, they still operated as commercial and social centres where people could buy products from overseas, watch Chinese movies, and participate in Chinese festivals and social events (Chow 132). As for the traditional associations that had been based in these Chinatowns, their decline in their traditional functions occurred alongside the development of new organizational structures established by the post-1967 immigrants. For example, in Toronto, Hong Kong-born, Canadian-educated social service workers and community activists "became the link between the Chinese working class and various government departments" (Chan, GM 154). In contrast to the traditional associations that prevailed during the exclusion era, these individuals were recognized and paid by the Canadian government, which allowed them to "assume leadership of Toronto's Chinese community, and eventually of such communities across the country" (Chan, GM 154). With their new leadership positions, these members of Canada's Chinese Canadian communities would have considerable status and influence in areas such as the acquisition of federal multicultural grants and input into city developments that concerned the interests of Chinese Canadians. However, some of these people who became leaders assumed a less activist role and worked within the parameters of their positions.

Between 1923 and 1967 in Canada, a governmental and public legacy of legislated and socially sanctioned forms of discrimination persisted against immigrants of Chinese origin. Their treatment of the Chinese population in that era reflects their persistent attempts to reconcile their views of what Canada's national identity should be with the Chinese population's presence and the threat that they pose to a cohesive sense of national identity. At the same time, their constitution of a particular national identity for Canada depended upon the presence of Otherness for its self-definition, even as it required the exclusion of that Otherness to maintain its integrity. Legislated and socially sanctioned forms of discrimination were not only racially motivated but also class-based because they relegated the Chinese population to the economic, social, political, and cultural margins of society. The government and public justified such discrimination towards these immigrants through race: their physically visible difference from the non-Chinese, white majority of Canadian society became an epistemological marker that identified their Otherness and signified the threat that they posed to Canada's predominant cultural and racial composition. This racial justification intersected with their class marginalization, which manifested itself through the official divestment of their collective influence by curtailing their economic power in the mainstream labour market and limiting it to marginalized places such as Chinatown. At the same time, their xenophobic attitudes were mitigated by the contributions that the Chinese population could provide for Canada's economy, as long as the Chinese population itself did not benefit from these contributions.

While Chinese Canadians had more opportunities for increasing their class statuses and raising their public profile after the end of the Second World War, discriminatory assumptions continued to inform the Canadian government's immigration policies and the public's views of them. The government continued to discriminate against Chinese immigrants as well as other immigrants from Asian backgrounds by prioritizing immigrants who possessed the right racial and class characteristics: those who are "white" and those who have desirable labour skills for Canada's economic development. Similarly, the persistence of xenophobic attitudes towards the Chinese population in public suggests that the public's acceptance of the Chinese population is tenuous and that their acceptance of "difference" can quickly revert to intolerance, particularly as the Chinese population's racial visibility makes them susceptible targets for discrimination.

The persistence of racial and class-based perceptions of Chinese Canadians and the impact of these perceptions on governmental policies illustrates the necessity of not only challenging their institutional exclusion but also epistemological constructions of Chinese Canadians. Thus, this historical background illuminates the inherently political and ethical nature of Chinese Canadian literature because Chinese Canadians' mutual recognition of their shared history and their predecessors' exclusion from mainstream society helped to develop a collective awareness about the work that they had to do to make themselves heard in Canadian society. By representing themselves in literature, these writers challenge Chinese Canadians' invisibility in the cultural productions of Canadian society. Their incentives for writing stem from their desire to acknowledge past generations of Chinese and recuperate their experiences. Marking out their presence in literature, they challenge stereotypical representations of Chinese Canadians and other debilitating images of Chineseness that have historically intersected with racially implicated class discourses. They represent Chinese Canadians as unique individuals who have their own difficulties and aspirations in the historical eras that they inhabit, but who have also survived and contributed significantly to the development of Canadian society. In the following chapters, I will analyse how Chinese Canadian authors represent what it means to be Chinese in Canada and, specifically, how their different understandings of class identity inform their representations.

Notes

1 In my introductory chapter, I referred to Ien Ang's cautionary comment about the dangers of essentializing Chineseness. However, given the recurrence and relevance of the term "Chinese" to the legislative and discursive contexts from 1923-1967, I will use it as an identity marker that will take on different significations from one context to the next. I will use this term to refer to the following situations: (1) the people who have emigrated from China to Canada; (2) the Canadian government's identification of a group of people as "Chinese" for legislative purposes; (3) the public's identification of a group of people as "Chinese" and its perceptions of that group; (4) the representation of them in the media and other communicatory forms; (5) the Chinese Canadian population's perceptions of themselves as a group who share a common cultural heritage and identity because of their genealogical ancestry, geographical origins, and Canadian experiences; and (6) the usage of "Chinese" in the term "Chinese Canadian literature," which designates a body of work that is a part of a particular group with shared, yet heterogeneous, histories and multiple identities.

2 The Burlingame Treaty had a free migration clause that would provide cheap Chinese labour for both America's and Canada's railway construction projects: "Although the British colonial office by 1868 no longer administered the movement of people into Canada, Ottawa was still dependent on Britain in foreign affairs and thus benefited as a most-favoured nation, from the Burlingame Treaty" (Chan, GM 43). The Burlingame Treaty was signed between the American and Chinese governments in 1858: under its terms, both countries would recognize the right of its citizens to change their home and national allegiance and allow its citizens to freely migrate abroad.

3 Yen Le Espiritu discusses the stereotyping of male and female Chinese in terms of their gender and sexuality and explains how they were simultaneously "over-sexualized" and "under-sexualized": in each case, the exaggeration would contribute to the Chinese person's abnormality and deviance from acceptable moral norms.

4 As Tamara Palmer Seiler suggests in the contemporary context, the construction of Canada's national identity through the image of the "mosaic" also elides in its connotations as it covers up the heterogeneity of historical and present realities of Canadian experience. Consequently, the mosaic is a symbol that simultaneously aims to achieve the public purpose of legitimizing diversity and affirming national unity. Yet, these symbols "perpetuate the very tensions and inequalities they are intended to reduce" (98).

5 Demographically, the Chinese population's geographical distribution remained rather concentrated and its numerical total remained consistent during the exclusion era. As a whole, the Chinese only comprised 0.5 percent of the total Canadian population from 1881 to 1941 (Lai 61). Between 1921 and 1941, sixty percent of the Chinese resided in British Columbia, with significantly smaller numbers in Ontario (about 12%), followed by Alberta, Manitoba, and the Maritimes. Although some Chinese lived in rural areas, most of the Chinese have resided in urban centres since 1901; this percentage has increased over the decades (Wickberg 25-26). Public hostility towards the Chinese prompted them to move eastward from B.C. to other provinces, where the social climate was comparatively less antagonistic (Lai 61). These movements shifted the concentration of the Chinese population, with B.C. Chinese declining from 85 percent at the turn of the century to 59 percent in 1921. In contrast, the percentage went up in the eastern provinces, with Quebec and Ontario accounting "for 14 and 19 percent of the national total respectively" (Lai 61).

6 After the passage of the 1967 Immigration Act, the British and French segments of the Canadian population retained their overall numerical dominance but other Europeans, non-Europeans, and Asians comprised a larger portion of the population. By 1996, the visible minority population had increased to about 11 percent of Canadian's population, up from 6.3 percent in 1986 (Kalbach and Kalbach 5).

7 The post-1967 immigrants came to Canada for reasons that generally differed from those who arrived before 1967. Most of them came by choice rather than out of necessity

and they saw Canada as a desirable place "to live, work, and raise families because of its political stability, high standard of living, relative lack of racial tension, and the openness of its educational system" (Tan and Roy 17-18).

Chapter Three

The "Memory Work" of Class: Reciprocal Influences Between Chinese Canadians' Memories and their Current Class Identities

In his comments about Asian Canadian literature and its representation of Asian immigrants' and their descendents' experiences, Benzi Zhang suggests that many of these literary works conceptualize identity as something that occurs in relation to not only where they currently reside, but also the life that they left behind in their former country. Acknowledging the heterogeneity of backgrounds among Asian immigrants who have come to Canada, Zhang suggests that many Asian Canadian works address how these immigrants face "the same problem of how to re-articulate their 'historical inheritance' in a 'heterogeneous present'" ("Identity as Cultural Trans(re)lation" 37). Zhang does not intend to suggest that this "historical inheritance" is a static body of cultural knowledge about themselves that immigrants transplant from their country of origin[1], but rather to emphasize the different ways in which that inheritance persists and impinges upon immigrants' present identities.

Extending Zhang's points, then, I suggest that the experience of immigrating to Canada entails a process of adaptation to Canadian society. Through this process, immigrants negotiate their identities in relation to what they remember about their homeland and what these memories may mean in their present circumstances: "After relocating themselves in a new society and culture, diasporans must face various political, economic, and cultural forces that threaten their sense of identity as a fixed, pure and closed structure, which has been uprooted from its original territory by their border-crossing experience" (Zhang, "Identity as Cultural Trans(re)lation" 37). At the same time, it is important to recognize that those memories themselves are constructed representations of the past that signify from specific contexts in which people evoke them. As Keya Ganguly asserts, people's "memories of the past provide a crucial discursive terrain for [them] to reconsolidat[e] . . . identit[ies]" (27), but these memories impact upon people's identities in discontinuous and shifting ways that vary from one individual to another (28-29).[2] Conceptualizing a reciprocal relationship between people's identities and their memories, she suggests that people's identities are influenced by, and influence, the memories that they construct about the past and evoke in reference to their individual circumstances.

In their representations of Chinese Canadians' experiences in The Concubine's Children (1994) and Disappearing Moon Café (1992) respectively, Denise Chong and Sky Lee address these issues around memory and identity, but within the context of Chinese Canadians from different generations who construct particular understandings of themselves in the era of 1923 to 1967. Their texts suggest that a consideration of the relationship between memory and identity is important because it highlights how Chinese Canadians' class identities derive not only from the ways in which they perceive themselves in the historical contexts that they inhabit, but also in relation to their class-inflected memories of their own experiences and their Chinese cultural heritage. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, Chinese Canadians had few possibilities for integrating into Canadian society during the Exclusion Era, but had more opportunities to do so in the post-war era. In the context of these shifting circumstances, Chong and Lee suggest ways of thinking about the relationship between Chinese Canadians' memories and their class identities that recognize how their memories of previous experiences and identities co-exist, conflict, and interact with their current experiences and other forms of identity that circulate in the same place. Their characters' memories promote and authorize particular class identities for them, but these very identities and the memories to which they refer also become the sources of personal struggle and interpersonal tensions among the characters. In the process, these two texts illustrate how class significations inform their characters' identities—perceptually and in actuality—and how characters' memories of China-based and Canadian-based experiences fluctuate in their meaning. These meanings shift from one individual and generation to the next, influencing those identities in contestatory and contradictory ways. At the same time, they avoid a simplistic understanding of what characters' memories mean and how their memories can impact upon their identities. They suggest that static ideas about Chineseness that are concretized through characters' memories are not necessarily oppressive, even though these ideas were at the time: instead, the selective recounting of particular ideas provide a comforting basis for characters' identities in times of crisis or struggle.

Class (Dis)satisfaction and "Memory Work": Representation of Chan Sam's Class Identity in Denise Chong's The Concubine's Children

Since the publication of Denise Chong's The Concubine's Children in 1994, literary critics have commented on the significance of Chong's representation of her multigenerational family against the broader backdrop of Canada's and China's histories. As critics such as Susanna Hilf and Eleanor Ty suggest, Chong's biography contributes to the "de-exoticizing [of] the Oriental other" (Ty 288) by representing her family as multifaceted individuals who cannot be irreducibly defined by Chinese stereotypes. Her text "bring[s] to the fore the (long-neglected) perspective of the Asian Other . . . [it] create[s] a realistic representation of [Chinatown,] which has many times been subjected to stereotypical and distorting depictions" (Hilf 77). In doing so, Chong constructs a narrative that validates her family's and, more broadly, Chinese Canadians' voices and experiences in mainstream discourses of Canadian history. At the same time, critics suggest, The Concubine's Children also represents Chong's personal journey of uncovering her family's past and engaging in a process of collective remembering that documents her predecessors' lives, validates their struggles in the historical contexts that they inhabited, and connects her own identity to her predecessors.[3]

Extant criticism on Chong's text, however, has focused more extensively on Chong's portrayal of her female family members and the ways in which their identities are defined by gendered and racialized understandings of Chineseness. It is important to consider the class aspects of Chinese Canadians' identities in Chong's The Concubine's Children because they help to define what her family members' identities mean, shape their perceptions of their circumstances, and influence how they respond to those circumstances. In her recent analysis, Michelle Gunderson does consider how the economic aspects of Denise Chong's family members' lives shape their identities and interpersonal relationships in The Concubine's Children, but she does not specifically develop what "class" means as an identity marker. In addition, Gunderson's analysis shares the tendency of earlier critics, like Ellen Quigley and Lien Chao, to focus on the Chinese women depicted in Chong's text. By focusing on Chong's depictions of the Chinese women in her family, analyses can risk simplifying Chong's portrayal of Chan Sam and define him as an oppressive patriarch and perpetrator of Chinese cultural traditions from which Chong's mother Hing and grandmother May-ying attempt to extricate themselves.[4] This is not to discount the importance of Chong's mother's and grandmother's struggles that she depicts extensively in her text, but it is to recognize that Chong also depicts her grandfather Chan Sam sympathetically and portrays him as someone who, although flawed, copes admirably with the limited resources available to him in the Exclusion Era and the post-World War II era. Chan Sam's understanding of himself in Canada is not only influenced by his memories of China and its cultural traditions, which he attempts to replicate, but also by the class aspirations that he pursues and Canada's westernized culture. Focusing on Denise Chong's representation of Chan Sam, I would like to suggest that Chan Sam's class identity signifies out of an intersection of class discourses that geographically span Canada and China. Influenced by his memories of China as well as by other Chinese people's memories of him (which he wants to influence), Chan Sam's class identity signifies through his everyday struggles to survive in Canada and the conflicting and often irreconcilable obligations that he feels compelled to fulfill. His memories and those of others become sites of contestation that shape his own identity as a Chinese immigrant. Chong depicts him as an individual who has resiliently survived in the face of changing circumstances in Canada and China that are, at times, beyond his control. Chinese Canadians' identities, Chong suggests through her depiction of Chan Sam, are temporally contingent and depend on a complex negotiation of various and often conflicting discourses of identity that, paradoxically, need to be reconciled into a cohesive whole for the identity to be viable. The impossibility of doing so and the tenuous nature of people's memories upon which their identities may depend do not diminish the importance of particular identities. These identities can provide a source of actual empowerment or psychological sustenance, albeit temporary or illusory, to suit the circumstances in which they find themselves.

Chan Sam's memories of China centre on a particular understanding of Chineseness that defines what his identity in Canada means and how class signifies as a part of that identity. As a Chinese immigrant who lives in the inhospitable climate of the Exclusion Era, Chan Sam's memories of China and its cultural traditions provide a sense of stability and purpose for his life in Canada. At the same time, Chan Sam's memories also highlight the discrepancy between his actual class identity and the class expectations that he is expected to fulfill in China. In attempting to fulfill these expectations, Chan Sam contributes to a destructive cycle of familial relations within his family in Canada for the sake of his family in China. This does not mean that Chong absolves Chan Sam of blame for his family's suffering in Canada, but rather that she recognizes the circumstances that influence him to constitute and demonstrate a particular class identity that he and other Chinese people in China can remember favourably.

Chong's sympathetic portrayal of Chan Sam contests a long-standing stereotypical image of the Chinese immigrant as a sojourner. As Anthony Chan attests, the sojourner image has been used historically to make the Chinese population in Canada "more comprehensible for white Canadians" ("Myth" 40) and to justify racist legislation against them. Such an image reductively defines Chinese immigrants as foreigners who only wanted to become wealthy, after which they would return to China ("Myth" 34, 39-40). To an extent, Chong's depiction of Chan Sam does correlate with this image, but she also complicates it by showing how Chan Sam's economic considerations and memories of his home village in China are mediated by cultural and historical contexts in Canada as well as in China. Chong suggests that the meanings and salience of Chinese immigrants' class identities are shaped by an intersection between their understandings of where they are from and where they are at.

Pierre Bourdieu suggests that one's familial lineage, cemented through marriage and births of descendents, perpetuates one's class identity because it locates one within particular networks of obligation:

> [T]he patrimony of a family or lineage includes not only their land and instruments of production but also their kin and their clientele, *nesba*, the network of alliances, or, more broadly, of relationships, to be kept up and regularly maintained, representing a heritage of commitments and debts of honour, a capital of rights and duties built up in the course of successive generations and providing an additional source of strength which can be called upon when extra-ordinary situations break in upon the daily routine. (Outline of a Theory of Practice 178)

Depicting Chan Sam's preparation for emigration to Canada, Chong refers to the expectations that Chan Sam will remember and use to guide his class aspirations in

Canada. His desires for class mobility in Canada are both pragmatically and personally defined: "'Return home in brocade,' the old lady said. Chan Sam made a promise to his wife that he would struggle and save, that he would remit enough to cover her expenses at home. He pledged to return before too many years for a visit, and one day, to come home for good" (18). Chan Sam's identity already signifies within a network of obligations to his family and his village, Chang Gar Bin. His identity signifies within an inherited patriarchal framework of familial relations that designate him as an economic provider for his family as well as a representative of his village who is expected to return prosperous. These aspects of Chan Sam's prescribed identity evoke an understanding of Chineseness that derives from his geographical origins in China and his racial lineage as a Chinese descendent. The villagers' class expectations intersect with Chan Sam's identity as a Chinese person: their class expectations define Chan Sam's class identity in terms of the collective pride and prestige that Chan Sam could provide for Chang Gar Bin, rather than in terms of his individual class mobility. If he returns prosperous, he will provide a good name for himself and his village; otherwise, he will lose face (18).

Drawing upon his memories of traditional Chinese familial relations, Chan Sam tries to replicate a patriarchal framework of familial relations, but he cannot maintain it because of his lower-class status in Canada. Within the patriarchal framework of family relations, Chan Sam is the unquestioned master of the household whom his wife Huangbo and concubine May-ying must obey: " A new husband's few words to his wife did not go beyond whatever was necessary to keep the woman in her place. A wife did not ask questions of a husband when obedience was always the answer" (30). However, Chan Sam cannot replicate such a relationship between a Chinese husband and a wife in Canada because its maintenance depends on particular economic circumstances that Chan Sam cannot provide for May-ying as well as on May-ying's compliance with the gender and class assumptions that maintain these familial relations. As Chong relates, Chan Sam cannot find a job easily because the Canadian government's racist legislation relegated Chinese immigrants to manual and low-paying jobs in the Canadian economy. Available jobs were "either in Chinatown, or else the menial, poorest-paying or the most dangerous jobs on a sawmill floor, a mine or a farm" (18). His economic dependency on May-ying, who works as a waitress in a Chinatown teashop (27-28), is a situation to which he is unaccustomed, particularly as it also threatens his sense of absolute authority as her husband. Despite his marginalized class position as a manual labourer in Canada's economy, Chan Sam still feels that he has a natural right to exercise complete authority over May-ying and sees her as someone who "[is] not free to act without his consent" (124). When May-ying works at a gambling house in Chinatown (63), Chan Sam cannot accept his marginal role in her workplace and refuses to listen when she says that he is disrupting the mahjong players: "Chan Sam did not see himself in the wrong. *'Gum gee!'* he yelled, pointing his finger at her and proclaiming what came out of her mouth to be nonsense" (37). While his actions could be interpreted as an example of a domineering and unreasonable Chinese husband, these actions need to be considered in the context of Chan Sam's close attachment to his home village and his immigration to an unfamiliar country. Chan Sam's reactions to May-ying also exemplify what can happen to Chinese immigrants when they are displaced in an unfamiliar society and are discriminated against by racist legislation. Compared to his life in Canada, Chan Sam's memories of his life back in Chang Gar Bin take on a heightened significance because they alleviate his feelings about his present impoverishment in Canada, at least temporarily, and orient his desires for class prestige and class mobility towards China.

Chan Sam reminisces about China, not simply because he misses his family and village there (124), but also because he longs for the feelings of self-assurance and pride that comes with his unquestioned and privileged class position among his wife Huangbo and the other villagers, who look up to him as a model of class success. In their memories, Chan Sam's class status signifies in terms of his familial position as an economic provider and in terms of the amount of money that he is perceived to have. As Chong suggests, Chan Sam takes great pride in his villagers' favourable memories of his class position:

> to have money sent from China to Canada would have unraveled Chan Sam's reputation, built upon years of exile from his land, as a provider for his family. A labourer in Canada who had a job could still earn in a day what a peasant in China could earn in a month. Though poor in Canada, the laborer was, in the eyes of his relations back home, wealthy. Chan Sam did not even consider the possibility of turning around and going

> back [to China]. His pride demanded that he only show his face again at home when he had something to be proud of . . . [like] a new abundance of material goods and money from Gold Mountain. (51)

As such, it is not so much the actual material markers of a higher-class identity that are important in Chan Sam's memories of his class status in China, but rather the feelings of pride that arise when the other peasants in Chang Gar Bin express their admiration and respect for him. His memories sustain him psychologically and prompt him to preserve his elevated class status in the villagers' memories, despite the discrepancy between his villagers' perceptions and his actual marginalization in Canada's economy. In addition, Chan Sam's recollections of his privileged class position also intersect with his desires for his village's social relations, particularly those between a Chinese husband and wife. Indeed, Chan Sam prefers Huangbo's "manner and subservience" (30) and criticizes that May-ying "did not know her place" (76). Thus, Chan Sam's class identity in China also depends upon the retention of a static patriarchal order in which Huangbo accepts the role of a dutiful and subordinate wife (76). Huangbo's subordinate role shapes Chan Sam's class prestige in the village because her role elevates him, in turn, as a good Chinese husband who provides for his family.

Due to these memories of home, Chan Sam cannot accommodate to his and May-ying's different material circumstances in Canada. Commenting on how the act of remembering the past can take many forms, Mieke Bal suggests that nostalgia can be empowering and productive, but it can also be unproductive, escapist, and sentimental (xi). Chan Sam's nostalgic evocation of his life in China, as I discussed earlier, provides a sense of limited empowerment in his economically difficult circumstances in Canada, but it is also unproductive because it diverts him from the realities of his actual situation. Indeed, Chan Sam remains stubbornly attached to his memories of Chinese cultural traditions, even though his attempts to impose his authority upon May-ying backfire. For instance, other immigrants were more lenient in allowing unmarried relationships because they helped Chinese women to survive in Canada during the Exclusion Era, but Chan Sam was "not one to let reality overtake tradition" (124). He cannot reconcile his memories of how women in China are expected to act with his and May-ying's economic situation, which necessitates different kinds of social relations between Chinese men and

Chinese women. At first, May-ying accepts Chan Sam's expectations about how a traditional Chinese wife should act (30) because she expects that Chan Sam will give her a comfortable life (8). In return for her "wifely sacrifices," May-ying expected to be "looked after in her old age by the sons of the household and, in death, by having her tomb swept and her ancestral spirit worshipped" (31). However, May-ying rebels when she realizes that their stay in Canada is not simply a "temporary exile" (60) and is, instead, becoming permanent. Coupled with Chan Sam's lack of money and his dependency on her, May-ying grows resentful of their perpetual impoverishment in Canada and Chan Sam's expectation that she sacrifice her wages for the family back in China. While she accepted the traditional role of a Chinese wife in China, the increasing discrepancy between the comfortable and affluent life that she expected and the harsh reality of her economic situation contributes to her aversion to Chan Sam's authority. Whereas Chan Sam's memories of China alleviate his discomfort about his class status in Canada, May-ying's memories of China and its culturally defined familial relations only exacerbate what she despises about her current situation. She "longed to get out from under [Chan Sam's] prying eyes, from his proverbs that buffeted her this way and that, as if neither he nor she had an original thought of their own" (65).

At the same time that his memories of China alleviate his discomfort in Canada, Chan Sam's memories of China also *increase* his dissatisfaction with his current class status in Canada and his daily interaction with other Chinese immigrants. In her discussion of the relationship between identity, place, and memory, Kateryna Longley suggests that people's identities are defined by the places that they inhabit as well as by their memories of other places that they inhabited: "the space is always open, not necessarily to the physical spaces 'outside' but to outside times, to outside experiences, to memories of other lived spaces" (14). Chong's depiction of Chan Sam suggests that his identity in Canada is shaped by his memories of China, but also by his desire to reenact the experiences to which his memories refer. Due to the disjuncture between Chan's memories of his class status in China and his actual class status in Canada, Chan Sam tries to recapture those feelings of pride by behaving as if his class status is actually higher. The disjuncture between his actual class status and the status that he remembers from China makes him feel uncomfortable and exacerbates his inability to fit into

Nanaimo's Chinatown. Even though the other men in Nanaimo are also unemployed and comparatively similar to his family's material impoverishment, Chan Sam considers them to be inferior to him and reacts negatively because they differ from the people with whom he is used to associating. The men's different regional attachments enhance Chan Sam's sense of isolation in Nanaimo. They belong to different clans, whose members have the same surname, and come from other districts in China:

> Nanaimo brought an unshakeable boredom. . . . [H]e longed for other dimensions of respect. He thought it beneath him to be consigned to the company of idle men, unemployed like him, who came to Nanaimo. He had none of his own people here. Accustomed to choosing his friends from among those who convened at the clan building or the Kuomintang building in Vancouver, he did not have the graciousness to extend friendship to strangers. Instead, he hankered for the respect and admiration he had from Huangbo and the villagers of Chang Gar Bin. As if to remind himself of his stature among his kin at home, he was acutely self-conscious of his demeanor; he avoided lingering too long on the benches of walking aimless along Pine Street. (Chong 58)

Discussing how certain patterns of behaviour can become engrained in a person's bodily actions, Paul Connerton suggests that these actions can "re-enact an image of the past . . . [and] keep the past also in an entirely effective form in their continuing ability to perform certain skilled actions" (72). People's bodily actions evoke and reaffirm past distinctions between a community's members: "The importance of postures for communal memory is evident. Power and rank are commonly expressed through certain postures relative to others; from the way in which people group themselves and from the dispositions of their bodies relative to the bodies of others" (Connerton 73). Chong's depiction of Chan Sam provides a way to think about how bodily actions can reaffirm distinctions between people, as Connerton suggests, but also how these actions' desired effects depend on particular communal contexts. Chan Sam tries to revitalize his memories of his class status back home by behaving in class-appropriate ways, such as by walking purposefully and avoiding certain places that may cause other Chinese people to identify him as an impoverished manual labourer. Although his actions are futile and do not translate into any real change in his class status in Canada, Chan Sam's actions show how memories can be both a source of stability and comfort and a source of grief and loneliness. Chan Sam's acting out of a higher-class status from his memories only gives him a fleeting sense of comfort that ultimately fails to satisfy him because it does not adequately translate the actual experiences of inhabiting that higher-class status in Chang Gar Bin. This fleeting sense of comfort only causes him to want something that is more substantial to testify to his class stature in China.

It is important to note, however, that Chan Sam's fellow villagers' class expectations also constrict how his class identity can signify and, consequently, constrict how he can act. Chan Sam needs to repeatedly reaffirm a higher-class status in material form so that his villagers and family will continue to remember him favourably. This instigates an ongoing and destructive cycle of financial sacrifices in Canada to sustain his fellow villagers' admiration and to increase his class prestige back in China. For instance, Chan Sam brings back enough money and things to reinforce that he has, indeed, moved beyond a peasant's lifestyle and has taken on the trappings of an upwardly mobile subject. He selects gifts that signify a prestigious lifestyle because of their expensiveness, their numerical rarity in China, and their perceived connection to extravagant modes of consumption and manners that are indicative of an upper-class status. For instance, the furniture that Chan Sam brings back elicits awe from his fellow villagers and reaffirms his higher-class status in their eyes because they show that he lives in comfort and that he can afford to buy so many expensive and well-made things for his family and the rest of the village: "They admired the foreign-made furniture. . . . Of particular fascination was a metal crib, for no villager could believe the luxury of furniture for children" (43).

Chan Sam also needs to reinforce his favourable class image in the villagers' memories by distributing gifts to them, which function as concrete "proof" of his class status. The necessity of circulating gifts exposes the paradoxical nature of expressing a class status within a community: the community's recognition of that person's class status also depends on its inhabitants' acknowledgement that the person still belongs to that community. Helmuth Berking provides a way to think about the act of gift-giving as a means by which people can reinforce class distinctions. As she suggests, gifts function socially and reinforce a sense of community between subjects by "bind[ing] themselves to one another (13). The act of gift giving constructs an asymmetrical relationship between people because it "set[s] in train a dialectic of symbolic power in which the actors encounter and recognize one another as creditors and debtors in ever-shifting roles" (Berking 7). Gift giving constructs an obligation on the part of the receiver to reciprocate that gift by giving one in return or by showing her gratefulness (Berking 8). Chong's depiction of Chan Sam's return to Chang Gar Bin shows how his class identity is contingent upon his ability to fulfill particular behavioural expectations. In return for his gifts, Chan Sam expects the villagers to recognize his higher-class status by behaving respectfully and remembering him accordingly. By distributing gifts, Chan Sam reinforces his connections to the village, which then allow him to distinguish his class status among them and to ensure that this status is recognized: "He went on a round of visits through the village to pay his respects, leaving behind tins of biscuits and candies, the standard show of generosity" (44).[5]

Caught among the oppressive circumstances of the Exclusion Era, his memories of China and his obligations, and his desires for recognition, Chan Sam wants to construct a narrative of his life in which subsequent generations of Chang Gar Bin's residents will remember him as a successful Chinese immigrant who, like his father, raised his class status in Canada: "He wanted something to reflect the experiences of his father and himself of going abroad, and of striving to raise themselves above the class of the average uneducated peasant" (86). By building a big and elegant house in China to memorialize himself and his family there, Chan Sam concretely embodies and testifies to his class mobility and subsequent economic success in Canada. Andreas Huyssen suggests that monuments can function as a way of "guarantee[ing] origin and stability as well as depth of time and of space in a rapidly changing world that was . . . transitory, uprooting, and unstable" (200). Monumental architecture "seemed to guarantee permanence and to provide the desired bulwark against the speed-up of time, the shifting grounds of urban space, the transitoriness of modern life" (Huyssen 200). Chan Sam's house functions as a monument to his higher-class identity because it physically encapsulates his immigrant experience in Canada as a success story that will persist over time in the village's collective memory. In addition, his house functions as a "symbol of his rootedness in

China" (Hilf 84): this reinforces his connections to that place and its residents, among whom he wants to maintain his class distinctions. The melding of Chinese and Western influences in his house's design constructs a particular relationship between Chan Sam's identity and his villagers' memories of him that simultaneously defines his class identity in terms of his individual achievements overseas and in terms of his connections to his family's ancestry and his village's rural and cultural heritage: "As the house began to take shape, villagers and workmen alike saw it as a testimonial to the man himself. They saw him as a husband and a father who had realized a peasant's dream of soil underfoot and tiles overhead. 'Chan Sam will leave a good name for a hundred generations,' they said" (75-76). His class prestige, then, derives from the house's significance as an immediate material embodiment of his class identity, but also from its location in Chang Gar Bin. His class identity signifies in relation to his rural heritage, which the villagers draw upon to construct a narrative of Chan Sam's life that originates in Chang Gar Bin and concludes with his return as a successful man.

His house's architecture and furnishings evoke a higher-class identity because of their cost, numerousness, uniqueness, and symbolic association with people who live in affluence. For instance, Chan Sam evokes the material markers of a higher-class lifestyle by including "a mural of fruit and of potted chrysanthemums and orchids, the symbols of a gentleman" (86) in one of the rooms. Each of the room's panels were also "decorated differently, some inlaid with diamond shapes of stained glass, others carved with delicate birds perched on flowering branches" (85). He situates this presentation of his apparent financial wealth within the context of his family, which he acknowledges by hanging a portrait of himself and Huangbo beside a portrait of his parents in the main reception room (85). The house's aesthetic details are also important for defining Chan Sam's higher-class identity because, as Pierre Bourdieu suggests, the aesthetic aspects of a person's daily existence reinforce class distinctions between those who survive on basic necessities and those who can afford to buy things for artistic display rather than for solely pragmatic ends. As a basis for class distinctions, the aesthetic signifies through

> the opposition between the brutish necessity which forces itself on the vulgar, and luxury, as the manifestation of distance from necessity, or asceticism, as self-imposed constraint, two contrasting ways of defying

> nature, need, appetite, desire; between the unbridled squandering which only highlights the privations of ordinary existence, and the ostentatious freedom of gratuitous expense or the austerity of elective restriction; between surrender to immediate, easy satisfactions and economy of means, bespeaking a possession of means commensurate with the means possessed. (Distinction 254-255)

Chan Sam's house evokes such an intersection between the artistic and the materialistic because its furnishings are not only expensive, but also meticulously constructed with materials of the best quality and decorated with intricate designs that take time to create.

While Chan Sam's house may provide a sense of permanence for his class identity, I suggest that it can also decontextualize the past that Chan Sam seeks to embody and distort the remembrance of that past in the process. The process of building that house also requires Chan Sam to create a particular discourse about Canada that occludes his disillusionment and his actual impoverishment in Canada. As a part of his new house's decorations, Chan Sam includes murals that construct a narrative of his life abroad in Canada:

> Two [of the scenes on the mural] were the sojourner's first sights upon his arrival in Gold Mountain: one was San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, the other was a Vancouver landscape of sea, mountain and towering Douglas firs. The third scene hinted at the life of luxury in Gold Mountain: a couple in a roadster, its top folded down, motored by a coral-coloured mansion on a wide, winding boulevard lined with palm trees. (86)

By portraying Canada as a land of wealth and material abundance, these murals' designs construct a decontextualized narrative of Chan Sam's experience that suppresses the oppressive economic and social conditions that he and other Chinese immigrants faced in Canada. In doing so, it reinforces, in his villagers' memories, a distorted image of Canada as a place in which anyone, regardless of racial or cultural background, has an equal opportunity to increase one's class status. Chong exposes the distortions behind this image of Canada by mentioning the racial barriers that prevent Chinese immigrants and descendents from increasing their class statuses. Even after the Second World War, these racial obstacles persist in other ways: Chinese immigrants and descendents lack the money to get a higher education and the white population still prevents Chinese people from getting jobs in areas such as engineering, law, and medicine (160).

Chong criticizes Chan Sam's construction of this house in China by suggesting that his pride and his need for respect often dictated his financial decisions, regardless of whether these actions were reasonable: "Whatever ability he demonstrated to be frugal and to save, he saw no contradiction in his extravagant spending on Gold Mountain goods to bring home to the village or on the house he was building there" (84). However, Chong also connects her depictions about Chan Sam's personal flaws and class aspirations to the "Gold Mountain" discourses that people in China have historically constructed and perpetuated in their communities' collective memories. In part, these discursive representations of Canada have exacerbated Chan Sam's flaws because of the unrealistic class expectations that they place upon Chinese immigrants: "After ten years abroad, Chan Sam too could have abandoned his plan to sojourn abroad. But to do so would have led to a loss of face . . . Some might have called his pride a character flaw, except that showiness was almost expected of those coming back from Gold Mountain—a sign to others that the dream of riches abroad was still alive" (17). By connecting her portrayal of Chan Sam to circulated discourses of "Gold Mountain," Chong conveys that these narratives of Canada are debilitating for both Chinese immigrants and the families that they left behind. Such circulations of class mobility within people's memories set up unrealistic expectations that inevitably evoke bitterness for those involved. These constructed memories of Canada expose their own contradictions because their attractiveness and viability depend upon the suppression of narratives about Chinese immigrants who remained poor and returned to China empty-handed (62). Stories such as the ones that May-ying's aunt circulates in the village's collective memory occlude the racist contexts that prevent Chinese immigrants from moving upward: "'People living in *Gum San* have wealth and riches; they have to push their feet to find the road'" (8).

Chong further conveys sympathy for Chan Sam by highlighting the tenuousness and provisional nature of Chan Sam's fictive class identity that he renders for himself back in China. Ironically, his class identity in China depends upon a *static* cultural framework as well as the continual repetition of that identity for its efficacy. As I mentioned earlier, Chan Sam's class identity in China depends upon a mutual acceptance, by him and by the villagers, of cultural assumptions that circulate in the village and that define his class identity there. When the Communists take power in China in 1949, they dismantle the static cultural framework upon which villagers' memories of Chan Sam are based. In contrast to the villagers' earlier reactions of pride that Chan Sam has given to his village a good name for future generations, their new reactions correspond with governmental directives that condemn Chan Sam's class status instead. The material markers that Chan Sam used to constitute favourable memories of himself come to signify as markers of oppression against less well-off peasants: "it was the showiness of the house that would label Chan Sam, and therefore his family as 'Right Peasants'—in other words, with leanings away from socialism" (185). Ironically, the Chinese government's "evidence" against Chan Sam also focuses on what is materially visible, rather than on his actual impoverishment in Canada. Destroying the epistemological foundation upon which Chan Sam constructed a prestigious class identity, the Chinese government condemned the house for the same reasons that he had used to built it (185). This suggests that it is not only Chinese immigrants' memories of China and his villagers' memories of them that shape what their class identities mean, but also the discursive contexts in which these memories are deployed.

Chong also recognizes that discourses of Canada as the "Gold Mountain" have helped Chan Sam's villagers and his descendents to survive in hard economic times. The Depression of the 1930s affected the lives of Chinese immigrants in Canada as well as Chinese farmers in China: "Gloom had otherwise beset the village as peasant after peasant . . . lost to creditors their rice seedlings, pigs, furniture, and tools" (69). In this context, Chan Sam's villagers' spirits are lifted when they learn that Chan Sam will be building a large and elegant house in Chang Gar Bin: "The news of his house-building had come at a time when the rice gruel on everyone's table was so watered down it was almost tasteless. His news gave hope to all that after bitterness would come sweetness" (70). This suggests that the persistence of favourable dreams of class mobility in Chinese peasants' memories help to alleviate their present suffering because they reinforce their perceptions that class mobility is possible for anyone, even though class mobility may be improbable in actuality.

Similarly, Chan Sam's descendents' memories of Chan Sam's apparent "success" sustained them psychologically because it helped them to cope with their daily struggles to survive off the land and instilled hope that they might become prosperous like him, even though these dreams of class mobility are elusive. Their impressions of Chan Sam depend on a continual recycling of particular memories about Chong's grandfather Chan Sam that are not verifiably "true." They constitute Chan Sam as a heroic figure who sacrificed so much for his family in China and suffered a lot in Canada because he remained separated from their family for decades: "Our Chinese relatives could not mention my grandfather's name without reverence and admiration. To them, what elevated my grandfather to heroic proportions was the tragedy of his hard life in Canada" (254). This implicitly buttresses a class identity for him that signifies out of his labour and its financial benefits. It orients Chan Sam as an economic provider and decision-maker who possesses great prestige and influence back home because of the economic successes that, they believe, he achieved in Canada. Thus, his descendents' memories define Chan Sam's class status in terms of his financial security and prosperity and mythologize him as a heroic model of an upwardly mobile class subject who has made it in Canada, even though he has not actually done so. It is significant that Chong's mother Hing, or Winnie, does not "correct" certain distortions in their memories of Chan Sam and his heroic status, even though she has been indirectly the recipient of its damaging effects through May-ying, who had also suffered and sacrificed for Chan Sam's benefit and for the benefit of his first wife's family:

> In the face of such devotion to her father's memory, Mother held back the truths dawning in her own mind. . . . For Mother to have said any of this would have undone what had sustained the Chinese family through hard and trying times, what had given them reason to carry on. Events had more than evened the score. She decided it was better to let them believe that her mother brought their family only unhappiness, and that the other mother who raised them had been a superior wife. (254)

By depicting her mother's decision to not correct the perceptions of Chan Sam's family in China, Chong alleviates blame from Chan Sam for his family's suffering and suggests a way to think about the value and significance of Chinese Canadians' memories that do not necessary depend on their factual accuracy, but rather on what purposes such memories may serve. Focusing on what these memories of Chan Sam can do for Chan Sam's family in China, Chong conveys sympathy for her Chinese relatives' memories of Chan Sam and states, "They could nurture only faint hopes that their children or their children's children might escape a peasant's lot" (260).[6]

In The Concubine's Children, Chong represents her grandfather Chan Sam as a Chinese immigrant whose experiences testify to his class ambitions and to his disappointments in Canada. While she does criticize Chan Sam's behaviour and expose some of his personal failings, she also acknowledges the contexts in which his actions emerged. As one of the "dwindling faithful" (62) who pinned his hopes on making it in Canada (despite its exclusionary atmosphere), Chan Sam is a sympathetic figure, despite his unbending adherence to Chinese cultural traditions and intense attachment to China. Thus, Chong suggests that the relationship between people's memories and their class identities signify in a reciprocal manner and within particular historical, social, and cultural contexts. As she suggests in her depiction of Chan Sam, people's memories can manifest themselves in overt as well as subtler ways. Chan Sam's memories trigger particular recollections of his class status in China that remind him of what he lacks in Canada, but they can also function as a means of validating his higher-class status in China. His memories of China influence how he perceives his class identity in Canada, how he expresses it, and why he decides to orient his class aspirations towards China. Chong emphasizes that it is important to remember her grandfather Chan Sam and his struggles because he is part of a historical heritage of Chinese immigrants whose struggles need to be remembered and heard. As she states, "I owed it to Mother, and to Chan Sam and May-ying, to find the good among the bad, and pride among the shame of their past" (266). By writing about her grandfather Chan Sam's experiences and the ways in which these have shaped his class aspirations and close attachment to China, Chong contributes to this recuperation of Chinese immigrants' pasts and suggests that their descendents have an ethical responsibility to do so.

