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68240

NAME OF AUTHOR / NOM DE L'AUTEUR Kathleen Swee Yin Chen

TITLE OF THESIS / TITRE DE LA THÈSE British Columbia Fiction: Attitudes Towards Chinese

UNIVERSITY / UNIVERSITÉ Simon Fraser University

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED /  
GRADE POUR LEQUEL CETTE THÈSE FUT PRÉSENTÉE Master of English

YEAR THIS DEGREE CONFERRED / ANNÉE D'OBTENTION DE CE GRADE 1984

NAME OF SUPERVISOR / NOM DU DIRECTEUR DE THÈSE Professor Gordon Elliott

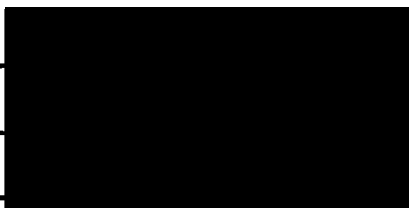
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BRITISH COLUMBIAN FICTION: ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHINESE

by

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B.A.

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department

of

English

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

July, 1984

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British Columbia Fiction: Attitudes Towards Chinese

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## ABSTRACT

British Columbian fiction accurately captures the broad outlines of British Columbian attitudes towards Chinese as dictated by the social and economic climate of the province. British Columbians already possessed a negative image of Chinese even before the Chinese themselves arrived. However, because the first Chinese arrived with the gold rush when the pickings were good, the Chinese did not pose a problem and therefore did not attract much attention. Although the first Chinese came in 1858, the first British Columbian novel to refer to them did not come off the press until 1896. As the economic conditions worsened in the early years of the new century, anger and prejudice against Chinese increased; novels such as Janet of Kootenay, The window gazer, The spoilers of the valley and The writing on the wall chart the increasing anti-Chinese sentiments of those years.

After the Exclusion Act of 1923 which stopped Chinese immigration into the country, anti-Chinese sentiments slowly died down. Gordon of the lost lagoon, Gold, gold in Cariboo!, The gleaming archway, Whispering leaves, The log of a lame duck, Cariboo runaway and Cariboo road reflect the general but definite move away from stereotyping to more balanced portrayals. As anger slowly faded so did interest. Except for the works of Ethel Wilson, the literary front from 1946 to the sixties is silent about the Chinese; after that only a few novels such as The stone angel and The big stuffed hand of friendship refer to them, and only in passing. However, with the

recent difficult economic times, at least one British Columbian  
writer has already returned to the stereotype: William Bejerell  
in Needles.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank both Prof. Gordon Elliott and Prof. David Stouck for their kind assistance in the completion of this thesis. Both of them read the manuscript critically and made many helpful recommendations and comments. Prof. Elliott has been especially generous with his time, resources AND GUIDANCE, ALL OF WHICH I greatly appreciate. I am grateful also to Prof. Kris Paulson for his moral support and encouragement throughout the writing of this thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their long support without which I would never have finished my programme here. God has indeed been gracious.



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## INTRODUCTION

The true literature of every country comes out of the experiences of its people; that literature, whether it be good or bad, should accurately reflect the thoughts and feelings of the nation for only if these thoughts and feelings are captured can the people identify with what is written. British Columbian fiction at least accurately reflects British Columbian attitudes towards Chinese and for that reason may be considered true literature. However, literature can also be used to change people's thinking, and British Columbian authors have at times presented and emphasized different images of Chinese in order to change British Columbian attitudes.

In each novel, many factors reveal the attitude towards Chinese. First is background. Historically British Columbia has held different attitudes towards Chinese at different places and during different periods, so that choice of setting, though not a determinant, strongly affects the attitude portrayed. Second is the integration or non-integration of Chinese into the plot and theme. Third is the characterization of Chinese in novels, whether flat or round, minor or major, good, evil or human.

The most important overall factor, however, is the author's language. Choice of expression, repetition of words, phrases and ideas, juxtaposition of passages, omission of information or emphasis on particular points all clearly reveal attitudes towards Chinese. Sometimes the author in his language unconsciously reveals his own deeply rooted feelings, thoughts

and attitudes, attitudes which that author himself may be wilfully trying to change in others. More often, though, the author consciously uses language to create and even to sell a particular image.

Before 1858, with the exception of Indians, the British colony on the West Coast of North America was a small Caucasian world; China and Chinese were far away across the Pacific Ocean. Even though aware of England's almost twenty-year old struggle with China for trading privileges, the staunch British residents of Fort Victoria had no reason to write extensively about the Orientals. In 1858, however, Chinese were among the first immigrants to trickle into British Columbia with the discovery of gold on the Fraser River in June. In a few months, the number of "Celestials" in British Columbia had swelled to hundreds; by 1870, there were 1,548.<sup>1</sup> Most of them slipped away to the "gold-flecked bars" of the Fraser while others settled into farming and some became washmen, house-servants or merchants.<sup>2</sup> Chinese quickly became a familiar sight to British Columbians.

British Columbians already possessed a mental image of Chinese before that first Chinese miner came into Victoria from

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<sup>1</sup> Wynne, R.E., Reaction to the Chinese in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia 1850-1910, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1964, p.497. See Appendix 1.

<sup>2</sup> Morton, James, In the sea of sterile mountains, (Vancouver: J.J. Douglas Ltd., 1974), p.7. Wynne's figures may not be accurate. Morton states that figures may have been exaggerated, or some arrivals may have been unreported. Also, no official records were kept of Chinese who walked across the border, who departed for China and San Francisco, or who simply died.

San Francisco. Right from the beginning Victorians treated Chinese with an "immediate disdain" which continued for almost a century. This attitude did not spring out of the blue but emerged from centuries of western history. Stuart Creighton Miller in The unwelcome immigrant states that historically the West has both idealized and scorned China.<sup>3</sup> Early travellers, Jesuit missionaries, and traders brought back favourable accounts of China's ancient greatness, hoary wisdom, culture, splendour, equitable system of justice, well-equipped and vast army and navy, system of government, law, and philosophy.<sup>4</sup> In the eighteenth century this image was replaced by one of a vile, heathen, stagnating, perverse, semi-civilized and over-populated China. English and American traders, some Protestant missionaries, and diplomats regarded Chinese as ridiculously clad, superstition-ridden, dishonest, crafty, cruel and cowardly. In the years following the Opium War, this negative image flourished with the aid of the penny press and the advent of the mass media. British Columbians were aware of and shared in this widespread consensus about Chinese, a consensus testified to by the Encyclopaedia Britannica: a Chinaman is "cold, cunning and distrustful; always ready to take advantage of those he had to deal with; extremely covetous and deceitful; quarrelsome, vindictive, but timid and dastardly. A Chinaman in

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<sup>3</sup> Miller, Stuart C., The unwelcome immigrant, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p.11.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

office is a strange compound of insolence and meanness. All ranks and conditions have a total disregard for truth."<sup>5</sup>

From the first arrival, the Chinese were suspect. However, these suspicions were latent, and although immigration increased daily, no serious problems developed. Chinese houseboys were initially made welcome: indeed, the possession of a Chinese house-servant became a sought-after status symbol. Having Chinese market gardeners and peddlers also pleased British Columbians. Besides being cooks, house-servants, laundrymen and market-gardeners, Chinese workers were in fish canneries, in coal mines and in sawmills. Chinese labour was largely responsible for the building of the Grand Trunk Road from the mouth of the Fraser to Hope; during the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, thousands of Chinese worked on the railway lines. The cheaper Chinese labour which continued to pour into British Columbia from China soon competed directly with white labour. This competition quickly aroused anti-Chinese sentiments, always greatest in the towns into which Chinese were first imported as cheap labour.

Frustrated by a Dominion government which refused to limit the entrance of "Chinese coolies" and by a class of greedy businessmen who preferred higher profits to hiring white labour, British Columbians voiced their increasing hostility to Chinese through newspapers and politicians. Whereas times of prosperity allowed British Columbians to be relatively objective, times of -----  
<sup>5</sup> "China", Encyclopaedia Britannica 7th edition Vol.VI, (1842).

economic hardship awakened memories of the semi-civilized, perverse and filthy Chinese, and thus brought to surface those latent racial prejudices. A common cry was that "the Mongolian labourer" has "no wife and children to feed and clothe and educate, no church to maintain, no Sunday clothes to buy, saves nearly all he earns, is a useless member of society and finally carries with him all his boardings home to China."<sup>6</sup>