An Inheritance of Class Ideals and Class-Implicated Shame: (Re)constitutions of Individual and Familial Identities in Sky Lee's Disappearing Moon Café

In her discussion of Sky Lee's novel Disappearing Moon Café, Lien Chao asserts that its publication in 1990 is a significant development for Chinese Canadian literature because "[her text] is the first Chinese Canadian novel that has caught mainstream critical attention" (Beyond Silence 93). Lee's fictional representation of Chinese Canadian experiences, Chao contends, challenges Chinese Canadians' collective invisibility within Canadian history by inscribing their experiences and perspectives within that history and by constituting them as empowered subjects ("As Agents and as Perspective" 220-221). Other critics have also considered these issues of historical representation, agency, and identity by analysing how Lee's novel depicts Chinese Canadian characters in past eras as well as how she depicts contemporary characters, particularly Kae, who revisits and interprets her Chinese predecessors' past.[7] Interpreting Lee's representations of Chinese Canadians within the contexts of Canada's racist legislation as well as Chinese cultural traditions, these critics suggest that these contexts shape how Lee's characters perceive themselves and constitute meaningful identities. Besides the historical circumstances that Lee's characters inhabit, her characters' memories of their Chinese predecessors inform their present understandings of themselves as Chinese descendents and as Chinese Canadians.

In their analyses of the above issues, however, critics tend to overlook Lee's representation of class identity and to focus on her portrayal of racial, ethnic, and gender identity instead. A few critics, such as Susanna Hilf, do refer to the class aspects of Lee's characterization. Pointing to the "animosities and willful segregation . . . between the social and economic classes" (111), Hilf suggests that class prejudices shape Fong Mei's relationship with Song An, but she does not elaborate on what this relationship suggests about how class identity works and signifies. Instead, she only concludes that Lee's depiction of "the struggles and conflicts arising within the community and the family . . . underlines the heterogeneity within the Chinese-Canadian community, disclosing it as a group which cannot be reduced to just a few stereotypes" (112). As a result, Hilf's rather brief reference to class overlooks how the identities of Lee's characters are not simply shaped by particular ideas of Chineseness, but also by class ideals that signify in relation to the characters' understandings of Chineseness. A consideration of class will contribute to Hilf's and other critics' analyses because it will show how Lee's characters' class identities intersect with other identity markers, such as gender and race, that shape their understandings of themselves as Chinese Canadians.

I will examine how Sky Lee represents, in the era from 1923 to 1967, the relationship between Chinese Canadians' memories and their class identities. Others critics have discussed how Chinese Canadians' memories are represented and how they are transmitted from one generation to the next. However, they have tended to focus on Lee's representation of fourth-generation descendent Kae and the ways in which that character constructs an identity by revisiting her family's submerged past, articulating it in the present, and connecting her identity to that familial legacy of experiences. For instance, Lien Chao asserts, "Kae Ying Woo and the contemporary generation . . . need to speak for the historically silenced generations. It is in [Woo's] narrative that the community's denied past is given a voice and, at the same time, in the process of speaking for the collective values Kae Ying Woo relocates her own identity" ("The Collective Self" 252). Thus, Kae's identity is not just based in the present, but also based on the memories of her predecessors, that serve to ground her in genealogical roots. Besides their tendency to focus on the connections between Kae's identity and the memories of her female predecessors, critics have focused more on the ways in which Lee's portrayal of Chinese Canadians' memories can serve to criticize and redress the historical exclusion of Chinese Canadians' voices and experiences from dominant discourses of Canadian history.

I wish to offer a somewhat different approach to memory by focusing on the other characters in Lee's novel, rather than Kae, and by considering how their memories of past experiences in China and Canada shape their class identities, their perceptions of those identities, and the ways in which they act to secure their connections to, or distance themselves from, their family's collective class standing. Suggesting a reciprocal relationship between Chinese Canadians' class identities and their memories, Lee depicts a multigenerational Chinese Canadian family named the Wongs whose memories constitute a site of struggle around what their individual identities mean and what memories are important for defining those identities. As an identity marker, class shapes her characters' relationships with each other and the identities that emerge out of these relationships. Lee depicts each Wong family member as someone who, in his or her own way, copes with his or her situation during the debilitating circumstances of the Exclusion Era (1923-1947) and the post-war era prior to the full dismantling of discriminatory immigration laws (1947-1967). However, this is not to discount the variability in which each of Lee's characters responds to the family's similar circumstances. These characters' responses are also mediated by their own and others' memories, which influence how they remember the past, how they perceive their current circumstances, and what they hope for the future. In turn, these factors shape the identities to which they aspire and the extents to which others' class ideals affect their identities. Her characters' memories of China and its cultural traditions authorize particular class identities and encourage other family members to conform to them, but the authority and prestige that are associated with these identities also depend upon the exclusion of threats to those prescribed identities.

Class-Based Memories: The Individual and Family Dynamics

Representing the era from 1923 to 1967, Lee portrays the family members' struggles between the class identities to which they are pressured to conform and their individual desires to transgress these expectations and articulate alternative identities that, in some cases, attempt to step outside class identity markers altogether. Lee illustrates the complex, mitigating pressures, both from within the family and outside of it, that shape how and why her characters choose to preserve their class identities or pursue alternative ones. Her characters' class identities signify from an intersection between materially and discursively expressed aspects that, in turn, signify out of the familial context and its interaction with the community outside of it. The Wongs' upper-class status in Chinatown during that era (1923-1967) derives from a fusion of economically based assets and their attendant benefits. This includes the Wong's material prosperity as a family, their economic power as restaurant owners and employers, and the benefits of social prestige and influence that simultaneously derive from and enhance these. As a whole, the Wong family's class status in Chinatown signifies in terms of the wealth, numerous businesses, and social connections that Gwei Chang has accumulated over many years: working initially as a labourer (229), he comes to own numerous businesses such as the restaurant *Disappearing Moon Café* in Vancouver, a store in Lilloet (152), and warehouses (231); with his prosperity, he accumulates significant clout in Chinatown and the Chinese Association (73), with a class hierarchy that delegates authority and ascribes prestige to select individuals from among the community's elders and businessmen. Yet, it is important to consider the role of particular memories in the process of identity construction because the Wongs' class identities and their perceptions of these identities are connected to the class expectations that they circulate in their memories as well as the ways in which they want to be remembered by other Chinese people in Canada and China. Transmitted and reconfigured through the memories of the first-generation immigrants in Kae's family and, later, through their *descendents*, these class expectations have reverberating effects upon the individuals, their identities, and their family as a whole.

Lee represents the ongoing tensions between her Chinese Canadian characters' personal desires and the family's class expectations to which they are expected to conform and perpetuate in the family's collective memory. In her discussion of ethnic expectations that immigrants may be expected to fulfill in their new country of residence, Anne-Marie Fortier suggests that immigrants are "the living embodiment of continuity and change, mediating memories of the past with present living conditions, bringing the past into the present and charged with the responsibility of keeping some form of ethnic identity alive in the future" (55). Fortier, then, highlights how an immigrant's identity is defined in relation to their current home as well as the home they left behind. In her portrayal of Gwei Chang (part of the first generation of the Wong family who immigrated to Canada), Lee depicts how Gwei Chang's identity is not simply defined by his economic achievements in Canada, but also by his experiential affiliations to China. Gwei Chang's memories of his life in China and its cultural traditions signify his identity in relation to specific familial class expectations. Despite his physical absence from China, Gwei Chang's memories of his family and the life that he has left behind persists and figures into the class identity that he constitutes in Canada. He feels obligated to fulfill his familial role as a good Chinese son by reciprocating his parents' sacrifices for him and to ensure that they are well taken care of: "He had received a letter from his mother, pleading with him to come home and do his duty as the eldest son" (235). In her discussion of Gwei Chang's obligation to continue the family line of descent, Alison Calder suggests that this obligation signifies within a racialized discourse of Chineseness that values the maintenance of the Wong family's racial purity. Gwei Chang, Calder continues, reproduces a narrative of racial purity within the Wong family that affirms "the impermeability of racial boundaries and erases such counter-narratives of racial mixing as his own relationship with Kelora . . . Enforcing these narratives of racial and family purity . . . repeat[s] and reiterate[s] the rules [of that narrative]" (16). I would like to extend Calder's points and suggest that the Wong family's concerns with racial purity are intricately connected to their class expectations and the class prestige that they wish to preserve in their descendents' memories. Gwei Chang's family's expectations suggest an intersection between class and race because he must ensure the continuity of his family's Chinese lineage so that his family's prestige, enhanced by his own prosperity and prestige in Canada, will be remembered by their descendents. Rebecca L. Green highlights that what is excluded from people's memories is as important as what is included because these exclusions also signal the kinds of identities and relationships that are desirable:

> Memory is highly political in that it is a medium for establishing relationships and contextual narratives and for identity formation . . . what is left unsaid is as important as that said. Forgetting or leaving out is just as important since "forgetting can be . . . an intentional and purposive attempt to create absences that can be crucial to the reconstruction and revaluation of social meanings and relations" (Weiss 1996, 133). (51)

In Lee's novel, the legitimacy and persistence of Gwei Chang's and his family's class prestige depends on the both the preservation of racial purity and the erasure of physical and discursive traces of racial impurity from the Wong family's collective memory. However, these possibilities for securing his own status also disallow other possibilities of identity that transgress these boundaries because they constrict him into preexisting frameworks of identity definition. Gwei Chang must break off his relationship with Kelora and their illegitimate son, Ting An, and erase their presence from the Wongs' collective memory. In addition, Gwei Chang must marry a Chinese woman and bear a son to maintain the patriarchal structure of genealogical descent and economic inheritance, which will ensure that their wealth will remain within the family.

As such, the identity that Gwei Chang feels pressured to fulfill is not simply a consequence of societal pressures in Canada, but also a result of his memories about China and the pressure of expectations that they invoke. These pressures are particularly acute for Gwei Chang because his pride in his personal accomplishments in Canada is augmented by his fear that that there may be no descendents to honour his memory after he dies. Gwei Chang's memories of Chinese cultural traditions mediate his feelings about his class status and signify that status within a familial context: "[There was] the possibility of ten thousand years of desolate wandering for his unintended soul . . . He'd been feeling far too happy and prosperous these days" (29). The possibility that his class-based achievements will terminate with the end of his own life leads him to accept Mui Lan's views on the need to preserve the family line (29). Donald Goellnicht suggests that Lee's representation of the Wongs' obsession with having children is not so much a result of Confucian values as a result of "structural and institutional racism that, through the use of the legislature and the courts, threatened the very survival of the Chinese community in Canada" ("Of Bones and Suicide" 304). While the historical conditions of the Exclusion Era do inform the Wong family's decisions to have children in Lee's text (as Goellnicht discusses at length in his article), the historical contexts that the Wong family inhabits do not fully dictate the individual choices that they make in Lee's novel. Goellnicht's point elides the ways in which the individual members of the Wong family react differently to their circumstances. Furthermore, the individual Wong family members' recollections of China and its cultural traditions play a significant role in legitimizing and defining what it means to have children as well as in defining particular identities associated with that process to secure the family members' conformity.

For instance, Lee's portrayal of Gwei Chang's wife Mui Lan illustrates how Chinese Canadians' memories of past experiences may provide a secure basis for defining their present class identities, but at the cost of constraining their perceptions of available possibilities for identity within the framework of those memories. However, it is important to note the differences between Gwei Chang's and Mui Lan's reactions to their family situation. Even though Gwei Chang agrees that the family line needs to be preserved, Mui Lan has a greater stake in preserving it because other family members' and other Chinatown residents' favourable memories of her class status depends on Fong Mei's ability to bear sons. Amidst the backdrop of the Exclusion Era and the exclusionary laws that targeted and reinforced the Chinese population's economic and social marginalization in Canadian society, Mui Lan's recollections of China provide psychological sustenance as well as a basis for defining her identity aspirations. Even though she is married to Gwei Chang, a highly successful businessman, Mui Lan remains dissatisfied with her higher-class identity because she feels isolated in the predominantly male community of Vancouver's Chinatown (26). Her memories of China enhance her loneliness in Canada, but those memories also evoke a social order that she wants to replicate within her own family. Mui Lan's idealized recollection of China inscribe its cultural traditions as attractive directives of behaviour because they designate clear roles, rewards, and punishments for the people involved. In response to the "idle loafers" and gossipers in her husband Gwei Chang's restaurant, she proclaims, "'Back home in the village . . . there were at least customs and traditions which held people in check. There was an established way of life, and one hardly ever heard of a girl going astray, or a boy who didn't know his duty. But here, in this wilderness, even the tang people lose all sense of right and wrong'" (27). Ironically, Mui Lan nostalgically recollects a patriarchal social order in which Chinese women would be subordinated to men, but she longs for it because it will alleviate her isolation and her feelings of insufficiency in relation to the other Chinese women in the community.

Indeed, Mui Lan's memories of China sustain her in the moments that she evokes them, but, like Chan Sam's, they also enhance what she *lacks* in Canada. These contradictory feelings instigate a cycle of bitterness and desire that shapes Mui Lan's class aspirations for the rest of her family. Her memories of Chinese cultural traditions filter her perceptions of her higher-class status in these contradictory ways. Mui Lan feels bitter that they have no sons (29-30) and asserts that their family's class status is meaningless without them: "'What good is all that Wong money when their family name can't even be assured?'" (36). Her intense bitterness is suggested by her exactitude in keeping track of how long she has been waiting for Fong Mei to bear grandsons: "She herself was rich enough to buy a building for a half dozen grandsons, yet she was still waiting after five years, three months, and soon nineteen days" (25). By clinging to her memories of Chinese cultural traditions, Mui Lan acts within that cultural framework to achieve what she believes is the purpose of a married Chinese woman: she is expected to continue the family line and its smooth inheritance of wealth by bearing sons; in turn, her own class stature will be secured because her descendents will honour her memory (60). For Mui Lan, whose identity in Canada derives from her class position as the wealthy businessman Gwei Chang's wife and her name on her immigration document (28), bearing sons will justify her own suffering in Canada and compensate for the society that she has left behind in China: it will guarantee some status for her within the societal constraints of the Exclusion Era.

It is important to note that it is not only Mui Lan's bitterness and desire that prompt her to devise a plan to give the Wong family a son; it is also her *fear* of how others will perceive the Wong family that prompts her to do so. In her discussion of how working-class women perceive themselves, Beverly Skeggs suggests that fear constitutes an important part of that identity: "They were never able to feel comfortable with themselves, always convinced that others will find something about them wanting and undesirable" (162). Lee's representation of Mui Lan suggests that women of upper-class status can also experience similar feelings of inadequacy, particularly when they are already constituted by Chinese cultural traditions as people who are subordinate to Chinese men. Gwei Chang is less desperate to maintain the family line at any cost because his own class status within his family and Chinatown community is assured and unquestioned, at least in the present: "That he had total authority would never be an issue for the patriarch" (30). In contrast, Mui Lan does not have such unquestioned authority. Her limited authority depends upon the preservation of class ideals in the family's collective memory. As a result, her fear about the Chinatown community's "vicious two-faced gossip" (36) is greater than Gwei Chang's because of the blame that it will likely place on the Wong women's inability to bear children, rather than on the men's inability to do so.

Yet, Mui Lan's obsessive pursuit of that ideal in a radically different societal context is limited because its realization depends upon the obedience of others who share the cultural traditions that she evokes from her memories. At the expense of securing her own class status, she causes her descendents to suffer from the burdens of cultural memories that she draws upon for her own identity. This is because the maintenance of the Wongs' individual and collective class statuses also depends on the maintenance of particular standards of sexual conduct that are defined and enforced by themselves and by the Chinatown community. Focusing on how certain behaviours become signified as shameful ones, Leigh Gilmore suggests that the shame of illegitimacy and incest is class-based because it derives from a middle-class morality that locates these behaviours as immoral products of lower-class life (56). For instance, "incest is a crime, in part because of the threat it poses to middle-class notions of family that subtend the legal constructions of rape and property. Incest is sex to which one can never consent" (Gilmore 57). Extending Gilmore's points, I would contend that the definitions of these shameful acts derive their legitimacy from stabilized and collectively accepted notions of morality that must be reinforced by denigrating and marginalizing those who engage in such behaviours. By eliding the contexts in which these behaviours occur, people can contain the threat that these activities pose to middle-class morality.

Lee provides a way to think about how codes of sexual morality relate to people's memories by suggesting that her characters' class identities depend on the ways in which they and others remember their family members' sexual conduct. What they remember, as well as what they do *not* remember, is equally important in shaping how others will perceive their class statuses. To preserve their collective class standing in the community and their individual standing within the family, the Wongs need to enforce the suppression and erasure of particular memories of incestuous acts and illegitimate children, from both their family's collective memory as well as the memories of others in the Chinese Canadian community. Thus, the genealogical legitimacy of their family is central to defining their individual class identities as well as their family's class status as a whole. Their family surname plays a crucial role here because it legitimizes and maintains the class structure within the family, their high-class status in Chinatown, and individuals who derive their class status from their association with that name. For instance, we are reminded of this when Lee introduces Mui Lan "as the wife of the most admired and likable businessman in Chinatown" (23). Her class identity, then, depends upon her connection to the Wong family and the integrity of that family's name. As such, Mui Lan wants to protect the family name from the possibilities of adultery, incest, and illegitimate children: these acts threaten to rupture the sanctity, verifiability, and cohesiveness of the Wongs' familial genealogy, which forms the basis for the family's patriarchal pattern of genealogical and economic descent.

Ironically, it is the Wongs' higher-class status that also constrains them within a framework of cultural obligations that they cannot fulfill, except by making decisions that could threaten to erode that status. As I discussed in Chapter 2, marriage in traditional Chinese culture promotes particular class significations because it consists of an economic union between two families, with the purpose of securing and enhancing their individual and collective class standing in the wider community. However, in the Exclusion Era, Mui Lan cannot operate under the same assumptions because there are few Chinese women in Chinatown at that time (26). Legitimate marriages and childbirths are critical to maintaining the Wong's family lineage, but the conditions of the Exclusion Era also contain the means for the erosion of the family's legitimacy. Mui Lan decides to set Choy Fuk up in an illegitimate relationship in order to preserve the legitimacy of the family line, but this also contributes to a growing set of family secrets about their illegitimate relations that will eventually affect their descendents. Like Gwei Chang's "forgetting" of his relationship with Kelora and their illegitimate son, Mui Lan's erasure of the actual origins of Choy Fuk's illegitimate child eventually reappears and adversely affects the whole family.

Despite the problems associated with Mui Lan's plans to bear a Wong son, Lee does not simply depict Fong Mei as a submissive recipient to her plans, but rather as someone whose decision to conform is shaped by her memories of China and her speculations on how other Chinese people may remember her in Canada and China. In her discussion of Fong Mei, Eva Beautell suggests that the Wongs' flourishing economic position constrains their actions to particular spaces. Fong Mei has "succumbed to the lures of the Wong family money, [so] [she] postpones indefinitely her return to China" (199). To an extent, Fong Mei does choose to follow Mui Lan's plans to have someone else help Choy Fuk bear a son: such an act would translate into economic and social capital—access to the family's money and to its social prestige—that will ensure her class status in her family and in Chinatown (188). Mui Lan tells Fong Mei that the birth of a son would also guarantee the Wongs' prosperity and consecrate her standing in its descendents' memories: "'the family is assured of a yellow, 'lucky' road. Otherwise, who would be left to honour even you, to sweep your grave" (60). Conversely, an inability to bear children will depreciate Fong Mei's status as well as her family's respectability among their peers. However, it is also the attractiveness of how others could remember her, coupled with the simultaneous threat that other Chinese people in China will remember her shamefully, that prompts Fong Mei to accept Mui Lan's plan: "Mui Lan . . . [knew] full well that a spurned daughter-in-law would rather commit suicide than go back to her parents' home, for all the ten generations of everlasting shame that she would cost her family, in fact her whole village" (59).

While Lee suggests the possibility of maintaining the Wongs' favourable class image, she also suggests that the memories within which it signifies are impossible to replicate continually. Ironically, the Chinese cultural traditions that helped to define the Wongs' class identity could be replicated most effectively within the static conditions of the Exclusion Era. Despite the debilitating effects of the Exclusion Era, its racist conditions were, ironically, more conducive for the Wongs' preservation of their class status (157). The era's legislation separated them from white Canadians and confined them to Chinatown, but they also contributed to the Chinese people's sense of racial and cultural cohesion within Chinatown. This sense of racial and cultural cohesiveness is suggested in Mui Lan's perceptions of the white Canadians, whom she constructs as a homogenous group that is separate from the Chinese: "'Here, we are living on the frontier with barbarians. We stick together'" (61). Like Chan Sam's memories of China and its cultural traditions in The Concubine's Children, Mui Lan's and Fong Mei's memories of China and its traditions provided a source of stability and unity in an era when Chinese people were unwanted foreigners in Canada: "The government is saying no more chinese immigrants! In fact, they're looking to shovel us all out" (30).

However, Lee suggests that such cultural cohesiveness could no longer be maintained after the Second World War because of the new job and housing opportunities outside of Chinatown, which became available for Chinese immigrants and their descendents in the post-war era. As a result, the Chinese population's cultural cohesiveness in the Exclusion Era could no longer be maintained because it also depended on restricting their spatial mobility to Chinatown: "Their insular little world—an ivory sphere, protected by layer upon layer of filigreed lies, all revolving independently of each other, finally collapsed like a decomposing melon" (163). Lee acknowledges the benefits that Mui Lan's and Fong Mei's memories of China and its cultural traditions provided for them during the Exclusion Era, but she also depicts the destructive effects that these memories can cause for their descendents. In this context, it is important to qualify Lien Chao's suggestion that female reproduction in Disappearing Moon Café is a "powerful feminine trope of identity transition and transformation" that moves Lee's characters closer to "becoming agents of their own liberation" ("As Agents and as Perspective" 225). Chao's interpretation elides the destructive effects of enforced reproduction within the Wong family as well as the exclusionary processes by which this act is enforced within the Wong family's collective memory. Even though the process of reproduction may confer some agency for the women in the Wong family and increase their class status within it, the process of reproduction also constrains these women within a racialized and gendered narrative of family memory that they are obliged to replicate for subsequent generations. Indeed, Mui Lan's and Fong Mei's attempts to ensure the sanctity of their family's genealogy and, therefore, its class prestige, perpetuates a destructive cycle of replicating inherited class identities through memory, transmitting them to their descendents, and suppressing their family's knowledge about shameful acts that threaten these identities.

By representing the older generation's difficulties in disseminating the same class ideals to the younger generation of the Wong family, Lee highlights the problems of transmitting memories in a different societal context. While Sau-ling Wong speaks specifically about the interpretation of autobiographies that represent first- and second-generation experiences in the United States, her comments highlight why it is important to consider the differences between the older and younger generation in Lee's novel. As Wong says, "in spite of obvious biological and cultural continuities, first- and second-generation ethnics cannot be said to experience and perceive 'Americanization' in the same way" ("Immigrant Autobiography" 301). Their memories of past experiences shape the ways in which they relate to and interpret their immediate experiences in the United States: "The Old World is both 'locus' and 'world view' for the immigrants prior to their relocation, but it has never been their children's 'locus,' and as 'world view' it pervades the life of the latter in both a presented and a mediated form" (Wong, "Immigrant Autobiography" 302). In other words, Wong is suggesting that the first-generation immigrants' memories of the country from which they emigrated shape their perceptions of life in America more directly than the perceptions of their American-born descendents: their children's understanding of the "Old World" are mediated by their elders' memories of it, whereas their elders have a more immediate relationship to that "Old World" that derives from their past experiences there. In Lee's novel, the older generation and younger generation of the Wong family have different understandings of the same gendered class ideals that, in turn, affect their views of their present circumstances. Beatrice's and Suzanne's rebellion against their mother Fong Mei's and grandmother's Mui Lan's class expectations are exacerbated by their inability to identify with the contexts to which their mother's and grandmother's memories refer. Magda Michielsens' comments about the problems of telling stories provides a way of thinking about the problems of replicating class memories when the original contexts to which they refer are no longer present: "Stories become difficult to tell when the frame of reference in which experiences were originally placed has evaporated. This is more than an emotional problem; it is a cognitive one" (183). Indeed, the absence of China's cultural context, with which Beatrice and Suzanne do not have any immediate experience, contributes to their inability to identify with their elders' expectations. While Fong Mei's favourable memories of China and its cultural traditions facilitate her conformity to Mui Lan's directives, Beatrice and Suzanne are learning about these traditions second-hand through their mother and grandmother. They think of these same traditions differently because they feel that these traditions are irrelevant and distant from their current experiences in Canada. For Beatrice and Suzanne, their Chinese heritage is not central to their identities because they define themselves in terms of their immediate, individual experiences in Canada rather than in terms of their elders' memories of China and their experiences in the Exclusion Era:

> One generation between mother and daughter, and already how far apart their goals and sentiments. They shared a common experience, but while Fong Mei hated this country, which had done nothing except disqualify her, Beatrice had grown up thoroughly small-town Canadian. While

> Beatrice hardly knew anywhere beyond the quiet streets of Vancouver, Beatrice's mother hated this pious town, which kept her bored and labouring like a poor woman. (164)

Despite the material comforts and respect that their upper-class status provides for the Wong family as a whole, the measures that Mui Lan and Fong Mei take to preserve that status also foment Suzanne's and Beatrice's rebellion and alienate them from the circumstances that have given rise to that status. For instance, when her daughter Beatrice falls in love with the illegitimate child Keeman and Suzanne falls in love with an illegitimate relative named Morgan, Fong Mei forbids her two daughters from marrying them because their incestuous relationships replicate the shame that she wishes to eradicate from her family's memory: "Year after year of tightly knotted lies—what she had had to endure. All that she had worked so hard to avoid. She would not have it destroyed" (149). Fong Mei's unsuccessful efforts to break up her daughters' relationships expose the tenuous assumptions that buttress the Wong family's favourable public image in other Chinese Canadians' memories. The preservation and dissemination of class ideals through the Wongs' memories depends upon a static understanding of Chineseness and the prominence of Chineseness as a defining feature of the Wongs' identities. As I discussed earlier, Fong Mei's fear of being shamed is part of the reason that she accepts her subordinate position in the Wong household and conforms to the role that is expected of a "traditional" Chinese woman. This fear is further exacerbated by her inability to accept Canada as her home and her closer identification with China, the place in which she was born. While their mother and grandmother attempt to socialize them into the same ideals, Beatrice and Suzanne do not feel ashamed of their supposedly destructive relationships with Keeman and Morgan. In one of their conversations, Beatrice's and Suzanne's perceptions of their family members' constant arguments are, ironically, rather light-hearted and sarcastic:

> [Suzanne said,] "You should have heard her last night. She's still real good at the good old ear-piercing, screaming-at-Dad number. Last night, they had a whopper!"
>
> "What was it, the same old going-home-to-China one?" [Beatrice asked].

> "No, it was more like Daddy and his slut-waitress bringing eternal shame and whatever nasties Mom could think up onto this family. She said that if you have a baby by Keeman, it'll be some kind of horrible cripple or retarded mental case. Nice thing to say, eh?" (201)

Suzanne's decontextualized understanding of her mother Fong Mei's views suggests that she is disconnected from her Chinese cultural heritage. Whereas Mui Lan's threats instill fear in Fong Mei and prompt her to conform, Suzanne perceives her mother's threats of "eternal shame" and her demonizing of Beatrice's potential baby as unreasonable constraints that are ultimately self-serving. When her mother chastizes her for indecent behaviour in public and shouts that she has "no shame at all" (202), Suzanne resents her mother's relentless control because she is interpreting her mother's criticism within the context of particular ideas about individual freedom, rather than within her mother's inherited cultural context of Chinese womanhood. She regards her family's upper-class status as a constricting identity, rather than as an empowering one, because its maintenance depends on racialized and gendered expectations of behaviour that she cannot accept: "She never cared about us. She never loved anything but money. I hated her for all the years of dressing us up like monkeys and telling us to behave like good little girls in front of fat men and their high and mighty wives because it was good for business" (202). Suzanne perceives herself as an individual whose desires should not be constrained by her family's cultural and class legacy, rather than as a family member who is connected to that past and who shares the responsibility for maintaining other Chinese people's favourable impressions of the Wongs and their upper-class status. She sees her elders' attempts to retain the family line in individualistic and monetary terms, rather than in terms of the family's overall public image: "Mom and Dad, and Granny's dumb China rules! All crud! None of that's really as important as they say. They just want to con you into the same crap they got conned into. Money, money, money. That's what they're really after. That's all they ever think about. Look at Mom! I don't want to land up like her—dried up and hateful" (176).

However, Suzanne's inability to fully escape her elders' class expectations illustrates how her elders' memories continue to return in destructive ways. At the cost of preserving the family's racial purity, Fong Mei secretly tells the doctors to kill Suzanne's baby when it is born (205-206). The death of Suzanne's child, who is ironically the last son in the Wongs' line of descent (146), exposes the difficulties of maintaining the Wongs' higher-class identity when it depends on Wongs' steadfast resistance of the recognition of any illegitimate offspring in the family's collective memory. For instance, Gwei Chang's subsequent remorse about his decision to abandon Kelora suggests the impossibility of fully forgetting his past actions and the destructive personal effects that can arise from replicating his familial predecessors' inherited class ideals. Even though he achieved a prestigious class stature for himself and his family as a whole and also ensured the continuation of his family line, his personal memories of his past actions surface. Each time he sees his illegitimate son Ting An, Gwei Chang recollects the personal happiness that he has sacrificed for his family's collective benefit: "Too cowardly, too scared to tell him, if the truth be known. How could Gwei Chang tell Ting An that he was his father, that he had abandoned the woman who was his mother?" (220). Gwei Chang's views suggest a way to think about memory that acknowledges its usefulness in the era in which he lived, when Chinese immigrants were regarded as foreigners who did not belong to Canada, but also to recognize and incorporate shameful memories as a legitimate part of the family's past. Otherwise, Lee suggests, these repressed memories will have destructive effects upon the subsequent generations who wittingly and unwittingly participate in its perpetuation.

However, Lee does not simply provide a pessimistic portrayal of the Wong family that culminates in its self-destruction through the literal death of its descent line. Indeed, she also suggests the possibility for constituting a recuperative and empowering identity out of the very discourses that it opposes. Beatrice's relationship and eventual marriage with Keeman (146-148), despite Fong Mei's opposition, signifies not only a rejection of her mother's class ideals and the assumptions of authentic Chineseness that they privilege, but also an affirmation of a relationship that crosses class lines. Keeman is from a more impoverished background, in contrast to Beatrice's more well off circumstances: "Her great-auntie was the export half of her grandfather's flourishing import business across the ocean" (144). In marrying, Beatrice and Keeman extricate themselves, to a degree, from the oppressiveness of the Wong family's collective memories of suppressed secrets and excluded relations and construct identities that do not depend upon adopting expected familial roles for posterity. Ironically, the historical circumstances that contributed to the Chinese population's situation also helped Beatrice and Keeman and provided the circumstances by which they are more likely to fall in love with each other. As Lee notes, the Chinese Canadian population suffered from the immigration laws of the Exclusion Era, which prevented Chinese people from emigrating to Canada. As a result, there was "such a meagre amount of young [Chinese] people [in Canada]—no new immigrant blood. What few there were, were native-born. Since 1923 the Chinese Exclusion Act had taken its heavy toll. The rapidly diminishing chinese-canadian community had withdrawn into itself, ripe for incest" (147). While the Exclusion Era's conditions provided the very conditions for the erosion of the Wong's family line, it also provided the possibility for its renewal. Indeed, the continuation of the family's line of descent, through Beatrice and Keeman, suggests a way of recognizing the Wongs' collective memory and class heritage that does not remain tied to it, but rather one that allows for the possibility of alternative identities and other types of relationships that may not conform to the Wongs' expectations.

In portraying the Wong family in the Exclusion Era and post-war era, Lee conveys an approach to Chinese Canadians' memories of their higher-class status and their inherited class expectations that acknowledges the memories of the older generations of the Wong family and the value of these memories for constructing meaningful class identities, but she also stresses the need to accommodate those memories to changing historical realities and for Wong descendents who may perceive these memories differently. Representing a contentious and fluctuating relationship between her characters' memories and the class identities that they construct, Lee suggests that their memories and identities are shaped by her characters' individual circumstances, familial connections, and shared cultural heritage. While some of her novel's characters embrace the class ideals that others remember and wish to replicate, others resist these same ideals because of the constraints that they place upon their individual identities and desires.

Suggesting a reciprocal relationship between their characters' memories and their class identities, Chong's The Concubine's Children and Lee's Disappearing Moon Café highlight the ways in which their characters' memories can shape their class aspirations and their attitudes towards other people's class expectations. In both texts, the characters' inherited class ideals signify in relation to particular understandings of Chineseness that orient around China and its cultural traditions. However, Chong and Lee also show how their characters respond differently to class-inflected memories of Chineseness and how their perceptions of those memories are, in turn, filtered by their class aspirations or by their desires to reject their elders' class ideals. While they acknowledge the potential problems in replicating classed understandings of Chineseness from memory in Canada, they also recognize that these memories do not necessarily have to be oppressive. For characters such as Chan Sam and Mui Lan, their memories of China provide a therapeutic function as well as a secure basis for defining their identities and class aspirations within Canada. In contrast, Suzanne regards her elders' memories of China as constraints upon her behaviour that do not meaningfully inform her self-perceptions. Despite these characters' different responses to particular memories, both Chong's and Lee's texts highlight that class identities are not simply defined and manifested in the present moments of their characters' lives. Rather, these identities are temporally affected in their meaning and manifestations. These identities derive their significance from the length of time that they have been present in actuality or in characters' memories. Intersecting with their own as well as others' racialized, gendered, and ethnicized understandings of them, their characters' class identities signify, over time, in relation to other people's identities as well as the communities within which the characters locate their identities.

Notes

1 Here, I am using the term "country of origin" to simply denote the country from which they immigrated, rather than to suggest a reductive understanding of immigrants that is based on a common country of "origin."

2 For instance, she discusses how Indian immigrants' recollections of the homeland influence their present identities in Britain differently because of the gender differences that their cultural traditions evoke.

3 More recently, critical interest in Chong's text has considered how Chong's narrative incorporates photography in its representations of her family's identity (Zackodnik 52-53, 73) and how her photography suggests "new ways of reading and recording women's lives and history" (Ty 289) that "question the veracity of history" (Ty 270).

4 Ellen Quigley and Lien Chao both examine how Chong portrays the suppression of women in her family and disrupts the patriarchal discourse that has defined these women's lives. Quigley states she "represents the difficult position of a Chinese Canadian female speaking subject within the constraints of a racist North America and a patriarchally defined Confucianism" (238). Similarly, Chao suggests that Chong collectively empowers her female predecessors by reinscribing her mother and grandmother into the mainstream and family histories that have failed to acknowledge their presence and sacrifices: "by recovering what is deleted in Chan Sam's letters and what is never recorded in any other written documents . . . Chong and her mother Hing/Winnie reclaim the historical invisibility of May-ying as the breadwinner of Chan Sam's family" (Beyond Silence 112).

5 It is important to note that Chan Sam can create the *impression* that he has a higher-class status more easily in China, even though he has not actually increased it, because the villagers are much poorer than him. In addition, the different value of the Canadian and Chinese currencies makes it easier for him to create that impression. Through Chan

Sam's viewpoint, Chong states, "'A dollar can go a long way in China, not like in Canada" (66)

6 As a related point, Chong's representation of her mother's reactions also suggests an ethics of memory that resists full disclosure and considers, instead, when it is feasible for one to do so and how much one should disclose. Chong does not insert any personal judgement into the text about the possible (im)morality of her mother's decision. She avoids privileging an authenticating marker of truth for validating her relations' memories. Instead, she suggests that circumstances should dictate how and whether memories should be disclosed and assessed.

7 Some of these critics include Mari Peepre, Donald Goellnicht, Susanna Hilf, A. Robert Lee, Eva Daris Beautell, and Alison Calder.

Chapter Four

Looking the Part: Bodily and Materially-Based Expressions of Class

In her analysis of Gish Jen's Mona in the Promised Land, Erika T. Lin asserts that Jen engages with the politics of racial identity by focusing on how the body is a site of racial signification. Jen problematizes and undermines the "discourse of the racialized body" (48) through her Chinese American characters' interpersonal interactions. She exposes the epistemological gap and instability between the significations that others ascribe to the body and the characters who fail to perform, or who contest, these significations through their bodily performances. In the contemporary American context, discourses of racial elitism result in "the policing of the bodies of people of color" (Lin 49) and serve to naturalize particular meanings and inscribe these upon those bodies. As a result, these discourses marginalize Asian Americans by defining them as irreducibly different, deviant, and lacking in relation to a white norm (Lin 49). Thus, Jen's novel "undermines a notion of personal identity as fixed in a stable, racially unitary body" (Lin 54) by depicting the body as something that is not a neutral entity. Instead, the body signifies from culturally derived ideals that people express in bodily form: "By pointing out that it is impossible to see the body in a culturally neutral way, by suggesting that the body is always already immersed in culturally constructed meanings, Jen denaturalizes at least one of the assumptions on which racist discourses are founded" (48).

Lin's analysis focuses on the bodily expression of *racial* identity, but her general points are relevant for a class analysis because she conceptualizes racial identity as a provisional construct that signifies and functions in particular cultural contexts. Similarly, the representation of bodily and materially based expressions of class in two Chinese Canadian works, Wayson Choy's Paper Shadows: a Chinatown Childhood (1999) and Yuen Chung Yip's The Tears of the Chinese Immigrants (1990), are politically significant because they challenge understandings of race and class that have historically served to discriminate against people of Chinese origin in Canada. As Kay J. Anderson notes, Chinese immigrants' physical features and material circumstances of habitation have been central to white Canadians' views of defining characteristics for the Chinese population (VC 177): their perception of Chinese people's bodily difference, manifested through their racial visibility and behaviours believed to be indicative of that difference, and their material circumstances, manifested in where they live and the identity traits that these express, construct Chinese immigrants as outsiders whose identities become defined through their ***inherent difference*** vis-à-vis the "white" race (VC 176). Indeed, "the essential distinctiveness of the races, each with its own culture" (Anderson, VC 176) was a persistent idea, even during World War II and after. These differences justified the Chinese population's economic marginalization and the legislative acts taken to enforce that marginalization.

Choy's and Yip's literary representations of Chinese Canadians challenge the assumptions in these racialized discourses of identity and the economic effects that these discourses justify and perpetuate upon Chinese people in Canada. They denaturalize the relationship between class significations and the bodily expressions and material goods to which they refer, depict how class significations are provisional and shifting, and suggest how they intersect with meanings that derive from cultural and racial identity markers. In doing so, they complicate what it means to be Chinese and Chinese Canadian in particular historical contexts by depicting characters with different understandings of these identities. In their texts, material and bodily enactments of class signify in empowering ways for their Chinese Canadian characters. While they acknowledge the limits of their characters' agency during the eras that they represent, they also stress that these characters' strategies of agency should not be devalued nor discredited. These strategies of agency must be considered in relation to historical and individual contingencies as well as to communal imperatives that encourage or discourage their expression. Their characters' class identities evoke and depend upon cultural and racial significations for their efficacy and justification. Personal and communal exigencies and desires, some of which are racially and culturally motivated, shape the class identities they express for private satisfaction and for public exposure within and outside of their immediate community.

Thus, Choy and Yip augment our understanding of how class is signified, expressed, and perceived because they suggest that the bodily and material enactment of class identities is as important as how the characters *think* about those identities. By representing Chinese Canadians as individuals with their own aspirations, fears, and unique experiences that shape their identities and relationship with others in their community, they contest and subvert the homogenizing stereotypes that have historically shaped and justified governmental and public attitudes towards Chinese Canadians. They provide an understanding of class identity as something that signifies in the abstract as ideas, but also as a concrete manifestation that is grounded in specific material circumstances of their characters' daily lives. In its bodily and material manifestations, class identity derives its efficacy from its visual effect among other people who recognize it and share the values that this visual effect conveys. These effects are not simply perceptual as both Choy and Yip illustrate its real effects upon their characters' daily lives and self-perceptions. Nevertheless, their characters' perceptions inform why their identities are important to them and how other identity markers influence their class identities' meanings and expression.

Theorizing Materially-Based and Bodily Expressions of Class

As Helen Thomas and Jamilah Ahmed suggest in their theoretical overview of the body, recent theorizations of the body reflect a fundamental shift away from older conceptualizations of the body as a neutral physical entity that can be "objectively" observed, defined, and interpreted. These earlier conceptualizations perpetuated "the Cartesian binaries of man/woman, public/private, and nature/culture [,which] all combine to place the body in opposition to the rational mind" and locate it as something that exists outside of "culture" (Thomas and Ahmed 3, 4).[1] Shelley Budgeon criticizes these older conceptualizations of the body and states that bodies are not simply passive sites upon which hegemonic significations are inscribed. Such conceptualizations, Budgeon says, view bodies "as though they are the 'natural' foundation or passive surface upon which culture overlays a disciplinary system of meanings" (51). Rather, the significations of bodies are temporally unstable as they are continually contested and reconstructed: "Bodies . . . can be thought, not as objects, upon which culture writes meanings, but as events that are continually in the process of becoming—as multiplicities that are never just found but are made and remade" (Budgeon 50).

This *process of becoming* that Budgeon posits for the body is salient for conceptualizing class identity because it allows me to approach class identity as something that signifies, not simply in the abstract as a set of ideas, but rather in a visible manner through its bodily enactment for other people. Furthermore, this enactment is not simply an event of replicating previously held meanings, but rather a process that signifies *through* that act of bodily enactment and that shifts in its signification from one context to another. However, as Pierre Bourdieu affirms, these significations are not simply random as particular class ideals become privileged and promoted as legitimate and valuable significations by people in influential class positions who wish to preserve the status quo, assimilating or excluding others who would threaten it (Logic of Practice 68). As such, the body is something that does not signify in random ways. It is moulded into particular dispositions, or behavioural and attitudinal tendencies, which are transferable from the contexts in which the person originally acquired them. Particular methods of treating and caring for the body become coded with significations that mirror cherished class values and implicate their undesirable opposites:

> The body is the most indisputable materialisation of class taste. It is an incorporated principle of classification which governs all forms of incorporation, choosing and modifying everything that the body ingests and digests and assimilates, physiologically and psychologically . . . i.e. the way of treating it, caring for it, feeding it, maintaining it, which reveals the deepest dispositions of the habitus. (Distinction 190)

According to Bourdieu, then, the body is associated with particular class values about how people should act in their daily lives. Like Budgeon's and Bourdieu's conceptualizations of the body, Choy and Yip depict the presentation of one's body for others as a relational process that is negotiated and shaped not only by one's own desires but also by others' ideas about how the body should be appropriately displayed. They represent Chinese Canadians whose bodily expressions and manifestations of class identity are neither static nor homogeneously signified; these class identities signify differently depending upon the individuals, historical contexts, and cultural discourses to which they refer. Dominant class significations disseminated by characters in positions of influence and authority clash with other individual characters' own desires; some of them successfully undermine these significations and create empowering identities that do not remain bound by them. However, this does not mean that Choy and Yip simply reject dominant class significations as necessarily oppressive in themselves. They also affirm the value or validity of these and other significations that may co-exist in the same context. Rather than automatically associating dominance with oppressiveness, they depict situations in which these dominant significations are conducive and empowering.