Attention, therefore, focussed on the vices of Chinese. Fear and suspicion exaggerated the enormity of those vices: Chinese brothels were more evil than white brothels; stories circulated about decent white ladies being lured to a "fate worse than death" and of innocent youths being tempted and tainted. Living conditions in Chinatown also disgusted whites: "a small home will shelter twenty Chinese who will sleep four in a bed in an atmosphere that would stifle a white person."<sup>7</sup> Chinese gambled, used human excrement in their vegetable plots, promoted opium; one solitary case of suspected leprosy sparked widespread fears of an epidemic. British Columbians thought of

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<sup>6</sup> Morton, p.37.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.59. This term "white" is a difficult term to use. Though a racist word referring to the skin-colour of Caucasians, it is acceptable and is frequently used even by Caucasians: for example, here by Morton. Yet the similar term "yellow" when applied to Chinese is derogatory. The difference lies in the different connotations behind the words. "White" conjures the picture of western superiority and power, as in Lothrop Stoddard's The rising tide of colour against white world-supremacy, whereas "yellow" conjures the picture of hordes of unsanitary and immoral Asians. Since the term "white" is acceptable, this study will continue in using it although without the connotation of superiority or power.

Chinese coolies as slaves, and at a rally in Victoria a speaker sympathetic towards Chinese was "shouted down with cries of 'Hurl him from our midst! Let the slave owners look after the slaves.'"<sup>8</sup> A newspaper proclaimed that "Chinatown is universally voted a nuisance...in every shape, sense or manner. Pigs are fed in the streets in front of the buildings; there is no regular sidewalk, the drainage is corrupted with animals and every kind of filth; in short, every inconvenience and disagreeable characteristic of a semi-barbarous race is present in Chinatown."<sup>9</sup> Another newspaper even condemned the formerly exalted house-servants: "A Chinese boy brought up in an English family and treated with the consideration most English people have for their own servants, does not appear to become attached to the family"; instead, British Columbians see them as planning and executing "murders and robberies."<sup>10</sup>

Although British Columbians sang their complaints against Chinese loud and clear during tough economic times, seldom did the average middle-class British Columbian raise a hand against any Chinese. Railroad labourers, children and teenagers, however, often physically abused them, sometimes burned them out of their homes or ran them out of town. The most frequent incidents were of Chinese being beaten, hit with snowballs or,

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.138.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.23.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p.157

in one instance in Nanaimo, pelted with chunks of coal.<sup>11</sup>

No novelists writing before 1896 made any reference to Chinese. This silence is not surprising, for although Chinese made up 18 per cent of the total population of British Columbia in 1870, this figure dropped to 8.79 per cent in 1881 and from then on steadily decreased to 4.9 per cent in 1921.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the first Chinese immigrants were mainly gold-miners, laundrymen, houseboys, cooks, market-gardeners or merchants; only novelists writing about circumstances where Chinese would naturally be found had any reason to include them. Few writers came into direct contact with Chinese individuals: writers heard stories about them, read newspaper articles about them or maybe saw them from across the street. Of those writers who did deal with Chinese on a personal basis, the relationship was almost unfailingly based on business: master or mistress to servant or vendor. The first novel with a mention of Chinese is The madonna of a day by Lily Dougall in 1896. From 1896 till the present, a total of forty novels referring to Chinese emerged.<sup>13</sup> The very existence of such a meagre number of novels most of which have but passing acknowledgments of the presence of Chinese in the one-and-a-quarter centuries of Chinese history in

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.65.

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>13</sup> All the main novels with reference to Chinese have been included in this study. Although other novels may exist, they have no substantial reference to Chinese and therefore will not affect this study. See Appendix 2 for a list of the forty novels.



British Columbia attest to the relative lack of importance of Chinese to white British Columbians, and to white British Columbian writers.

Between 1896 and the mid-nineteen forties, nineteen writers produced twenty-eight novels. Only in ten of these novels, however, do Chinese play significant roles. Of the remaining novels, references range from a passing acknowledgment to the existence of Chinese to scattered, though revelatory, statements about Chinese by both the characters in the novel and the author himself. The frequency of novels published in this fifty-year period peaks from 1919 to 1921: five novels in three years. Except in those novels by Ethel Wilson, Chinese disappear from the literary scene for a period of sixteen years, until 1962. Yet when they do reappear, Chinese are still generally relegated to minor and stereotyped roles.

This pattern of appearance and disappearance roughly corresponds to the attention British Columbians paid to Chinese. Although the first arrived in 1858, they took over thirty-five years to emerge in the literature. Novels mentioning Chinese continue to appear sporadically through the years. Then, between 1919 and 1923 increasing opposition to Orientals from veterans and businessmen came as a result of the post-war scarcity of jobs.<sup>14</sup> During the war Chinese had taken greater control of the fruit and vegetable business: 90 per cent of the produce supplied to the Vancouver market was Chinese-grown; more than 55

<sup>14</sup> Morton, p.266.

per cent of the potatoes.<sup>15</sup> Statistics of this kind were printed boldly in the newspapers for every citizen to read.

Consequently, the already existing high anti-Oriental feelings increased and culminated in the Exclusion Act of 1923.

The British Columbian literary front reflects the post-war concern about the Chinese. Chinese play substantial roles in novels released in the immediate pre-Exclusion Act years: Sing and Tom in Frederick Niven's The lady of the crossing (1919), Chow in Evah M. McKowan's Janet of Kootenay (1919), Li Ho in Isabel Ecclestone McKay's The window gazer (1921) and Ah Sing in Robert Watson's The spoilers of the valley (1921); Hilda Glynn-Ward in The writing on the wall (1921) takes on the whole Chinese community, her novel being wholly centered upon the issue of Chinese immigration. This sudden emergence of a batch of novels which pushes Chinese significantly to the forefront of attention clearly reflects the peaking of anti-Chinese feelings during those years.

With the Exclusion Act, British Columbians could rest from their worries that their province would become "the domain of...yellow races."<sup>16</sup> As a result, both the number of novels and the anti-Chinese sentiments expressed slowly decreased in the years after the Exclusion Act. For a brief period from 1928 to 1937, however, attention again focussed on Chinese because they were spreading into the retail business outside Chinatown and

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 233, p.235.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p.238.

into the territory of white businessmen. This tempest blew over as Chinese became westernized.<sup>17</sup> The Second World War further occupied the minds of white British Columbian residents, and removed the spotlight from Chinese. As time passed, a new generation of both white and Chinese were born, raised and educated together in an atmosphere relatively free of the constant agitation earlier caused by repeated attempts to legislate Chinese out of the country.<sup>18</sup> In the same way as the newspapers had lost their voices on the issue of Chinese immigration after 1923, so too a silence, except by Ethel Wilson, fell upon the literary front after 1946, a silence to last until that new generation became mature enough to begin contributing in 1962.

Of the twenty-nine authors who since 1896 have written with reference to Chinese, only a handful have any significant literary standing. Some authors such as Hilda Glynn-Ward, Alex Philip, Roy V. Brandon, Charlotte Gordon and M.B. Gaunt are not even mentioned in the Literary history of Canada edited by Carl F. Klinck. Although some such as Frederick Niven, Lily Dougall and Robert E. Knowles were prolific, few were good; many wrote sensational melodrama or didactic and moralistic fiction that falls far below art. Only Frederick Niven, Bertrand W. Sinclair, Alan Sullivan, M. Allerdale Grainger, Ethel Wilson and Margaret Laurence have achieved any literary recognition.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.248.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.242.

With the exception of the small number of novels in which Chinese play a more significant role, most British Columbian authors deal with Chinese only in passing. Chinese restaurants appear frequently, and in M. Allerdale Grainger's Woodsmen of the west chopsticks in a secluded lumber camp are enough to attest to the existence and pervasiveness of the Chinese.<sup>19</sup> Most authors use Chinese for local colour, to give authenticity, to be part of the scenery, the background of the plot.<sup>20</sup> His presence is acknowledged, but merely acknowledged. He has no face, no distinguishing characteristics, no thoughts or feelings: indeed, frequently he does not even have a name. He is just an "antiquated Chinese cook" who comes out of a door in Niven's Wild honey; "an icy John Chinaman, whose Oriental art in cooking was the envy of every other chef in Lilton" in Brandon's A river of gold; Lawanne's "Chinese boy", otherwise known as "that Chink" or "China-boy" in Sinclair's The hidden places; "the Chinaman washing for gold on the banks of the Fraser", "the Chinaman ... weeding the flower borders," "the Chinese cook in the big summer kitchen" in Julia W. Henshaw's Why not sweetheart. In Redgold Charlotte Gordon is typical of British Columbian writers in that her few references to Chinese place them as part of the general picture: "pioneers, cowboys, cowgirls, cattle

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<sup>19</sup> Grainger, M. Allerdale, Woodsmen of the west, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964), p.28.