While the overt display or enforcement of these significations is one means by which class becomes bodily enacted, people's *perceptions* of class are as important as their actual class statuses: "A class is defined as much by its *being-perceived* as by its *being*, by its consumption—which need not be conspicuous in order to be symbolic—as much as by its position in the relations of production (even if it is true that the latter governs the former)" (Bourdieu, Distinction 483). This provides an important dimension for my analysis because both Choy and Yip depict Chinese Canadians whose class identities do not simply derive from their concrete expressions of particular class identities in actuality, but also through their *perceptions* of these class identities and the significations that they attach to them. Even though these meanings may not necessarily depend upon or correlate with the characters' actual material circumstances, they should not be discounted simply because they are perceptual and do not always result in actual changes to the characters' circumstances. Instead, Choy's and Yip's foregrounding of the perceptual nature of class identities presents forms of individual agency that are not necessarily grounded in concrete changes to people's material circumstances. This emphasis on the perceptual nature of class identity also contributes to their heterogeneous representation of Chinese Canadians as individuals who may share, but also differ, in their attitudes towards class and the class identities that they prioritize.

Bourdieu's approach to the acts of displaying and performing class identities applies to the ways in which Chinese Canadian writers represent class through their characters' use of material goods. He states that we need to resist a comprehension of material goods that locates them as objective indicators of reality or as a means to arriving at an interpretation of reality that is independent of the people who actually consume these goods and interpret their world. Instead, it is important to examine how people represent reality through their use of these goods, such that these goods come to signify their perceptions of class distinctions. As Bourdieu affirms, people's representation of their current material and social conditions "are themselves the product of that condition"

(Distinction 484).[2] This suggests that people's class identities signify through a reciprocal and reproductive relationship between people's material conditions and their consumption of material goods. Elaborating on Bourdieu's idea, I suggest that we should also consider material goods as physical objects that signify in ways that may not necessarily relate to the objects' actual physical attributes and derive, instead, from the meanings that people attach to them. Michel de Certeau's focus on people's consumption, or use, of material goods, emphasizes the importance of their everyday use outside of the contexts in which they are produced. By conceptualizing goods as "parts of the repertory with which users carry out operations of their own" (31), de Certeau highlights the subjective and temporal nature of the significations that people attach to these goods, as well as the flexibility in the ways that people can use them beyond their original utilitarian function. How people use their material goods is as important as what people *think* about this process. This allows more possibilities for agency, even when users may be financially or contextually limited by the amounts or types of material goods that they can access or the opportunities that they have for exercising empowering identities.

Imperatives to be a Proper Chinese Boy: Performing Class Identities in Wayson Choy's Paper Shadows: a Chinatown Childhood

> I believe that those of us who have stories to tell have an obligation to remind the younger among us that they - we - come from unique backgrounds, and that interesting events happened, details exist, which will show them how to survive as unhomogenized individuals; will show them how to laugh, how to connect the past to the present. (Choy, "The Importance of Story" 104)

Expressed in a speech to the Vancouver Institute in 1998, Wayson Choy's comments highlight the political importance of sharing one's experiences with others, suggesting that a Chinese Canadian writer has a responsibility to enhance the general public's as well as Chinese Canadian descendents' understanding of Chinese Canadians' past. Otherwise, Choy asserts, "if you don't tell your stories, later on when the present and future generations grow up and have their children, they will think that they all went to

Beverly Hills High" ("The Importance of Story" 104). His comments echo his sentiments about Paper Shadows in an interview with Glenn Deer, which reveal the collective as well as the personal importance that he attaches to his writing about his own and other Chinese Canadians' lives: "I want to understand the horrible times my parents and the pioneer generation went through, and why and how they were able to survive at all" (Deer 41). He acknowledges that he enjoys reading what he calls "sensationalist" narratives and plots with a "grand sweep," but also says that he finds them inadequate for depicting Chinese immigrants' and descendents' lives. These types of narratives, Choy suggests, tend to construct artificially cohesive images of people's lives that elide the daily realities of those lives and the "inner sweep of character" that he wishes to portray (Deer 41).

This "inner sweep of character" is central to Paper Shadows as the text represents the daily experiences of Choy as a child and other Chinese adults from 1939 to 1950. In this regard, an analysis of the bodily and material expressions of class identity will inform what it means to be Chinese in Canada during that era. However, in a climate of racial and economic discrimination towards people of Chinese origin, affirming one's Chineseness and projecting a particular image of class identity operate as ways to mitigate against this discrimination and to provide a sense of dignity to their daily struggles to survive.

Little criticism currently exists on Choy's text, but reviewer Sandra Martin notes that Paper Shadows offers "the freshness of a child's experience but delicately overlaid with an adult's sensibility" (1). She recognizes that Choy's act of writing about his past constitutes a process of revisiting and, in some senses, reinterpreting what has happened to him before. Martin recognizes the uniqueness of Choy's experiences and the time period in which he grew up, but she tends to deal with the significance of his childhood for his current understanding of himself and the ways in which his autobiography will appeal to readers because the experience of childhood is universal (1). Moreover, her review does not talk very extensively about the problems of racism, cultural conflict, and class tensions that both Choy and other Chinese immigrants experienced during the time period that he represents in his autobiography. In contrast to Martin's review, I focus on how Choy represents these aspects in Paper Shadows because they inform how he perceives and reacts to his circumstances as well as how he perceives his childhood from an adult viewpoint. Focusing on the ways in which class expectations and tensions permeate Choy's childhood experiences, I suggest that Choy's decision to convey his childhood from both an adult and child perspective informs his representations of how class identities signify and manifest in bodily and material forms. He interprets his childhood in relation to his present subject position as an adult, but he also conveys what it is like, psychologically and emotionally, to grow up as a Chinese boy in Vancouver's Chinatown from 1939 to 1950.

In his representation of his childhood during this time, Choy depicts how Chinese Canadians' identities and their perceptions of those identities are shaped by the possibilities for integrating into Canadian society and the opportunities for class mobility that are available to them in that historical context. The 1940s constitutes a unique period of Chinese Canadian history because this is the period that sees a shift, in the governmental and public realm, from an exclusionist attitude towards Chinese immigration and their place in Canadian society to a more inclusive one that developed after the Second World War. In Choy's text, Chinese Canadians' class identities signify in relation to both their Chinese cultural heritage and the presence of Western cultural practices in their daily lives. However, Choy also asserts that such identities are not uniform in their meanings or in the ways in which they are perceived. Representing his childhood in this context, Choy depicts it as a period of struggle between the identities to which others expect him to conform and the identities that he personally desires.

While he resists Chinese adults' bodily and material expressions of class identity as a young child, Choy also gives credence to their views of these class significations. He acknowledges their efficacy in contesting, for the adults, Chinese people's racial marginalization in Canadian society. The adults' expression of particular class identities do not always lead to improvements in their actual class positions or changes to non-Chinese people's perceptions of them, but Choy acknowledges the perceptual significance of these identities for their daily lives. In representing his childhood and experiences of other Chinese adults, Choy provides new views on agency through his inclusion of class concerns, which intersect with his characters' views and struggles over Chineseness as well as their awareness of their racial difference in Canadian society.

Embodying the Part: Expressing Class for Public and Private Viewing

Choy represents his childhood experiences of the 1940s as a time that is fraught with tension because of the behavioural ideals to which he is expected to subscribe and his inability to fully accept and conform to them. As he is a son of Chinese descent, Choy is expected to recognize his subordinate status in his family and Chinatown community and act accordingly. He must express his position as a Chinese descendent and acknowledge his cultural inheritance of Chinese traditions by behaving in suitably "Chinese" ways and demonstrating appropriate forms of respect toward adults in his family and community. These include the clothing that he wears, the ways that he behaves in public and social situations, and the language that he speaks: each of these signify out of an intersection between ideas of Chineseness and class.

In his depiction of his parents' expectations for his behaviour in public, Choy reveals how "favourable" class identities are conveyed through particular types of clothing. As Tim Dant suggests, clothing allows one to express one's individuality by distinguishing one's physical appearance from others, but it can also signify "social distinctions of age, gender, and status" (86). This second function is important as it emphasizes that the meanings attributed to clothing are constructed and are not necessarily inherent to the clothes' physical aspects themselves. These meanings often derive out of the discursive and social contexts in which the clothing appears (Dant 97). The effect of wearing particular clothes derives from not only their ability to foreground class distinctions among Chinese people, but also their ability to construct the *perception* of a particular class status for others to observe and emulate. Cultural and racial meanings also inform how clothing works for Choy's characters' class identities as well as why certain characters resist the identities that clothing serves to express.

Pierre Bourdieu's discussion of clothing, which he frames within the larger context of presenting one's body for public display, stresses that the expression of class identity through clothing does not simply arise out of the kind of clothing that is worn, though it can signal a particular lifestyle of consumption that is associated with particular class statuses (Distinction 192-193). He stresses that clothing is also part of a larger process of "social representation of [one's] own body" (Distinction 193), whereby certain ways of behaving are attached to and expected of people who wear that clothing. In Choy's case, his clothing's class significations are culturally framed because adults in the Chinese community circulate and enforce particular ideas of Chineseness through that clothing. They enforce these ideas with the threat of verbal rebuke and physical punishment. Choy's clothing functions as physical proof that he has the desirable personality traits expected of a Chinese boy: dressing up materially demonstrates his proper breeding and his understanding of his own status in relation to the other adults. Choy's actions have collective consequences because if he behaves improperly, he is not only showing disrespect and giving that person a poor impression of himself but also shaming his family in public. As Choy's mother tells him, "'You dress up . . . You don't want to let people think you have *mo li, no manners*'" (96). His mother's reference to the concept of *mo li* embodies an entire outlook on life that avoids weakness, ignorance, and lack of self-control. Choy reminds us of *mo li*'s Confucian implications:

> I know now that *mo li* meant much more than "no manners." It meant having no *Confucian* manners. Being *mo li* branded someone as having no sense of the Right Way or Right Behaviour—the *Tao.* Having *mo li*, you were marked as someone ignorant and crude; in short, you were someone destined to fail in life, fated to become life's fool. A loser. A bum. (96-97).

The expectation that Choy should dress well when he goes out with other Chinese adults signifies in relation to particular assumptions about how Chinese people should interact, based on their age, as well as the appropriate forms of respect that should be displayed. Choy must dress well when he goes out with another Chinese adult, especially when that adult is Third Uncle, one of their wealthier relations. This is significant because it suggests that his display of respect for Third Uncle is not simply about affirming his subordinate position in relation to an older relative; it is also about showing appropriate physical markers of class status that correspond with the kinds of clothes that are associated with people in higher-class positions like his uncle. Here, clothing is part of a discourse of class morality that establishes boundaries between desirable and undesirable forms of public behaviour. Wearing more formal clothes becomes equated with social respectability because it signals Choy's acceptance of particular behavioural dispositions that correspond with and uphold the adults' prescribed understandings of Chineseness. Choy is reluctant to obey his parents and says, "I would rather wear torn overalls, scuffed boots and a cowboy hat than my Sunday best" (97). However, his parents make him wear a suit when he goes out with his Third Uncle because they want to maintain a good impression of themselves for their more affluent relative. Thus, pragmatic reasons shape his parents' bodily displays of attractive class identities in their daily interactions with Choy's Third Uncle. Indeed, his parents also dress well when they are in their uncle's presence. Since his uncle is his father's direct and oldest relation and is also literate (95), he will be writing back to their family in China about them. As a result, his mother "always wanted to impress him" (95) so that he would write about them favourably. Choy's parents feel obligated to act in a suitability deferential way that acknowledges their genealogical heritage as people of Chinese descent and that recognizes their social position vis-à-vis the others with whom they associate in the Chinese community.

When he writes about how clothing expresses class distinctions, Choy also suggests a contrast between the clothes that his family can afford to buy and the class effects that the wearing of this clothing can promote. This adds a nuance to Bourdieu's ideas on clothing because it suggests the elasticity of what may be designated as "appropriate" class behaviours: Choy's family cannot afford to display particular material markers of class, but they can still wear particular types of clothes that are "good enough" to satisfy those of higher class status. As Choy's family is less well off than other Chinese immigrants in Chinatown, their actual class identities signify through their clothes because they indicate their inability to spend beyond the minimum necessary for their physical survival. Thus, their lower class identities signify through their inability to consume freely. The products that Choy's family and others of similar financial status buy and use reveal that they prefer long-lasting and practical goods over goods that are used to express personal taste, aesthetic quality, or social prestige among peers: "All the poorer Chinatown families followed this rule. *Buy larger, save more.* It was a credo" (Choy 93). At the same time, his family can remain thrifty without having to sacrifice the possibility of maintaining their peers' favourable impressions of them. His parents buy an "Irish tweed suit" for Choy to wear: it is cheap but it is also suitable to be worn in public (93). For instance, Choy states that "Mother did not care where [me and my Third Uncle] went as long as I dressed respectably" (96). The clothing's effect on other Chinese and non-Chinese adults is more important to Choy's parents than the extent to which these clothes may expose their actual class identity. Choy's clothes are sufficient enough to convey a good impression among other Chinese adults, given their limited economic means.

For Choy's Third Uncle, however, clothes such as Irish tweed are unsuitable because of the higher-class identity that he wishes to affirm within the Chinese community. Choy's representation of Third Uncle exemplifies the complex and subtle ways in which one can express a class identity through one's physical appearance and behaviour. Besides signifying in relation to Chineseness, Choy's Third Uncle's clothes also evoke class meanings that relate to ideas of modernity: to be modern becomes equated with Westernization and, more specifically, an ability to participate in a specific mode of consumption—the buying of certain material goods—that are not easily attainable. His uncle's clothes point to a particular standard of living that does not depend upon a pragmatic orientation to money for one's survival. The class markers that distinguish and elevate him above Choy's family coalesce around a discourse of the "immaculate gentleman" (95), on which I will elaborate shortly. Third Uncle works as a Head Cook on various steamships and has kitchen assistants (94), which means that he is still a part of the same occupational "class" as Choy's father, who also cooks on trains and ships. Yet, Third Uncle carries more prestige because of his age, which gives him a higher status in the familial hierarchy, and his better financial circumstances, which he displays through his clothes and other accoutrements. For Choy's uncle, enacting a class identity means that he must display relevant material markers of class upon his own body in an appropriate fashion. He wears expensive items such as oxford shoes, a Burmese-jade ring, and a gold watch-chain, but the way that he displays them suggests a high degree of refinement. His appearance connotes cleanliness, exactitude, and physical suavity. As Choy observes, his uncle wore "metal armbands that held his shirt sleeves at exactly the right length. His clothes were meticulously clean; his oxford shoes, bright" (94).

Besides wearing the appropriate clothing, his uncle expresses a prestigious class identity through his behavioural posture. In public situations, he displays suave behaviour that suggests refinement, cleanliness, and grace. By implication, he *avoids* displaying the undesirable opposite—uncouthness, dirtiness, and clumsiness—and promotes the impression that he is modern, educated, and socially refined. For instance, Choy's uncle performs his higher-class identity when he eats with others. Tanya Lewis suggests a relationship between social conformity and eating because it is "not simply a matter of physically nourishing those who partake of it but also an occasion to satisfy social conventions" (90). Connecting Lewis's point to class, it is not simply what one eats but, rather, how one eats and interacts with others that acknowledges class differences. As Bourdieu affirms, the act of eating encompasses various "forms and formalisms" that include "the etiquette governing posture and gesture, ways of serving oneself and others, of using the different utensils, [and] the seating plan, strictly but discreetly hierarchical" (Distinction 196). When Choy and his parents eat in Third Uncle's presence, the way they eat and the way that they *react* to what they are eating becomes more important than what they are actually eating. His uncle's method of eating suggests a state of refinement that befits his higher status among them. Whether he is eating over at their house or out at a Chinese restaurant, his uncle dresses well and avoids making a mess. He wears a "gentleman's hat" (94) and he "always t[akes] particular care not to spot or stain his clothes" (94). During dessert, he would "carefully slice into the pie" (95). Choy feels pressured to conform and emulate his uncle's standards and tells us that he feels "conscious of Father's instructions on how to use a fork properly, and always aware of Third Uncle's watchful eyes" (95). His uncle's adoption of Western eating practices—the use of their utensils—as well as Western forms of clothing evokes class meanings that depend upon a subordination of the Chinese populations' cultural heritage to the process of Westernization. This does not mean Choy's parents reject their Chinese heritage in favour of Westernization, but rather that they consider Westernization as a means for accessing greater prospects for class mobility in Canadian society and, in turn, alleviating their racial difference within that society. In contrast, the Chinatown community offers limited prospects for class mobility, particularly as it is isolated from mainstream society. Thus, Choy's parents admire Third uncle and consider him as someone who they should emulate because he represents someone who has successfully assimilated into Canadian society and, despite his racial difference from the white population, has increased his class status within the economic avenues available to him. His parents also want Choy to emulate his Third Uncle because the act of imitation functions as a form of respect towards him: it recognizes his uncle's higher-class status because it augments his own behaviours to meet his uncle's standards.

Even when such overt age or physical differences in class status are not apparent, Choy must behave appropriately. The public nature of expressing a class identity through eating also occurs when Choy and his parents have dinner at their relatives' Winter Hotel. His parents' abrupt reactions after Choy's comment on the food indicate that he has crossed the boundary of acceptable behaviour in public: "'What do you want?' Choy-Gut Moh finally asked me in her nicest Toisanese. 'I get you whatever you want, Sonny.' '*Ngoh fan kay,*' I said. '*I go home.*' With Mother having to save face, and Father having lost his temper, I was yanked from my chair and hastily told we were leaving" (101). In this case, his parents' expectations take precedence over his dislike of the food. Regardless of what he thinks of the food, Choy must not embarrass his parents in front of other adults by speaking inappropriately because this reflects poorly on their ability to teach him the right manners.

The discourses of class to which Choy is subjected extend to the kind of language that he is taught to use. As Simon J. Charlesworth suggests, language operates as a class marker because it is legitimated and valued as a part of the dominant culture, "elevat[ing] one form of linguistic habitus to the status of legitimate, as the form of speech befitting those who are appropriate for senior and professional positions" (220). Charlesworth's general point, then, is that language expresses an association with a particular class identity that advocates the expression of that language as the appropriate *style* to use. Choy's text presents a similar association between class and language but shows how it is also shaped by the connections that Chinese adults enforce between language, ethnicity and regional roots. The Chinese language functions as a class marker because it distinguishes the superiority and inferiority of people on the basis of their linguistic proficiency. These distinctions intersect with the associated significations between one's ability to speak Chinese language and one's Chineseness. As his mother asserts, "'You Chinese . . . You speak Chinese'" (82) Choy's father is more tolerant than his mother and "approve[s] of [Choy's] English vocabulary" (84) because he recognizes its functional utility, but he still adheres to her notion of Chineseness, which designates one's linguistic proficiency in Chinese as a marker of one's authentic Chineseness. For Choy's parents and other adults who are more experientially and emotionally attached to China, they affirm that a person's proficiency in the Chinese language signifies that the person is more authentically Chinese, more cultured, and, therefore, socially superior to other people of Chinese descent. Language identifies one's ability to access and participate in Chinese cultural traditions.[3]

In the Chinese school that Choy attends, the Chinese language is designated as an imperative marker of Chineseness. This evokes class significations because the Chinese dialects that the students speak identify their ancestors' regional roots in China. The teachers use their students' regional roots to identify perceived differences among these students' cultural proficiency and educational prospects, stratify them according to these criteria, and treat them unequally (in accordance with their assigned statuses). However, Choy's representation of his education at that school illustrates the divisive and destructive effects of class distinctions that derive from language, even though it may be a source of pride to be proficient in Chinese. The school is dedicated to instruction in particular types of Chinese dialects, Mandarin and Cantonese (214), which reinforces the physical division between students whose families come from rural backgrounds in China and those who come from urban ones. Choy's Chinese teachers associate class differences with these spaces and discriminate against students who come from rural backgrounds. The teachers, who have emigrated from more affluent parts of China where Mandarin and Cantonese are often spoken, regard the children who come from rural areas and speak village dialects with condescension. They believe that these children must be disciplined more extensively because of their supposedly innate intellectual and moral deficiencies. The rural kids' inability to master the taught language becomes a stigma that confirms their cultural deficiency and social ineptitude. This is coupled with the original dialects that they speak, which become the basis for a class hierarchy in the school. To be lower class is to speak a rural Chinese dialect that is devalued in relation to the taught dialects. The teachers react even more unfavourably towards the students who are born in Canada, regarding them as people who are even less authentically Chinese and irredeemable through education. Here, class distinctions derive from their place of birth, which become indicative of their cultural proficiency in traditional Chinese culture:

> At Kwomintang Chinese school, not one of the China-born teachers understood that kids like me were simply different. Many of our Chinatown parents came from the poorest districts of Old China, from farming villages, but the teachers themselves, many of them refugees from the Sino-Japanese War, came from the modern cities of Canton and Hong Kong. They were barely able to tolerate our Sze Yup dialects. They saw our peasant Chinese faces, but not our in-between souls. Rather, many of them felt the in-between, local-born children were *mo-no juk sum—brainless bamboo stumps*—truly spoiled and utterly stupid. From their feelings of superiority at being traditional and Chinese, many of them saw us as beyond redemption, deliberately disrespectful, and needing more beatings than lessons. (234)

Like their teachers, the Chinese students also differentiate among themselves by judging how well each student can speak the Chinese language. When a girl asks Choy why he does not want to learn Chinese and he asserts that he is Canadian, the girl "laughed pityingly" (238). The girl's reaction suggests that she considers the English language to be inferior to the Chinese language. Her reaction also implies that Choy is less Chinese and, therefore, less socially respectable because he does not know the Chinese language and prefers to learn English.

As a result, both the Chinese school and Chinese community in Paper Shadows find it important to champion a particular type of Chinese identity that conflates linguistic differences among themselves. Choy writes that families in Chinatown experience social pressure to conform to the predominant dialects and to send their kids to those schools. Linguistic proficiency becomes a cultural marker of superior status among peers because "[a]ll respectable Chinatown families felt obliged, even coerced, to send their sons and daughters to one of the half-dozen private Chinatown schools. A Chinese boy or a Chinese girl must be taught Chinese, in the formal Mandarin or Cantonese dialects. Village dialects like Toisanese were not taught at all" (214). Even though Choy's family speaks Toisanese, they acquiesce to these community pressures because they do not want to be marginalized in the urbanized community in which they live. They do not change their class status in real terms when they speak Mandarin or Cantonese, but they can, at least, potentially avoid the discrimination that Choy experiences at the Chinese school.

Re-visioning Class Expectations from Childhood

Despite the presence of these class expectations to which he is expected to subscribe as a child, Choy resists conforming to them because they do not meaningfully inform his self-perceptions within the relatively insulated confines of Chinatown and the surrounding area. As a child, he shows his lack of identification in several instances with the adults' prescribed class expectations: "The Irish tweed at that time was a stiff, coarse, sandpaper-like fabric that scratched sensitive skin like mine" (93). These material expressions of class identity have no resonance beyond his sensory discomfort and his desire to relieve himself of it. Moreover, Choy feels inadequate among other Chinese adults as they consider him to be a "mo-no" who fails to live up to their expectations. As a result, Choy retreats to his imagination because it provides an outlet for his feelings of inadequacy and his subordinate status in relation to other Chinese adults. Alleviating his lack of agency in actuality, Choy uses his imagination to disrupt the totality and constraints of the class identities that the other Chinese adults prescribe. In his imagination, he inverts his subordinate position in real life and reinvents himself as a heroic figure with power, authority, and unrestricted agency. He derives pleasure from imagining himself as a righteous superhero and a "brave protector of the weak" (260) in a world where outcomes are certain and justice will prevail. However, his imaginary rejection of his class expectations also takes on a racial significance because he envisions himself as a white person. By drawing upon heroic figures from Western popular culture such as the Wild West adventurer, Keystone Kop, and the Lone Ranger, Choy rejects his racial visibility and adopts the material objects that are associated with Western culture: "I no longer felt I was a failure, because I was no longer going to be Chinese. I was going to be Buster Keaton or a Keystone Kop . . . my head buzzed happily with new scenarios for movies that Larry and I would star in" (239).

While he depicts his childhood resistance towards the Chinese adults' class expectations, Choy also reinterprets his childhood in light of the new knowledge that he has accumulated since his childhood in 1940s Canada. Ironically, his limited childhood resistance against the Chinese adults' class expectations depends, in part, upon his ignorance of the material and historical realities that prompt the other Chinese adults to enact particular class identities in public. Buffered from his family's economic hardships (27), troubled histories of Chinatown (90), as well as the Second World War (57, 116), Choy can remain secluded and content in his immediate environment. For instance, Choy's naïve childhood belief that he can simply reject the Chinese adults' class expectations and become white is only sustainable within Chinatown's physical confines. Such an illusion is shattered when Choy meets a white boy outside Chinatown who mocks his physical features: " I knew some Chinese people had eyes that slanted much more than ours, but why would a boy make fun of that?" (167). From this instance, Choy represents how his childhood awareness of the world around him has subtly shifted: he realizes that his racial visibility has real consequences that he cannot ignore.

Similarly, Choy also exposes the gap between his childhood and adult perceptions of the Chinese adults' class expectations. He does so by reinterpreting the material and historical realities of his time, which he was ignorant of as a child, from an adult perspective. His text uses more than one subject position: these include the "I" in his reconstruction of his perspective as a child and the temporally separated, experientially mature, and adult "I" of the present that looks back upon that childhood. At times, Choy uses his adult perspective to ironically comment upon the epistemological gap or the lack of fit between his child's perceptions and the discourses to which he is subjected and expected to uphold as a filial son. His childhood rebelliousness against the adults' class expectations becomes mediated through an adult subjectivity that contextualizes his childhood and these expectations in the period from 1939 to 1950. While he presents his childhood as a time during which he can exercise agency against predominant class-implicated discourses of Chineseness, Choy also criticizes his ignorance during that time and its negative effects upon his perceptions of the adults' class discourses. In doing so, Choy reconfigures his childhood stance and incorporates differing perspectives on identity, giving credence to each and justifying them as strategies of survival and agency in specific historical and personal contexts.

Even though Choy rebels against the class identities that his parents and other adults prescribe for him and the various ways in which he must express them, he qualifies his childhood interpretations of these from an adult subject position. In the context of the Exclusion Era—a time of overt and widespread exclusion of Chinese immigrants and their descendents from mainstream society—and their uncertain status during the Second World War, Choy acknowledges that many of the adults in Chinatown derive strength from such stable and clear identifications with China and the significations of Chineseness that are transplanted to Canada. The adults around Choy reiterate this fact and state bluntly, "'Canada no want you . . . you worry about being Chinese'" (31). This insistence on being Chinese appears restrictive from Choy's perspective as a child. However, by locating this in the Exclusion Era, Choy wants us to understand their responses as a necessary survival strategy that is prompted by historical exigencies. The Chinese immigrants can only depend on each other because of their racial exclusion from mainstream society. As a result, their racial exclusion contributes to their coherence as a community: "'Home,' of course, was always a village or city in China, the place where you were raised, where they still wanted you, even dead; where you belonged. For ever" (31). As such, Choy's recollections of his childhood involve a revision of his own attitudes towards the class identities that he disliked as a child.

For instance, Choy reveals that his perceptions about clothing have changed in his adulthood. He acknowledges that the act of presenting a class identity through one's clothing is another means by which one copes with one's daily hardships, regardless of whether this reflects one's actual class status or whether this translates into actual improvements in the person's living circumstances, social status, or interactions with others. Many adults in his community such as his Third Uncle, Grandfather, and even his parents derive pleasure from *appearing* to be well off. For his Third Uncle, who actually does possess a higher-class status, dressing well asserts that status and accrues concrete benefits that alleviate the irreducibility of his racial difference from the white population and the discriminatory effects that result from this difference. He gets special treatment from his kitchen assistants, who take pride in polishing his shoes until they are as shiny as the ship captain's (94). The restaurant waiters also treat him well: they "always laughed" when his uncle makes a joke because they "hop[ed] for his nickel tip" (95).

For other adults in Paper Shadows, conveying the illusion of a high-class identity through their clothing operates as a survival strategy that provides solace for their current hardships in Canada. As such, the emotional effects of wearing the clothes are more important than the extent to which the clothes reflect or offer the means to improve the adults' actual material circumstances. They may be racially discriminated against in other aspects of their lives such as in their work, but they can derive some dignity over their circumstances by dressing well. In some cases, they dress well in order to satisfy the expectations of other family members outside of Canada who expect their kin to be better off in Canada. For instance, Uncle Dai Kew's physical presentation of himself through clothing symbolically enacts a fictitious class status for his relatives back home in China that reciprocally benefits both sides. Appearing to be prosperous boosts his sense of achievement and self-esteem and provides comfort and happiness to his relatives back in China: "With a proper dark suit, one could appear physically filled out, look Gold Mountain prosperous, however little he might have" (92). Similarly, Choy's grandfather, who has a terminal illness, wants to look respectable before he goes out because it gives him a sense of dignity and self-control: "Before we stepped out, Gung-Gung would insist on looking fresh and clean. Because the old man had grown weaker, his shaving involved the whole family" (144).

Choy further exposes the limitations of his childhood perceptions by qualifying his own frustration with and resistance to his parents' expectations about what he should wear. In contrast to his childhood views about the clothing that he is expected to wear, Choy legitimizes his parents' and other Chinese adults' attitudes towards that clothing by showing how these attitudes are shaped by their awareness of the larger society outside of Chinatown and their racial visibility within that society:

> [D]ay off was a time to show the world that you were well employed. No matter how you might have sweated and wiped your brow the rest of the time, to dress well and appear well off was to keep to a standard set by the merchants and leaders of Chinatown. Many of the steady-working men of Chinatown, Father included, dressed in Sunday-best suits whether their day fell on Sunday or not. It became the rule. (96)

Their enacted perception of a particular class identity signifies from both their Chinese community and the white community outside of Chinatown that they visit. Dressing up derives from public pressures to conform to a communal standard exemplified by Chinatown's higher-class segments. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the construction of Chinatowns is based on the racial homogenization of Chinese immigrants and their spatial restriction to these spaces. Here, projecting a homogeneous class identity through a display of material wealth is not necessarily negative because it operates as a material strategy for countering their racial discrimination. Appearing prosperous, even though they are not prosperous in actuality, operates as a collective strategy to forestall the general public's racial discrimination towards people of Chinese descent and to appear materially similar to others outside of Chinatown.

The family photographs in his autobiography contribute to Choy's reorientation towards his childhood, the Chinese adults in his community, and the class expectations that these adults bodily and materially display. As Betty Bergland asserts, photographs are not simply mimetic, objective reproductions or "unmediated copies of the real world" (50); instead, they are *representations* of reality that signify within specific historical and cultural contexts. As such, photos may reinforce but also allow for the possibility of critiquing "ideologically loaded meanings," "rethink[ing], and re-remember[ing], ethnic identities and multicultural histories" (Bergland 53). Like Bergland's views of photography, the class-inflected representations of Choy's family and the Chinese community in Choy's photos are not simply for posterity. These photos are politically and ethically oriented because they articulate a responsibility towards preserving his family's and community's past and conferring some dignity upon them, but they also serve to criticize the societal conditions that have racially and economically excluded them. Most of the photographs in Choy's text are poses of himself, his parents, and other relatives and often depict them in clothes that elide their personal hardships. With their captions that identify the person or people within them, these photos construct a retrospective image of his parents, relatives, and other Chinese immigrants as economically successful individuals. For instance, a photo of Choy's foster father in a suit and tie appears with the caption "Toy Choy's first Gold Mountain portrait" (303).

At the same time, the placement of these photos in Choy's text provides a visual narrative that overlays and modifies the meaning of the actual text. In this respect, these photographs also implicitly criticize their subjects' bodily and materially enacted forms of class identity because of what they elide: the daily sufferings of his own family and other Chinese and the societal mechanisms of legislated exclusion and social discrimination that have exacerbated them. For instance, in one photo, his father and uncle are dressed up in suits and are walking down a street in a Western neighbourhood (72): the caption that accompanies it states "Father (right) and one of my uncles" (72). Here, his father and uncle bodily express a class identity that suggests material affluence and social respectability, but the juxtaposition of that photo with the main text also exposes the contradictions behind their wearing of those clothes and the inadequacy of photos to fully represent historical realities. As I mentioned earlier, Chinese adults in Paper Shadows express class identities for public exposure because it is one aspect of their appearance that they can change, at least perceptually, to mediate against their racial visibility. However, as I mentioned in Chapter 2, the perceived threat of Chinese people to Canada's economy prompts the Canadian government to legislate racist policies of exclusion from the country and its mainstream economy. Thus, this photo's juxtaposition with the chapter's main text provides an ironic comment upon the class identities that the Chinese adults display and the impossibility of achieving such class standing in mainstream society during the Exclusion Era: the photo prefaces the chapter's opening pages about the racialized class discrimination against people of Chinese descent prior to and during the Exclusion Era (72-74). Highlighting the adverse effects of the Exclusion Act upon the Chinese community, Choy states bluntly, " In the ten years between 1931 and 1941, Chinatown's population was cut in half, to seven thousand. The racist Exclusion Act was made into law on July 1, a date my uncles and aunts always called 'the Day of Shame'" (74).

Thus, Choy's photos contribute to his representation of class by acknowledging the class identities that Chinese adults expressed and the reasons that prompted them to do so, but he also criticizes the rigidity that they can impose upon the public's impressions of the era in which he has grown up. Instead, he stresses the importance of situating the expression of these class identities in their respective contexts and to recognize that these representations of identity construct only a *partial* understanding of Chinese Canadians' past. They elide the individually unique experiences and struggles of Chinese people who lived during that time, which Choy asserts is part of a writer's responsibility to uncover and depict. For instance, he foregrounds the gap between his sheltered existence in Chinatown and the harsher realities that coexist in that same place: "Some Chinatown children, as I later discovered, were barely tolerated, sexually abused, beaten, even starved" (98). Alongside these depictions, however, Choy's selection of photos functions in a recuperative manner. Much like Denise Chong's views of her mother's photos in The Concubine's Children, I suggest that Choy's photos, despite their epistemological incompleteness, dignify the lives of Chinese people during the era in which Choy has grown up. These bodily and material representations of class identity mitigate against their suffering and conceive them as agents who coped successfully, at least temporarily, with the social and economic means available to them.

Overall, Choy constructs a heterogeneous and non-essentialist understanding of bodily and material expressions of identity that accounts for individual choices as well as collective pressures, both in their own community and larger society, that shape how such manifestations of class identity signify and work in racially and culturally significant ways. Choy portrays how Chinese people in that era experienced and coped in their own ways with the pressures of being Chinese in their community and larger society. He criticizes the class identities and expectations that he encounters as a child, but he also acknowledges their psychological and pragmatic value for other adults who adhere to them. Exposing the limits of his childhood interpretations of these class identities from an adult perspective in his text, he conceptualizes class as something that signifies, and that must be interpreted within, the context of people's individual circumstances, rather than something that can be defined and evaluated separately from these. As such, his representation of his life and the extent to which class is an important identity marker for him is but one among other possible and valid interpretations of that same era.

Fusing Tradition and Modernity: Individual and Communal Ethics of Class in Yuen Chung Yip's The Tears of Chinese Immigrants

In his preface to Yuen Chung Yip's novel The Tears of the Chinese Immigrants, Sheng-Tai Chang locates Yip's text in the context of Chinese literary history and suggests that it can be regarded as a successor to earlier influences in modern Chinese literature, particularly the prominent school of social realism, with its "censure of social evils and [its] championing of social reform" (19). Though Yip published his work after he emigrated to Canada in 1950, Chang suggests that Yip was heavily influenced by Chinese literature. He points to Yip's admiration of writers such as Lu Xun and Mao Dun, both of whom are associated with the literary movement of realism in 1930s China. Cai Han-ao asserts that the development of realism as the privileged mode of writing has its roots in the post-dynastic era of modern China, which consisted of writers and intellectuals who called for a new literature that "reflected popular sentiment and social reality" (361). Influenced by Marxist thought and concerned with the direction of Chinese society, these writers saw literature as an ideological and political tool for denunciating society's social evils, proposing solutions and praising those who work to better society, and envisioning a brighter future for it (Cai 361-362). These writers, like ones that Yip admires, are regarded as leftist because of their affinity with the Chinese Communist Party and its revolutionary cause to overthrow the current government and to transform China as a whole. This affinity between practitioners of social realism and the leftist nationalist movement strengthened in the 1920s and still remains in that literary movement (Cai 365). Leo Ou-Fan Lee affirms this point and states that the concept of realism has been prominent in Chinese literature in the first half of the twentieth century, but especially in the 1930s, with its "patriotic pan-moralism" and an "obsession with social reality . . . which encouraged message-giving and literature's 'social effect'" (161).

While Yip does advocate reform within the Chinese Canadian community, Chang's point needs to be considered in the context of what class means and how it signifies *differently* among Yip's characters. As Chang does not explicitly address these issues, his analysis of Yip's text tends to evoke a binary between "progressive" and "conservative" and between "Chinese" and "Western," both of which simplify how Yip depicts Chinese Canadians and the identities that they express. For instance, Chang states that Yip's text is fundamentally about "the struggle between progressive and conservative forces within the Chinese community" (12): it criticizes the outdated nature of old Chinese cultural traditions and advocates the discarding of these in order to enhance Chinese Canadians' well-being (Yip 12). However, an analysis of how class actually works in Yip's novel—how it is signified and expressed in bodily and material form—will complicate Chang's observations and suggest a more complex view of what it means to be Chinese and Chinese Canadian in Yip's text.

I will also consider Chang's story against the backdrop that it represents—1950s Canada—because both of these inform his characterization of Chinese Canadians, narrative structure, and narrative progression. Yip's text recognizes Chinese Canadians' past struggles, affirms their shared heritage, and demonstrates the benefits of class mobility in 1950s Canada. These additional considerations inform his depictions of bodily and material expressions of class identities for his Chinese Canadian characters and, in turn, complicate Chang's observations about Yip's depicted vision for the Chinese Canadian community.

Yip interrogates the significations of class and articulates an ethical orientation towards class identities that values both individual mobility and communal responsibility and advocates the co-existence and fusion of Chinese cultural tradition and Western modernization. Through his characters, particularly Charlie and his narrative commentary, Yip problematizes the positive and negative significations that we might attach to class. He dignifies lower class identities as sources for hope and action and denigrates the abuse or corruption inherent in attempts to acquire and express upper-class identities when this occurs at the expense of others' well-being or communal health. This is not to suggest that Yip does not advocate class mobility for his characters, for he does portray some characters as models of class mobility who have successfully integrated into mainstream society. However, his text configures certain class values as desirable ones and affirms them in the context of individual and communal life.

Representational Snapshot of 1950s Canada

In representing 1950s Canada, Yip situates his novel at a historically significant turning point in Chinese Canadian history when many old Chinatowns were declining and disappearing (Lai 122-123) and Chinese Canadians were increasingly integrating themselves into mainstream society. As I discussed in an earlier chapter, a growing division between different generations of immigrants occurs during this time period. This division was facilitated by the movement of the younger generation into urban centers and the increased immigration from China, which started to change the numerical and cultural composition of the Chinese Canadian population. In addition, this decade is significant because it marks a distinctive break from the legislated discrimination of the Exclusion Era (1923-1947) and the constraints that this would impose on Chinese immigrants' and their descendents' lives. During the Exclusion Era, it was pragmatically necessary for the Chinese population to stick together and help each other, despite the fact that this enhanced their isolation from mainstream society. In contrast, the 1950s marks the liberalization of laws and the acceptance of Chinese immigrants as Canadian citizens. During this time, immigrants' employment opportunities, residential options, and forms of social interaction extended beyond Chinatowns' spatial confines and the economic margins of Canadian society (Lai 123-124). As a result, the 1950s can also be regarded as a time of uncertainty and change because of these new opportunities, the older generation of Chinese Canadians who vividly remembers the Exclusion Era and may be more suspicious of integrating into mainstream life, and the younger generation who is more willing to integrate into and work within mainstream society (Con et al. 256).

Yip uses this backdrop of 1950s Canada to explore the tensions between Chinese Canadians' opposing values, distinguished generationally and experientially, and to examine the loss of moral and familial attachments when individual class mobility becomes one's defining goal. It is significant that he is writing fairly close to the time period to which his novel refers because this suggests his self-positioning as someone who represents Chinese Canadians' current lives and envisions prospects for their future in Canada, both among themselves and with others of non-Chinese descent. He creates a community of Chinese Canadians that portrays the possibility of mutually positive relationships that elide class differences but that also acknowledge that these individual class differences can strengthen the Chinese Canadian community as a whole and, ultimately, Canadian society in general.

Yip's character Charlie narrates the whole novel and provides us with information about the other characters' lives as well. Yip's novel does not chart a trajectory of character development that focuses on Charlie and his wife Marlene, although it does move along chronologically with periodic flashbacks when Charlie reflects upon previous experiences or encounters with other Chinese Canadians. Yip provides an episodic narrative plot that does not focus heavily on developing and resolving extensive cause-and-effect threads over the course of the entire narrative. The narrative provides what I would like to call "snapshots," or portraitures, of characters in particular moments in time, rather than a cohesive narrative that develops them over the course of the novel.[4] Focusing on his characters' personalities and class attitudes, Yip provides a composite image of Chinese Canadian life that is unified by the characters' individual experiences and attitudes. Charlie meets and evaluates these other characters in the novel: during these meetings, Yip uses Charlie's viewpoint to criticize some characters and to praise others as role models.

The novel's opening scene exemplifies Yip's orientation towards class in the rest of his text. Yip introduces us to Charlie and his wife Marlene, who have lower-class statuses, and show how financial constraints affect their daily lives and influence what they choose to buy. They decide to budget accordingly and to avoid buying "anything expensive—not a car or even a TV set—before [they] were firmly on [their] feet financially" (27). To use Pierre Bourdieu's terminology, monetary wealth for Charlie and Marlene functions as a form of "economic capital" that provides "strength, power, and consequent profit on their holder" ("What Makes a Social Class?" 4). In Yip's text, the benefits of possessing this capital are materially and socially realized. Charlie's and Marlene's class identities are relationally defined against the higher class identities of their "well-off friends" (27), which signify through a combination of their accumulated financial wealth, the material goods that they can acquire with that wealth, and the prestigious social position that accrues from their wealth. In contrast, Charlie's and

Marlene's class identities signify through their *lack* of wealth and expensive material goods.

Charlie and Marlene want to acquire their friends' higher-class identities, but they do not feel ashamed of their current class position. As Charlie asserts, "Sometimes our well-off friends would laugh at what they considered our shabbiness and backwardness, but we never felt ashamed" (27). Despite how others look at them, they do not feel ashamed because they take pride in their ability to make ends meet without falling into debt and to work honestly for a better future. They cannot spend as freely as their wealthier friends, but they are proud of the work ethic that they developed because of their lower-class position: "We didn't waste our time fantasizing about the impossible; we preferred to work hard for the good life" (26). Charlie's and Marlene's work ethic focuses on long-term benefits rather than seemingly attractive short-term "material gains" (44). Charlie's enthusiastic reaction towards Zhenfang's decision to get a higher education so that she can support herself independently, without having to rely on a husband, suggests that individuals' ambitions for class mobility can serve as models of inspiration for others to emulate. This underpins a class ethic in one's *individual* actions as one's acquisition of a high class status is not just for one's benefit but also for others from the same genealogical background: "'How about starting with ourselves. Just to show others what can be done" (43). Therefore, Charlie and Marlene themselves operate as role models for other Chinese immigrants who want to integrate into and succeed in mainstream society. They both want to get a higher education and envision a prosperous and happy future, which they can achieve by "working hard," "saving" money (122) and maintain through the next generation by "bringing up [their children] properly" (122) so that they share their class attitudes.

Charlie's attitudes toward his own circumstances mirror those that he expresses about other characters' class identities. Through Charlie, Yip expresses either approval or disapproval: to have a higher class status does not simply entail the acquisition of the appropriate markers, but also how one behaves and uses one's status in one's life. For instance, Yang Zigui is more admirable than Huang Mingde because he is a "gentle, down-to-earth businessman" who uses his class standing to assist the Chinese community as a whole: he donates to community welfare and has helped China to raise funds during the Second World War (110-111). Thus, Charlie's positive assessment of Zigui's class identity is mediated by the communal affiliations that Zigui promotes and strengthens among the Chinese Canadian population. In contrast, Huang Mingde is not to be admired, despite his equivalent financial status and his social position as a "community leader" in Chinatown. Instead of using his wealth to help the less fortunate in the Chinese community, Mingde engages in "ruthless and unscrupulous" practices (110) that exploit other Chinese immigrants for his personal gain. For instance, he attempts to "lure and bully Zhenfang into a marriage with his no-good son" (110) so that he can maintain the family line and ensure that his wealth remains within his family.

When he eats at a Chinese restaurant, Charlie reacts negatively towards the other customers who behave arrogantly. Describing some Chinese Canadian customers who were born in Canada and have just entered the restaurant where he and Marlene were eating, Charlie derides their arrogance and dismissal of Chineseness. He describes them as people with "a supercilious air" who are "foul-mouthed" and "non-descript" (99). One of them is named Donald, whom he has met before:

> In short, he was one hundred percent Chinese by background. He knew how to speak Chinese and he must have some basic knowledge of Chinese customs. Out of a special feeling for another fellow Chinese, I tried to strike up a conversation with him at that banquet. Most of us talked in Chinese, but he regarded speaking Chinese as an insult to him. He actually said, "Talk English, damn Chinamen!" which really made me mad. I almost wanted to swear at him. Wasn't he Chinese, too? Didn't the Chinese have their own language and culture? Why should people look down upon those of the same origin? (Yip 99)

Donald's seemingly higher-class status is not admirable because his acquisition of that status occurs at the expense of forgetting his cultural inheritance and denying the reality that "we couldn't bleach our skin" (Yip 100). This does not mean that Charlie wants to reject Western influences and return to a "pure" or essentialist form of Chinese cultural education as the goal that parents should achieve. However, Charlie does reject an individualistic, meritocratic pursuit of class markers that privileges the English language and Western education over the preservation of Chinese culture, including their language, values, and customs. His thoughts criticize how these views, as represented by Donald, promote destructive divisions between people of Chinese descent when they should, instead, adhere to "noble ethics" and not look down upon other people of Chinese descent (99). As Charlie implies, Donald has a personal as well as a *communal* responsibility to assert his Chineseness because his behaviour has racial implications for the larger society's impressions of Chinese people. For Donald to dismiss his racial visibility and to act "white" by speaking English—as he believes it is more appropriate for one of his status to do so—is to "damage the reputation of the Chinese" (100) because his actions reflect poorly upon Chinese people as a whole.

The server Zhu at the restaurant agrees with Charlie's assessment and harshly criticizes these people for their behaviour: "'These guys mix with white hooligans. They believe in self-indulgence; they're cynical and arrogant'" (100). Through Zhu's viewpoint, Yip provides a way of thinking about clothing as a class marker that differs from Choy's portrayal in Paper Shadows. As I discussed earlier, Wayson Choy's Paper Shadows suggests how clothing can function as a class marker that Chinese Canadians can use to cope with their current hardships and to psychologically alleviate, albeit temporarily, their feelings toward their economic and social marginalization in Canadian society. As such, Choy depicts the act of wearing clothing as a positive bodily expression of class identity that can benefit Chinese Canadians. Yip does suggest clothing can also function as a class marker, but he qualifies its value in relation to the wearers' attitudes towards their Chinese heritage and the larger Chinese Canadian community. Even though they may "speak good English and dress well" (100), Zhu regards them with contempt because they are "a pack of good-for-nothings" (100) who reject their cultural heritage and genealogical ties to the Chinese community. Thus, their unattractive behaviour diminishes the value of their bodily expressions of higher-class identity through clothing. Similarly, Zhaoming, another character in Yip's story, exemplifies the same attitude towards other people with higher-class identities. She does not admire those people, such as Huang Mingde and Huang Jinfa, who may be very rich, but who are not admirable people because they flaunt their wealth and fail to treat other Chinese immigrants respectfully. As she states, "'the Huangs always brag how rich they are . . . [Huang Minde is] about twenty-two, oily-tongued, dressed in vulgar taste. He may think himself smart, rich and everything, but I can't stand him'" (37).

The everyday aspects of material goods also manifest themselves in the class identities that Charlie evaluates. As Henri Lefebvre asserts, consumer goods such as cars signify, not only in terms of their pragmatic usefulness, but also in terms of their symbolic value as status symbols that foster and affirm hierarchies among people who possess these goods and those who do not: "The car is a status symbol, it stands for comfort, power, authority, speed, it is *consumed as a sign* in addition to its practical use (Everyday Life 102). Charlie's perceptions of material goods acknowledge the class distinctions that these goods promote, but qualify them. He disapproves of Zhaoming's naivety and inability to look beyond short-term material gains. Zhaoming sees the acquisition of material goods, such as a car, as prestigious expressions of identity that show his class mobility for other people's admiration: "'I buy a new Buick today. Good material. Very comfort. What do you think? Look nice, eh?'" (46). Yip frames the novel's historical backdrop from a moral standpoint by positioning Charlie as a moral commentator who affirms an ethical orientation for people's class identities. Materially, Zhaoming comes from a wealthy background, which contrasts to Charlie's comparatively lower finances, but Charlie comments disapprovingly that "Zhaoming came to take for granted his financial dependence on his parents" (46). From Charlie's viewpoint, Zhaoming's materialism is shallow and irresponsible because he buys things to satisfy himself and increase his public stature rather than to use his money to support his wife back in Hong Kong (46). Moreover, Zhaoming's purchase will put him into debt (47). In place of Zhaoming's views, Charlie advocates a view of materialism that emphasizes the importance of family responsibility, respect, and duty.

Chinese Canadians' shared heritage and collective experiences in Canada also inform Charlie's perceptions of what should be important for others' present class identities and their expression. Yip affirms that part of maintaining connections with Chinese Canadians' past is to preserve and revitalize people's lives in Chinatown, which has historically been a central hub of Chinese immigrant life prior to the Second World War. In contrast to Donald and Zhaoming, characters such as Yuanhuan are admirable because they affirm and express their class statuses through their communal efforts to improve the residents' quality of life. He recognizes the predecessors who have made this possible (99-103). Thus, his personal class identity on its own is not what Zhu values, but rather how he uses his class status in his relationships with others in the community. Class identity is contextualized in terms of a communal ethic that advocates mutual assistance, cooperation, and respect for everyone, regardless of class background or current class standing. This fuses a movement towards modernization with the maintenance of Chinese traditions, which Yuanhuan exemplifies through continuing respect and assistance for others of Chinese descent. Zhu speaks about him approvingly:

> A smart and well-educated fellow, but very modest. He went to school here in Canada, but he understood both Chinese and Western cultures. He always spoke Chinese to other Chinese, never looking down upon them because of their poor education. He also helped old people make remittances, apply for pensions, and so on. That's why he was so popular in the Chinese community. (Yip 101)

This attitude extends to others of non-Chinese descent. Yip depicts this through Charlie's interactions with other non-Chinese characters such as the white boy Billy in Lethbridge. Charlie's ability to befriend him and to divest him of his racist attitudes posits that these attitudes perpetuate because of the non-Chinese population's ignorance of their lives and culture. Charlie's actions suggest the possibility of educating the public and incorporating them into a new communal vision of tolerance that does not discriminate against those of different class and racial backgrounds. As Charlie tells Billy, "'Don't be afraid of people richer than you and don't look down upon people worse off than yourself'" (122). This scene echoes the novel's opening scene of communal assistance, in which Charlie agrees to help care for the Glens' garden when they go on holiday (25). Like his influence on Billy, Charlie recounts how he changed the Glens' "deep-seated racial biases, little by little" (94-95) by talking with Mrs. Glen and helping her with chores. Charlie's actions exemplify the activist role that he wants other people of Chinese descent to emulate: to help improve the circumstances of Chinese people as well as their image among and reception by non-Chinese people.

Lower class characters—those who are less financially well-off and struggle to make a living—can also contribute to these efforts to improve Chinese Canadians' lives.

Juming asserts that gambling is destructive to the community and evokes a class consciousness among the poor (114) as a means for collective action and a "healthy reform" (114). In order to mobilize the Chinatown population to reform their community, Juming appeals to the people's sense of nationalism as well as to their sense of a genealogical legacy that centers around China (114). Thus, Chinatown becomes one site for reforming and reinvigorating the Chinese Canadian community in Canada as a whole through people's collective efforts to improve their quality of life at a local level.

The experiences of the character Uncle Liang speak to the class issues that Yip raises throughout the novel. Liang's own story is tragic because he willingly sacrifices material possibilities for his own class mobility in order to provide opportunities for his son back in China. He values his son's class mobility over his own and conceptualizes that mobility in terms of acquiring the necessary capital: these include economic capital but also cultural capital, such as a higher level of education. However, he laments his son's ungratefulness and his greed, believing that he has sacrificed in vain. As a result, Uncle Liang's death at the end of the novel functions as a symbolic departure of the old, previous generation of Chinese immigrants and the ushering in of a new era signified by Charlie and the younger generation of characters. However, this does not mean that Charlie forgets Liang's struggles or others like him. Charlie affirms his connection to the past lives of other Chinese Canadians and their ancestors. Even though he and Marlene are pursuing education as a means to acquire higher-class identities for themselves, this does not come at the expense of denying their historical heritage as descendents of other labourers who emigrated from China.

As such, Charlie's perceptions of class signify out of and derive greater significance from the past, locating his individual identity in the collective context of Chinese Canadian experiences and affirming the responsibility that people have for remembering their efforts and struggles: "Rest well, Uncle Liang. Your tears fall on my heart and remain there and become part of that great river of suffering and sorrow that runs through us all, Chinese immigrants and everyone who came to this country from those distant lands of youth and loved ones in search for a dream" (125). While he does not live in Chinatown, Charlie's closing comments suggest its continuing persistence as a meaningful physical space of interpersonal familiarity, physical comfort, and experiential depth that he will commit to memory: “Here is Chinatown, and existence constantly looming large in my consciousness” (Yip 125).

Consequently, Yip’s text does not present a purely happy ending to all of these characters’ circumstances. His text creates a heterogeneous image of a Chinese Canadian community that, while perhaps offering some moralizing (as noted by Chang), values all class identities that are oriented according to communal- and familial-based values that account for one’s relationships with others as central to any identity that one may acquire and articulate. As I mentioned earlier, Sheng-tai Chang affirms that Yip criticizes old Chinese cultural traditions, but I would add that he also recuperates Chineseness through his affirmation of genealogical connections and collective experiences within an ethical framework of class relations between his characters. Yip’s novel articulates a “national” vision of Chinese Canadian community that accepts, values, and even affirms the desirability of assimilating into mainstream society. By depicting Chinese Canadian characters who interact with each other and other non-Chinese characters, Yip suggests the possibility of forming alliances across racial and class lines and using those to construct a society based on mutual respect and knowledge of each other. However, Yip also recognizes the economic and racial obstacles that affected Chinese Canadians in the past and perceives the 1950s as an era of opportunity for them to improve their own and their community’s fortunes. He maintains that it is important to retain one’s local roots, the heritage left behind by the older generation, and one’s ethical responsibilities towards others who are less economically fortunate.

Overall, Wayson Choy’s and Yuen Chung Yip’s texts both illustrate the bodily and material manifestations of class identities and the ways in which they signify within particular historical contexts. Choy represents his 1940s childhood and how other people’s ideas of class shape his daily existence and personal sense of identity. Speaking from child and adult subject positions in his text, he questions the cultural assumptions upon which these class markers are based and their salience for his personal identity, but he also recuperates the importance of these markers for the other people of his community. He emphasizes that each Chinese Canadian’s unique circumstances will influence what class identities can mean and why some Chinese Canadians choose to express particular class identities. In contrast, Yip represents class identities in the 1950s in order to envision an ethical set of class identities for the Chinese Canadian community. He expresses a vision for interpersonal relations among Chinese Canadians as well as between Chinese Canadians and mainstream society that recognizes each other's class differences but does not let these differences dictate the terms of their relationship. Through Charlie's experiences, The Tears of Chinese Immigrants suggests how the salience and meanings of Chinese Canadians' class identities vary from one moment in time to another. Unlike Choy, however, Yip posits a relationship among past, present, and future conduct that locates his individual characters' class differences in the context of their communal responsibilities for shaping the Chinese community's future development.

Notes

1 In their discussion, Thomas and Ahmed elaborate on what has caused these theoretical shifts in conceptualizing the body. Specifically, they suggest that discourses such as postmodernism, postructuralism, and postcolonialism have contributed to these shifts. Critical of the ideas of "universal" and "objective" truths, theories in these areas affirm the importance of situational specificities and acknowledge the legitimate value of different viewpoints, even though they may be contradictory or incommensurable (Thomas and Ahmed 4-6).

2 Fred Myers concurs with Bourdieu and asserts that approaches to material culture must provide flexible views of how material objects work and signify. These material goods are not autonomous: "studies should consider the dynamics surrounding objects, rather than their more static moments of definition and secure classification" (8). In this respect, the question of what an object can *do* becomes as important as what an object can *mean*.

3 Thus, a higher-class status is accorded to those who are better educated in "authentic" Chinese culture, one aspect of which is the Chinese language. His parents and others in Chinatown privilege the importation of Chinese culture from *China* rather than a modified form of that culture in a Canadian context because they believe that a purer and, therefore, more authentic form of Chinese culture originates from China. As such, a more *authentic* form of the Chinese language becomes indicative of a more authentic Chinese identity. When Third Uncle says, "'Send him back to China . . . if you want Way Sun to learn [Chinese] properly'" (241), he evokes a cultural discourse of Chineseness that is signified by a common language and prescribes an identity for Choy whose meanings derive from a shared ancestral origin in China. Financial constraints make it impossible for them to send Choy to China, but Choy's parents still hold onto that ideal of Chineseness and expect him to emulate it as closely as possible.

4 This is with the exception of Uncle Liang, Charlie, and his wife, all of whom appear more frequently than the other characters in Yip's text: Charlie appears most frequently because he is the narrator of the text; during the episodes, his wife appears in most scenes with him. Uncle Liang recounts his problems with his son early in the narrative and appears later on when he is near death and has an extended conversation with Charlie.

Chapter Five

Labouring an Identity: (Re)establishing Class Significations in the Workplace

In her discussion of how American ethnic women's autobiographies represent work, Anne Goldman states that, "historically, the authority of working-class writers has often been erased by the generic byline 'Anonymous'" (ix). Her interest in these writers' works lies in her desire to recuperate a demographic of "uncelebrated writers" (x) and to extend our understanding of "the ways and means by which people . . . speak themselves into textual existence" (ix). By representing themselves in literary form, American ethnic women writers can inscribe their presence into historical and discursive contexts that have marginalized and silenced them because of their "racial identit[ies] and working-class status[es]" (Goldman x). Proposing that their autobiographies express a relationship between work and class identity, Goldman suggests that they inscribe their voices through the *literary* expression of their labour and articulate empowering identities through that labour (58). For instance, she suggests in her discussion of autobiographical representations of culinary labour that cooking is not simply a neutral activity for personal nourishment; it is also an activity with political ramifications for their identities. The act of articulating an identity through the representation of cooking exemplifies a political struggle for cultural ownership. By drawing attention "to the work involved in cultural reproduction" (Goldman 58), writers can question the status quo of unequal economic relations. They can criticize the "languages of oppression" (Goldman 58) and economic capital that help to justify and perpetuate these oppressive relations.

Goldman's ideas provide a useful starting point for thinking about how to interpret the representation of work in Fred Wah's biofiction Diamond Grill (1996)[1] because they suggest what work can do and how work can signify for marginalized subjects' identities. Goldman connects work to identity by conceptualizing identity as something that is constructed through and mediated by people's work and their perceptions of that work. Workers' identities are not simply defined in an *a priori* fashion by their work; rather, their identities emerge through the act of working itself. Thus, the literary representation of that work is a political act that aims to claim authority over how workers' lives are represented for the public. Fred Wah's Diamond Grill extends Goldman's ideas about what it means to represent work and how work is connected to class identity. Representing Chinese Canadians who work in his father's café, Wah suggests that work needs to be understood in relation to larger contexts that shape its emergence and daily operations, but also in relation to the workers themselves.

My analysis of how Wah depicts work and class will contribute to the existing criticism on his text. Critics such as Susanna Hilf, Cynthia Sugars, Julie McGonegal, and Joanne Saul have noted the centrality of hybridity to Wah's conceptualization of identity in Diamond Grill. Their analyses are valuable because they examine Wah's textual strategies of resistance towards reductive and homogenizing notions of identity. For instance, Susanna Hilf asserts that Wah expresses a hybrid orientation towards identity that signifies within specific cultural and ethnic contexts rather than within a definable set of constant identity markers (153-154). Another critic, Cynthia Sugars, considers Wah's shifting perceptions of himself in Diamond Grill and his struggles to "ground himself as a 'landed' Canadian, even as he problematizes what an 'authentic' Canadianness might mean" (31). As Sugars suggests, Wah articulates a hybrid identity for himself through his representation of "an experience of diaspora that is not limited by singular identity constructions" (31). While these analyses provide valuable insight into Wah's self-representation in Diamond Grill, Hilf's and other critics' analyses tend to focus on his depiction of racial and ethnic identity rather than on his depiction of class identity.[2] As a result, they overlook the ways in which Wah also depicts identities that accommodate, at least in part, preexisting class and racial significations. Cynthia Sugars alludes to class identity in her discussion, particularly when she talks about Wah's representation of the Diamond Grill café. While Sugars examines how Wah negotiates a diasporic and racialized understanding of his own identity in the café, she does not consider how Wah constructs a class identity per se through the processes of inhabiting that workplace and taking part in its daily activities. My analysis of class identity in Diamond Grill will illustrate how race, as well as class, informs Wah's depictions of his own, his father's, and the other café workers' identities.

Representing Chinese Canadian workers within the broader contexts of historical legislation, national identity, and white Canadians' racialized attitudes towards Chinese Canadians, Wah challenges the assumptions in these contexts about the place of Chinese

Canadians in Canada's economy and in Canada as a whole. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, assumptions about the Chinese Canadians' inability to assimilate and their supposed racial inferiority helped to justify the federal government's exclusionary legislation against Chinese Canadians, which constrained their job opportunities and their possibilities for class mobility in the Exclusion Era. Even though these legislative restrictions were lifted after the Second World War, public perceptions of Chinese Canadians continued to refer to their racial difference and "foreign" origins. This served to remind Chinese Canadians that, despite the post-war possibilities for class mobility, their racial visibility would continue to taint the ways in which white Canadians would perceive them. Wah places Chinese Canadians' labour in the midst of these contexts and foregrounds the differences that have distinguished Chinese Canadians from white Canadians. He recognizes the Chinese Canadian workers' individuality and also depicts them as people with a shared heritage of labour that is defined by their racial and class marginalization in the labour market and by the ways in which they are treated differently from non-Chinese workers. By depicting Chinese Canadians in this manner, Wah expresses an approach to work that recognizes the unequal opportunities among people in the labour market and the ways in which racial and class assumptions contribute to these inequalities.

While he represents the differences that can separate Chinese Canadians from white Canadians, Wah does not simply express an oppositional approach to identity that defines Chinese Canadians' identities in terms of their differences from non-Chinese people. To an extent, Wah advocates what Viet Nguyen suggests is a recurring feature in Asian American literature. Several Asian American works, Nguyen suggests, depict Asian American characters' successful integration into mainstream society by portraying them as models of entrepreneurship (148-149). Nguyen says that this is not necessarily negative because an *acceptance* of predominant ideals is not just a capitulation to assimilative pressures; rather, it constitutes another flexible strategy that authors use to empower Asian Americans within American society and to critique it *through* "the inclusion of heretofore excluded participants" (149). Wah's representations of work partially reflect Nguyen's orientation towards identity because he represents himself, his father, and some Diamond Grill café workers as models of resilience and determination who have succeeded in Canada's capitalist economy and integrated into mainstream life. However, he also avoids simplifying or homogenizing the extent to which Chinese Canadians have succeeded within and integrated into Canadian society. He represents the economic hardships that other café workers face and the persistence of white Canadians' perceptions of Chinese Canadians as a racially different people. In doing so, his text proposes opportunities for individual and communal identity orientations that do not always reject preexisting identities and privilege hybridity.

This is not to suggest that Wah does not consider hybridity as a central way to think about identity, but rather that he also recognizes the persistence of preexisting identities. From his reflections on his writing in Faking It, I suggest that Wah sees writing as a way to not only represent his hybrid identity, but also to explore and interrogate those disjunctive moments in which hybridity may temporarily disappear and resurface. As Wah states, "the more I wrote the more I discovered that faking it is a continual theatre of necessity. No other way to be in language, but to bluff your way through it, stalling for more time" (16). This concern with "faking it," I suggest, illustrates his recognition that one must always contend with preexisting identity categories and that certain circumstances require one to appropriate and work within preexisting understandings of identity.

These concerns with preexisting identities are explored in Diamond Grill. In his representatations of himself, Wah explores the complex ways in which his racially hybrid identity shifts in its meanings, intersects with his class identity within the Diamond Grill café, and influences his possibilities for agency. Signifying in relation to preexisting racial discourses that depend upon static conceptions of identity, his racially hybrid identity also provides a means for him to act in an empowering manner in the workplace. As for the other Chinese Canadian workers whom he represents, he shows how they can affirm empowering class identities through their work that simultaneously depend on and suppress their racial and cultural difference vis-à-vis the white population. Thus, he reconfigures what it means to be Chinese Canadian by foregrounding the racial and cultural differences that separate them from people of non-Chinese descent, but he does offer possibilities for bridging or suppressing these differences in the context of their work. I contend that Wah's representation of these possibilities exemplifies an accommodative strategy that allows different identities to exist without subsuming them under a new, hegemonic form. I agree with Julie McGonegal's assertion that Wah expresses an oppositional yet cooperative identity politics (191) that values both the individual and communal contexts for locating people's identities, but my analysis of work will foreground class identity markers as a part of his identity politics.

Wah's Representations of Work: National and Economic Contexts

In her discussion of Diamond Grill, Joanne Saul suggests that many Canadian writers, including Wah, "are insisting on new, more diverse cultural performances that resist the pull of the national imaginary" (269). In other words, these writers convey heterogeneous understandings of identity that avoid subsuming individuals' differences under a static understanding of "Canadian" national identity. Resisting a conception of identity that orients around static conceptions of Canadianness or Chineseness, Wah constructs an identity for himself in Diamond Grill that recognizes the "shifting and often conflicting elements of his mixed-race background" (Saul 268). In doing so, he "challenges both notions of sameness and difference in discussions of ethnic and national belonging" (Saul 268). These issues are also informed by Wah's representations of class identity in the workplace. Wah conveys how Chinese Canadians' class identities intersect with racialized understandings of Chineseness and Canadianness and how these identities also constitute a means for Chinese Canadians to resist or accommodate to dominant understandings of Canada's history and its national identity. Foregrounding the historical and economic contexts in which Chinese Canadians work, Wah criticizes these contexts for failing to acknowledge Chinese Canadians' presence.

Wah's representations of work expose that the perpetuation of regulatory sites and networks of social relations depend on particular understandings of work that implicate discriminatory assumptions about the people who do that work: in turn, these understandings of work occlude Chinese Canadians' work experiences and self-perceptions. Lisa Lowe provides a way of looking at how particular understandings of work can serve to obscure the workers who actually do that work and the conditions within which they work. Lowe suggests that working subjects become disempowered when work is conceptualized separately from the person who actually does that work and is, instead, defined in terms of what she criticizes as "interchangeable 'abstract labor'" (Immigrant Acts 170). This definition orients work under an economic framework that is dictated by the modern state, which disempowers working subjects by separating the sphere of work from the material, political, and cultural conditions that shape it. Wah speaks to Lowe's critique as he refuses to depict his father's café as a place of "abstract labor" (Immigrant Acts 170) in which workers simply produce goods for their customers' pleasurable consumption. Instead, he locates the café workers' labour in the conditions of their work and the larger conditions that shape their employment opportunities. Resisting homogenization and simplification, he recognizes the dangers of inscribing an interpretation of the past that elides the café workers' differences under a history of "collective enterprise" (125), progress, and its "mechanical purity" (125). Such an interpretation fails to acknowledge the racial and ethnic discrimination that has historically underpinned and facilitated it. In addition, this collective enterprise is also racialized as it privileges whiteness and erases Otherness:

> Why be in such a rush to dilute? Those of us who have already been genetically diluted need our own space to figure it out. I don't want to be inducted into someone else's story, or project. Particularly one that would reduce and usurp my family's residue of ghost values to another status quo. Sorry, but I'm just not interested in this collective enterprise erected from the sacrosanct great railway imagination dedicated to harvesting a dominant white cultural landscape. There's a whole forest of us out here who don't like clear-cut, suspect the mechanical purity of righteous, clear, shining, Homelite Americas, chainsaws whining, just across the valley. No way I'll let these chips fall where they may. (125)

Wah refuses to assimilate into the nationalist project of capitalist progress and a culturally homogeneous form of national identity because it instills a definition of class that normalizes and valourizes the cultural hegemony of whiteness. In addition, it threatens to trivialize and erase his own, his family's, and the other restaurant workers' presence as well as the specifics of their class identities in narratives of Canada's history. By privileging a unitary, economically driven form of national identity that defines people's class identities in terms of their contributions to the nation's economic development, these nationalist narratives perpetuate stereotypical and reductive views of Chinese immigrants and their descendents by occluding the specific contexts that have shaped their opportunities for work and class mobility in Canada.

But even as he criticizes it, Wah also reconfigures the nationalist project of economic progress so that it recognizes Chinese Canadians' achievements and hardships. He criticizes amalgamative representations of Chinese labourers that group, depersonalize, and objectify people like his grandfather as "just another hungry ghost, just another last spike" (59). For example, Wah juxtaposes his description of his grandfather Lucky Jim alongside his references to racialized class discourses. These discourses, Wah suggests, objectify and homogenize the Chinese population as a group of frugal foreigners who threaten Canada's racial homogeneity and moral integrity: "a troublemaker, that one, a yellow peril . . . an Asiatic Exclusion League problem, a huckster, a leper, a depraved opium addict, a slant-eyed devil, a Mongolian, a heathen, bone-scraping ghoul, a pest" (59). In contrast, Wah's description of Lucky Jim distinguishes him as an individual whose identity cannot be readily defined according to preconceived racial, moral, and economic characteristics. He describes his grandfather's occupational success, but he also describes how he likes gambling, dislikes class pretension, and shares his money with other people (58-59). By juxtaposing these reductive discourses with his personal description of his grandfather, Wah exposes the inadequacy of those discourses for representing Chinese Canadians' identities and the class attitudes that inform their identities.

Wah affirms that Chinese Canadians are not simply addendums of the national economy who will remain excluded from Canadian society. Instead, he recuperates the voices of these workers by extricating them from the nationalist context of "collective enterprise" (125). Speaking from within those representations, he affirms defiantly that "the real last spike is yet to be driven" (165), testifying to his family's as well as the other Chinese workers' resilience and persistent presence in Canadian society. For instance, Wah's representations of his family members foreground the discriminatory labour legislation, job opportunities, and pragmatic imperatives that have shaped their economic opportunities during the Exclusion Era and afterward. This marginality is a direct consequence of exclusionary legislation, but he textually inscribes his family members as subjects who coped and excelled in the limited economic avenues available to them. Despite their exclusion from the mainstream labour market, Wah illustrates how his family increased their class status and power by working their way upwards into better-paying and more socially prestigious occupations. His father's and grandfather's striving for higher class identities, which are defined through economic prosperity and the social prestige that such success accrues, becomes a way to resist and deflect racial discrimination through publicly valued markers of success. This does not mean that they are immune to racial discrimination, but that they do acquire respect and recognition for their achievements. Indeed, they integrated into mainstream societal life and subsequently advanced from manual labourers to business owners in the restaurant service sector; they then hired other people from the Chinese community. For instance, Wah's grandfather came to Canada in 1892, worked as a cook on the CPR and the boats around the West Coast (58), returned to China, and came back to Canada in 1904 because "there were better chances in Canada" (55). But as Wah reminds us, discriminatory labour laws in Vancouver prevent his grandfather from working in more prestigious and better-paying lines of work. Combined with his lack of money and the imperative to support his family back in China, his grandfather "drift[s] out to the prairies" and sets up a "partnership in a restaurant with three other guys" (55), which is the best job that he can acquire at the time and provides, at the least, a stable and livable source of income.

Thus, Wah accepts the recognized characteristics of class success in Canada's economy—the acquisition of economic capital and participation within the productive and consumptive aspects of that economy. Similarly, Wah suggests that his father copes during the Exclusion Era by using the available occupational choices to facilitate his family's integration into Canadian society. Ironically, the exclusion of Chinese immigrants from other occupations during the Exclusion Era contributed to their proliferation in the restaurant sector, which Wah's father could capitalize upon: "He knows a Chinaman can always find his way around the country by knocking on the kitchen doors of Chinese restaurants" (17). In the process, his father grows economically prosperous by increasing his knowledge in cooking and working his way upwards in the Chinese restaurant business. He works initially "in a small café in a small town sixty miles north of Swift Current . . . at the Elite Café in Cabri" (19) and later moves back to

Swift Current after he acquires "enough English and café-business smarts" (19) through formal education and his café job. However, he eventually moves west to British Columbia in 1943 (92) because of the prairies' poor job opportunities and economic prospects: "I don't know, our lots were already chosen for us on the prairies. There was no way to get ahead on real estate, the restaurants were already established, the old Chinese partners were all there, had their shares in the cafés, and it was hard to break away from. The prairies were going downhill" (88). This emphasizes that the decision of Wah's father to go into a partnership with three other Chinese immigrants and to open the Diamond Grill café in Nelson, British Columbia is not just a personal choice but also a pragmatic one that is dictated by external conditions.

The historical context within which his father's café exists is significant as it informs how racial and class discourses intersect and impact negatively and positively upon his own and his family's identities. In contrast to the businesses that operated within the confines of Chinatowns during the Exclusion Era, the post-war rescinding of restrictive economic legislation opened the door for Chinese Canadians to set up their businesses outside of Chinatown more freely. For instance, Denise Chong's The Concubine's Children and Wayson Choy's Paper Shadows both depict Chinatown-based businesses from the Exclusion Era that Chinese clientele frequented. In contrast, Wah's father's café is located in Nelson, British Columbia, frequented by both Chinese and white customers, and is "considered the most modern and up-to-date of the half-dozen Chinese cafes in town" (119). As Wah notes, the town's demographic composition is racially and economically heterogeneous, with Nelson's Chinese population changing significantly in the early fifties (136) after the federal government rescinds the 1923 Immigration Act and "a wave of young Chinese immigrate to Canada" (136).

Despite the success of his father's café, Wah foregrounds how his family's genealogy augments the class identities they acquired through their work. Wah and his father have hybrid genealogies as Wah's grandparents are of Chinese, Scottish, and Irish descent and his father's wife, whom he marries in 1938, is of Swedish descent (20). However, their Chinese roots continue to be the privileged and overdetermined identity marker that others use to diminish their class status and discriminate against them, particularly against those members of his family whose racial difference manifests overtly in their visible skin colour. His father and grandfather are economically prosperous and socially prestigious because of their successful restaurant businesses, but continual racial qualifications of their class identities persist. The intersection between race and class becomes a way of excluding on the basis of difference, both legislatively through Head Taxes (Wah 130-131) and labour laws that target people of Chinese descent and socially through discriminatory stereotypes and representations. These discriminatory representations and forms of legislation diminish the Wahs' achievements and class statuses through racial qualifications that cast them as foreigners who threaten the nation's economic prosperity and racial purity.

Thus, Wah inscribes his family's and other Chinese Canadian workers' experiences within Canada's economic history, but without suppressing the racial differences that distinguish them from white Canadians and impinge upon their opportunities for class mobility. He suggests that the intersection of class and race in legislative, economic, and social contexts influence Chinese Canadians' employment opportunities, work conditions, and possibilities for enhancing their class statuses through their work. As such, the construction of an effective identity politics must consider not only the ways in which different forms of discrimination intersect and affect Chinese Canadians, but also the racial and class assumptions that underlie and perpetuate this discrimination.

Wah represents Diamond Grill café as an empowering location in which its workers can configure class identities that derive from their own understandings of class. He depicts how class and class identities are constructed through his own, his father's, and the other café workers' everyday experiences at work and how class identities signify and reproduce at the everyday level. In doing so, he portrays Chinese Canadians as complex individuals whose identities cannot be readily reducible to specific qualities or supposedly indicative of Chinese Canadians as a whole or of workers in a particular occupation. He depicts himself, his father, and the other workers as individuals with their own specialties, deficiencies, and unique experiences that inform their attitudes and approaches to their work. Their attitudes are as significant for defining their class identities as their ability to access financial rewards and other forms of class status in their occupation. They do not simply mimic dominant class ideals in order to alleviate their discomfort with their racial and cultural differences and to integrate into the predominant white community of Nelson, British Columbia. Rather, they also reconfigure these ideals and express a class ethics within the café that extols class mobility, but without denigrating others with lower class statuses.

Representing Himself in Diamond Grill

The historical and economic contexts that I discussed in the previous section inform Wah's representations of daily labour in the workplace. Wah recognizes that these contexts affect people's employment opportunities, but he also asserts that they are not necessarily replicated in the workplace itself. As Michel de Certeau suggests in his discussion of regulated spaces of activity, people are not simply bound by the restrictions of a given space of activity. Instead, they can "find *ways of using* the constraining order of the place or of the language. Without leaving the place where he has no choice but to live and which lays down its law for him, he establishes within it a degree of *plurality* and creativity" (de Certeau 30). De Certeau speaks generally about various arenas of daily activity, but his comments are particularly applicable to work because they allow me to consider work as a flexible arena where many kinds of things can happen. The workplace contains official rules that guide its operations, but workers are not solely bound by those rules: they can appropriate and use their work conditions in ways that are not originally intended or authorized.

Wah's representation of himself reveals that class informs his racially hybrid identity. His self-positioning relates to his positioning of others in his text: he connects his experiences to the café people, but he also emphasizes his uniqueness from them. This expresses a politics of identity that does not privilege the collective over the individual, but rather one that accepts both as equally valid configurations of identity that are valuable in particular contexts. Wah's interest in his racially hybrid identity is a topic that he extensively explores in not only Diamond Grill but also an earlier text entitled Waiting for Saskatchewan and in his recent collection of critical essays entitled Faking It: Poetics and Hybridity. In particular, he is interested in thinking about what his identity means and how it works in relation to place: "Writing would have a lot to do with 'place,' the spiritual and spatial localities of the writer. I see things from where I am, in my view point, and I measure and imagine a ~~world~~ from there. Who I am. Am I?" (Faking It

186). His experience of inhabiting particular places is particularly acute because of his racially hybrid identity, which has served to foreground the ways in which that identity can signify differently from one place to another and the ways in which that identity intersects with class assumptions. For instance, he states in his perception of racialized class identities in North America that certain notions of race and class are privileged within that place: "Race in North America can be modified, to a degree, through class . . . The reality of the formula, though, is surely the whiter you are the more class you have. . . . [I]dentity is never pure, never sure. And in that the hybrid has as much possibility of 'a' sure racial identity as anyone; the only thing sure about it, however, is . . . that it's always shifting" (Faking It 101). Even though he feels uncomfortable with his hybrid identity and does not feel comfortable with "claiming either the Chinese part or Canadian part" (Faking It 100), he realizes that his situation provides him with unique opportunities to challenge static and essentialist ideas about identity and problematize how these ideas underpin people's interpretations of the places that they inhabit (Faking It 47).

In Diamond Grill, he explores these issues of identity in reference to the Diamond Grill café and the work that he does in it. I suggest that his self-representation reconciles past and present views on his identity in his youth and in adulthood. As an adult who reflects back upon his childhood and more recent adult experiences, he acknowledges the attractiveness of class for diffusing his uneasiness about his own identity as a hybrid person, but he also recognizes its complicity with the very racial discourses that he is resisting. He allows for class as a part of his self-identity and embraces the agency that he can acquire through his class mobility, but he also rejects a self-definition that solely focuses on class. Instead, he emphasizes the importance of considering the intersection and reciprocal influence between class and other identity markers such as race. This is significant because it suggests that the possibilities of expressing empowering identities are situationally specific and are dependent upon the extent to which individuals resist or appropriate preexisting class and racial ideas. These preexisting ideas may reinforce one's marginality in particular situations, but may contribute to one's agency in others.

Narrating his family's past experiences of racial and class exclusion, Wah locates his own identity as a part of this struggle against discriminatory and reductive identities. Indeed, "[d]ue to his multicultural heritage, his life had been marked by a prevailing sense of unbelonging" (Hilf 151). This sense of unbelonging manifests itself in persistent reminders, both as a child and as an adult, about his racial Otherness. Wah exposes the paradox of his hybrid identity and the ways in which others use his hybrid genealogy to assign particular identities to him. People of non-Chinese descent refer to his genealogical roots and physical traits as proof of his Chineseness. In contrast, people of Chinese descent use these same identity markers to determine that he is not Chinese enough because he looks more white than Chinese and is only a quarter Chinese by descent. To them, he is "white." In both cases, specific traits become overdetermined identity markers that elide his other genealogical origins.

Even when he can pass as a white person, his surname "Wah" and his biological connections to other people of Chinese descent differentiate him from other families of similar economic and occupational status. Wah's family is economically privileged but that privilege is always qualified by a persistent awareness of their racial Otherness and the discriminatory effects that result from it. Their racial background reduces the prestige of their class identities in public, but it also, ironically, necessitates expected behaviours that they must perform to retain their current class status: "I can't fool around out there when my father's a business man, a Chinese business man, and I'd better not talk back like I did today, to anyone, particularly when they're white, because it all comes down to him, my father, and our family has to be careful in this town it's a small town" (101). Wah's actions do not simply affect others' perceptions of him as an individual, but also their perceptions of Chinese people as a whole. Even though these behaviours reinforce Chinese Canadians' subordination to the white population in public, Wah must act in a suitably subservient and respectful manner towards the white population to retain their goodwill and maintain their positive impression of Chinese people. This shows the impossibility of articulating an effective identity politics that fails to recognize the intersection between race and class because the public's perceptions of Wah's class identity are qualified by their racialized expectations of appropriate behaviour. Wah suggests that these assumptions must be challenged for Chinese Canadians' class statuses to attain the same prestige as non-Chinese people with similar status.

Similarly, the Chinese part of his biological lineage takes precedence and overshadows his father's respectable status as a small-town businessman when a white girl's father forbids him from befriending someone outside of his "race." Wah's racial difference signifies his supposed untrustworthiness and becomes the justification for the girl's father to restrict his contact with them: "I know your father's a respected business man downtown but you've got sneaky eyes and I don't want you seeing my daughter any more so don't let me catch you around here again and no more phone calls either" (39). Later on in his text, Wah exposes the persistence of racial discrimination and its intersection with class positioning. He criticizes a white investor who feels threatened by the increased number of Chinese in higher education and upper echelons of the economy: "Just another tight lipped high muckamuck reception listening to the whining groans of an old-fart pink-faced investor worried about the Hong Kong real estate take-over, a wincing glance as he moans that UBC has become the University of a Billion Chinks" (165).