<sup>20</sup> Hiebert, A., "The Oriental as he appears in some of the novels of British Columbia", British Columbia library quarterly 34, April 1971, p.20.

barons, agriculturists, Indians, Chinaman, Japanese, Mounted police."<sup>21</sup> Sometimes the Chinese does have a name, but that is about all he possesses. Pong Sam in Woodsmen of the west has a name, but only a name. He is merely the cook who "would be busy at his stove --flapping hot-cakes with swift, sure movements, bringing plates piled with them to the table, answering calls for tea and coffee."<sup>22</sup>

An author describing the Chinese usually sees the stereotype and records only the outward physical appearance. The Chinese usually wears the typical "wide-sleeved blue coat" and "baggy trousers"; he sometimes has on a conical straw hat and straw slippers; he is often an "immobile-featured Celestial" with "a face of true Oriental impassiveness", whose sedate shuffling walk sometimes breaks into a peculiar "jog-trot...neither a walk nor a run." <sup>23</sup> He might have "a pole across his shoulders, from each end of which...dangles a basket filled with fish or vegetable," or he might ride a bicycle down the street, "a clay pipe jutting from his mouth."<sup>24</sup> His speech is "excited jabbering" or a sing-song chant, his singing a

<sup>21</sup> Gordon, Charlotte, Redgold, (Vancouver: Sun Publishing Company Limited, 1928), p.91.

<sup>22</sup> Grainger, p.70, p.88.

<sup>23</sup> Miven, Fredrick, The transplanted, (Toronto: Collins, 1944), p.19; Sullivan, Alan, Cariboo road, (Toronto: Thomas Nelson, 1946), p.35; Sinclair, Bertrand W., Big timber, (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1916), p.122; Philip, Alex, The crimson west, (Ottawa: Graphic Publishers, 1927), p.17; Watson, Robert, Gordon of the lost lagoon, (New York: Minton, Balch and Company, 1924), p.13.

<sup>24</sup> Philip, The crimson west, p.17.

"high-pitched nasal tone."<sup>25</sup>

These descriptions are relatively impartial though because they describe only the outward appearance. When authors move beyond superficial description, they display their mixed feelings towards Chinese. Lily Dougall is ambiguous in her depiction of Chinese miners in The madonna of a day. She seems to empathize with Chinese, recognizing their situation as strangers "in the midst of a foreign land" so that unusual happenings would not "seem beyond the range of explicable things."<sup>26</sup> Dougall deliberately distinguishes between the protagonist's perception of Chinese and her own. Whereas to the protagonist Chinese grins are "horrid grimaces" which appear to be "insulting", Dougall clarifies that "perhaps" they were "natural smile(s) of welcome."<sup>27</sup> Yet, Dougall herself describes Chinese as "grotesque" with "ugly features", avid gamblers indifferent to all else but their game, and living in huts that have a "foul reek" and are bathed in "gloom" and "smoke".<sup>28</sup>

Although the main part of The singer of the Kootenay is set in a mining town in British Columbia, normally a place teeming with Chinese miners, Robert Knowles refers to Chinese only once

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<sup>25</sup> Watson, Gordon of the lost lagoon, p.145; Niven, The transplanted, p.19; Philip, The painted cliff, (Toronto: Thomas Allen, 1925), p.27.

<sup>26</sup> Dougall, Lily, The madonna of a day, (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1896), p.69.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p.68.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

in the entire novel, and then as "smiling and stealthy," a phrase clearly exhibiting the supreme confidence he has that his readers share and will identify with his sentiments.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, antagonism often rises against Chinese railroad labourers who compete for jobs with white men: in Woodsmen of the West, a labourer vents his frustration at "being broke" in what he calls "that blank-blank Chinaman's country."<sup>30</sup> The land is "Chinaman's country" because so many Chinese work for cheaper pay that white men cannot find jobs, and starve. In contrast, Chinese are readily accepted as house-servants because they have no competition for such jobs. Sinclair writes in Big timber that Chinese are "such a domestic treasure as only the trained Oriental can be, a bland, silent-footed model of efficiency in personal service."<sup>31</sup> In Alex Philip's The painted cliff, being rich enough to have such "a sack o' chicamin on this table that'll bust its legs" includes the luxury of being able to "have half a dozen slant-eyed Orientals to wait on you in a big house."<sup>32</sup> A home is not perfect without "a Chinese servant in the kitchen."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Knowles, Robert E., The singer of the Kootenay, (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1911), p.111.