While Wah's racial difference always threatens to exclude him and eclipse his class identity, it also exposes the dependence of the white population's class dominance upon the continual subordination of others. Instead, Wah depicts situations in which race does not necessarily overshadow or suppress class as an identity marker. Julie McGonegal's ideas about Wah's hybrid identity provide a useful starting point for me to interpret how class signifies for Wah. As McGonegal proposes, Wah advocates the hyphen as an empowering vehicle of identity because it suggests transience and tension between different elements that comprise his identity as a culturally hybrid person (184). Refusing to reduce his hybridized identity to discernable component parts and holding them in a productive tension instead, Wah lives on the hyphen and negotiates one identity for another when it becomes salient for that particular situation (McGonegal 187). I wish to turn McGonegal's analysis in a different direction and suggest that hybridity operates somewhat differently when Wah has to negotiate his identity in contexts that have well-defined roles such as his father's café and, particularly, when such roles are attractive to him. His text's ending represents his approach to his own identity in his father's café because he describes how his father goes through the door and "rattles a noisy hyphen" (176). The door functions as a metaphor that signifies the persistence of such tensions for his own hybrid identity and the continual threat of having his identity appropriated and defined by others in reductive ways. At the same time, it highlights possibilities for identities that do not have to privilege hybridity and can derive from other markers instead. Given his expected role as an efficient and productive assistant in his father's café, his racially hybrid identity becomes superceded by class, despite his recognition that he is still racially Othered because of his mixed genealogy. This does not mean that he can escape completely from such racial categorizations: indeed, the café highlights these tensions, but it also allows him to articulate identities that derive from the experiential process of work and class significations that these evoke. As a young adult who wants to belong, class offers a way for Wah to empower himself—to derive some measure of control over his self-representation—and to forge connections with others that cross predetermined racial boundaries.

Depicting his café experiences, Wah constitutes work as a site of activity where he can, within the café's spatial limits, contest these static ascriptions of racial identity and fashion an empowering identity that signifies out of his ability to work and his familial association with that place. In his discussion about what work means, Robert Ulin acknowledges the importance of Marx's insights on the capitalist system and the imperatives of profitability that drive production and oppress the workers, but affirms that a purely economic approach to work inscribes a rather narrow and instrumental reading of human motivations that divests workers of agency. In place of this, Ulin thinks about the activity of working in terms of "the process[es] of mutual communicative exchange" that can occur between fellow workers and the ways in which these exchanges signify the work that they do and their identities in the workplace (707). The act of working provides an opportunity for "self-formation and resistance" (Ulin 692), where workers can construct identities that signify through their experiential and mutual perceptions of that work. In Wah's particular situation, it is not simply Wah's contributions to the restaurant's functioning and productivity that define his identity per se, but rather how his labour shapes his self-perception and other people's perceptions of him within the café. He can circumvent racial identity categories that would expose his own genealogical impurity and express a class identity that signifies out of his father's occupational status: "When Lawrence and I work together, him just over from China, he's a boss's son and I'm a boss's son. His pure Chineseness and my impure Chineseness don't make any difference to us in the café" (137).

In addition, the café's kitchen is not only the physical site of production that keeps the café running, but also a place where he can feel safe "within the meaningless but familiar hum of Cantonese and away from all the angst of the arrogant white world out front" (63). It becomes an "in-between" space where he can feel comfortable, but this quality also makes his feeling of comfort temporary. Like his racially hybrid father, Wah is continually reminded that he can never fully belong there. The "familiar hum" reassures but also reminds him of his racial impurity because he cannot comprehend the cooks' conversations. Instead, the cooks' words are simply "dense vocables of nonsense" (61). When Wah announces his presence in the kitchen aurally by slamming the cooler door, his work obscures his racial impurity. Ironically, then, class, as an overdetermined identity marker, can signify positively for his identity: "When I slam it shut with its great metallic clank, all those Chinese guys in the kitchen hear my hard work underlined and me going past fast, their critical gazes silenced by my busy busy blaze" (100). But this also highlights the tentativeness and temporal nature of inhabiting that identity and the pervasive presence of racial identity markers that threaten to overshadow it. If he does not silence the Chinese workers' "critical gazes" by remaining "busy busy" (100), then his image as a hard worker will disappear and he will draw their attention to his genealogical impurity again.

These two situations—Wah with his friend Lawrence and Wah with the kitchen cooks—exemplify that the possibility of agency is temporary because it occurs in the context of his café work. However, the temporality of Wah's identity should not be interpreted simply as a reflection of his limited agency in the café because this overlooks how Wah can also take advantage of particular moments where the conditions are ideal for expressing alternative identities. Referring to Wah's café job, Cynthia Sugars suggests that it separates him from his friends and enhances his racial and class difference from them. It reinscribes a subordinate status in relation to his white friends, who continue to identify him racially as the Chinese boy who serves ice cream (Sugars 40). However, I suggest that this scene can also be read as an empowering moment because it displaces the racial assumptions that others have used to define his identity and discriminate against him and foregrounds the context of his work instead. His position as a server allows him to fashion an empowering identity through his work. As a young boy working there, he gains respect from his ability to manipulate the technologically sophisticated equipment and serve their products to his friends: "The soda fountain becomes my territory . . . I impress [my friends] by serving up larger-than-normal scoops of ice cream, thicker shakes, more sauce, and fancier flourishes of ice cream" (41).

In contrast to the attractiveness of expressing a class identity in the workplace, Wah remains continually uncomfortable with racial identity markers because his hybrid origins prevent him from completely fitting into either the Chinese or white community because he is either too white or too Chinese. Realizing the powerlessness that he acquires if he identifies himself as Chinese, Wah strategically adopts a white identity instead. Wah identifies with other Chinese kids in the community because of their shared genealogy, but remains uncomfortable with the racial slurs that they encounter: "But my buddies at school call them Chinks and geeks and I feel a little embarrassed and don't talk much with the Chinese kids. *I'm white enough to get away with it and that's what I do*" (136, emphasis added). Unlike his relatives, he appears white enough to pass as a non-Chinese person and does so to avoid these slurs: "I become as white as I can, which, considering I'm mostly Scandinavian, is easy for me" (98). Wah's ability to pass as a white person does illustrate an effective way for him to avoid the debilitating effects of racial discrimination, but its efficacy is mediated by his recognition, as an adult, that his coping strategy compromises his agency and fails to challenge the same racial discourses that discriminate against him.

While his ambivalent feelings about his hybrid genealogical roots persist as an adult, his retrospective considerations reveal his acceptance of those roots and his undermining of the reductive processes that identify him by his biological descent and physical appearance. Wah revises his earlier views as a young adult indirectly when he states, from an older subject position, that he has additional privileges because he can pass as white. As such, he can divert attention away from his genealogical hybridity and assimilate into mainstream society's "middle class" (105) or bourgeois norm: "It all works out. You and I have done alright, our genealogical trajectories compounded or diluted enough into the white middle class to put us over the blue line" (105). Wah's evocation of a "middle[-]class" (105) identity marks not only his achievement of a particular level of monetary affluence but also his successful assimilation into and participation in mainstream society's consumerist culture. Wah believes that his affluence and consumption of mainstream cultural products will allow him to hide his hybrid genealogy behind an unthreatening veneer of material and cultural consumption.

However, he also recognizes that this is a privilege that other people of Chinese descent do not possess: "all my ambivalence gets covered over, camouflaged by a safety net of class and colourlessness—the racism within me that makes and consumes that neutral (white) version of myself, that allows me the sad privilege of being, in this white white world, not the target but the gun" (138). Wah's uncritical acceptance of mainstream class virtues, which the prevailing economic order exemplifies, allows him to obscure his racial difference. Yet, Wah realizes that this "colourlessness" of class is equally disempowering. Even though he can gain pleasure and escape through his acceptance of this approach to class, it also constitutes a dangerous self-cooptation into a framework of knowledge that denies difference under a white norm. This norm reinforces discursive representations of nation that collapse and suppress difference under a colonialist framework that positions him as an "echo"—a lack and an Other—who is subordinated to a white status quo: "Everything's out there larger elsewhere and then I add myself who's watching, who's interloped into this fold of property imagined by power and class as simply the echo of an old empire heaven, who's slipped into this tribal paradigm in a bog of algae, just like the dog" (134). This imperialistic vision of property naturalizes racial difference and the material and social relations that determine it.

Wah disrupts the "gook" image in his text by juxtaposing his feelings about his own hybrid identity and the attractiveness of whiteness with the Chinese stereotypes that he evokes (98). Resisting the identity categories that others have assigned to him, Wah also proclaims that he will not be denied the economic benefits that others have acquired, just because he is partly Chinese by descent. Instead, he affirms both his racial hybridity and his prospects of class mobility. In his childhood encounter with a white businessman, Wah experiences discrimination because of his racial difference and Chinese roots, which supercede his father's respectable class identity as a "respected business man downtown" (39); even though he acknowledges his father's success, the businessman evaluates Wah by associating racial traits with undesirable personality traits: he perceives Wah as an untrustworthy Chinese person because he has "sneaky eyes" (39). In retrospect, Wah reacts against the businessman and affirms that he will raise his class status through education and obtain the economic benefits that the businessman represents: "Well fuck! I can't even speak Chinese my eyes don't slant and aren't black my hair's light brown and I'm not going to work in a restaurant all my life but I'm going to go to university and I'm going to be as great a fucking white success as you asshole and my name's still going to be Wah and I'll love garlic and rice for the rest of my life" (39). His childhood ambivalence about his racial heritage has shifted, for he now affirms his Chineseness and his aspirations simultaneously and refuses to be excluded from mainstream channels of economic success. At the same time, he affirms that his ability to pass as white (105, 138) continues to attract him. Implicitly, this conceptualizes identity as something that Wah struggles with and works through daily, rather than as something that he can construct and attribute to himself freely. Thus, Wah's representation of his struggles around his identity and his ability to pass as a white person disrupts the "gook" image that he evokes by illustrating the inadequacies of static racial categories for identifying people of mixed descent and heterogeneous class backgrounds. Dissociating himself from racial ideas about how Chinese people "should" look like, Wah also recognizes the physical realities of racial difference and the ways in which these perceived differences shape other people's perceptions of Chinese Canadians. His personal experience with the white businessman illustrates that the act of constructing an empowering class identity through work must also include the act of challenging the racial assumptions that inform people's discriminatory views of Chinese Canadians' work and the class identities that Chinese Canadians signify from their work.

Wah further exposes the constructed nature of identity categories by using a process of "defamiliarization."[3] As Viktor Shklovsky states, this involves the constitution of something in a different context so that it makes the familiar strange and, therefore, visible again (17-18). Wah subverts the ontological boundaries of racial identity categories, displaces those identities into unfamiliar contexts, and mimics them ironically. Here, cooking is a political strategy for criticizing the exclusionary nature and politics of identity categories that fail to account for hybrid subjects. He asserts mockingly, "Better watch out for the craw, better watch out for the goat. That's the mix, the breed, the half-breed, metis, quarter-breed, trace-of-a-breed true demi-semi-ethnic polluted rootless living technicolour snarl . . . Quite a soup. Heinz 57 Varieties. There's a whole bunch of us who've grown up as resident aliens, living in the hyphen" (53). Similarly, he takes the notion of breaking up identities into genealogical percentages to an extreme by drawing upon the language of economic progress. This exposes the deficiencies of depicting identity as the accumulated sum of component parts because it presumes that there is a set of stable and exact origins to which people can refer to authenticate that identity: "The return on these racialized investments has produced colourful dividends and yielded an annual growth rate that now parallels blue-chip stocks" (83). Wah's economic metaphor for race is significant because it also challenges what the notion of economic success means and how it signifies for people's class identities. His metaphor suggests that economic success cannot be defined in an "objective" and neutral fashion because racial premises underpin its definition. The evaluation of economic success and, by extension, the class identities that derive from and signify in relation to that success must account for racial ideas that mitigate how the public perceives Chinese Canadians.

As an adult reflecting back, Wah affirms his Chineseness without reducing the complexity of his experiences to an identifiably hybrid identity or asserting that his experiences are representative of other people, such as his father, who is also of hybrid descent. In his reflections about the political significance of writing about his racial hybridity, Wah affirms such an understanding of his hybrid identity. He recognizes the shifting and multiple meanings that can encompass a person's hybrid identity and sees, in writing, the possibility of exploring what such an identity may mean in both personal and larger historical contexts: "Racial hybridity's a process of locating, dis-cerning, writing through identity's fictions by unmarking just enough history that memory's allowed a sometimes quick triple-tongue, just enough speed so that movement's possible" (Faking It 18). Wah's recognition of his "sad privilege" (138)—his ability to choose to pass as white when others of Chinese descent or partial Chinese descent like his father cannot—indicates why he wants to represent his father and the other café workers. Like him, he portrays how they can also negotiate identities through work, but in ways that differ from his own strategies because they must also contend with their racial visibility.

Representing Others' Identities in Diamond Grill

Like his representations of himself, Wah locates his representations of his father, café co-owners, and other café workers within the privileged terms of success and upward mobility defined by the capitalist-driven economy, but he also reconfigures these predominant class markers to account for other forms of agency and ways of interpreting work. Through work, the workers in his text can increase their agency and prestige within and outside of the café. For instance, Wah represents the café as a productive and profitable business centred on food production and customer service. It has integrated successfully into and flourished economically in Nelson and its capitalist-oriented economy, but has also maintained a unique identity that distinguishes it from other profit-driven businesses. The operation of his father's café and its economic success should not simply be interpreted as the result of a hard-working model minority who has culturally and economically integrated into the capitalist system successfully. Instead, I suggest that Wah illustrates a fusion of different business practices in his father's café that juxtaposes capitalist ideals of progress and productivity alongside non-profitable business motives. His father's running of a modern café business engages in an economic discourse that promotes the capitalist principle of maximizing the business's profitability and conveys its modernity by suggesting its sophistication, advancement, and newness. However, while it does operate according to these ideals, Wah affirms that it also embodies its own significations that appear within, but also lie outside of, the capitalist logic of production. He promotes an understanding of people's work experiences in Diamond Grill that focuses on the daily details and subjective nature of café work for each person involved. This centralizes the workers as agents within the prevailing economic system and distinguishes them individually. Besides its class significations, work becomes a site that foregrounds racial and cultural differences between the workers themselves and between them and their customers. At the same time, it also operates as a site that resolves these differences and even depends upon their reinforcement for its productivity and profitability.

First, Wah evokes the café's technological modernity to demonstrate his father's hard-earned financial success from running the business. As his father has raised his family to a respectable "middle-class" status (69), they can live without fear of financial hardship. Recounting the opening of his father's café, Wah represents it as an integral part of Nelson, rather than as a subsidiary sphere of economic activity that carries little class prestige. The cafe is not only a place of labour but also a place of pleasurable consumption that displaces racial barriers with an attractive narrative of class mobility and prosperity for the community. As Wah says, "I think of the pride with which my father names the Diamond Grill. For him, the name is neither innocent nor pretentious. The Diamond, he proudly regales the banquet at the grand opening, is the most modern, up-to-date restaurant in the interior of B.C. The angled design of the booths matches the angles of a diamond and the diamond itself stands for good luck. We hope this new restaurant will bring good luck for all our families and for this town. Eat! Drink! Have a good time!" (25). The act of naming the café becomes a source of power that, Wah recalls, is "indeed a privilege" (25) because Chinese immigrants were "denied the right to vote up until 1949" (25). Naming the café constitutes his father's public declaration of a class identity that affirms his success and inscribes his presence in the communal imaginary and its predominant markers of success.

Wah also suggests that class signifies through an ability to engage in acquiring and displaying particular consumer goods and forms of recognized economic capital. Higher-class identities are associated with modernity: an ability to buy and publicly display the most recent and advanced products. To appear modern is to convey a sense of newness, sophistication, cleanliness, and aesthetic pleasantness. The interior of his father's café conveys classiness—its technological and aesthetic sophistication—through its dining area's physical layout and its equipment for preparing food and beverages. The "most modern-looking thing about the restaurant is that these booths are built on a slight diagonal, diamond-shaped, to make better use of the narrowness of the room" (119). It also has a vinyl floor (153), seating "upholstered in orange and green Naugahyde and . . . a chrome coat pole [is] at the end of each seat" (110). A jukebox appears in each booth along the wall and four Wurlitzers are "stationed on the front horseshoe counters," with the big floor model prominently displayed "against the wall between the counter section and the booths" (161). Efficiency also dictates the café's layout, with "two counters . . . designed for maximum use of a small space" (33). The dining room service is smooth, efficient, and stylish. Cream jugs are "filled and ready to grab for the next rush" and patties of butter are "ready to serve" (63). When Wah works at the café, his father instructs him on the importance of keeping the café clean, tidy, and efficient and making customers feel welcome by giving them water as soon as they enter (50). Similarly, they have sophisticated and up-to-date equipment for preparing food and drinks, including a milkshake mixer (32), milk machine (51), coffee urn (104), till (142), and the "most modern soda fountain in town" (40).

While Wah discusses the café's technological sophistication, he also pays equal attention to the café's co-owners and their hired helpers, both of whom contribute to the café's daily functioning. In doing so, he evokes both the continuous and physical toil of café work but also the agency that it provides to workers. I suggest that his representation of the physical separation between the kitchen and the dining room functions as a metaphor for his representations of the café workers as a whole. Cynthia Sugars affirms that "Wah plays with the notion of place as a space that both grounds and disrupts identificatory structures" (30) because the swinging doors that divide the kitchen from the dining room function "not just as a border between 'Occident and Orient' but as the hyphenated divider and connector between multiple identity markers" (43). Extending Sugar's point, I suggest that Wah's image of the swinging doors also highlights and critiques the separation between the café workers' public and private lives, with a desire to narrate the labour behind their public image as polite Chinese servers. The beginning of his text signals this spatial separation between their perceived, public images as café workers who serve customers and the subaltern lives beneath them that remain unarticulated: "In the diamond, at the end of a long green vinyl aisle between booths of chrome, Naugahyde, and Formica, are two large swinging wooden doors, each with a round hatch of face-sized window. Those kitchen doors can be kicked with such a slap they're heard all the way up to the soda fountain. *On the other side of the doors, hardly audible to the customers*, echoes a jargon of curses, jokes, and cryptic orders" (1, emphasis added). By narrating their work lives, Wah carves out a discursive space within the capitalist logic of production for these workers, whose invisibility in these narratives derives from their unacknowledged daily struggles. He extols the success of his father's co-owned café business, but he also foregrounds the hard work of everyone there who helped to maintain its efficient, cordial, and well-serviced atmosphere.

Wah represents the relentless and often thankless nature of café work by dramatizing the workers' daily labour through several descriptive snapshots of their work conditions at different times of the day and year. He individualizes these workers as a resilient and hardworking group of people whose identities are defined by their café work. In doing so, Wah textually provides a form of public recognition for these workers that recuperates their historical invisibility in narratives about Canada's past. For instance, he describes a typical morning at his father's café: "As soon as the café opens at quarter to six, half a dozen regulars stumble in and stake out their spots, mostly up at the counter. They just want coffees and gossip, the weather and roads, hockey games this weekend, Smokies, Flyers, Dynamiters, Maple Leafs, some bets, some laughs" (29). Similarly, he conveys the daily rush and repetitive toil of work. Its frenetic pace debilitates them physically but takes precedence over their personal needs. They work long hours and must produce on demand for many customers (46). Often times, Wah suggests, the work can be isolating and demoralizing because of its repetitiveness and limited financial prospects. The cook has a "life with nothing but grease, smoke, and sweat over a hot stove and then the lonely walk home" (113), while the dishwasher has "no wife, no children, [and] an entire life of jobs in back rooms and kitchens" (113). Even Pong, the café's "silent partner," is "grumpy and fractious" (113). Their work, which they depend upon for their physical survival, encompasses their entire lives and is the only thing that they can expect with certainty: "That first hour before Donna comes on at seven is a mild rush, no time, just him and the cook, get the backup urn of coffee ready, hasn't eaten yet, a quick sip of coffee on the run, so blast and run the morning into the day, day after day until he dies, until the rampaged blood is seedless, until the leaning heart is sacked" (30). Besides serving the customers, which begins at a quarter to six in the morning (29) and ends late at night, preparation is ongoing in the café's kitchen and dining area. They must rush to prepare for that afternoon's customers between eleven and twelve o' clock (146), and they clean up and prepare for the next day after closing hours (115).

At the same time that he presents the café workers' labour, the absences behind their labour—the causes and circumstances that led them to these jobs—figure as much into his text as his explanations for people like his father and grandfather, whose occupational choices derive from the racial and class discrimination in the Exclusion Era. Wah does not speak fully for the other workers whom he represents because he maintains an epistemological limit between himself and the cooks, whose disgruntled attitudes remain unexplained: "When I ask my dad he just says They're like that. They've always been like that! Him, then? Me, too?" (113). This evokes a conceptualization of identity that does not assume a full knowledge of himself or those he represents, but rather an acceptance of those silences as productive elements for construing their identities through his narration of their lives in the present. By resisting closure or certainty, Wah resists imposing static identities upon these workers and suggests a flexible approach to representing and interpreting their lives that acknowledges the impossibility of fully knowing them.

This view of the café workers' labour mirrors Wah's representation of his father in Waiting for Saskatchewan, in which he also acknowledges the impossibility of fully comprehending his father's life. He goes further to suggest the undesirability of fixing any definite interpretation upon his father's life because his father's past can never be adequately represented in its entirety. Acknowledging that "all [the] 'facts' existed once" about his father (Waiting for Saskatchewan 59), Wah gives a provisional interpretation of his father that focuses on representing the particularities of his job at Elite café. In doing so, he constitutes a class identity for his father that derives from his work and the sense of purpose and community that his work provides for him:

> *What I remember or what you or anyone else connected remembers isn't the point.* There isn't even any point. *There is just this.* You , before, you had a car, on the street in an overcoat, winter, to work. Always alone. I mean I see only your singularity, you with hands in your pockets, heads down, going to work, with intention, in the cold winter dusk, to the Elite, your dad or Buster already has the big stainless coffee urn ready, what was it, twenty cups of ground in the cloth sack . . . the first few customers . . . sweep the floors, maybe do some cooking in the kitchen where you can talk to the cooks, Grampa out front flipping coins, the whole new family around you there in Swift Current. (Waiting for Saskatchewan 60, emphasis added)

Thus, it is not so much what he or his father thinks, but rather what his father *does* that is important for defining his identity in Waiting for Saskatchewan. In the same way that he depicts his father, Wah focuses on the Diamond Grill café workers' work in Diamond Grill, but he also presents another way of thinking about work that goes beyond its daily drudgery. Wah suggests that the café workers' work is physically strenuous, but that its very predictability also reassures them as they can derive enjoyment through their ability to facilitate and complete that work. Their work is a sophisticated, fascinating, and even playful activity:

> Hands on the move, and with one of them break an egg into the coffee grounds, turn taps, fill cream jugs, body picks up speed. A little spark to the step starts . . . This is work. Rhythm. Don't love it but count on it, get into it. Some kind of dance . . . But what's so striking about Buster are his hands. They're not only large but in tune. So sensitive to surface that utensils, plates, cups, glasses, quarters, dimes, and nickels juggle through the air in perfect arcs of utility, always landing with precision. He has touch, he's a pro. (37)

Similarly, Wah suggests that Shu derives a sense of anticipation and fulfillment through his job as a cook, "waiting for that first order shouted into the kitchen air. That's the switch, the buzz. Now the day has measure" (38). Work provides a similar function for his father. When his Swedish wife's family excludes him after he marries her, he "just shrug[s] it off" (14) and dedicates himself to doing his work well. While his café work only provides a temporary refuge, his father can escape from racial discrimination in the café and achieve a sense of personal fulfillment that remains untainted by racial markers. Instead, his father feels proud when everything is clean and ready for his anticipated customers.

Wah's representations of food preparation, serving food, and café customers who buy their food further suggest how daily processes of work can mediate the café workers' self-perceptions. The mediation of racial and cultural differences through food shapes the café workers' class identities, which workers signify in relation to other people within and outside of the café. As Kathleen Batstone affirms, embracing food practices of an alien culture is not necessarily negative but, rather, an appropriation of power that allows the person to manipulate identity (6). Instead of judging the food according to apolitical aesthetic criteria, Batstone's approach usefully constitutes it as a site of empowerment for the workers who prepare it. Wah suggests a similar connection between the making of food and power. Using food, he expresses that class identities can signify through the café's created products: they are not simply material goods for customers' physical consumption but also material goods that mediate the signification of identity through its preparation, circulation, and consumption. Indeed, the café workers in Wah's text use the process of food preparation to define class identities within the predominant economic order that are irreducible to their occupational statuses.

Cooking is one aspect of café labour that workers use to define their class identities and enhance their prestige. Anne Goldman suggests that some autobiographies correlate the loss of traditional cuisine with the loss of cultural integrity and authority (Goldman 20), but Wah configures cooking differently. Even as he fondly recollects dishes from his childhood and regrets his inability to remember the particular ingredients in them, Wah does not depict the loss of supposedly "traditional" Chinese cuisine as something that is necessarily negative. He rejects an "authentic" form of Chineseness that finds its ultimate, pure expression in its identifiable cuisine. Instead, the "mixed grill" dish that the Diamond Grill cooks create is popular with the customers and represents a new configuration of authority that does not derive from authenticating identity markers, but rather the disruption and hybridizing of these identity markers into something "new." Their ability to make the dish comes out of their work as servants under wealthy white employers; it is "part of their colonial cook's training, learning to serve the superior race in Hong Kong and Victoria properly, mostly as chefs in private elite clubs and homes" (2). However, in the Diamond Grill café, "its ruddy countenance has mutated into something quick and dirty, not grilled at all, but fried" (2). In his description of this dish, Wah discusses Shu's choice of ingredients, cooking methods, and presentation on "the large oblong platters used only for this dish" (2). This extricates the dish from its colonial context, in which the Chinese cooks are subordinate and produce for their white superiors' profit, and reorients the cooks as agents who appropriate these recipes, reconfigure them in their own work contexts, and individualize them as products from which they can profit financially.

They can also profit individually from their food as it brings them recognition in the wider community. For instance, one of the café's four partners, named Seto, specializes in pastries. Wah represents Seto as an agential subject who has successfully assimilated into the mainstream economic system and demarcated a space of public recognition for his productive efforts. Despite his comparatively subordinate class position in relation to his wealthier customers, Seto's expertise in preparing Western food brings him recognition that extends beyond the café's immediate vicinity. Customers return continually "for a piece of Seto's strawberry shortcake," and people book them in advance (107); moreover, his sugar doughnuts "are legendary throughout the Kootenays" (107). So while he does not gain a higher-class identity in real material terms, he does acquire prestige through his food, which distinguishes him from other pastry makers in town. Seto's privileged status in the café also manifests within the physical organization of the workplace's activities itself and his privileged position within it. Referring to Karl Marx's theorization of class, Pierre Bourdieu acknowledges that one's position in the relations of production does help to define one's class status, but he also affirms the necessity of considering both official and unofficial "rules" that designate and reinforce particular hierarchies of power and responsibilities between working subjects. As Bourdieu states,

> a class or class fraction is defined not only by its position in the relations of production, as identified through indices such as occupation, income or even educational level, but also by . . . a certain distribution of geographical space (which is never socially neutral) and by a whole set of subsidiary characteristics which may function, in the form of tacit requirements, as real principles of selection or exclusion without ever being formally stated. (Distinction 102)

Seto has flexible hours of work and even his own space within the café for making his food, which subtly signals his differential status from the other workers who work all day in the main preparation areas (107): "Seto rolls his dough out in a small room next to the office. It's Seto's pantry . . . I've never seen him move fast, like everyone else who works here...He's usually gone by four or five in the afternoon" (107-108). At the same time, Wah suggests the material restrictions that can delimit one's agency. He speculates that Seto's privileged position in the café derives from his prior investment of economic capital: "Maybe he put more money in than the other partners so he doesn't have to work as hard" (108).

More broadly, Wah refuses to depict his father's cafe as a place that can be racially identified by its menu. As a recognizable physical fixture in most Canadian towns, restaurants or cafés run by people of Chinese descent are perceived publicly as places that sell authentic Chinese food. However, Wah exposes the limitations of such identity labels because they fail to account for the possibilities of cafes that serve hybridized dishes or dishes from multiple cultural backgrounds. While customers can order "Chinese" food (45), most of the café's dishes are Western in origin or prepared with a combination of preparation procedures and ingredients, such as the "mixed grill" dish (2) that cannot be identified adequately as simply "Chinese" or "Western." Wah's problematizing of such cultural boundaries complicates his depictions of empowering class identities because he refuses to equate empowerment with a rejection of dominant cultural products and forms of food production. Their serving of dishes with divergent and hybridized cultural roots resists, as well as accommodates, static racial markers as a part of the food's meaning. Wah's problematizing of racial and cultural assumptions around food criticizes the same kinds of assumptions that have been used historically by others to economically discriminate against Chinese Canadians. As such, their serving of dishes constitutes a form of class agency because they appropriate food from different cultural origins in order to enhance their personal and collective class prestige in the larger community.

For instance, the café's recognition in the larger community is so widespread that several public figures appear at its annual "legendary Chinese banquet" (158). Besides the CPR workers and pensioners, the mayor and chiefs of the police and fire departments attend and praise the workers (159). Their praise depends upon the maintenance of specific roles that distinguish the customers who consume the products from those who toil and, indeed, highlights a racial divide between the Chinese workers and the café's comparatively wealthier, white clientele. Paradoxically, however, it is this same marker of difference, albeit translated through food, that makes the customers' praise possible. Their fame comes from their food, which customers can identify as "Chinese" (158).

Thus, their racial difference that contributes to the workers' discrimination outside the café becomes, inside the café, a mobilizing identity marker that they appropriate and translate through their food to gain recognition.

Wah also suggests how the personal consumption of food can contribute to Chinese Canadians' class agency. For instance, Wah's consumption of rice is not simply for personal nourishment and sensory satisfaction (75). As a culturally hybrid subject who does not fit into Chinese or white culture completely, Wah can circumvent these cultural tensions through eating and imaginatively inhabit a class identity, albeit temporarily, through that food. This is not to suggest that race does not figure into food because Wah affirms that it can also be a "site of an implicit racial qualification," but it does provide opportunities for him to inscribe his own significations as well. As a young adult, he fantasizes a higher-class status that signifies through an ability to eat foods that are more expensive and more refined in their preparation. Wah contrasts Shu's patty, which is eaten by CPR workers, to "real steak" (82). The "poor man's steak" (82) consists of "a patty of ground beef mixed with various seasonings and boiled or fried" (82) and served "mashed potatoes, gravy, and fried onions" (82), whereas those who can afford it have "real steak" (82). Thus, the "poor man" quality of the Salisbury steak is defined by its inauthentic quality and its position as a substitute for "real steak: "[t]he combination of gravy and onions with the beef makes this one of my favourites; a really straight meal with a slight cachet of class and masculinity" (82). Its "upper-class" quality signifies through its authenticity, amount of preparation involved, and price. Consuming the steak allows Wah to inhabit a higher-class status imaginatively on a sensory level without having his racial hybridity impinge negatively upon that experience.

Consuming food can also contribute to a community's collective sense of identity by providing the occasion for affirming traditional cultural values. As Wah suggests, food consumption operates as a communal cohesive that affirms a shared genealogical heritage and the value of familial relations: "We'd have family meals in her and Grandpa's little house and there was usually a large group of people at the table, uncles and aunts and cousins" (9). Eating food preserves his and his family's cultural distinctiveness, which the national project of "collective enterprise" (125) threatens to erase. In narrating these occasions of food consumption, Wah validates his and his family's existence and locates himself as a subject whose identity derives from his experiential connection to his family's past.

Ethical (Re)orientations of Class

While the café owners' and other workers' work emphasizes their racial and class differences from white and rich clientele, Wah suggests that it also allows them to critique and circumvent these identity markers. The café's owners and workers do not wholly assimilate into the capitalist thrust towards mechanical efficiency and profitability and, instead, affirm a business ethic that values customer accessibility, compassion, and respect for people of different class backgrounds. Wah locates his father's café at the centre of the predominantly non-Chinese community of Nelson, British Columbia, serving people from different financial and socially prestigious backgrounds. Cutting across class lines, the café caters to its diverse demographic by selling food that wealthy businessmen and manual labourers can both afford (82). Similarly, Wah's description of his father subverts the racial stereotype that Chinese people are untrustworthy swindlers with "sneaky eyes" (39). His father's business ethic does not focus solely on profit and personal self-interest because it serves the whole community instead of rich clients only. His self-sacrifice for other people's benefit is evident when he even opens up on Christmas Day "at six in the morning for the CPR shift workers and the rooming house people" (79).

Here, Anne Goldman's views about the autobiographical representation of work are useful for considering the relationships that can develop between people of higher and lower class statuses. As she suggests, it is important to avoid "a class-inflected reading of narrative that is overly dependent on a rigid distinction between the 'upper classes' and the 'lower orders'" (Goldman 151) because it constructs class boundaries that reductively define those workers' identities in terms of their opposition to their employers. I suggest that these kinds of distinctions are also problematic because they elide how narratives can represent moments of interaction and interchange between people of different class statuses that are beneficial for each other, rather than for simply those with higher class statuses. For instance, the café workers are hired by Wah's father and other café co-owners and are subject to long hours, but it is overly simplistic to conclude that the co-owners are benefiting at the expense of the workers' labour. Rather, his father constructs an atmosphere of tolerance and respect that benefits not only the owners but also the café workers and customers. In doing so, he exemplifies a way of thinking about class identities that connects the meanings of one's class identity to the ways in which one interacts with others.

For instance, Wah depicts his grandfather and father as admirable subjects who exemplify dignity because they affirm a behavioural ethic that demands respect for both the café workers and customers, regardless of their class background. Class identity is not just something to acquire but one that self-reflexively questions its own potential pretentiousness. Here, class signifies through the person's acquisition and public display of material wealth. Wah states that for his grandfather and father, inhabiting a class identity comes with appropriate behaviour: to act modestly, avoid flaunting one's wealth, and to avoid belittling others who are less economically successful. In his father's view, a person's class status is less admirable if that person acts in an arrogant or belittling manner: "He doesn't like pretension and, though he certainly works hard to raise our family up a middle-class notch, he'll sideswipe anyone he sees putting on airs or using class advantage . . . It's not class itself, really, but how you use it" (69-70). Here, the concept "hyu muckamuck" (68) from the First Nations language Chinook—a hybrid "pidgin language" for trade purposes that combined Chinook with other Western linguistic influences (70)—becomes culturally recoded in reference to his family's experiences and becomes part of his father's class values. The term means "plenty to eat and then transformed, through the contact zone, into big shot, big-time operator" (68). His father is adverse to such behaviour, even though he has acquired, through the successful café business, the necessary amount of financial capital to live comfortably without fear of poverty. When he hears that Wah is "driving down Baker Street in Dad's Monarch with [his] right arm around a girl" (69), he chastises him for acting so arrogantly: "Don't think you're such a high muckamuck" (69).

His father's criticisms of class arrogance correlate with his treatment of the café's waitresses. Mervyn Nicholson suggests that "the metaphor of eating as power, as the exercise of power, has an ancestry predating capitalism. In traditional Christian and feudal society, the (superior) aristocracy is visualized as those who eat, while the (inferior) peasantry feed and serve them" (222). This connection between eating and power does exist in the context of Wah's father's café as the servers must conform to the expected role of serving their customers, but it is mediated by an ethics of class behaviour that relocates power back in the hands of the servers who can refuse to serve them. For instance, when a white, rich businessman tries to steal the waitress's tips, Wah's father kicks him out: "jesus christ Murphy what do you think you're doing lifting the girls' tips. They work hard for that money and you got more'n you know what to do with. You think you're such a high muckamuck. You never leave tips yourself and here you're stealing small change. I want you to get out of here and don't come into this café again" (70). The businessman's inappropriate behaviour reduces the stature of his higher-class identity; in contrast, Wah textually affirms his father as an admirable class subject. His father's principle of respect for people's hard-earned finances extends to his workers as they also are discharged if he catches them stealing other servers' tips (164).

Wah further conveys his father's business ethic by suggesting that he does not simply aim to maximize his profits at the expense of his customers' well-being. Eating constructs a status situation that subordinates the server in relation to the customer, but Wah suggests that it also provides opportunities for forming relationships that circumvent class and cultural differences. In one situation, his father is not obliged to remain after delivering food to the Doukhobors, but he stays and chats with them: "sometimes he stays up at the temporary outdoor compound where the arrested Doukhobors are kept and he'll eat with them" (45). Serving and eating with the Doukhobors becomes an occasion for Wah's father to bridge their cultural differences and construct a communal atmosphere between himself and his customers. Even though he thinks that "they're pretty strange . . . he gets along with them" (45).

Moreover, his father's café is not simply a sphere of labour that produces commodities (food and beverages) for public consumption. It is also a communal space in which both the café's co-owners and café workers maintain good relations and create an atmosphere of tolerance. Interpersonal tensions do arise from café workers' fixed and pre-conceived ideas about people from racial and cultural backgrounds different from their own, but Wah also asserts that the workplace can be a space for negotiating and diffusing the conflicts that derive from these differences. For example, the Chinese workers react negatively when his father hires two waitresses Donna and Miko of Japanese descent and houses them above the café (77) because of the Japanese aggression towards China in the Second World War. Like the white businessman's racialized judgement of Wah (mentioned earlier), the Chinese workers' attitudes towards Donna and Miki also prioritize these waitresses' racial origins over their class statuses. However, Donna and Miki are "such vivacious and likeable people" (77) and hard workers that their co-workers and customers soon accept them. They soon become "an integral part of life in the café; almost family, as they say" (77). Thus, the café becomes a place where workers can avoid being judged and defined by preexisting identity markers or racial biases. Workplace imperatives supercede and override the Chinese workers' animosity towards Japanese people: what counts is the Japanese workers' ability and desire to work hard and effectively. Their work highlights their separation from the wealthier segments of their clientele, but it also provides opportunities for them to express alternative class identities that are not solely defined by their labour and economic power. Wah centres these workers as a part of the café's daily functioning and dignifies their identities as workers. They work harmoniously with the café owners and create a climate of camaraderie through this: "This is the centre of the café, the place to yak it up with the other waiters and waitresses, to kid around, complain about the bad tippers, to change shifts, to unload an armful of dirty dishes into a tub, and, often, more than once, to get a wink, a pinch, and a smile from Donna Mori. Caffeine junction's always buzzing" (104).

Wah's depiction of the café workers' interaction with customers contributes to his image of the café as a sphere of work that benefits economically and socially from the inclusion of leisure activities. Chris Rojek criticizes "the commonsense view that leisure is subordinate to work in everyday life" (20) and argues for its centrality in the reproduction of people's class identities as well as its potential for reconfiguring these identities, whether in actuality or imaginatively. Wah depicts leisure, specifically gambling, as a central part of his father's business. It highlights the differences in wealth between the rich men and the café workers, including his father, but it also contributes to the café's profitability and operates as a sly, covert strategy for Wah's father to increase his family's opportunities for class mobility. His father "loves this friendly back-booth horsing around. It's good for business and these customers like it. He also wins more than he loses" (124). As a business strategy, gambling provides opportunities for workers and their customers to interact and cement relations of goodwill that are necessary for ensuring their patronage. For their customers, the lure of winning money entices both wealthy and poorer ones to participate: "The lottery, pak kop piu, is a hub of activity around the cafes . . . It's pretty cheap, just a few quarters. Even some of the waitresses and white customers are into it" (73).

Thus, their gambling equally relies on and temporarily elides material inequalities between the customers and workers, providing opportunities for intercultural interaction that may not be socially sanctioned otherwise. Moreover, the leisure activities within the café temporarily dissolve racial and class boundaries between white customers and workers and permit interracial relationships, which Wah could not pursue *outside* of work with a white businessman's daughter (39). However, gambling also depends upon the participants' ability to spare money on these activities. Wah's father works this to his advantage by taunting his rich white customers playfully about their luck (123) if they are reluctant to part with their money: "o.k. Philips, c'mon, don't be such a cheapskate, I'll give you a chance to get your money back" (123). They eventually concede and participate and the stakes rise quickly because they could not "stand to lose" (123). Ironically, his father benefits more than his opponents (124). The café's wealthy white clients simply regard gambling as an entertaining diversion from work, but for his father, "[e]asy games get serious" (124). Wah's father feels proud that he can "bluff each day past those white guys and always have jingle jangle high jinks deep into his right pocket for his family" (124); his winnings go towards Wah's future education (124). Thus, for Wah's father, gambling is not simply a diversionary activity but also an activity encoded with race and class assumptions that he appropriates and takes advantage of to contribute to his family's class mobility.

Overall, Fred Wah's representation of work in Diamond Grill demonstrates his awareness of the capitalist and pragmatic imperatives that shape his Chinese Canadian characters' working circumstances and the work that they do in those circumstances, but he avoids homogenizing his characters into an undifferentiated group of subjects who simply produce for other people's economic profit and physical consumption. While he acknowledges the benefits of working within a capitalist system and the class mobility that Chinese Canadians can achieve from this, Wah also exposes its racialized assumptions and the ways in which these assumptions historically work to perpetuate Chinese Canadians' class subordination by the federal government's exclusionary legislation and by white Canadians' racialized perceptions of their class identities. He advocates an approach to representing and understanding Canada's economic history that includes marginalized subjects and recognizes the intersection of racial and class assumptions as a part of that history. This does not mean that Wah affirms an irreducible view of difference as a defining aspect of Chinese Canadians' experiences and their uniqueness from non-Chinese. However, he does conceptualize "difference" in ways that are specific to each Chinese Canadian individual's circumstances, which shapes the kinds of work that are available to them, their work conditions, and the work that they actually carry out under those conditions. While these ideas may appear incompatible with critics' ideas about Wah's depiction of racially hybrid subjects and the empowerment that arises from that hybridity, Wah's representations of work complement and contribute to the extant criticism on Diamond Grill because he recognizes how multiple identity markers intersect and produce varying meanings of "Chinese Canadian-ness." Thus, the intersection between class and other identity markers such as race mediates what identity means for the people that Wah represents in his text.

He proposes that the everyday operations of workplaces like his father's café are complicit in such a racialized economy because they function according to capitalist ideals. However, these workplaces are also sites in which workers can resist dominant racial assumptions and construct identities that derive from their own understandings of class, race, and cultural heritage. For instance, in terms of how he represents the actual act of working, Wah avoids conceptualizing work as a reified sphere of productive activity within the national economy and within a capitalist model of progress: both of these views of work define the class identities of workers through their position in a larger hierarchy of economic power. Challenging these conceptions of work, Wah orients work in relation to the physical conditions in which the work is actually done. He emphasizes a localized representation of class that validates the everyday details of his characters' work and the daily process of working itself alongside its communal and historical conditions. The process of work and the identities that arise out of it interest Wah and remain, in his view, something that is influenced by, yet distinct from, the physical, cultural, and legislative contexts that exist outside the workplace. Work, in Wah's text, is a heterogeneous space of interpersonal relations and activity in which different approaches to identity are negotiated and expressed.

At the same time that he criticizes dominant racial assumptions, Wah also depicts Chinese Canadians who contest their racialized class marginalization by appropriating those racial markers for their economic benefit. Appearing in both situations in which Wah's characters assert or deny their Chineseness, his text shows how race functions as an identity marker that mediates Chinese Canadians' awareness of themselves and shapes their attitudes towards their work and their class identities. Wah does posit an identity politics that averts essentialism and reductionism, but his suggestion of race as an empowering identity marker for Chinese Canadians' economic benefit problematizes how race can signify and, in turn, what those racial significations mean for Chinese Canadians' agency. Fixing particular meanings for racial markers does not necessarily lead to a loss of agency. Describing his father's café's success, Wah suggests that their racial difference from the white population provides a strategic point of reference from which Chinese Canadian workers' can enhance their class standing in the predominantly white community.

By depicting race in these ways, Wah challenges the assumptions that white Canadians depended on historically to justify the passage of exclusionary legislation for Canada's Chinese population. Wah asserts that race is a construct rather than a fixed identity marker with predetermined meanings, but he also says that Chinese Canadians' physical visibility as racially different subjects leads to real consequences that delimit their agency. His representations of his familial predecessors', his own, and other workers' experiences show how race has been a historically persistent concept that shapes white Canadians' perceptions of Chinese Canadians' work, the class identities associated with their work, and their treatment of Chinese Canadians inside and outside the workplace. Indeed, the inescapability of their racial difference illustrates that Chinese

Canadians' possibilities of agency in Diamond Grill depend upon others, both Chinese and white by descent, who must recognize or acknowledge their class standing.

At the same time that he illustrates the consequences of racial difference for their relationship with non-Chinese, Wah also suggests how people's ideas of race can include and exclude people within the Chinese Canadian population itself. He does not conform to either Chinese or non-Chinese people's preconceived notions of what a Chinese or Canadian should look like. As a result, racial ideas become a basis for internal differentiation among others who associate Chineseness with a particular physical appearance. These ideas manifest in the workplace and serve to differentiate Wah from other workers of Chinese descent, but Wah's presence as a racially hybrid subject frustrates the imposition of such ideas and exposes their inadequacy for defining him.

By foregrounding how race signifies and works in relation to the workplace, Wah's text offers an approach to understanding class identity, and identity more generally, as something that needs to account for the interactive nature of identity construction and signification. This is important because he highlights how identity politics and agency operate within preexisting contexts. Returning to Julie McGonegal's point about Wah's oppositional yet cooperative identity politics, I suggest that Wah's portrayal of work shows how class mediates one's understandings of identity and manifests in both oppositional and cooperative forms. Hybridity is but one way in which identity can signify and work because static understandings of identity often work alongside them. The manifestation of class in Wah's text evokes both static and fluctuating ideas about what class identities mean and what kinds of class identities are desirable. Thus, an effective identity politics to achieve agency is contingent upon recognizing the ways in which identity markers are not fully oppressive or empowering and are dependent upon the situations in which they appear for their meaning and function. Recognizing the fluidity as well as the static potential of such identity markers, Wah avoids conceptualizing identity categories in ways that reinforce debilitating assumptions and affirms that it is necessary to recognize and contest those assumptions.

Notes

1 In his interview with Ashok Mathur, Fred Wah talks about why he uses the term "biotext," which he later augments by calling Diamond Grill a "biofiction." His comments suggest that he prefers the label "biofiction" because it allows him to indicate that his self-representation in Diamond Grill does connect to his actual life, but also to highlight the constructed and fictive nature of that representation and the ways in which that representation is only a tentative inscription of his life: "I'm using the term 'biotext' as a hedge against the kind of writing I do in Diamond Grill being hijacked by ready-made generic expetations, the cachet exuded, at least for me, by those two other terms, autobiography and life writing . . . [H]owever, I felt I needed to call the hedge a hedge and so I tinted it as 'biofiction.' For this book, that feels like a happier term, compositionally, since it indicates the possible brush with certain narrative tropes. . . . Diamond Grill settles nothing (I hope)" (Faking It 97).

2 Both Joanne Saul and Julie McGonegal also examine Wah's representation of identity, but they focus on race and culture instead of class. For example, Saul suggests that Wah tackles the problems of belonging and self-representation for Chinese Canadians, which is particularly problematic for him because of his racially hybrid and ethnic background and the impossibility of writing a coherent narrative (9-10). Julie McGonegal extends Saul's and Hilf's ideas and provocatively argues that Wah's metaphorical use of the hyphen "exposes the singular inadequacy of the terms that it intermediates" (McGonegal 180) and opens up possibilities for identity that negotiate between different identity markers because it "implies movement that *goes between* rather than only *from one to the other*" (McGonegal 187). As such, McGonegal asserts that this allows Wah to conceptualize the state of hybridity as one of tension, movement, and negotiation between different identity markers rather than a celebratory merging of elements into a newly unified identity with consistent significations. Jeff Derksen does refer to Wah's "working-class background" but does not really examine how class informs the representation of his personal identity. Instead, he explores how Wah constructs an identity politics "within rather than through language" (72), which

"provides an alternative to the containable performances of race, class, and gender and rewrites the limits of identity" (72).

3 Fred Wah refers to Viktor Shklovsky's concept of "defamiliarization" in order to suggest the importance of continually questioning and redefining any particular perspective: "Even the varied lexicon of critical desire shows a continuing need to reinvent/renew perceptions that otherwise reify" (Faking It 24).

Chapter Six

Appropriating and Signifying Space: Spatially-Based Class Identities

In her analysis of Chinese American author Fae Myenne Ng's novel Bone, Lisa Lowe affirms that Ng "explores *space* as a category in which to read about the emergence of, and the obstacles to, Asian American social life over the past century" (Immigrant Acts 120). Ng's fictional representations of space, Lowe maintains, do not simply replicate the economic conditions and effects of spatial containment and racial discrimination that Chinese Americans have experienced historically. Questioning how institutionalized narratives of American history have excluded events and people that do not conform to entrenched notions of progress and development, Ng suggests that these "pressures of universal temporalized history" (Lowe, Immigrant Acts 121) inscribe an epistemological hegemony through their representations of spaces, which elide their physical and demographic heterogeneity and their cultural and historical complexity. Ng's representations of Chinatown disrupt the logic of the capitalist system and its orientation towards Chinatown as an "ethnic ghetto for production" (Lowe, Immigrant Acts 126) and, in its place, construct an image of Chinatown that is not fully knowable or containable within these institutionalized modes of spatial representation. As Lowe asserts, Ng's novel "excavates the uneven geography of locality" and conceptualizes Chinatown as a "resistant, recalcitrant, 'historical' space" (Immigrant Acts 121) that disrupts and reshapes institutionalized strategies of representation and the representations that these strategies privilege.

Lowe's views lead me to formulate the following question, which speaks to these issues and the problems that arise when minority writers represent their views within dominant discourses: how can a marginalized group's literary representations articulate a proactive politics of space when the boundaries of geographical entities such as Chinatown are determined by others who possess the power to establish such boundaries? While Lisa Lowe refers to a Chinese American novel, her points about space are relevant for my own analysis because she recognizes how space connects to the marginalization of minority subjects and how subjects can use spaces to resist their subordination. Dominant representations of Chinatown may homogenize the experiences of Chinese

Americans and divest them of agency, but writers such as Ng problematize these representations by creating alternative conceptions of these spaces that reinscribe Chinese Americans' presence and restore their agency.

Chinese Canadian writers Paul Yee and Wayson Choy contend with similar concerns when they represent space in Breakaway (1994) and The Jade Peony (1995) respectively. Their writing operates out of "representational regimes" (Lowe, Immigrant Acts 101) that regulate and encourage disempowering and reductive views of Chinese Canadians and the spaces in which they live for public circulation. However, as Lisa Lowe asserts, these representational regimes contain, in their very assertion of particular representational strategies, possibilities for minority writers to critique and subvert them. Like Ng's Bone, the Chinese Canadian works that I will focus on in this chapter intervene within institutionalized historical narratives of spaces that characterized Chinese Canadians in disempowering ways. Referring to and drawing upon actual spaces that have been significant to Chinese Canadian history, Yee and Choy promote the everyday and spatially specific as central to an understanding of Chinese Canadian experiences and the class identities that emerge out of these. They draw upon spatial images associated with Chinese Canadian history—rural space, urban space, and Chinatowns—in order to trouble and reconfigure dominant historical depictions of Chinese Canadians as well as epistemological assumptions around representing and relating to Chinese Canadians' past experiences.

Yee and Choy represent spaces as sites of contestation that shape the interpersonal relations and identities of Chinese Canadian characters. Occurring among characters of Chinese descent as well as between them and characters of non-Chinese descent, these moments of contestation are reflected in their characters' struggles for physical control over spaces' activities and their struggles for control over those spaces' meanings. In doing so, Yee and Choy avoid simplistic depictions of their characters as either fully functioning agents or completely oppressed victims: they show how their characters' presence in particular spaces at certain moments affects their agency and how these spaces shift in meaning over time. Their characters acquire agency through their physical occupation, manipulation, and narration of particular spaces, which interconnect with their daily activities and interpersonal interaction within them. To use Michel de

Certeau's phrase from his examination of consumption, these characters "make do" (35) with these spaces and use them in imaginative ways that are not necessarily practical but that are important for their identities. Other identity markers such as race also inform these spaces' meanings and the class identities that their characters construct in relation to these spaces. Their racial difference, for instance, contributes to their class marginalization in the historical eras that Yee and Choy represent and, in addition, shapes their perceptions and reactions to that marginalization. As a result, their characters do not simply reject hegemonic class identities that threaten to elide or erase their racial difference; rather, their identities refer to and incorporate dominant class ideals as a part of their revised significations.

Theorizing Space and Class Identity

To frame my theoretical approach to Yee's and Choy's representations of space, I would like to begin with Susan Stanford Friedman's views on the growing body of scholarship that focuses on the significance of space in relation to identity. As Friedman asserts, the importance of space, or what she refers to as the "new geography" (18), is a rapidly developing field in identity studies that crosses between the humanities and social sciences, reflecting a fundamental shift from a "discourse of organic wholeness" to a "discourse of spatialized flux" (19) in theorizations of how spaces and identities signify and function. This theoretical shift departs from, broadly speaking, three older tendencies of spatial theorization: (1) space as an entity that is already and clearly defined, separate from the subjects residing within space; (2) space as an empty container or neutral geographical terrain upon which events occur; and (3) space as "a site of authenticity, stability, and nostagia" (Gwin 10) that is unproblematic as an identity marker for the people who reside within that space.

These conceptualizations assume that space can be extricated and understood separately from the historical contexts in which it appears. This evokes an entrenched assumption about space that Henri Lefebvre suggests is present in Western culture: "the illusion of a transparent, 'pure' and neutral space, which, though philosophical in origin, has permeated Western culture—is being dispelled only very slowly" (Production of Space 292). In Lefebvre's view, this illusion has encouraged a rationalist approach to space that "treat[s] specific domains as determined and defined in accordance with a logical thesis about coherence and cohesiveness, equilibrium and regulation" (Production of Space 293). However, this presupposes an *a priori* pure state—an identifiable origin—from which the meanings of a space can be inscribed and maintained consistently within its designated geographical boundaries. For instance, this conceptualization of space manifests itself in disciplines such as anthropology. According to Akhil Gupta and David Ferguson, the field has been dominated, until recently, by an approach to space and identity that presumes identities are simply "extensions of a prior, natural identity rooted in locality and community" ("Culture" 7), within which a clearly defined culture can be found and assumed as an unproblematic expression of its inhabitants' identities. This approach presumes that space operates as a "neutral grid on which cultural difference, historical memory and societal organization is inscribed" ("Beyond 'Culture'" 34), which naturalizes the relationships between spaces and these aspects and elides how they are constructed and negotiated.

In contrast, Friedman asserts that this "new geography" (18) of identity questions any inherent and natural relationship between articulated identities and the spaces to which they refer or in which they are articulated. It rejects the "individualistic telos of developmental models" of identity (19) and reorients identity as a discursive construct—"a historically embedded site, a positionality, a location" (19)—that shifts in its significations and salience from one spatial context to another. Identity markers are not equally foregrounded in every situation: "Change the scene, and the most relevant constituents of identity come into play" (23). Decoupling identity from a supposedly natural relationship to space orients identity as "a continually contested domain" (Gupta and Ferguson, "Culture" 14) that, like the spaces in which it is expressed, "always involves a construction, rather than merely a discovery, of difference" (Gupta and Ferguson, "Culture" 13). This reorientation towards spaces conceptualizes a new relationship between spaces and identities that assumes the significations of both are "open to contestation and reformulation" (Gupta and Ferguson, "Culture" 18): these significations are not predetermined, naturally derivative from each other, or unproblematic in their expression and circulation.

With this general theoretical framework in mind, I combine Michel de Certeau's and Pierre Bourdieu's theorizations of space in order to interpret Yee's and Choy's representations of space, the class identities explored through these, and the influence of these spaces on their characters' understandings of "Chinese Canadian-ness." Both de Certeau's and Bourdieu's views of space align with more recent developments of space and identity. First, de Certeau considers space "as a practiced place" (117), which posits spaces as constructed entities in both the material and discursive sense: they are not simply defined by their physical geography but also by narratives that people construct and use to organize what these spaces mean, which people can reinforce through particular behaviours in those spaces. However, these meanings are not simply imposed by those in positions of power and mimicked by their followers. De Certeau stresses that people negotiate these spaces' meanings at the level of the everyday. Particular narratives of spaces may become dominant and encourage, through a system of rewards and punishments, adherence to these, but opportunities for resistance appear outside of as well as within the terms of those very narratives and the dissidence that they aim to suppress. De Certeau refers to these as "delinquent narrativit[ies]" (130), which are characterized by their manifestations "in the interstices of the codes that [they] und[o] and displac[e] . . . by the privilege of the *tour* over the *state*" (130).

De Certeau's ideas of space connect well with Pierre Bourdieu's theorization of class identities and how these both shape and problematize people's social relations in particular spaces. Bourdieu asserts that "[i]ndividuals do not move about in social space in a random way" (Distinction 110) because there are certain class identities and expectations expressed by those who control what occurs in those spaces and define the social relations between these individuals. However, it is also important to consider how these class identities are contested and used by people who want to maintain or change their class position in those spaces: "Only by reference to the space . . . which defines them and which they seek to maintain or redefine, can one understand the strategies, individual or collective, spontaneous or organized, which are aimed at conserving, transforming or transforming so as to conserve" (Distinction 156).

De Certeau's focus on how people use space and Bourdieu's views on the changing significations of class raise useful questions about the politics of space that are pertinent for my analysis of Chinese Canadian literature: Under whose and what terms are such spaces signified, and in what specific contexts do people use space, how, and why? I suggest that Yee's and Choy's representations of spaces problematize and complicate how class shapes the significations of Chinese Canadian identities. In her discussion of narrative enactments of geographical space, Minrose Gwin suggests that writers can conceptualize spaces as flexible, "multiple fields of interaction" (8) and expose how identity markers such as class "are at once circumscribed and destabilized discursively within and between those locations" (14). In the same way, Yee and Choy represent spaces as flexible geographical terrains with porous boundaries and meanings that are negotiated by Chinese Canadian characters who reside within and outside of those spaces, but they do so against the backdrop of Chinese Canadian history. While their characters do not acquire absolute agency over the spaces that they occupy, they work successfully within the limitations of their historically shaped spatial circumstances. They define these spaces in ways that are salient and empowering for their own class identities, even though these may impact insignificantly upon their positions of power in relation to others inside or outside of those spaces or the material conditions of their daily lives. However, the ways in which they do so also differ because of their characters' unique spatial circumstances, perceptions of those circumstances, and class aspirations. The gendered and racialized class statuses of Yee's and Choy's characters shape their relationships with other people within and outside of those spaces, which further influence how they react to their marginalization in the spaces that they inhabit.

The Young Adult Character as Empowered Protagonist and Historical Agent: Spatial (Re)inscriptions of Class Identity in Paul Yee's Breakaway

In an interview with Marie Davis, Paul Yee reflects on a writer's responsibilities and affirms that his own writing has to "do some social good for the community" (64). His comment signals an orientation towards writing—a "utopian impulse"—that affirms its educative value and its possibilities for representing how people can resolve problems and create a better society (M. Davis 67). As someone who depicts Chinese cultural traditions in his fiction, Yee acknowledges the necessity of explaining unfamiliar cultural practices that he represents in his fiction to readers because they may be unfamiliar with them (M. Davis 64). However, he does not simply regard writing as a way to educate readers about Chinese Canadians' past experiences, but also as a way to acknowledge his Chinese Canadian predecessors: "my fiction is a kind of backward way of thanking people for sacrificing and going through difficult times" (M. Davis 68). Yee's writing is mitigated by an ethical sense of personal and collective responsibility towards both the people he represents and the people who read his work. This approach to writing informs Yee's identity politics because he conceptualizes literature as a political strategy for representing Chinese Canadians' experiences and viewpoints and affirming their value in mainstream culture. His young adult novel Breakaway exemplifies this orientation towards writing by representing Chinese immigrants' lives during the Depression era.

While little criticism exists on Yee's work, John Ming Chen's and Pat Parungao's analysis of Yee's female characters provides a useful entry into Breakaway because it illustrates how Chinese cultural traditions contribute to these characters' struggles in Canada. As Chen and Parungao suggest, Yee's fiction focuses consistently on the relationship of individuals to the society in which they live and the individuals' struggle with Chinese cultural traditions in the Canadian context (21). Yee extols his female characters' talents and intellectual capabilities and questions the gender assumptions of Chinese cultural traditions, which assume the inferiority of women and subordinate them under "patriarchal social and familial structures" (Chen and Parungao 24). He empowers his female characters, who succeed despite oppressive societal conditions in Canada, but he also avoids presenting a completely "rosy picture" (Chen and Parangao 24) by depicting that tragedies also result from these constricting circumstances.

Similarly, Chinese cultural traditions contribute to Yee's characters' struggles in Breakaway. My focus on class and space contributes to the limited body of criticism on Yee's fiction because it will show how his protagonists' attitudes and motivations for acting are shaped by their Chinese cultural traditions as well as Western capitalist and consumer culture. Class meanings contribute to these cultural influences' spatial effects upon Yee's characters: they help to define their perceptions of the spaces that they inhabit as well as the spaces that they *wish* to inhabit. The attractions of class mobility and the realities of class marginalization within particular spaces shape how their identities as Chinese Canadians signify and what identities they aspire to. Class informs, and is informed by, Yee's characters' agency and development of identities in relation to the spaces that they occupy and use.

It is also important to note that Yee's awareness of the economic and social effects of the Depression era on Chinese Canadians informs his literary representation of Chinese Canadians. By locating his characters in that era, Yee suggests how larger societal conditions can negatively impact upon their agency and possibilities of class mobility, but also provide other possibilities for agency. The Depression's reverberating economic effects prompted Canada's federal government to limit immigration sharply, but this was not simply an isolated decision. As Valerie Knowles states, public opposition to increased immigration influenced the federal government's decision as "Canadians everywhere took the view that immigrants threatened scarce jobs in an economy that saw almost a quarter of the labour force unemployed in 1933" (115). Thus, these economic conditions increased the public's hostility towards Chinese Canadians, which was already legitimized legislatively by the federal government's earlier exclusionary legislation that characterized the Exclusion Era (1923-1947) as a whole. But while the Depression era exacerbated Chinese Canadians' economic and social marginalization in mainstream Canadian society, it also, paradoxically, provided the conditions that contributed to the Chinese Canadians' communal cohesion, development of communal organizations, and cross-Canada connections between various Chinese Canadian communities. The widespread economic problems in Canadian society worsened other social problems, which prompted Chinese Canadian communities to look after themselves by offering their own community-based organizations and parallel services in areas such as education, welfare, and social services. Indeed, the 1920s and 1930s "were characterized by a Chinese community static or declining in size but increasing in organizational activities" (Con et al. 170). Leaders and fundraisers also traveled across the country to exchange information and solicit support for community projects (Con et al. 167).

In Breakaway, Yee's portrait of a Chinese community during the Depression era focuses on one character's young adulthood and viewpoints. This raises the following questions: How does young adulthood signify in Chinese Canadian authors' literary representations of characters in contexts such as the Exclusion Era? What work do these representations of young adult perspectives and experiences do in terms of modifying our views of Chinese Canadians? Focusing on the daily, individualized lives of Chinese immigrants and their descendents who live in a rural context, Yee focuses on how one young adult, Kwok, constructs a Chinese Canadian identity during that time. He charts the tensions that arise from his struggles with negative feelings towards his own and his family's marginal class status in relation to the Chinese Canadian community and Canadian society as a whole. These feelings about his family's class status intersect with his awareness of his racial difference and the perceived disadvantages that this difference accrues in the larger society. This contributes to his ongoing struggle over how to define his personal identity within his family, the Chinese Canadian community, and Canadian society as a whole. Each of these contexts promote different understandings of Chineseness and class that, in some cases, cannot be easily reconciled with the pragmatic or ideological imperatives that particular circumstances may demand.

The Politics and Ethics of Class Identities in Yee's Representations of Urban and Rural Space

According to Barbara Ching and Gerald W. Creed, the rural/urban or country/city distinction underlies many of the power relations that shape interpersonal and societal relations (2) as it generates "not only political and economic conflict but social identification as well" (3). The signification of rural and urban spaces is political and class-oriented because they are represented within capitalist, urban-oriented discourses of national economic development that privilege urban space as the central frame of reference, with the city as "the locus of political, economic, and cultural power" (Ching and Creed 17). Thus, urban space occupies a position of epistemological privilege in these economic discourses and signifies positively in opposition to rural space, acquiring a cultural and economic value that rural space lacks. This helps to promote and justify the superiority of urban space and urban subjects from those spaces because these urban subjects can "confidently assume the cultural value of their situation" (Ching and Creed 4). The city is a physical and discursive manifestation of urbanity that functions ideologically for urban residents as they can evoke particular images of the city to protect their "cultural and economic superiority" (Ching and Creed 18). These discourses assert that urban spaces are superior to rural ones by valuing progress and development as indicators of higher-class status to which people should aspire; urban spaces are more advanced technologically, scientifically, and culturally, whereas rural spaces are represented as homogenous and unchanging entities with negative connotations of backwardness and rusticity. Offering "reassuring evidence of historical continuity" (Lynch 172), rural space is represented as a less developed place uncorrupted by economic progress and reflective of a simpler lifestyle. It evokes the "romantic trope of the countryside as an idyllic retreat" (Ching and Creed 19) or "harmonious refuge from the modern world" (Lynch 172) that testifies to the nation's progress because of its perceived *lack* of economic development in relation to urban spaces.

Yee's novel Breakaway troubles these significations of rural and urban spaces and asserts that they can be redefined. Questioning the privileging of urban over rural space, Yee situates the rural as a centre of class conflict, negotiation, and resolution, and makes his young adult protagonist Kwok central to this process. Initially, Kwok encounters contradictory lifestyles: one with immediately foreseeable results in the form of acquired material capital and accompanied prestige, and another that is comparatively unattractive, with a life of daily drudgery and monotonous physical labour that fail to reap tangible markers of value. To stay on the farm reminds him constantly of his family's lower class identity that he wishes to escape. As Kwok states, "Chinatown people look at us and think the Wongs are low-life. We track farm mud wherever we go. People hold their noses when we come close. They sweep up as soon as we've passed. We beggars do anything to feed our pigs for cheap" (9). He looks forward to a university education because it signifies possibilities for acquiring a higher-class identity that will dissociate him from the marginal spaces of his family's farm and Chinatown and their negative significations. For Kwok, one of the key aspects of possessing a higher-class identity is to display a state of cleanliness and material wealth on one's own body and a state of technological modernity in one's home because these actions both signify a disassociation from a life of physical labour, subsistence, and frugality. Conversely, these actions will evoke a life of material luxury that exceeds one's basic needs because, in turn, Kwok believes that this will alleviate his shame in his family's lifestyle and garner the social prestige and respect that he desires. The city signifies as a place of modernity where he can accrue these economic rewards and construct a positive class identity that dissociates him from his rural roots and aligns him with the urban economy and "automobile age" (18).

It is important to consider Kwok's earlier perceptions of himself alongside his perceptions of Chinatown because doing so illustrates how his class aspirations are aligned with particular urban spaces and influenced by racial significations associated with them. Even though Chinatown is urban, he is not attracted to it because he wants to access the perceived class rewards from white urban centres. Chinatown reminds him of his racial heritage *and* his rural roots, both of which he wishes to escape. His perceptions of his own cultural differences in relation to the Chinatown residents increase his feelings of inadequacy. He thinks that they are "so . . . Chinese" as they go to Chinese school (82). In his view, this makes them more Chinese than him because they are more familiar with Chinese cultural traditions. Despite the heterogeneity of class identities among Chinatown's residents, he still feels inadequate in comparison to them and sees himself as a "hick farm boy" (82). The word "hick" connotes a negative image of a rural person who is ignorant and backward, unsophisticated and uncultured. To come from the country is to inherit a lower class status by spatial association, whereas to come from the city is to inhabit a space that contains desirable class attributes.

Yee's representation of Kwok's home illustrates how these significations of urban and rural spaces are circulated and contested at the domestic level and, more importantly, how Kwok's pursuit of class mobility depends upon a fixing of the same markers from which he wants to escape. The home, then, is not a simply a neutral space of comfort and security for Yee's characters. Rather, it is a politicized space that shapes how each character perceives and identifies him/herself within the family and in the larger community. Rosemary George notes that the popular conceptualization of home connotes images of "security, comfort, shelter, and protection" (1), but she asserts that the "home" is inherently political and can operate as a physical and discursive site for replicating predominant societal class relations on a domestic scale and justifying these with "duties, rules, rewards, and punishments" (56). In the context of colonial empires, representations of the home in literature affirm these relations (George 62) by promoting idealized images about the appropriate class relations that people should emulate, regardless of whether these reflect actual societal conditions or whether people can implement these.

Indeed, Yee's characters' uses and signification of that space are influenced by their awareness of what lies beyond its physical boundaries. His representation of the home exemplifies how class ideals manifest themselves in his characters' identities and interpersonal relations within the home. Yee's characters replicate particular class identities in their home space, but the effects of expressing these identities and the meanings to which they refer encourage an interpretation of the home as a space with circulating class expectations that connect to and signify in relation to spaces outside of it. Yee's characters do not simply replicate existing class relations within the home as they act pragmatically in response to their individual economic and spatial limitations. Realizing that few possibilities are available for their physical survival and financial prosperity in the Depression era, Kwok's parents focus on farming for their livelihood. To meet the demands of their livelihood, his parents want each family member to contribute to the home's economic viability and prosperity by helping with the farm work and housework. However, Yee suggests that the enforcement of particular class values within Kwok's home space signifies within that space as well as *in relation to* spaces external to it. This spatial relationship to class significations is important as it draws attention to Kwok's relative position of influence in different spaces, which shapes his class aspirations and the potential for pursuing them. Kwok wants to pursue a higher education so that he can acquire the class capital to escape his family's constricting and humiliating economic circumstances. Ironically, however, his ability to do so depends on the maintenance of a class-oriented familial hierarchy and patriarchal structure of power in his family's household, from which he wishes to escape.

For instance, the reciprocity of significations between Kwok's home and the spaces outside it shows that Kwok's own spatial mobility depends upon the limited mobility of *others* who reside in those spaces. His spatial mobility *out of* the home depends on his sister Ying's restricted mobility within it. His mother's differing expectations for her two children, Kwok and Ying, automatically locate their identities in a gendered hierarchy of class expectations that orient around the domestic space. His mother wants him to pursue a university education so that he can raise his class status (88), but she expects Ying to stay home and marry eventually; since Kwok is not expected to sacrifice his schooling to work on the family farm like his sister, he has the time to pursue his education. Thus, their mother's views of appropriate class identities for male and female children of Chinese descent are spatially as well as culturally informed. She regards the female's "proper" role as a homemaker and the male's as a public role outside of the home. In Ying's case, her identity derives from a negative encoding of gender and her spatially constricted existence, which is reflected in the class identity that she must uphold at home and her limited access to or possession of economic capital. For Kwok, however, gender is positively encoded and spatially liberating with perceived opportunities for class mobility that he can pursue away from home. Kwok's mother expects him to accept her vision of increased prosperity and maintains that it is his filial duty to do so: "'I didn't raise a son to clean pig pens all his life'" (92). In contrast, his mother defines Ying's role in terms of her usefulness for her other family member's needs, which become prioritized over her own desires. Her mother does want Ying to increase her class status as well, but without compromising her son's possibilities of mobility: this means that she expects Ying to achieve this result within a specifically prescribed framework of filial obligations that define how a traditional Chinese woman should act. Kwok's mother wants Ying to marry so that they can maintain their livelihood as farmers and provide the funds for Kwok's university tuition (93). Ying must accept a subordinate role that signifies out of her mother's class and gender ideals within the domestic space. Her mother envisions a marriage between Ying and someone wealthier and says that this is inevitable: "'Sooner or later, daughters have to leave home" (93).

This does not mean that his sister and mother willingly consent to their expected roles at home without complaint, but I suggest that their adoption of these roles should be considered in the context of institutional barriers that restrict their class mobility in mainstream society and their methods of coping with their current situations. Ying works within the limitations of her role in the family household to improve her class standing in the Chinese community. She opts to marry Mr. Dickson because it will maintain her economic usefulness to their family. Marriage will not necessarily improve Ying's or her family's class status in the mainstream society, but it will improve her own material circumstances and enhance her class standing in her family because Dickson is one of the more affluent Chinese in their community. As Ying thinks, "With Dickson, at least I'm still useful to Ba" (99). Kwok thinks that selling the farm will solve their problems and even prevent her marriage to Dickson, but Ying warns him of his shortsightedness because their parents, particularly her mother, will continue to dictate her role at home as she is physically and economically dependent on their parents: "'Even if Ba sells to Drysdale, do you think my life would turn out any differently? Ma would still marry me off'" (99).

Like Ying, Kwok must deal with limitations to his class aspirations. Despite his mother's optimism, he encounters institutional barriers in the education system that obstruct his possibilities for class mobility in mainstream society. Although he is not completely certain, Kwok suspects that his application for a university scholarship was rejected because he is Chinese; as a result, he does not have enough money to pursue a higher education. As Kwok's father asserts, class mobility is difficult, if not impossible, when one of the means for acquiring class capital is racially biased against Chinese people. Even if they have superior educational credentials, their physical appearance will limit their class mobility. These credentials may be valuable in China, but in Canada "'you can have twenty university degrees and still they won't give you a job'" (39). Besides these racial barriers, an event that contributes to Kwok's shifting class identity is when he observes and participates in a soccer match between Chinese players and the more prominent white team sponsored by Bastion Cigarettes. He witnesses the Chinese players' determination and resilience amidst the racist officiating and admires their ability to play hard, even though their soccer skills are technically inferior to the other team's. When he helps Chinatown's players beat the other team, Kwok experiences a collective sense of belonging among the Chinese players and Chinatown community as a whole. As he tells Ying, "Then we won, and for the first time . . . I felt I belonged somewhere. It was a brand new feeling for me. It felt good, to be able to help Chinatown. And farms are part of that community " (140). Previously, he differentiated himself from Chinatown residents because of perceived cultural as well as class differences, but his participation in combating and triumphing over the racist officiating contributes to his racial identification with other Chinese. His involvement helps to alleviate his feelings of difference and shame around his cultural and class heritage and to change his attitudes towards his family's farmland.

Due to the institutionalized racial barriers that prevent him from pursuing a higher education and, more importantly, his collective identification with other Chinese people, Kwok changes his attitudes towards his family's daily life and source of livelihood. His disgust with his family's daily life disappears and he comes to respect it alongside his ancestral predecessors' past struggles. Paradoxically, the very racial and class markers that Kwok wants to escape ignite and foster his identification with his rural roots: specifically, he identifies with his family's farm and realizes the historical significance of preserving their rural livelihood. Kwok reorients his class identity and class aspirations, such that they are no longer predicated on a movement out of the rural and into the urban setting and, instead, centralized around the rural setting in which he, his family, and other farmers reside. It is true that, on a pragmatic level, Kwok is unable to pursue his university ambitions because he could not acquire the funds for doing so; moreover, he suspects that his application was rejected because of the educational institution's racial discrimination. However, Kwok's decision to forego his university aspirations is not simply indicative of his resignation to a marginalized existence. I suggest that we should consider how Kwok uses this marginality to reorient his class ambitions to local spaces such as his family's farm. Rather asking "Why are they marginal?" we should ask, "What do they do with their marginality?" because this offers more productive avenues of inquiry that situate Yee's characters as agents and authorizers of their experiences.

Indeed, Kwok no longer views his family's farm as a place from which to escape but, rather, as a place to inhabit and preserve for future generations. Feeling proud of his family's work and their ability to survive, Kwok affirms an identity that signifies in the context of the farm and the ethnic and class markers that he attaches to this space. Like Kae in Sky Lee's Disappearing Moon Café and Denise Chong in her biography The Concubine's Children, Kwok locates himself as an inheritor of Chinese Canadian history. However, whereas Kae and Chong look back upon the Exclusion Era from a later time, Yee places Kwok in that period. This allows Yee to articulate a more immediate sense of spatial agency for Kwok by dramatizing his appropriation of the spaces that he inhabits. Kwok realizes that if Drysdale acquires his family's farmland, they would not simply lose their immediate means of livelihood, but also the class identities that derive from their land. As Benzi Zhang suggests, to re-claim land is to re-articulate identity in a transnational and transcultural sense because this action produces "negotiational strategies . . . to deal with the tension between the dominant national discourse that is based on a hegemonic culture and various counter-discourses that preserve rather than efface cultural differences" ("Identity in Diaspora" 137). Drysdale's motivations for acquiring their land evoke a class discourse that implicates the erasure of racial difference and narratological multiplicity under a hegemonic, universalizing mode of economic production—capitalist development. Unlike Drysdale, Kwok comes to regard the land for more than its immediate material benefits (like his father): he decides to help his father save the farm and convinces him that they should not sell it to Drysdale. In addition, Kwok positions his personal identity in relation to his family's farmland and affirms a collective narrative of experience and identity for his family and, more broadly, the Chinese community, that Drysdale's capitalist imperatives threaten to erase (62-63; 37-38). Drysdale privileges urbanites' over rural residents' needs and conceptualizes rural space as something to develop for the economic profit and consumption of the wealthy: "I will build a grand clubhouse here, with swimming pool, tennis courts, even riding stables. It will be more spectacular than any site in the world" (62). Although the economic system that Drysdale represents still exists at the end of Yee's novel, their retention of the farmland should not be seen in static, passive terms. These characters cope with what they have; they retain control over a local space—physically and narratologically—despite financial and social pressures to give it up. His family's use of the space privileges an ethic of subsistence, which differs significantly from Drysdale's visions of improving the land for economic progress and profit.

Kwok's father's critical views are not confined to the white population as he also criticizes Chinatown businessmen who promote these capitalist imperatives of profit at the expense of individuals' welfare: "'Chinatown thinks nothing of farmers. The big-shot businessmen make big profits buying buildings, make bigger profits trading goods. They call you stupid for working on a farm. . . . But I don't pay them any attention. I work hard.. I have land I call my own, I sleep well at night'" (89). Thus, their farmland represents a physical and discursive inheritance between three generations of Kwok's family that affirms his grandfather's existence—as a farmer who subsisted on the same piece of land—and, more importantly, locates Kwok's identity as a continuation of that genealogical history which his father had already inherited from his grandfather. Yee's narrative focus on Kwok also works on another related level: Kwok is a representative of a new generation whose heritage symbolically encompasses cultural discourses from China and Canada, yet he also signifies the possibility for redefining and transgressing these limits on appropriate behaviours and attitudes. For instance, it seems that Kwok also forfeits his university ambitions for his sister's sake because he feels that it is unfair for her to marry someone she does not love, even if this would help them to survive economically. Kwok's mother asserts that this cultural practice is not uncommon in China and that it is necessary because of their current circumstances. However, Kwok challenges his mother's ideas and asserts that things are different in Canada (93). By staying on the farm and helping his father to make ends meet, he indirectly helps his sister to resist the role that she is expected to fulfill. Kwok's action challenges the limits of the cultural discourse that his family has inherited from China and reconstitutes it in the Canadian context.

Kwok's desires also go beyond his father's views because he does not simply want to resist and preserve the inscriptions of their identities upon this land. He also wants to reconfigure the epistemological limits of Canadian national discourse as it fails to recognize Chinese farmers as legitimate subjects. As he asserts, "Soon no one will know there were ever Chinese farmers" (140) and, later, adds, "Fifty, sixty years of history. It will be as if we never existed. As if Chinese don't do anything but wash laundry and open restaurants" (143). Recalling Lisa Lowe's comments about the inherent contradictions that occur in the nation's suppression of the immigrant Other, I would argue that containment of the Chinese immigrants in particular spaces and their exclusion from others provides the conditions for interrogating those very limits. In this case, despite the marginality of his family's land in relation to the larger society, Kwok's retention of that land and its *local* inscriptions creates the conditions for pressuring and reconfiguring the limits of Canada's historical narratives and their *national* inscriptions. His comments evoke both class and race concerns: they affirm the racial difference of Chinese immigrants within Canada's historical narratives, but they also resist inscribing a homogenizing class discourse that groups Chinese immigrants as a people who only work in certain occupations. His attitudes, then, exemplify an orientation towards his own identity and the collective identity of Chinese immigrants and their descendents that acknowledges their differences from non-Chinese and the spatial impact of these differences upon their ability to survive and increase their class statuses. Affirming the Chinese population's internal heterogeneity, Kwok also sees the retention of his family's land as a means by which he can foreground the spatialized class distinctions that demarcate rural Chinese from urban Chinese and, in turn, change reductive public perceptions of the Chinese population.

Representing Chinatown as a Communal and Contested Space: Static and Shifting Class Identities in Wayson Choy's The Jade Peony

In their analyses of Wayson Choy's The Jade Peony, Christopher Lee and Rocio G. Davis focus on Choy's complex manifestations of "Chinese" and "Chinese Canadian" identities and how they signify temporally and subjectively. As Christopher Lee affirms, Choy's novel suggests that to be Chinese in Canada is not a "traditional, essentialized construction" (24) identifiable by one's adherence to a static set of cultural traditions or one's genealogical identification with China as a place of ethnic origin. Rather, Chineseness signifies in connection with what "Canadian-ness" means in complex ways: "the Chinese Canadian subject must always negotiate these contradictory positions and racialized identity emerges as a site of hybridity and contamination . . . [it] is about negotiating cultures in ways that may privilege one over the other at any given point. At the same time, such an identity continues to contest the boundaries of Canadian culture and Chineseness itself" (25). Rocio G. Davis also considers the construction of ethnic identity but does so in terms of how it relates to place. As Davis suggests, Choy's novel engages in a "creative (re)possession of place" (141) that conceptualizes Chinatown as both a physical place and a discursive construction that signifies meaningfully for his characters' identities. Davis asserts that Choy represents Chinatown, not simply as a geographical space in which people preserve fixed and enduring notions of ethnic identity, but rather as a space that is temporally and ontologically in flux and is a physical site for the interrogation, negotiation, and reconfiguration of characters' identities. Thus, Choy represents Chinatown "as a liminal discursive space" in which he "interrogates both Chinese and Canadian identities" (R. Davis 210).

These two authors' analyses are useful but they tend to focus more on how ethnicity signifies. My focus on class in Choy's portrayal of Chinatown will contribute to their insights because class informs his characters' identities as Chinese Canadians. Christopher Lee refers to class implicitly when he asserts that the "power relationships" between Choy's characters are closely tied to "ethnicity [as] a social construction" (21). He then states that the "social context of hierarchies . . . serve to reinforce ethnicity" in a very particular way in wartime Chinatown, "where loyalty and submission are demanded and displayed physically through badges which proclaim one's Chinese ancestry" (29). However, Lee stops short of examining how class specifically manifests itself through particular signifiers and his characters' daily interactions. Choy problematizes how class signifies in the Chinatown context and illustrates how class intersects with ideas about Chineseness as well as Canadianness.