<sup>30</sup> Grainger, p.40.

<sup>31</sup> Sinclair, Big timber, p.122.

<sup>32</sup> Philip, The painted cliff, p. 41.

<sup>33</sup> Sinclair, Big timber, P.121.

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A typical portrait of Chinatown is in Robert W. Service's novel The trail of ninety-eight: underground warrens, opium joints, gambling dens, flaunted vice. Service wonders why white women lived there, and why they hid at the sight of him.<sup>34</sup> Not only is Chinatown secretly riddled with underground haunts, its rampant vice demoralizes innocent white youths, and white women who have been most likely forced into shameful prostitution.

Most authors, with few notable exceptions, characterize Chinese according to the negative stereotype. Of the exceptions, even when authors consciously try to remain impartial or repudiate the prejudice towards Chinese, these authors do not go beyond merely describing the outward physical appearance. Only two authors, Evah M. McKowan and Ethel Wilson, portray Chinese as complex human beings.

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<sup>34</sup> Service, Robert W., The trail of ninety-eight, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1911), p.12.



## Chapter 1

The years after World War 1 saw increased opposition to Orientals because of a scarcity of jobs in the post-war depression. The literature of British Columbia reflects this peaking of anti-Oriental sentiments. Novels of the early nineteen hundreds present stereotyped Chinese characters: novels by Lily Dougall, Frederick Niven, Robert Service, Robert E. Knowles and Roger Pocock. In the light of contemporary books, Evah M. McKowan's Janet of Kootenay published in 1919 is highly unusual because it presents a rounded Chinese character, Chow the farm-hand. However, anti-Chinese sentiments continued to increase so that in 1921 alone, three books with significant references to Chinese appeared. The window gazer by Isabel Ecclestone McKay tries to repudiate the stereotype of Chinese and the biased sentiments of British Columbians. Nevertheless, McKay's book is not effective and pales besides Robert Watson's The spoilers of the valley and Hilda Glynn-Ward's The writing on the wall. Both these books sought to "persuade white British Columbians to be vigilant lest greedy politicians sell them out to the Orientals and endeavoured 'to awaken those unbelievers in Eastern Canada who still wonder why the West is crying out on its knees for new immigration regulations!'"<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Pat Roy, intro., The writing on the wall by Hilda Glynn-Ward, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), p.vi.

McKowan's depicting of Chow is without any preconceived negative image of Chinese. Janet of Kootenay is the first British Columbian novel consistently presenting a Chinese with understanding and at depth. For the first time, a Chinese character in a British Columbian novel is a real person and not one just playing a brief and stereotyped role. The novel is in the form of a series of letters by Janet Kirk, the owner of a farm, to her friend. Whereas other novels generally refer to Chinese servants but rarely, and even that only in passing, McKowan's portrait of Chow is deliberate and balanced. She carefully plants references to Chow in almost every letter so that the reader is constantly reminded of Chow's presence and contribution to the farm. Janet recounts Chow's daily activities, from his initial appearance to the end of the season when she dismisses him, just as she recounts her own activities and her interactions with her neighbours. Furthermore, these recountings are often detailed: McKowan even shows Janet in conversation with Chow. Each reference adds more information about Chow until he becomes a complete person, not just the "farm-hand".