Since Choy's text engages with pre-existing discourses of Chinatown that have discriminated against and silenced Chinese Canadians historically, it is important to consider the racial and economic assumptions and intentions that underpin the Canadian government's and media's significations of actual Chinatowns. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, the *physical* construction of Chinatown reflects a systematic process of exclusion whereby people of Chinese descent are identified with these places and, subsequently, are excluded from full participation and citizenship in mainstream Canadian society. However, it is not simply Chinatowns' physical boundaries that separate the Chinese immigrants spatially from the rest of society, but also, as Kay J. Anderson affirms, the racial and class significations attached to these places that reinforce and justify their separation. Anglo-Canadian representations of Chinatown help to justify these practices because they suggest the white population's economic, social, and cultural dominance over the Chinese. These representations were not simply fictional or imaginary as they incorporated observable behaviours and conditions from Chinatowns in actuality. However, what is significant is that these representations of Chinatowns and their residents' lives present homogenizing and skewed images that suppress their heterogeneity and individuality. By grouping them according to cultural and behavioural traits that supposedly typify all people of Chinese descent, these representations enhanced European perceptions of "Chinatown" as an alien and immoral space (Anderson, "Idea of Chinatown" 241) *and* justified the continual spatial separation and institutional marginalization of the Chinese population from mainstream society. Thus, these images reinforced public perceptions that *all* Chinese immigrants, not just those residing in Chinatown, cannot assimilate into Canadian society because of their foreign culture and undesirable disposition, which both appear to stem from inherent racial differences and threaten Canada's social fabric: "From the vantage point of the European, Chinatown signified all those features that seemed to set the Chinese irrevocably apart—their appearance, lack of Christian faith, opium and gambling addiction, their strange eating habits, and odd graveyard practices" (Anderson, "Idea of Chinatown" 241).

In this context, Chinatown is a significant aspect of Chinese Canadian history that writers represent through literature. Through their own interpretations of Chinatown, they can subvert homogeneous and reductive significations of Chinatowns that gloss over its demographic and cultural complexity.[1] Wayson Choy's The Jade Peony capitalizes on the public's knowledge of Chinatown and its historical association with Chinese Canadians. His novel reflects what Sau-ling Wong affirms for Chinese American literary representations of Chinatown because he focuses his narrative and narration on characters of Chinese descent: these texts "decidedly [do] *not* revolve around the white man's actual or anticipated reactions . . . [do] not dominate their energies or define their sense of self" (Wong, "Ethnic Subject" 261). In doing so, Choy's novel challenges homogeneous and reductive representations of Chinatown and its residents, which disconnect them from the specific conditions of their emergence and persistence. Questioning representations of Chinatown as a culturally static and economically marginal entity, Choy emphasizes its physical and discursive porosity against the backdrop of the 1930s and 1940s. In his novel, Chinatown is not a physical space that is cut off from mainstream society or a secluded repository in which timeless Chinese cultural traditions prevail. He depicts Chinatown as a resilient space of mutual cooperation and amiable social relations where its inhabitants can affirm a collective identity, but also as a heterogeneous and contested space where they struggle with different class identities and the expectations associated with these identities. These conflicts arose from class ideals, derived from Chinese cultural traditions, that some of the adult characters attempt to enforce, and the class ideals of Western consumer culture to which the child characters are attracted. These conflicting class ideals coexist with the characters' conflicting ideas about their racial and cultural differences (in relation to the non-Chinese community). However, his Chinatown characters do not simply accept and perpetuate the class ideals that they inherit. For instance, Choy's child narrators inherit, translate, and combine old and new views of class; in doing so, they construct individual class identities that cannot be easily categorized as Chinese or Western in origin. This is not to suggest that Choy's adult characters simply reinforce unyielding class identities or that Choy equates agency with the characters' ability to escape static class identities. Choy's novel also offers ways of thinking about agency that do not necessarily depend upon actual changes in characters' circumstances for their salience.

Avoiding an idealistic interpretation of Chinatown as a harmonious refuge for Chinese immigrants, Choy includes stories of suffering and despair, some of which remain untold, antagonistic characters, and others with tragic and irredeemable lives. These include bachelor-men who behaved disruptively and "roamed the streets looking for trouble" (96), other bachelor-men who "killed themselves" to escape the hopelessness of their situation (17), and labourers like Old Yuen whose addiction to drinking and gambling damaged his own and his family's livelihood permanently (104-106). In isolation, these images convey Chinatown as an immoral and destitute place, but Choy complicates these images by depicting how his characters cope with economic and physical hardships in the 1930s and 1940s. By drawing attention to the pervasive and debilitating effects of institutional economic and racial barriers upon their lives, Choy discourages interpretations of his characters' circumstances that simply evaluate them on their individual strengths and deficiencies. In place of this, he advocates an approach to representing and interpreting their past that maintains their experiences' historical specificity and affirms that their circumstances and actions should be interpreted in terms of discriminatory societal constraints and the pragmatic choices that these may necessitate. It is true that his characters' actions do not fundamentally alter the prevailing power structures that regulate people's behaviors along class lines in the spaces that they occupy, nor the structures that maintain Chinatown's spatial marginality vis-à-vis mainstream Canadian society. Nevertheless, his characters derive strength from their common hardships and construct a positive communal identity out of their limited agency and material resources that, ironically, provide the conditions for that identity to develop.

For instance, Wong Bak represents the numerous bachelor men whose dreams of class mobility have been shattered by hard, manual labour with few monetary rewards in return. Choy draws attention to this institutionally entrenched context of racialized class oppression and exposes the physical and psychological effects of spatial discrimination and segregation upon these men. They cannot find employment easily and are barred from more prestigious occupations. Unable to get jobs as professionals because of their alien status (136, 139), they can only acquire jobs in the service and manual labour sectors. They are "lucky to be hired on, worked for weeks or months in the hellhole kitchens of the steamship lines, touring the B.C. coast from Seattle and Vancouver to Alaska" (71). Cast aside into dirty and crowded areas of the city such as Chinatown, these men can only make do with what is available to them: "In the city dump of False Creek Flats, living in makeshift huts, thirty-two Old China bachelor-men tried to shelter themselves; dozens more were dying of neglect in the overcrowded rooms of Pender Street" (16). These men "were shoved aside, threatened, forgotten" (18) and slept "[i]n the crowded rooming houses of Chinatown . . . in cots and on floors beside dead men" (18). With nowhere to turn, Chinatown is a spatial refuge for bachelor men such as Wong Bak and others who struggle to survive financially and physically.

Thus, Choy's characters live in Chinatown, not so much by choice as out of necessity, because mainstream society has excluded them. Their daily experiences of impoverishment, resulting from institutionalized racial and class discrimination, foster a sense of mutual identification on the basis of their similar circumstances. However, this communal identity also arises out of the relationships that develop between the wealthier and more impoverished segments of Chinatown. As such, it is not just their circumstantial similarities but also their differences that contribute to it. For instance, Jook-Liang's father asserts in "one of the news sheets of those Depression years how much the Chinese in Vancouver must help the Chinese. Because, he wrote, 'No one else will'" (16). This statement affirms a positive communal identity for Chinatown that signifies through a genealogically based sense of Chineseness and a reciprocal, cooperative spirit towards the less fortunate: "Could we help out with Wong Bak? Perhaps a meal now and then, a few visits with the family . . . ? asked the officer from the Tong Association" (18).

Similarly, the historical context to which Choy's novel refers informs his representations of Chinatown activities and its participants. For instance, I suggest that his depiction of gambling challenges a historically prominent and reductive representation of Chinatown as a place of immoral behaviour because he complicates the moral assumptions on which this interpretation depends. He dissociates gambling from the monetary incentives and potential addiction associated with it and frames it in terms of the social benefits that it can provide for his Chinatown residents. This does not mean that money is not an incentive or that some of his characters are not addicted. Choy does recognize this, but he focuses on depicting how gambling is important for his characters instead of expressing moralistic judgements about why they gamble. Gambling provides an atmosphere of camaraderie for his characters to escape temporarily from their daily suffering and isolation. Bachelor men such as Dai-Kew "would rush off to go gambling in a smoky Chinatown bachelor-club, with its all-night kitchen and fast night company" (71). Female characters would also gamble when their husbands are away on seasonal work; however, in contrast to the men, it seems that gambling also provides them with a physical space within which they can express themselves independently of the men who would otherwise expect them to conform to their subordinate roles as Chinese wives. Their gambling tables "were a cozy haven, like a club gathering, a sorority" (59) where they can "swear as hard as any man" (59) and share gossip and advice.

Recuperating the image of impoverished Chinese immigrants, Choy dignifies their lives by representing Chinatown as a resilient communal space, despite the economic difficulties that many of its inhabitants face daily. He constructs a set of class ethics that derive from the context of manual labour, which contributes to his positive depiction of Chinatown characters and the class values that they promote. Choy valourizes characters with lower class identities that signify out of their connection to their community rather than out of their personal achievements, material acquisitions, and individual class mobility. In his portrayal of Gee Sok's Chinatown laundry, Choy dignifies Gee Sok's job and depicts him as an exemplary character whose altruistic business practices contribute to the Chinatown community's vitality and survival. Prioritizing his customers' well being over individual profit, Sok sacrifices higher economic returns for himself and keeps his services affordable for Chinatown residents. He "gave generously of his cleaning and tailoring services, and at the lowest fees, to those poorer families like ours who were always making over old clothes" (95). These values are the desirable ones to emulate, much like the other families, who offer to assist the bachelor men in their daily survival or Nellie Yip, who provides her trusted services as a midwife among Chinatown residents (96). Communally rather than individually motivated, these characters all recognize the hardships of Chinatown residents and aim to help each other.

Choy's depictions of his child narrators' experiences and perceptions contribute further to his representation of Chinatown. Dividing his novel into three sections and narrating each one through a child's viewpoint, Choy uses a multi-vocal approach to expose the dangers of univocal or authoritative interpretations around these characters' lives. In doing so, he conveys the heterogeneity of Chinatown life and illustrates the situated nature of any interpretation, which depends on each narrator's unique background, family position, gender, and the historical context in which they reside. As such, his choices of narration highlight the mutability of what class means and how class is relevant to his characters' Chinatown experiences and identities. I will focus my analysis on two of Choy's child narrators: the eldest child Jook-Liang and the youngest child Sek-Lung. Referring to Sek-Lung, Christopher Lee notes that "resistance is still possible" (23) because he is a child who has not fully adopted the adults' values. I suggest that Jook-Liang's own resistance to her family's values can be interpreted in the same way. Choy illustrates how personal and societal circumstances limit their agency, but also how they operate successfully within these and construct their own class identities. He positions these children as inheritors of the adult characters' Chinese cultural traditions and as translators who reconfigure and hybridize these traditions with Western influences. In the process, they articulate class identities that signify out of a combination of these cultural influences.

Jook-Liang recognizes that her gender determines her subordinate class status in the traditional Chinese family because she cannot acquire particular monetary rewards or garner the same social recognition that comes with a male's birth. Her brother Sek-Lung is showered with attention and elaborate gifts after his birth—"twice the number of jade and gold bracelets"—that testify to his value in the family. In contrast, people pay little attention to Jook-Liang's birth: "only the women noticed me in my new dress, and then only for a few minutes to compare Poh-Poh's and Stepmother's embroidery" (31). Her grandmother reinforces Jook-Liang's awareness of her subordinate status by reminding her that "[a] girl-child is *mo-yung*—useless" (32) and asserting that she needs to help with the household's domestic chores (31). In addition, she exposes Jook-Liang to Chinese notions of feminine beauty that restrict women's possibilities of class mobility in China and subordinate them to men. For instance, the Chinese tradition of footbinding promotes physical ideals of feminine beauty that help to secure the daughter's marriage into a wealthy household. Jook-Liang learns that they were married off to strengthen their households' patriarchal lines of genealogical descent, inheritance, and male members' class statuses: "A beautiful girl-child from a poor family is even more useless than an ugly one from a rich family, unless you can sell either one for a jade bracelet or hard foreign currency. Then you can feed your worthy sons, give them educations, arrange marriages, make them proud men" (43).

While she is subject to her grandmother's class-inflected views of Chinese femininity, Jook-Liang does challenge the authority of her grandmother's gendered class significations by exposing their spatial limits of replication. Jook-Liang thinks defiantly, "'This is Canada . . . not old China'" (29). Michelle Hartley suggests that "Poh-Poh preserves the boundaries of Chinese culture even though Chinatown has proven permeable to Western consumer culture" (69), but her interpretation overemphasizes the ability of Jook-Liang's grandmother to preserve Chinese culture in an uncontaminated form. I suggest that Jook-Liang exemplifies a new generation of Chinese who successfully draws upon past traditions for her present circumstances, but discards the oppressive aspects of those traditions. She achieves this by imagining an identity for herself that translates the oppressive aspects of Chinese cultural traditions into markers of her own individuality.

For instance, her grandmother learnt to tie ribbons into "flat 'eternal love' patterns" when she was a "house-daughter" (34) to a Shanghai family back in China. With the

First Concubine threatening to break her fingers, Jook-Liang's grandmother perfected this skill (34). Jook-Liang translates her grandmother's skill, a cultural practice that beautifies wealthy and socially elevated women and their surroundings back in China, into a physical marker of aesthetic beauty and individuality that is separate from its original class significations. She uses her grandmother's ribbons to decorate her shoes and imagines herself as someone who is beautiful, but in ways that are separate from her grandmother's Chinese cultural traditions: "I also play-acted for myself, imagining a world where I belonged, dressed perfectly, behaved beyond reproach, and was loved, always loved, and was not . . . *mo yung*" (40). Her grandmother reminds her that, in China, parents bound their daughters' feet to increase their desirability for marriage (40). During the time that her grandmother grew up in China, the usefulness of a Chinese woman derived from her perceived ability to secure a marriage that would maintain or enhance her family's class status. The possibility of a favourable marriage depended on the woman's beauty, so binding her feet was regarded as a necessary step to enhance her desirability because people considered small feet to be beautiful. Those who are considered to be poor marriage prospects are regarded as useless people, or "mo yung" (41): for instance, a midwife considered her grandmother to be "'too ugly'" (40) to have her feet bound and called her "*mo yung*" (41). Jook-Liang's dancing further undermines these cultural traditions and the class and gender assumptions that underpin them because her actions challenge her grandmother's ideas about how a Chinese woman should behave and expose these ideas' spatial limits. Her grandmother considers Jook-Liang to be a "spoiled granddaughter" and asserts, "'In China, they tie your feet like this . . . No can dan-see!'" (40). By dancing, Jook-Liang resists her grandmother's ideas and affirms her individuality.

Her construction of an alternative class identity also signifies out of Western influences that have entered Chinatown, such as the white bourgeois identity that Hollywood icon Shirley Temple personifies.[2] Michelle Hartley contends that Jook-Liang's agency can only manifest itself in her imagination and not in her actual circumstances (73). It is true that the white bourgeois ideals to which Jook-Liang aspires constrain her within another equally restrictive set of class values in place of the ones that she rejects from her grandmother; in addition, the class values upon which she constructs her identity continue to reinforce feminine ideals of class-coded behaviour and the racial assumptions these promote, which she cannot fully live up to either. I suggest that Jook-Liang's limitations can be interpreted differently from what Hartley proposes. The bond that Wong Suk and Jook-Liang form through their "imaginative play" of empowering identities (Hartley 72) has concrete effects as well because it elides their generational and gender differences and the class expectations of behaviour that these would normally demand. For instance, before Wong Suk's first visit to their home, her father reminds her to act respectably towards Wong Suk and acknowledge him formally as "*Sinsaag*, Venerable Sir" (19) because her grandmother "must not lose face" (18). However, through their imagination as well as the dancing she performs for Wong Suk's delight, they form an unconventional familial bond that operates outside of these class expectations and benefits them mutually. Jook-Liang "becomes the daughter [Wong Suk] never had" (R. Davis 203) and their relationship provides them with a sense of self-worth and mutual respect that they have been unable to receive in their respective circumstances: "Wong Suk would otherwise have been only one of the many discarded bachelor men in Chinatown—and I, barely tolerated by Poh-Poh, would merely be a useless girl-child" (39). Wong Suk does leave Canada eventually to return to his home village in China, but Choy also affirms that their relationship will persist in each others' memories. As Jook-Liang affirms, "*Dear Wong Suk, I never to forget you*" (68).

Like Jook-Liang, Sek-Lung translates class-coded behaviours into positive identity markers within the limits of his personal circumstances in 1940s Chinatown, where differing class ideals clash and signify out of assumptions around Chineseness and Canadianness. This conflict constitutes a struggle between Sek-Lung's family members' desire to modernize and his grandmother's desire to preserve Chinese cultural traditions. This conflict must be understood in the context of the Second World War because Choy locates Sek-Lung's situation within a time of military conflict, the intense feelings of patriotic nationalism that these evoke, and the momentous post-war changes to the Chinese population's legal status. As Peter Li notes, the Chinese immigrants and their descendants were excluded from full participation in all aspects of mainstream societal life during the Exclusion Era. Despite the public's anti-Chinese sentiment, the federal government tolerated the Chinese because their cheap labour contributed to the nation's economy, but they also curtailed their legal and civil rights (P. Li 24). Against this backdrop of exclusion was a national narrative of assimilation, circulated both by the government and media, that privileged an Anglo-European identity and pressured immigrants to assimilate to it. However, with the arrival of World War II, the Chinese population saw the war as an opportunity to demonstrate their patriotism to Canada by, for instance, enlisting, raising funds, and buying war bonds. As a result, white Canadians developed a new respect and amity towards them, which helped the Chinese population to acquire voting, citizenship, employment, and other legal rights after the war (Con et al. 201). Several Chinese then moved out of Chinatowns and into middle-class neighbourhoods because they wanted "living standards comparable to those of white Canadians" (Con et al. 201).

This context is important for interpreting Sek-Lung's father's and his brother Kiam's desires to modernize and their reactions to Sek-Lung's and his grandmother's behavior. Aware of the Chinese community's racial and class marginalization during the Exclusion Era, they want to modernize because they believe that this will allow them to construct empowering class identities that will help them to move on from their community's past suffering. Containing class significations that derive from particular spaces and cultural traditions associated with these, they equate the act of becoming modern with becoming higher class and Canadian: and to become Canadian, I suggest, signifies their desire to assimilate into mainstream society. They want to reject their Chinese cultural traditions and rural origins, both of which carry lower class connotations for them and also differentiate them from white Canadians, and construct new class identities that incorporate the ideals associated with urban life and Western culture. Sek-Lung's father conceptualizes the era of the Second World War as a time of inevitable and irreversible change that they must accept and adapt to by becoming Canadians: "'After all these dirty wars are finished . . . those who understand the new ways will survive" (162). These "new ways" (162) carry class connotations that the adult characters associate with urban and rural spaces, much like the class significations that Kwok attaches to urban and rural spaces in Yee's Breakaway. They privilege urban significations and ascribe them with a higher-class value; in contrast, anything associated with the rural evokes negative lower-class connotations that the family must avoid. Along with the rural, Chinese cultural traditions also carry negative class significations because his father and Kiam do not associate these as closely with capitalist development, scientific and technological advancement, or progress in general. The lack of development that they associate with the rural and Chineseness connote their backwardness. In contrast, Kiam valourizes English and other Western languages as well as scientific developments because he associates them with societal progress: "those languages are *scientific* . . . We are now in a scientific, logical world'" (147). His comment evokes notions of Canadianness and Chineseness simultaneously as it locates Chineseness as an unprogressive and backward culture in contrast to the progressiveness and prestige of Western culture.

These class tensions manifest themselves through Sek-Lung's experiences with his grandmother. For example, the adults are troubled when he helps his grandmother to pick things out of the garbage for her trinkets. Sek-Lung's father thinks, "How could he dare tell the Old One, his ageing mother, that what was appropriate in a poor village in China was shameful here?" (145). His feelings of shame illustrate how perceptions of the same behaviours and their class connotations shift depending on where they are expressed and who perceives them in those spaces. In China, his grandmother and other villagers live in difficult economic circumstances, so picking things out of the garbage is unobjectionable and necessary for their survival. However, now that they are living in one of Canada's Chinatowns, Sek-Lung's father and his siblings feel pressured to adhere to standards of class-coded behaviour that emulate the wealthier and powerful class segments in Chinatown. In this case, their perceived class identities are more significant than their actual ones. They want to avoid behaviours that suggest a downtrodden lifestyle or an impoverished background and emulate ones that suggest affluence and material comfort. As First Brother Kiam expresses, "'We are not poor . . . yet she and Sek-Lung poke through garbage as if . . . they were beggars!'" (145). Second Brother Jung adds, "All our friends are laughing at us!" (145). They want to avoid the public humiliation that they will incur if others discover Sek-Lung's and his grandmother's deviant behaviour, so they pressure his grandmother to keep her garbage trips more discreet in the future.

In contrast to the adults in his family, Sek-Lung is able to look past the negative class connotations that the other adults ascribe to his grandmother's behaviour and to appreciate the beauty of the trinkets that she creates from retrieved garbage. Ironically, this is partly due to his ignorance of the larger context of the war and the equally destructive effects of Chinese patriotism upon individual members of the Chinatown community. Much like Jook-Liang, he can continue to live within his imagination. Sek-Lung's appreciation for his grandmother's skill parallels his expressed attitudes towards Chinese cultural traditions after she passes away. Like Yee's protagonist Kwok in Breakaway, Sek-Lung inherits Chinese cultural traditions and realizes the limits of his agency when he states, "I would *always* be Chinese." But whereas Kwok sacrifices his desires of class mobility to uphold the virtues of his family's rural class roots, Sek-Lung does not fully reject individualistic narratives of class mobility and the Westernized ideals of modernity and progress that these encompass. For instance, he does dream of living in a grand house like his white friend Freddy Bartholomew, where he would not have to understand a word of Chinese (140): thus, he sees the acquisition of class identity markers such as material possessions as a means to escape the constraints of Chinese cultural traditions. These include the necessity of acknowledging his subordinate role in the household like Jook-Liang and addressing each of his elders with the proper title of respect (132). His adult family members pressure him to know these well, but he finds the Chinese rankings to be "overwhelming" (132).

Despite his ambivalence towards these Chinese cultural traditions, Sek-Lung does reconcile his desires for class mobility with the Chinese traditions that his grandmother wants to preserve. Sek-Lung disagrees with his father's and Kiam's views that "we must all change, be modern, move forward, throw away the old" (162) and remembers his grandmother's words: "*Old way, best way*" (162). Like their grandmother, the adults in Sek-Lung's family want to impose their own vision of class identity within the space of Chinatown. But whereas their grandmother wants to preserve a "pure" form of Chinese culture untainted by Western influences and remember their rural origins, the adults want to eradicate the past and embrace Western culture. Yet, Choy affirms that either extreme is impossible as well as undesirable. After his grandmother dies, Sek-Lung believes that she still exists in a ghostly form. His belief in ghosts exemplifies the ongoing presence of the past in the present, aligns him with the Chinese cultural traditions that he wants to uphold, and challenges the other adults' desires to modernize and discard their cultural heritage. His views counter Kiam's scientific and logical explanations about her death: "Kiam quickly reiterated the facts: *she's dead. Buried. Gone.* She was, he explained, disintegrating into basic atoms and molecules" (161). Due to his persistent assertions about his deceased grandmother, his father and stepmother "plead[ed] with my Chinatown uncles to intervene, to join forces against my madness" (162). However, with Third Uncle Dai Kew's help, the other adults in Sek-Lung's family agree to respect their Chinese cultural traditions: "'What harm could it do? . . . You can respect your mother and still be modern'" (166). His uncle convinces Sek-Lung's father that they can still retain their Christian beliefs and "run electric motors" (166). Thus, Sek-Lung and Dai Kew affirm a new orientation towards personal identity that does not necessarily depend on or require the construction and reinforcement of strict cultural and class boundaries. They accept the co-existence and confluence of different class discourses and the cultural discourses of Chineseness and Canadianness that they embody.

However, Choy suggests that the possibilities for expressing this new orientation towards personal identity in practice are limited. He illustrates how the powerful and influential in Chinatown expect its inhabitants to conform to the particular identities that they promote and how the context of the Second World War also demands conformity to these identities. As Christopher Lee asserts, Choy portrays wartime Chinatown as a "place where loyalty and submission are demanded and displayed physically through badges which proclaim one's Chinese ancestry . . . [and] serve to reinforce ethnicity" (29). Thus, I suggest that Choy's criticism of restrictive class identities parallels and extends to a more general criticism of equally static identities that subscribe to racialized, ethnic nationalisms. For example, Sek-Lung's neighbour Mei-Ying falls in love with a Japanese man, but her Chinatown community refuses to recognize their relationship because the Japanese are enemies of China during the war. This attitude towards the Japanese is enforced by the significations attributed to the spatial boundary between Chinatown and Japtown: to enter Japtown is to enter "enemy territory" (209). With no avenues left to pursue her relationship, she commits suicide (236-237). This tragic ending to Choy's novel dispels any illusions that his characters can acquire full agency and illustrates how their lives are inevitably constrained and affected by a larger context of uncontrollable events and the communally promoted identities that arise in response to these.

In summary, Jook-Liang and Sek-Lung construct empowering class identities, despite their economically and socially difficult circumstances. At the same time, their class identities signify in relation to racial, ethnic, and gender attitudes that circulate within as well as outside of the Chinatown community. These connections between class and other identity markers contribute to Choy's representation of Chinatown as a space that is simultaneously insulated from and influenced by the non-Chinese community outside it. Within the Chinatown that he depicts, ideas about Chineseness and "Canadian-ness" converge and inform his characters' class assumptions, their desires for class mobility, and their identities' meanings.

My analysis of the relationship between class and space in Paul Yee's Breakaway and Wayson Choy's The Jade Peony shows how spaces contribute to the meaning and significance of their characters' identities. Yee and Choy represent contextually specific images of space that Chinese Canadian characters use to negotiate and transform class significations associated with those spaces. In doing so, their texts' characters construct individual class identities that signify in relation to and within these spaces. While their personal and societal circumstances limit their possibilities for expressing empowering class identities, their characters work within and appropriate the spatial conditions available to them. Both novels' narratives centre on specific spaces that have been historically important to Chinese Canadian experiences, but Yee and Choy problematize the processes by which such spaces become signified through their strategies of narration, characterization, and narrative development. Keeping Yee's representation of urban and rural spaces and Choy's representation of Chinatown in mind, I suggest that both authors address the politics and ethics of signifying these spaces in relation to their characters' class identities. Their novels suggest that the process of signifying spaces, class, and identities needs to account for the individual characters who signify these, the larger historical backdrops in which they do so, the interrelationship between spaces, and their mutual influences upon the agency of particular characters who inhabit and use those spaces: all of these factors influence what class identities characters accept, how they define those identities, and what identities they aspire to and pursue.

Both novels acknowledge the realities of living in Canada for Chinese Canadians: as a racial and ethnic minority, Yee's and Choy's Chinese Canadian characters must contend with the pervasiveness of Western capitalist and consumer culture in Canadian society and its inevitable effects upon their daily lives and self-perceptions. Their exposure to Western culture and its class-based meanings create conflicts with other characters within and outside of their Chinese community because they clash with their Chinese cultural traditions. Some characters, such as Kwok's grandmother in Choy's novel, feel that these Western cultural influences threaten their cultural survival. At the same time, other characters realize that it is unrealistic for them to preserve a "pure" Chinese cultural heritage as the basis for defining their identities as Chinese and Chinese Canadians. Indeed, neither the countryside nor Chinatown in their novels is impermeable to Western cultural influences. However, these authors do not suggest that assimilation into Western culture and its class ideals is inevitable or necessary for their characters to express empowering identities: each author recognizes that assimilation is only one of several strategies for acquiring agency. Indeed, Kwok's eventual opposition to dominant class ideals in Yee's Breakaway is a form of agency that is just as effective as the more integrative approach that Jook-Liang and Sek-Lung adopt in Choy's The Jade Peony. These different responses suggest how particular historical conditions may favour certain forms of agency over others. Furthermore, the intersection of different identity markers defines the nature of their characters' spatial marginalization and the extent of their success in overcoming that marginalization. Thus, examinations of class and space in Chinese Canadian fiction need to account for the ways in which meanings of the same identity markers can differ from one space to another and the ways in which meanings of particular spaces can differ from one character to another.

Notes

1 Sau-ling Wong cautions, however, that inherent difficulties exist in the production of these representations for public consumption: the representation of Chinatown for literary publication is "an inherently 'spectacular' act" ("Ethnic Subject" 254) that "tends naturally to reinforce the 'spectacular' facet of Chinatown life" ("Ethnic Subject" 254). The English word "Chinatown" already presupposes an awareness of difference" and "impl[ies] a certain complicity in an oppressive history" because it singles out a particular neighbourhood as a worthy place to represent for a curious public (Wong, "Ethnic Subject" 253). Chinese Canadian writers must, therefore, contend with representations of Chinatown that already circulate in the public sphere and influence the potential reception for their work. Ironically, however, these writers have an audience for these representations because of the "white reader's appetite for exoticism" (Wong, "Chinatown Tour" 39): this is the same exoticism historically promoted by governmental and media representations of Chinatown that some Chinese Canadian writers wish to resist. To attract a readership, some writers decide to capitalize "on white curiosity" about Chinese culture, select aspects of that culture that are acceptable to "white tastes" and "fascinating to whites" (Wong, "Chinatown Tour" 42), and conduct a "guided Chinatown tour by providing explanations of the manners and mores of the Chinese-American community from the vantage point of a 'native'" (Wong, "Chinatown Tour" 40). While such representational strategies can potentially reinscribe a reductive view of Chinese Canadians as exotic Others, I suggest that these strategies also exemplify a way for writers to represent Chinese Canadians' elided experiences for public consumption and to augment the public's understanding of those experiences within representational modes with which people are familiar.

2 In her article "Does Shirley Temple Eat Chicken Feet? Consuming Ambivalence in Wayson Choy's The Jade Peony," Michelle Hartley suggests that Jook-Liang wants to emulate Shirley Temple's social graces and acquire the material comforts associated with her bourgeois lifestyle. Temple embodies "the ideal American middle-class existence . . . praised and valued by adults for her dancing talent, her 'dimpled smile and perfect white-

skin features,' as Liang describes them (43) and her role as the perpetual child" (Hartley 69). However, Liang comes to realize that her racial difference will prevent her becoming like Temple completely (Hartley 69-70). Her desired class identity can only materialize in her imagination, where she can play out her dreams of fame, belonging, and opportunity (Hartley 72).

Chapter Seven

Conclusion: The Significance of Class Analyses for Chinese Canadian Literature

In his influential work entitled Orientalism, Edward Said defines "Orientalism" as "the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, and ruling over it" (3). Said stresses that its representations of the Orient are not natural depictions; rather, they construct certain ways of thinking about the Orient vis-à-vis the West that derive out of ethnocentric and racial assumptions, which define the Orient in terms of its differences from the West. These understandings of the Orient have historically excluded and marginalized the Orient within Western discourses of history: "the Orient and everything in it was, if not patently inferior to, then in need of corrective study by the West" (Said 41). While Said's ideas refer to a larger context that is beyond the scope of this study, they provide a way to think about the significance of Chinese Canadian literature and the critical study of that literature. Echoing Said's observations about the ways in which Orientalist representations skew people's understandings of the Orient and the people who inhabit it, essentialist and reductive assumptions have historically underpinned the Canadian federal government's and Canadian public's discriminatory attitudes towards people of Chinese descent, but the purposes to which these attitudes have been deployed have varied from one era to another. While such attitudes have helped to justify the federal government's discriminatory legislation against Chinese Canadians as a group, similar assumptions have also underpinned the federal government's and public's *positive* attitudes towards them. Promoting static impressions of Chinese Canadians as a people whose irreducible difference prevents them from integrating fully into Canadian life, exclusionary and Orientalist discourses have guided public impressions of Chinese Canadians. These discourses informed the government's depictions of Chinese Canadians as inscrutable and threatening subjects, as exotic people with a distinct and separate culture from all others, and as model minority subjects. Against this legacy of representations, the emergence of Chinese Canadian literature is politically significant because it exemplifies a means by which Chinese Canadian writers have challenged these representations and defined what it means to be

"Chinese Canadian" from the viewpoints of Chinese Canadians. As Lisa Lowe suggests, "orientalism may well be an apparatus through which a variety of concerns with difference is figured" (Critical Terrains 8), but this apparatus is also "internally complex and unstable" (Critical Terrains 5). As such, "narratives of gendered, racial, national, and class differences [can] complicate and interrupt the narrative of Orientalism . . . they mark the places where orientalism is vulnerable to challenge" (Lowe, Critical Terrains 5). Indeed, Chinese Canadian writers' literary representations of identity draw upon contexts and ideas that have been historically significant to the federal government's representations of them—such as Chinatown and the sojourner image—but these writers also appropriate them and construct images of Chinese Canadian experiences and identities that expose and undermine the legitimacy of such representations.

One of the ways in which Chinese Canadian writers do so is to develop heterogeneous understandings of identity that cannot be reductively defined and separately understood from the contexts in which identities may manifest. To draw out some larger conclusions about how class is a useful analytical concept and how Chinese Canadian literature represents class identity, I return to the question that I posed in my introductory chapter: How can we analyse any kind of identity without falling back into essentialist and reductive assumptions about it? Conceptualizing identity in the above manner is important because of the historical legacy of dominant discourses that have depended upon such assumptions for their efficacy. In the preceding chapters, I analysed some Chinese Canadian writers' representations of how class signifies for the identities that Chinese Canadian characters construct and express in their literary works. Representing class for Chinese Canadians in the context of how memory works in their narratives, how workers use their bodies and live in the world, what work means, and how space is conceptualized and used, these writers depict a diverse range of characters whose identities signify in relation to class markers that mediate, and are mediated by, the characters' racialized and ethnicized understandings of themselves as "Chinese Canadians." It is erroneous to overlook the class aspects of characters' experiences or to regard these class aspects as equivalent to racial and ethnic aspects of their experiences. The class dimensions of their experiences are distinct and operate in ways that differ from the racial or ethnic aspects of those experiences, even though these aspects can often overlap with and mutually affect each other.

Chong's, Lee's, Choy's, Yip's, and Wah's texts suggest an understanding of "Chinese Canadian-ness" that shows how class signifies and works in Chinese Canadian characters' everyday lives. Approaching class identity in this way is essential because Chong, Lee, Choy, Yip, Wah, and Yee suggest that class identity is not a monolithic identity marker that signifies in a categorical fashion or that signifies in the same way among Chinese Canadians who may identify, or be identified, as people of particular class statuses. These Chinese Canadian writers convey that class identities do signify in relation to concrete things such as the clothes that they wear, the money that they have, and the places that they inhabit and use, but they also suggest that these markers of class identity, in themselves, do not fully convey what class identities mean for their characters or why these identities are significant for their self-perceptions. As these writers convey, their Chinese Canadian characters' class identities manifest in diverse ways, acquire significance, and shift in their meanings within the characters' unique circumstances and the different perceptions that they may have of those circumstances. The historical contexts in which these characters live do shape the ways in which these identities may manifest in their daily lives, but these contexts do not dictate how characters may accept or resist particular understandings of class identities. Chong, Lee, Choy, Yip, Wah, and Yee suggest that the everyday is not just a realm of mundane, repeated, and insignificant actions that have no bearing upon their characters' class identities. Instead, it is precisely in the characters' daily and ordinary acts of living and surviving that their class identities are entrenched. At the same time, the pervasiveness of these class identities in their daily lives does not preclude characters from challenging and subverting them or from appropriating them in ways that are conducive for their identities. Class expectations encourage characters to behave and think in particular ways, but these expectations do not fully dictate or predetermine what they do or what identities they construct. As Rita Felski suggests, everyday life is not "a homogeneous and predictable terrain" and "includes the ever-present possibility of innovation and change" (29). At the same time, she also acknowledges, like Michel de Certeau, that agency can also arise in the everyday repetition of mundane tasks. To privilege innovation with agency is "to remain trapped within a mindset which assumes the superior value of the new" (Felski 21). For instance, the laundry owner Gee Sok in The Jade Peony and Kwok's father in Breakaway may not be financially prosperous, but their financial situations do not lead to powerlessness automatically. Making the best of their circumstances, both characters construct meaningful class identities out of their daily work in the laundry and on the family farm respectively. In contrast to Gee Sok and Kwok, Chan Sam in The Concubine's Children and Jook-Liang in The Jade Peony constitute class identities through a process of innovation rather than through a process of repeating mundane tasks. By constructing a new house in China, Chan Sam literally changes his material surroundings in China so that he can secure a favourable class identity in the villagers' memories. The effects of Jook-Liang's innovative use of dancing lead to perceptual, rather than concrete, changes in her situation, but they do provide her with a way to circumvent her grandmother's class ideals and to construct an alternative identity. These examples suggest that the process of change, repetition, or both, in the characters' everyday circumstances can shape their class identities.

My analysis of class in everyday life, then, contributes to a non-reductive conceptualization of identity because it conceives of identity as an experientially based concept that is grounded in the characters' unique and daily experiences. Chinese Canadian literary works depict the everyday as a politically charged sphere of activity that reflects and shapes Chinese Canadians' class statuses, regardless of whether they are conscious of the class codes that they may mimic or reject in their daily lives. Identity is not just something that these characters individually express in particular moments for certain purposes; it also seeps into these characters' daily lives and manifests itself through their attitudes and daily choices of action. However, as I will elaborate upon later, the ways in which these class identities manifest in the characters' daily lives differ from one text to another.

Specifically, an analysis of class identity in Chinese Canadian literature highlights the importance of understanding Chinese Canadian identity as something that is not only conceived in the abstract, but also grounded in the concrete circumstances of characters' daily lives: what material goods they use, buy, sell, and give; how they define and use their spaces of habitation and work; what they wear at home and in public; and how they act in certain spaces. These various manifestations of material circumstances inform the characters' construction and expression of identities. If we do not examine Chinese Canadians' experiences in material terms, then we risk obscuring how these writers constitute identities in heterogeneous ways: what the characters do in their stories is as important as how they think about themselves. Through their actions within particular material circumstances, they can contest dominant discourses and legislation that have discriminated against them. For instance, my primary texts' representations of work show that it is not just the relations of production between characters that inform their identities. Instead, these identities emerge out of what the characters actually do at work: how they work, what they produce, and how they interact and identify with other people in their workplace. These aspects of work shape the habitus that contributes to their class identities' significations. At the same time, texts such as Paper Shadows show how Chinese Canadians' thoughts about their class identities may acquire a *greater* significance than what they actually do, particularly when they are in marginalized economic circumstances that they cannot change, or that they can only change in limited ways. As such, an analysis of class identity should foreground the concrete circumstances in which identities may manifest, but recognize that these should not necessarily take precedence over a consideration of how Chinese Canadian characters think about their identities. In varying degrees, their characters' thoughts co-exist with and influence the ways that their concrete circumstances become significant for their identities.

Thus, class provides a way for me to interpret how material circumstances inform characters' construction and expression of identities. My analysis also contributes to Canadian literary criticism as a whole because it addresses the dearth of materialist approaches in that criticism, as Imre Szeman points out, and shows the benefits of adopting a materialist approach (1-2). As Szeman asserts, a materialist analysis allows critics to be "concrete without being reductive, determinate without being determining" (6). Foregrounding the material aspects of class identity in Chinese Canadian literature, I promote an understanding of its representations of identity that recognizes how material circumstances may shape characters' identities as well as how these material aspects impact upon their identities differently. My analysis alerts us to the problems behind what David Li has identified as relativistic approaches to identity that fail to consider the economic sphere (194). Ignoring the economic sphere, Li says, produces an inadequate understanding of identity because it overlooks how economic relations shape people's experiences and the identities that they construct in response to these. Referring specifically to the potentially negative consequences of poststructuralist approaches to identity, Li suggests that these approaches can reproduce the essentialist conceptualizations of identity that they contest. Criticizing the "poststructuralist itemization and atomisation of difference" (193), Li states that poststructuralism's "prevalent reference to difference as a thing in and by itself . . . leads to a reproduction of essentialism in and through categorical isolation and individuation" (193). As a result, this approach to identity erases historical differentiations among Asian Americans (D. Li 193) and reproduces essentialist interpretations because it codes difference as "an idiosyncratic merit or drawback to be either cherished or conquered by the individual" (D. Li 194). This depoliticizes differences between Asian Americans and separates their identities from real material contexts such as the economic relations between individuals.

My analysis also speaks to Li's concerns by recognizing that Chinese Canadian characters' identities are not just a matter of personal choice, even though characters express class identities to fulfill particular desires or aims. Instead, they must contend with certain material conditions and social relations arising out of these conditions that extend beyond their immediate circumstances and that implicate the Chinese Canadian community as a whole. The economic sphere, which includes the acts of producing and using material goods, is part of the process by which Chinese Canadian characters express their class identities differently. An analysis of identity that ignores material circumstances elides not only the ways in which agency can occur but also the various ways in which powerlessness arises. To a degree, the characters' material circumstances dictate their opportunities for agency because they influence the extent to which characters can act independently of other people's class expectations. In Paper Shadows, Choy's possibilities for agency in Chinatown are limited because he lacks the Chinese adults' material resources and social influence. These adults reinforce the class expectations that Chinese children like Choy are expected to follow; in doing so, they encourage Choy and other children to view particular class ideals and actions in desirable or undesirable ways. Despite their subordinate position, these characters can inscribe alternative meanings upon these circumstances and contest their subordination in ways that circumscribe the influence of dominant characters.

In examining these material circumstances, however, it is important to avoid essentialist or deterministic conclusions about how these characters' material contexts influence their identities. Several of my texts illustrate that the same set of material circumstances can be liberating for one character and oppressive for another. These differences arise from their differing relationships to these material circumstances: how much control they have over those circumstances and the kinds of class capital that they can draw upon in those circumstances. The material circumstances from which class distinctions emerge also instigate particular social relations among characters that reinforce the differences in characters' material circumstances. For instance, the Wong family members in Sky Lee's Disappearing Moon Café collectively inherit and share the same economic circumstances, which they are expected to preserve by behaving appropriately for their respective positions within the family hierarchy. However, the class identities to which they must adhere and the attitudes that they have towards these identities differ depend on their relative positions of influence and the material benefits that they can acquire. In addition, some Chinese Canadian characters depicted in Chinese Canadian literature do not have the willpower to circumscribe the influence of the dominant characters: for instance, Wah's representation of the anonymous dishwasher in Diamond Grill shows how material circumstances can not only empower, but also disempower or exacerbate the marginality of characters with lower-class identities. By accounting for the ways in which characters' material circumstances can simultaneously empower and fail to empower certain characters, I suggest that such considerations will highlight how the influence and effects of characters' class identities may derive from, and depend on, the subordination of other characters in those same circumstances.

Besides the above considerations, these material circumstances do not signify separately from the Chinese Canadian characters who inhabit and use them. The individual's as well as other people's perceptions of the same material circumstances shape, mediate, and contest the signification and effects of particular class identities within those circumstances. I am not advocating an understanding of identity that simply perceives it as a perceptual concept, but I am suggesting that perception plays an important role in shaping how characters use material circumstances and how class identities come to signify through these uses. As several of my primary texts illustrate, material circumstances can provide the means for characters to mutually identify with each other and construct collective identities that derive out of that shared identification, but these same circumstances can also allow characters to distinguish themselves from each other. In Diamond Grill, real differences in power separate the co-owners from the café workers because the co-owners own the restaurants' resources and benefit more extensively from its profits. However, the co-owners and workers can still express a shared sense of collective achievement through their individual contributions to the restaurants' products and operation. Their individual contributions also allow them to distinguish themselves individually from each other. Thus, their shared circumstances of work provide the basis for their common identification with each other as well as the basis for their individual expression. Similarly, these material circumstances function in collective and individual ways in The Concubine's Children. When Chan Sam returns to China, his apparently more affluent material circumstances distinguish him from the other villagers, but his genealogical connections to the village also reinforce his connection to the village's rural heritage. He exemplifies someone who has become successful in Canada. These two examples illustrate how characters' material circumstances are not just a neutral backdrop for their expression of class identities. They express their identities for particular people *through* their uses of those material circumstances; their identities' significations arise from the perceptual effects of these usages upon the other people.

At the same time that we consider the ways in which Chinese Canadian characters' identities signify in relation to collective influences such as the Wong elders' expectations in Disappearing Moon Café, Chang Gar Bin's class expectations in The Concubine's Children, or the Chinatown community's standards of dressing on Sunday in Paper Shadows, it is also important to examine the extent to which those collective influences impact or do not impact on individual characters' identities. Furthermore, these influences are not always continuous in their effects upon some of the Chinese Canadian characters that Lee, Chong, and Choy depict in their texts. Rather, these collective influences upon characters' identities are discontinuous and variable in their impact because these influences figure more prominently in particular moments of interaction between characters and less prominently in other moments. For instance, Choy in Paper Shadows is subject to other Chinese adults' class expectations, yet these do not fully define his identity because he also imagines an alternative identity for himself. Similarly, Fong Mei's perceptions of herself are also shaped by her predecessors' inherited class ideals, but the difference between her and Choy is that she subscribes to these ideals more willingly, whereas Choy's acceptance of the adults' expectations is tempered by his reluctance. As such, the extent to which Fong Mei and Choy define their identities separately from, or in relation to, other characters in Lee's and Choy's texts is shaped by the extent to which they accept other characters' class ideals and their views of them.

Secondly, class complicates what agency and marginality mean in Chinese Canadian literature because some of these authors depict Chinese Canadian characters in marginal class positions who empower themselves, even though their possibilities for actual class mobility are circumscribed by their lack of class capital. It is true that Chinese Canadian characters such as Kwok in Breakaway find themselves at a disadvantage because they cannot secure the requisite class capital to boost their class standing. In contrast to Kwok, Wah's father's class position as café co-owner and employer of other workers in Diamond Grill and the merchants' higher financial and social status in Paper Shadows provide them with economic and social advantages over other people. However, these texts also show the unpredictability and variability of daily interactions between Chinese Canadians as well as between Chinese Canadians and non-Chinese people. In doing so, these texts illustrate that agency can occur in other ways that may not necessarily require them to acquire class capital.

For example, the perceptual importance of class identity in my primary texts complicates how we should interpret their representation of agency and marginality. Some of the characters in my primary texts do not achieve concrete or lasting changes to their actual circumstances, but they still exercise some form of agency by conveying a favourable impression of themselves in public. However, these effects should not be discounted as less substantial and, therefore, less important than concrete changes in

Chinese Canadian characters' material circumstances and class statuses. These characters may not always have realistic chances to improve their class standing in actuality, but their attempts at improving their perceptual standing among others exemplify how they contest their subordination by making do with their available means. For instance, the bodily depiction of class identities in texts like The Concubine's Children and Paper Shadows are significant for their effects upon other people's perceptions of Chinese Canadians' class identities, rather than for their ability to concretely change material inequities between characters. Even though the image that he conveys of himself does not correlate with his actual material circumstances in Canada, Chan Sam wants to enhance his class status in his villagers' memories of him. In Choy's text, the Chinese adults in Choy's community dress up to convey an image of financial prosperity for the non-Chinese public. In both cases, these characters express particular class identities to improve other people's perceptions of them. While differing circumstances prompt these texts' characters to express class identities, these two situations exemplify how we need to conceptualize agency in ways that do not privilege concrete changes in characters' material circumstances. The characters' actions in the above examples benefit them temporarily, but they are still important for their projected identities. This suggests the importance of analysing the perceptual impact of characters' class identities and the ways in which they may relate to other visible identity markers such as race and age. Understanding class identity requires that we consider it as a construct as well as a "fact," insofar as it points to "real" material circumstances for its impetuses and desired effects.

In addition, the Chinese adults' expressions of these class identities in Paper Shadows provide a therapeutic function because they help to mitigate their daily hardships of surviving in the racially exclusionist atmosphere of the Exclusion Era and the uncertain climate of the Second World War. Similarly, the café workers in Diamond Grill and Denise Chong's grandparents in The Concubine's Children also derive comfort from particular class identities because they help to alleviate the oppression that they experience in other aspects of their lives. I am aware of the dangers of interpreting identities in this manner because it reflects the dangers of depoliticization that can occur when identity is understood as a private and individualistic concept (D. Li 193-194).

Similarly, my conceptualization of identity as a therapeutic strategy can, arguably, depoliticize identity by detaching it from the larger contexts of marginalization within which it appears and localizing it in an individual, psychological context. However, I suggest that I have retained a political edge to my interpretations by examining how characters' identities function as strategies of resistance against their collective marginalization in the larger society as well as their marginalization within their own community. This allows me to consider Chinese Canadian characters' seemingly ineffectual and apolitical actions as empowering acts that signal their recognition of the societal contexts beyond their individual circumstances.

These Chinese Canadian works further extend our understanding of how agency can arise and function by depicting characters who accept and work within the larger community's dominant class ideals. Accommodating to these ideals is not necessarily a negative thing because these characters can empower themselves by acquiring class capital in the larger society. Such acts of accommodation may come with the danger of sacrificing their cultural inheritance, but these texts affirm the necessity of transforming what it means to be Chinese in a Canadian context. For example, Lee and Choy both convey that it is impossible to maintain and pass on particular meanings of Chineseness from one generation to another because of shifting historical circumstances as well as the different experiences that separate Chinese Canadians of one generation from another. Lee and Choy suggest the interconnectedness between their characters' individual circumstances and the larger historical and cultural contexts in which they live; as such, it is unrealistic and undesirable to construct class identities that are completely separate from these contexts because they inevitably impinge upon their characters' perceptions. This does not mean that these authors' representations of Chinese Canadians advocate a wholesale rejection of Chineseness that entails an embracing of capitalist ideals and its possibilities of class mobility. For instance, Yip's depiction of Charlie in The Tears of the Chinese Immigrants and Yee's depiction of Kwok in Breakaway both affirm, in different historical contexts, the importance of remembering the racialized class legacy of one's predecessors. Through their characters, Yip and Yee suggest that Chinese Canadians have an ethical responsibility to remember that past and to constitute a class identity that acknowledges their debt to it. Whereas Kwok constructs a rural-based class identity that signifies in terms of its opposition to the capitalist economic system's encroachment upon his family's farmland, Charlie's class identity signifies in relation to his close identification with his Chinese roots and his class aspirations in the mainstream economy.

A class-based approach to identity not only prompts us to reconsider how agency and marginality can occur but also prompts us to reconsider what hegemony means and how resistance to that hegemony can occur. In the context of American class relations and the bourgeoisie's dominance in American society, Roger Rouse suggests that hegemonic influence "concerns the production of subjects [and] the shaping of people's attitudes and dispositions so that they will act in ways that members of the ruling bloc consider appropriate to their interests" (371). Denise Chong, Sky Lee, Wayson Choy, Yuen Chung Yip, Fred Wah, and Paul Yee portray, in different ways, how hegemonic relations can develop between Chinese and non-Chinese characters as well as between characters of Chinese descent. Their texts emphasize the heterogeneity of relationships between these characters and highlight the complex ways in which hegemonic relations can be oppressive but also liberating for those who operate successfully within them. At the same time, they expose the limits of replicating these hegemonic relations and suggest possibilities for resisting them through everyday acts of resistance. They depict characters who financially and socially influence others with less class capital to act and think in ways that reinforce the status quo, but they also expose the inherent difficulties and contradictions in doing so.

In Paul Yee's Breakaway, for instance, Kwok and his family occupy a marginal class position in Canada's economy and remain racially subordinate to white people like Mr. Drysdale. Despite their subordinate position, Kwok and his family use their marginality to resist Mr. Drysdale's capitalist imperatives and to affirm their presence as active subjects in Canada's historical narratives. Sky Lee's Disappearing Moon Café depicts how hegemonic class relations can occur *among* Chinese people in the Exclusion Era. Even though eras such as the Exclusion Era may be characterized by uniform legislation towards the Chinese population, Lee's and Yee's texts encourage us to recognize the heterogeneity that exists among the Chinese population in any historical era. Lacking other opportunities for class mobility in the discriminatory climate of the Exclusion Era, Fong Mei conforms to Mui Lan's wishes to bear a son by illegitimate means so that she can raise her class status within the family. Lee does recognize the oppressiveness of these cultural traditions and demonstrates this through characters who rebel against them (such as Beatrice and Suzanne), but she also affirms the value of these traditions because they can provide comfort, stability, and class benefits.

In relation to these issues of materiality, dominance, and agency, Chinese Canadian writers represent, in varying ways, how Chinese Canadian characters' awareness of other identity markers mediate how they signify and express their class identities as well as in what contexts they choose to do so. However, they also suggest that their class identities can mediate the ways in which they perceive *other* identity markers. For instance, Wah's depiction of his own and other café workers' identities in Diamond Grill suggests how class augments Chinese Canadians' perceptions of race and ethnicity and the identities that they construct from these identity markers, but his text also conveys the differences between their perceptions and identities. Wah suggests an understanding of identity that considers the contradictory and opposite ways in which the same identity markers can signify and the ways in which these identity markers intersect with each other. These identity markers cannot be considered in an additive fashion because the effects of the intersections between identity markers differ from the effects that occur when these identity markers function separately. Indeed, Wah's self-representation highlights how his racial hybridity and his class background signify in a reciprocal relationship to each other, such that his race may become more significant for defining his class identity outside of the café than inside it. However, Wah also suggests that his class identity can, in turn, augment his views of his racial background as well as the ways in which he may choose to suppress his racial difference. Similarly, Chan Sam and Mei-ying share the same racial and cultural background in Disappearing Moon Café, but they perceive their similar economic situation differently because of, in part, their different positions of influence in an inherited framework of Confucian familial relations (which Chan Sam tries to enforce).

The intersections between class and other identity markers in these texts highlight how Chinese Canadian characters' positions of "dominance" or "subordination" signify in complex ways because they are defined in relation to other characters and in particular contexts. These characters may be marginalized in one context, but they may be empowered in another. Furthermore, the characters' supposed deficiencies can be strengths or, to use Bourdieu's terminology, forms of capital in other contexts that they can draw upon to attain public recognition. For example, they may verify their genealogical roots, communal association, or cultural heritage in order to legitimize their class identities in public. Characters' racial or ethnic differences may marginalize them in the dominant white culture, but they may mediate that marginality through the real and perceived benefits of publicly displaying class identities. As an example of the ways that Chinese Canadian literature can depict shifting positions of dominance and subordination, Chong's The Concubine's Children shows how these positions can manifest in relation not only to different spaces within Canada, but also to Canada and China. Chan Sam is marginalized in Canada, but he can constitute a prestigious class identity in China by drawing on the limited money that his family earned in Canada. At the same time, Chan Sam's situation exemplifies how Chinese Canadians' expressions of class identities can be compromised by personal sacrifices and the loss of agency in other aspects of their lives. Indeed, Chan Sam expresses a sense of class superiority over his relatives back in China, but at the cost of living in impoverished circumstances in Canada. This suggests that we need to recognize agency as something that is situationally specific. The extent of a characters' agency in one situation does not necessarily translate into other situations and the ways in which they achieve agency in one situation may not necessarily work in other situations. For instance, Wah's representation of himself in Diamond Grill suggests that one's position of dominance and subordination is also dependent on the people with whom he interacts in a particular situation. His class status signifies in an empowering way among his white friends in his father's café, but his class status does not necessarily translate into something empowering when he interacts with others in the café. For instance, his racially hybrid identity augments how that class status signifies when he interacts with the workers in the café kitchen.

The visibility of class can counter or augment the significance of the character's racial visibility or ethnic associations. In some works of Chinese Canadian literature such as The Tears of the Chinese Immigrants and The Concubine's Children, class operates as an individual signifier of success or projected success; it also operates as a collective signifier that demonstrates one's loyalty to one's race or to one's ethnic traditions by providing a positive role model for one's group or a positive image of one's group in the larger society. Their class-based circumstances provide Chinese Canadian characters the means to alleviate their racial and ethnic disadvantages, both actual and perceived, by ascribing a sense of dignity to their daily life. For instance, the characters' construction of class identities can involve the act of inscribing dignity into their work or the act of affirming the collective strength that derives from their shared economic deficiencies.

Despite their racial and ethnic differences from the non-Chinese population, Chinese Canadian characters can, in some situations, take advantage of those differences in order to enhance their class identities' effects. For instance, in Yee's Breakaway, class highlights the racial and ethnic difference of Kwok's family vis-à-vis the non-Chinese community as well as their similarity vis-à-vis other people in the Chinese Canadian community. Kwok affirms his family's Chinese heritage by resisting Drysdale's economic encroachment upon their land. His resistance also highlights the class differences between his family and Drysdale and his preservation of those differences. These manifestations of class as a marker of similarity *and* difference also appear in Diamond Grill: class functions as an individual and collective identity marker that the characters signify in relation to their racial heritage. In contrast to Yee's text, however, class signifies in a somewhat different manner because the Chinese Canadians in Wah's text are more integrated into the capitalist economy.

Racial difference becomes an asset for these characters when they deploy that difference in the context of producing goods for the mainstream economy. They can use their racial difference for their own advantage because it becomes a way for them to appropriate the consumerist ethic of the capitalist economy and to distinguish themselves, *as a group*, within that economy. In Wah's Diamond Grill, race is not only a negative marker of Otherness but also a form of class capital that the café owners and workers can capitalize upon to enhance their prestige collectively in the non-Chinese community. Their skilled production of Chinese food contributes to their café's prestige as well as to their prestige as individual cooks. However, outside of the café, their racial difference can be a potential liability because their actions exemplify how their "race" acts as a whole: how they act and how these actions are perceived by others may lead to judgements about not only themselves but also the rest of the Chinese community.

These considerations of how class identities signify through their intersection with other identity markers have larger implications for my analysis of identity in Chinese Canadian literature. It is important to consider when class is or is not a prominent identity marker and to recognize the limits of class identity as an effective means for exercising agency. As Fred Wah's Diamond Grill illustrates, the empowering potential of expressing desirable class ideals must be qualified because its significations can become overdetermined in certain situations. In the process, this can reproduce the constrictive or reductive forms of identity that characters wish to resist. In other cases, such as Kwok's experiences of racial exclusion in Breakaway, racial identities signify in overdetermined ways and limit the characters' class agency. Both of the examples illustrate that class identity provides provisional possibilities of empowerment that are always affected by the historical contexts in which they appear. These contexts also affect the characters' constructions of class identities in another way. Chinese Canadian authors' portrayal of class illustrates that it is not only what Chinese Canadians do in the present that is important for their identities but also what they have *done* in the past, what they do *for* the future, and what they *wish* to do in the future. Even though it is impossible to replicate particular class identities from one time period to another in these texts, these characters depend upon that temporality to signify their identities. For instance, my analysis of the relationship between class and memory shows how characters refer to their shared past of Chinese cultural traditions in order to authorize their class identities in the present. Paradoxically, then, the meanings of characters' class identities may shift in the present, but they may depend on a static set of ideas about Chineseness for their legitimacy. As an additional caveat, the effectiveness of a class identity depends upon the stabilizing of *other* identity markers against which that identity can be judged. For instance, the coherence of Charlie's judgements of other characters' class identities in The Tears of the Chinese Immigrants depends implicitly on a stable understanding of Chineseness and the cultural ideals associated with that Chineseness. These caveats exemplify the need to think about how the meanings attached to particular identities fluctuate as well as when these meanings also *stabilize* and what purposes these moments of stabilization serve: in other words, why do these meanings fluctuate or stabilize and how do they work in either case?

In terms of their texts' significance for the contemporary context, I suggest that these authors' representations of Chinese Canadian life serve as models of behaviour for Chinese Canadians in actuality. Their texts take place in the era from 1923 to 1967, but their characters exemplify particular attitudes towards class and Chineseness that are relevant for the present. These authors grapple with their Chinese heritage and the conflicts that ensue when their characters experience the attractions of Western culture and the possibilities of class mobility in mainstream society. Acknowledging the benefits of class mobility for empowering a previously marginalized people, these authors also assert the need to respect and preserve Chinese Canadians' collective past. Class mobility, they suggest, should not occur at the expense of denying one's connections to a collective history and eliding the struggles of one's predecessors. Their texts promote an ethical orientation towards class identity by suggesting possibilities for mutual identification between people of different class statuses and the possibilities of agency that such identification can accrue.

In summary, my class analysis foregrounds an identity marker that has often been subordinate to ethnicity and race in critical readings of Chinese Canadian literature and, more broadly, Asian Canadian literature. Rather than offering a representative portrait of Chinese Canadians in the era from 1923 to 1967, these works of Chinese Canadian literature represent a diversity of Chinese Canadian experiences. Class functions as an identity marker that is informed by racial and ethnic significations and the individual and historical contexts in which it is evoked. My class analysis furthers my understanding of these writers' representations of Chinese Canadians because it complicates the distinctions that are constructed between people of non-Chinese and Chinese descent as well as among Chinese Canadians themselves in these texts. It exposes the inadequacies of analyses that focus on race or ethnicity only because it shows how the use of a simplistic dominant/dominated binary to characterize Chinese-white relations fails to account for, to use Lisa Lowe's terminology, the multiplicitous, heterogeneous, and hybrid processes of identity construction among Chinese Canadians.

Indeed, the articulation of particular class identities can offer agency to characters, but this means of agency can function in complex and unexpected ways. Characters' desires to express particular class identities often result in a suppression or elision of undesirable characteristics that may contradict or compromise these class identities' meanings, but these same characteristics may, paradoxically, be desirable ones for other characters and contexts. Class provides a means for expressing, in material terms, a sense of pride in one's ethnic heritage or racial difference and a strategy for empowering oneself in one's community. However, it can also function as the basis for rejecting those very identities in order to acquire agency within the Chinese community or outside of it. Operating in paradoxical and contradictory ways, class forms of identification depend on the characters' relative position of agency (in relation to others) as well as the historical and material conditions that they inhabit. In these texts, class functions as a central medium through which Chinese Canadian characters deploy or elide their racial and ethnic differences to express a sense of personal or collective success. Class identities can reinforce differences among characters in the same ethnic or racial group, but these differences can also provide a rallying point for them to strengthen communal unity and create opportunities for individual and collective agency.

Further analyses of identity in Chinese Canadian literature would do well to consider the differences among Chinese Canadian characters as well as the various ways in which characters use their differences to (re)constitute what it means to be Chinese Canadian. In a broader context, Ien Ang offers a politics of identity that does not simply consider the articulation of identities for the purposes of empowering individuals or the ethnic groups with which they identify, but also the articulation of identities for the purposes of changing the contexts in which these identities manifest. The local and daily actions of people, then, can modify and subvert what may appear to be detached and omnipresent contexts that seep into people's lives:

> What such mundane local interactions can contribute to, I believe, is the incremental and dialogic construction of lived identities which slowly dissolve the boundaries between the past and the future, between "where

> we come from" and "what we might become," between being and becoming: being is enhanced by becoming, and becoming is never possible without a solid grounding in being. As subjects from multiple backgrounds negotiate their coexistence and mutual interconnection, the contradictory necessity and impossibility of identities is played out in the messiness of everyday life, as the global and the local interpenetrate each other. This gradual hacking away at the absolutist antagonism between "identity" and "globalization" in practice, while never guaranteed and bound to have its ups and downs in its own right, is a form of micro-politics of everyday life informed by pragmatic faith in the capacity for cultural identities to change, not through the imposition of some grandiose vision for the future, but slowly and unsensationally, by elaborating the practical means . . . that enable deep and lasting social change. (Ang, "Identity Blues" 11)

Works Cited

Anderson, Kay J. Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1991.

---. "The Idea of Chinatown: the Power of Place and Institutional Practice in the Making of a Racial Category." Immigration in Canada: Historical Perspectives. Ed. Gerald Tulchinsky. Mississauga: Copp Clark Longman, 1994. 223-248.

Ang, Ien. "Can One Say No to Chineseness? Pushing the Limits of the Diasporic Paradigm." Boundary 2: An International Journal of Literature and Culture 25.3 (Fall 1998): 223-42.

---. "Identity Blues." Without Guarantees: In Honour of Stuart Hall. Ed. Paul Gilroy, Lawrence Grossberg, and Angela McRobbie. London and New York: Verso, 2000. 1-13.

Bal, Mieke. "Introduction." Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present. Ed. Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer. Hanover, NH: UP of New England, 1999. vii-xvii.

Batstone, Kathleen. "Introduction." Essays on Canadian Writing 78 (Winter 2003): 1-15.

Baureiss, Gunter. "Chinese Immigration, Chinese Stereotypes, and Chinese Labour." Canadian Ethnic Studies 19.3 (1987): 15-34.

Beauregard, Guy. "What is at Stake in Comparative Analyses of Asian Canadian and Asian American Literary Studies?" Essays on Canadian Writing 75 (Winter 2002): 217-239.

Beautell, Eva Darias. "The Imaginary Ethnic: Anachronies, (Im)Mobility and Historical Meaning in Obasan and Disappearing Moon Café." Tricks With a Glass: Writing Ethnicity in Canada. Cross/Cultures: Readings in the Post/Colonial Literatures in English 46. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000. 191-208.

Bergland, Betty. "Rereading Photographs and Narratives in Ethnic Autobiography: Memory and Subjectivity in Mary Antin's The Promised Land." Memory, Narrative, and Identity: New Essays in Ethnic American Literatures. Ed. Amritjit Singh, Joseph T. Skerrett, Jr. and Robert E. Hogan. Boston: Northeastern UP, 1994. 45-88.

Berking, Helmuth. Sociology of Giving. London, England: SAGE, 1999.

Bolaria, B. Singh and Peter S. Li. "Capitalist Expansion and Immigrant Labour: Chinese in Canada." Racial Oppression in Canada. 2nd ed. Eds. B. Singh Bolaria and Peter S. Li. Toronto: Garamond, 1988. 101-126.

Bourdieu, Pierre. Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste. Trans. Richard Nice. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1984.

---. Outline of a Theory of Practice. Trans. Richard Nice. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1977.

---. The Logic of Practice. Trans. Richard Nice. Cambridge: Polity, 1990.

---. "What Makes a Social Class? On the Theoretical and Practical Existence of Groups." Berkeley Journal of Sociology: a Critical Review 32 (1987): 1-17.

Boyko, John. Last Step to Freedom: The Evolution of Canadian Racism. 2nd ed. Winnipeg: J. Gordon Shillingford, 1998.

Budgeon, Shelley. "Identity as an Embodied Event." Body & Society 9.1 (March 2003): 35-55.

Calder, Alison. "Paper Families and Blonde Demonesses: The Haunting of History in Sky Lee's 'Disappearing Moon Café.'" ARIEL 31.4 (Oct. 2000): 7-21.

Chan, Anthony. Gold Mountain: The Chinese in the New World. Vancouver: New Star, 1983.

---. "The Myth of the Chinese Sojourner in Canada." Visible Minorities and Multiculturalism: Asians in Canada. Ed. K. Victor Ujimoto and Gordon Hirabayashi. Toronto: Butterworth, 1980. 33-42.

Chao, Lien. Beyond Silence: Chinese-Canadian Literature in English. Toronto: TSAR, 1997.

---. "As Agents and as Perspective: Female Characters in Disappearing Moon Café." Intersexions: Issues of Race and Gender in Canadian Women's Writing. Ed. Coomi S. Vevaina and Barbara Godard. New Delhi: Creative, 1996. 219-230.

---. "The Collective Self: A Narrative Paradigm in Sky Lee's Disappearing Moon Café." Cross-Addressing: Resistance Literature and Cultural Borders. Ed. John C. Hawley. New York: State U of New York P, 1996. 237-256.

Chang, Sheng-Tai. "Introduction." The Tears of Chinese Immigrants. Yuen Chung Yip. Dunvegan, Ontario: Cormorant, 1990. 7-21.

Charlesworth, Simon J. The Phenomenology of Working-Class Experience. Cambridge Cultural Social Studies. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000.

Chen, John Ming and Pat Parangao. "Society, History, and Values: a Cultural Study of Paul Yee's Chinese-Canadian Female Characters." Canadian Children's Literature 25.1 (Spring 1999): 20-36.

Ching, Barbara and Gerald W. Creed. "Introduction: Recognizing Rusticity: Identity and the Power of Place." Knowing Your Place: Rural Identity and Cultural Hierarchy. Ed. Barbara Ching and Gerald W. Creed. New York: Routledge, 1997. 1-38.

Chong, Denise. The Concubine's Children: Portrait of a Family Divided. Toronto: Penguin, 1994.

Chow, W. S. "The Chinese Community in Canada Before 1987 and Some Recent Developments." Ethnicity in the Americas. Ed. Francis Henry. The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1976. 115-135.

Choy, Wayson. Paper Shadows: Memories of a Chinatown Childhood. Toronto: Penguin, 1999.

---. "The Importance of Story: the Hunger for Personal Narrative." Journal of Business Administration and Policy Analysis 24-26 (1996): 92-106.

---. The Jade Peony: a Novel. Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas & MacIntyre, 1995.

Chun, Allen. "Fuck Chineseness: On the Ambiguities of Ethnicity as Culture as Identity." boundary 2 22.2 (Summer 1996): 111-138.

Coleman, Daniel and Donald Goellnicht. "Introduction: 'Race' into the Twenty-First Century." Essays on Canadian Writing 75 (Winter 2002): 1-29.

Con, Harry, Ronald J. Con, Graham Johnson, Edgar Wickberg, and William E. Willmott. From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982.

Connerton, Paul. How Societies Remember. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989.

Creese, Gillian. "Organizing Against Racism in the Workplace: Chinese Workers in Vancouver Before the Second World War." Canadian Ethnic Studies 19.3 (1987): 35-46.

Dant, Tim. Material Culture in the Social World: Values, Activities, Lifestyles. Philadelphia: Open UP, 1999.

Davis, Marie C. "'A Backward Way of Thanking People': Paul Yee on His Historical Fiction." Canadian Children's Literature 22.3 (Fall 1996): 50-68.

Davis, Rocio G. Transcultural Reinventions: Asian American and Asian Canadian Short-Story Cycles. Toronto: TSAR, 2001.

Dawson, Brian J. Moon Cakes in Gold Mountain: From China to the Canadian Plains. Calgary: Detsilig Enterprises, 1991.

De Certeau, Michel. The Practice of Everyday Life. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley: U of California P, 1984.

De Certeau, Michel, Luce Giard, and Pierre Mayol. The Practice of Everyday Life: *Volume 2: Living and Cooking*. Trans. Timothy J. Tomasik. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1998.

Deer, Glenn. "An Interview with Wayson Choy." Canadian Literature 163 (Winter 1999): 34-45.

Ebrey, Patricia. "Women, Marriage, and the Family in Chinese History." Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization. Ed. Paul S. Ropp. Berkeley: U of California P, 1990. 197-223.

Ellis, Donald G. Crafting Society: Ethnicity: Class and Communication Theory. LEA's Communication Series. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1999.

Espiritu, Yen Le. Asian American Women and Men: Labor, Laws, and Love. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1997.

Felski, Rita. "The Invention of Everyday Life." New Formations 39 (Winter 1999-2000): 15-31.

Fortier, Anne-Marie. "Re-Membering Places and the Performance of Belonging(s)." Theory, Culture & Society 16.2 (1999): 41-64.

Friedman, Susan Stanford. Mappings: Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1998.

Gallagher, Mary. "Women and Gender." An Introduction to Chinese Culture Through the Family. Ed. Howard Giskin and Bettye S. Walsh. Albany: State U of New York P, 2001. 89-105.

Ganguly, Keya. "Migrant Identities: Personal Memory and the Construction of Selfhood." Cultural Studies 6.1 (Jan. 1992): 27-50.

George, Rosemary. The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relations and Twentieth-Century Fiction. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.

Gilmore, Leigh. The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony. Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP, 2001.

Goellnicht, Donald C. "A Long Labour: The Protracted Birth of Asian Canadian Literature." Essays on Canadian Writing 72 (Winter 2000): 1-41.

---. "Of Bones and Suicide: Sky Lee's Disappearing Moon Café and Fae Myenne Ng's Bone." Modern Fiction Studies 46.2 (Summer 2000): 300-330.

Goldman, Anne. Take My Word: Autobiographical Innovations of Ethnic American Working Women. Berkeley: U of California P, 1996.

Green, Rebecca L. "Ancestral Dreams: Re-Living the Past, Re-Creating the Future." Memory and Representation: Constructed Truths and Competing Realities. Ed. Dena Elisabeth Eber and Arthur G. Neal. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State U Popular P, 2001.

Gunderson, Michelle. "Managing Diversity: the Economies of Community in Denise Chong's The Concubine's Children." West Coast Line 33.2 (Fall 1999): 106-123.

Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson. "Culture, Power, Place: Ethnography at the End of an Era." Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology. Ed. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson. Durham: Duke UP, 1997. 1-29.

---. "Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference." Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology. Ed. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson. Durham: Duke UP, 1997. 33-51.

Gwin, Minrose C. The Woman in the Red Dress: Gender, Space, and Reading. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2002.

Hall, Stuart. "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?" Questions of Cultural Identity. Ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay. London: SAGE, 1996. 1-17.

Han-ao, Cai. Fifteen Lectures on Chinese Literature. Pei-ching: Educational Science, 1993.

Hartley, Michelle. "Does Shirley Temple Eat Chicken Feet? Consuming Ambivalence in Wayson Choy's The Jade Peony." Essays on Canadian Writing 78 (Winter 2003): 61-85.

Hetherington, Kevin. Expressions of Identity: Space, Performance, Politics. London: SAGE, 1998.

Hilf, Susanne. Writing the Hyphen: the Articulation of Interculturalism in Contemporary Chinese-Canadian Literature. Frankfurt: P. Lang, 2000.

Ho, Wendy. In Her Mother's House: The Politics of Asian American Mother-Daughter Writing. Walnut Creek and Oxford: Altamira Press, 1999.

Huyssen, Andreas. "Monumental Seduction." Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present. Ed. Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer. Hanover, NH: UP of New England, 1999. 191-207.

Indra, Doreen M. "Changes in Canadian Immigration Patterns Over the Past Decade With Special Reference to Asia." Visible Minorities and Multiculturalism: Asians in Canada. Ed. K. Victor Ujimoto and Gordon Hirabayashi. Toronto: Butterworth, 1980. 163-179.

Jay, Jennifer. "Gold Mountain and Maple Leaf: Identity and Landscape in Chinese Canadian Literature." Unpublished ms. 17 pp.

Kalbach, Madeline A. and Warren E. Kalbach. "Becoming Canadian: Problems of an Emerging Identity." Canadian Ethnic Studies 31.2 (1999): 1-16.

King, Nicola. Memory, Narrative, Identity: Remembering the Self. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2000.

Koh, Karlyn. Speculations and (Dis)Identifications: Notes on Asian Canadian Women Writers. New Scholars—New Visions in Canadian Studies. Seattle: Canadian Studies Center (University of Washington), Summer 1996.

Knowles, Valerie. Strangers At Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-1997. Rev. ed. Toronto: Dundurn, 1997.

Lai, David Chuenyan. Chinatowns: Towns Within Cities in Canada. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1988.

LeFebvre, Henri. The Production of Space. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.

---. Everyday Life in the Modern World. New York: Harper, 1971.

Lee, A. Robert. "Imagined Cities of China: Timothy Mo's London, Sky Lee's Vancouver, Fae Myenne Ng's San Francisco and Gish Jen's New York." Wasafiri 22 (Autumn 1995): 25-30.

Lee, Christopher. "Engaging Chineseness in Wayson Choy's The Jade Peony." Canadian Literature 163 (Winter 1999): 18-33.

Lee, Leo Ou-Fan. "The Politics of Technique: Perspectives of Literary Dissidence in Contemporary Chinese Fiction." After Mao: Chinese Literature and Society, 1978-1981. Ed. Jeffrey C. Kinkley. Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies at Harvard University, 1985. 159-190.

Lee, Sky. Disappearing Moon Café. 1990. Washington: Seal, 1992.

Lewis, Tanya. "Eating Identity: Food and the Construction of Region in The Cure for Death by Lightning and Fall on Your Knees." Essays on Canadian Writing 78 (Winter 2003): 86-109.

Li, David Leiwei. Imagining the Nation: Asian American Literature and Cultural Consent. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1998.

Li, Peter S. The Chinese in Canada. 2nd ed. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1998.

Lin, Erika T. "Mona on the Phone: The Performative Body and Racial Identity in Mona in the Promised Land." MELUS 28.2 (Summer 2003): 47-57.

Longley, Kateryna. "Places of Refuge: Postcolonial Spaces." SPAN 44 (April 1997): 8-21.

Lowe, Lisa. Immigrant Acts : on Asian American Cultural Politics. Durham: Duke UP, 1996.

---. Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991.

Lynch, Deidre. "At Home With Jane Austen." Cultural Institutions of the Novel. Ed. Deidre Lynch and William B. Warner. Durham and London: Duke UP, 1996. 159-192.

Mackey, Eva. The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada. London: Routledge, 1999.

Martin, Sandra. "When a Stranger Calls: at Age 56, Wayson Choy Got the Surprise of His Life." Quill and Quire 65.6 (June 1999): 1, 46.

Marx, Karl and Freidrich Engels. The German Ideology: Parts I and III. Ed. R. Pascal. New York: International Publishers, 1947.

Marx, Karl. "Wage Labour and Capital." The Marx-Engels Reader. 2nd ed. Ed. Robert C. Tucker. New York: Norton, 1978. 203-217.

---. "Class Struggle and Mode of Production." The Marx-Engels Reader. 2nd ed. Ed. Robert C. Tucker. New York: Norton, 1978. 220.

McGonegal, Julie. "Hyphenating the Hybrid 'I': (Re)Visions of Racial Mixedness in Fred Wah's *Diamond Grill.*" Essays on Canadian Writing 75 (Winter 2002): 177-195.

McKeown, Adam. "Conceptualizing Chinese Diasporas, 1842-1949." The Journal of Asian Studies 58.2 (May 1999): 306-337.

McLaren, Angus. Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945. The Canadian Social History Series. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990.

Michielsens, Magda. "Memory Frames: The Role of Concepts and Cognition in Telling Life-Stories." Feminism and Autobiography: Texts, Theory, and Methods. Ed. Tess Cosslett, Celia Lury, and Penny Summerfield. Transformations: Thinking Through Feminism. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. 183-200.

Miki, Roy. Broken Entries: Race, Subjectivity, Writing: Essays. Toronto: Mercury, 1998.

Nguyen, Viet Thanh. Race and Resistance: Literature and Politics in North America. New York: Oxford UP, 2002.

Nicholson, Mervyn. "Lowther, Neruda, and the Secret Wisdom of Food." Essays on Canadian Writing 78 (Winter 2003): 220-242.

Peepre, Mari. "Resistance and the Demon Mother in Diaspora Literature: Sky Lee and Denise Chong Speak Back to the Mother/Land." International Journal of Canadian Studies 18 (Fall 1998): 79-92.

Quigley, Ellen. "Unveiling the Ghost: Denise Chong's feminist negotiations of Confusian autobiography in The Concubine's Children." Essays on Canadian Writing 63 (Spring 1998): 237-253.

Rojek, Chris. Leisure and Culture. Houndmills: Palgrave, 2000.

Rouse, Roger. "Thinking Through Transnationalism: Notes on the Cultural Politics of Class Relations in the Contemporary United States." Public Culture 7.2 (Winter 1995): 353-402.

Said, Edward W. Orientalism. New York: Pantheon, 1978.

Saul, Joanne. "Displacement and Self-Representation: Theorizing Contemporary Canadian Biotexts." Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly 24.1 (Winter 2001): 259-272.

Seiler, Tamara Palmer. "Melting Pot and Mosaic: Images and Realities." Canada and the United States: Differences that Count. Ed. Thomas, David M. 2nd ed. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2000. 97-120.

Shklovsky. Victor. "Art as Technique." Literary Theory: An Anthology. Rev. ed. Ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan. Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998. 17-23.

Siemerling, Winfried, ed. Writing Ethnicity: Cross-Cultural Consciousness in Canadian and Quebecois Literature. Toronto: ECW, 1996.

Skeggs, Beverly. Formations of Class & Gender: Becoming Respectable. London: SAGE, 1997.

Sugars, Cynthia. "'The Negative Capability of Camouflage': Fleeing Diaspora in Fred Wah's Diamond Grill." Studies in Canadian Literature 26.1 (Annual 2001): 27-45.

Suyama, Nobuaki. "The Evolving Pattern of Canada's Immigration Policy-Making." Australian-Canadian Studies Journal 15.2/16.1 (1997-98): 115-137.

Szeman, Imre. "Introduction: a Manifesto for Materialism." Essays on Canadian Writing 68 (Summer 1999): 1-18.

Tan, Jin. "Chinese Labour and the Reconstituted Social Order of British Columbia." Canadian Ethnic Studies 19.3 (1987): 68-88.

Tan, Jin and Patricia E. Roy. The Chinese in Canada. Ottawa: The Canadian Historical Association, 1985.

Tian, Guang. Chinese-Canadians, Canadian-Chinese: Coping and Adapting in North America. Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen, 1999.

Thomas, Helen and Jamilah Ahmed. "Introduction." Cultural Bodies: Ethnography and Theory. Ed. Helen Thomas and Jamilah Ahmed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004. 1-24.

Tu, Wei-ming. "The Confucian Tradition in Chinese History." Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization. Ed. Paul S. Ropp. Berkeley: U of California P, 1990. 112-137.

Ty, Eleanor. "Writing Historiographic Autoethnography: Denise Chong's The Concubine's Children." English Studies in Canada 28 (June 2002): 269-292.

Ty, Eleanor and Donald Goellnicht. "Introduction." Asian North American Identities: Beyond the Hyphen. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2004. 1-14.

Ulin, Robert. "Work as Cultural Production: Labour and Self-Identity Among Southwest French Wine-Growers." Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 8.4 (Dec 2002): 691-712.

Valverde, Mariana. The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991.

Vevaina, Coomi S. and Barbara Godard, ed. Intersexions: Issues of Race and Gender in Canadian Women's Writing. New Delhi: Creative, 1996.

Wah, Fred. Faking It: Poetics and Hybridity, Critical Writing 1984-1999. Edmonton: NeWest, 2000.

---. Diamond Grill. 1996. Edmonton: NeWest, 1997.

---. Waiting for Saskatchewan. Winnipeg: Turnstone, 1985.

Ward, W. Peter. White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Toward Orientals in British Columbia. 2nd ed. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1990.

Weiss, Brad. "Dressing at Death: Clothing, Time, and Memory in Buhaya, Tanzania." Clothing and Difference: Embodied Identities in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa. Ed. Hildi Hendrickson. Durham: Duke UP, 1996. 133-154.

Wickberg, Edgar. "Chinese Associations in Canada, 1923-1947." Visible Minorities and Multiculturalism: Asians in Canada. Ed. K. Victor Ujimoto and Gordon Hirabayashi. Toronto: Butterworth, 1980. 23-31.

Wong, Sau-ling C[ynthia]. "Denationalization Reconsidered: Asian American Cultural Criticism at a Theoretical Crossroads." Amerasia Journal 21.1/2 (1995): 1-27.

---. "Chinese American Literature." An Inter-ethnic Companion to Asian American Literature. Ed. King-kok Cheung. New York: Cambridge UP, 1997. 39-61.

---. "Immigrant Autobiography: Some Questions of Definition and Approach." Women, Autobiography, Theory: a Reader. Madison: The U of Wisconsin P, 1998. 299-320.

---. "Ethnic Subject, Ethnic Sign, and the Difficulty of Rehabilitative Representation: Chinatown in Some Works of Chinese American Fiction." The Yearbook of English Studies 24 (1994): 251-262.

---. "Autobiography as Guided Chinatown Tour? Maxine Hong Kingston's The Woman Warrior and the Chinese American Autobiography Controversy." Maxine H.

Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*: A Casebook. Ed. Sau-ling Cynthia Wong. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999. 29-56.

Yee, Paul. Breakaway. Toronto: Groundwood, 1994.

---. Saltwater City: an Illustrated History of the Chinese in Vancouver. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1988.

Yip, Yuen Chung. The Tears of Chinese Immigrants. Trans. Sheng-Tai Chang. 1959. Dunvegan, Ontario: Cormorant, 1990.

Yu, Miriam. "Human Rights, Discrimination, and Coping Behavior of the Chinese in Canada." Canadian Ethnic Studies 19.3 (1987): 114-124.

Zackodnik, Teresa. "Suggestive Voices from 'the Storeroom of the Past': Photography in Denise Chong's The Concubine's Children." Essays on Canadian Writing 72 (Winter 2000): 49-78.

Zhang, Benzi. "Identity as Cultural Trans(re)lation: Reading Asian Diasporic Literature in Canada." Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture 8.1 (July 1999): 35-49.

---. "Identity in Diaspora and Diaspora in Writing: the Poetics of Transrelation." Journal of Intercultural Studies 23.2 (Aug. 2000): 125-142.