Chow is hard-working and diligent. Being the only employee he is responsible for all the work on the farm. McKowan details every one of Chow's tasks: Chow carries down blasted rocks for pillars at the gate; Chow feeds the chickens; Chow plants the fruit trees; Chow hoes the garden; Chow prunes the trees; Chow washes the dishes; Chow plants "one land with carrots and beets,

one with turnips and mangolds and one with corn, with pumpkins and squash among the rows"; Chow milks the cow; Chow "harrows the soil that the early corn, celery and tomatoes will be planted in"; Chow does the harvesting; Chow packs the harvested vegetables and fruits into boxes; Chow sends the boxes to the train. He fulfils these responsibilities to the best of his ability and, because of his diligence, often masters the skill needed. Janet tells her friend, "I wonder if I will ever get to be expert enough to keep up with Chow in planting. He goes so quickly that I cannot keep anywhere near him." <sup>36</sup> Chow is thorough in everything he does: he digs the asparagus bed "to the depth of eighteen inches with fertilizer well worked in." <sup>37</sup> Again, Janet says, "If Chow is expert in anything it is in getting soil into a perfect condition. Sometimes I think he is slow but he says, 'If I go slow, plants will hurry.'" <sup>38</sup> Unlike Janet, Chow knows his patience will be rewarded in the long run. Even the white men acknowledge that Chow does his work well. They urge Janet to have Chow help her plant the hedge because Chow can be relied on to plant in a straight line.

Chow is conscientious; he does not wait to be told before he does a job. In fact, by the time Janet realizes she should

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<sup>36</sup> McKowan, Evah, Janet of Kootenay, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1919), p. 133.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

prune her tomato plants, Chow "had made a good beginning."<sup>39</sup> Indeed, Chow is often more conscientious than Janet herself. In contrast to Chow's religiously attending to every plant, Janet herself admits that "I am slighting it, hoping that a cutworm will not find that special plant or deciding that, if my time is worth anything, I can replace a few plants and still be ahead."<sup>40</sup> Janet would rather plant roses than "decide whether Chow is to put potatoes or beets first and where." Chow does not allow Janet to neglect her responsibilities on the farm, however, insisting, "That do any time. You come see what I do." Janet reluctantly obeys: "Chow is an autocrat, and an autocrat with right on his side has never...been unseated."<sup>41</sup> Chow has "right on his side" because the potatoes and beets are more important than roses; potatoes and beets are Janet's livelihood whereas roses are but for fun. Janet calls Chow an "autocrat", not a "tyrant" or a "dictator". These two words have negative connotations whereas "autocrat" is an objective word. Besides, Janet's statement is a gentle tease, a reflection of her own tug-of-war between fun and work: Indeed, "autocrat" is a tribute to Chow's diligence.

McKowan could be criticized for creating a perfect servant. Twice she emphasizes Chow's skill never once does she suggest that Chow shirks his work. McKowan's portrayal, however, is not

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 198.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

far from reality. Chinese had already earned a reputation for being ideal servants, and their industry and perseverance in all they did was universally acknowledged.

McKowan does not depend solely on her presentation of a diligent and responsible Chinese to negate the stereotype, but also depicts Chow as an individual, an ordinary human being with ordinary human emotions. McKowan is rare in her perception of such emotion as shyness and loneliness in the solitary Chinese immigrant and shows a great understanding of his psychology. Instead of a cold and emotionless Chinaman, Chow "mournfully" buries four dead chickens. \*<sup>2</sup> Chow is "almost as excited about the fireplace" as Janet. \*<sup>3</sup> He proves this excitement by his faithful daily trudge to carry down stones to build the fireplace despite his busy routine. Later, when the fireplace is completed, he donates "a Chinese basket...for the fireplace wood."\*<sup>4</sup> In his excitement he even takes part in the ceremony of lighting the first fire but, despite his interest, his shyness prevents his joining his employer in the meal following. Instead, "he gratefully took his portion and trotted down to the squatter's shack, where he lives, looking very lonesome." \*<sup>5</sup> Chow has shared briefly in human fellowship, but knows that his sharing has a limit for he is but the Chinese farm-hand. His

\*<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.53.

\*<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.60.

\*<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.80.

\*<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.64.

brief fellowship brings a remembrance of a better fellowship he cannot have now with his own family across the ocean: therefore the loneliness.

Chow is also an individual with very definite ideas. When Janet mistakenly thanks Chow for chopping off the top of the fourth cedar, Chow "disclaimed any...such foolishness".<sup>46</sup> Having climbed the top of one cedar tree and found the job "pretty shaky and breath-taking", Chow had "pronounced that as 'enough for one day' with much finality."<sup>47</sup> Experience making him wiser, he has formed his own opinion of anyone foolish enough to attempt the same act. His pronouncement that Mr. Saundry and Mr. Gordon, who might have done the job, are both "scosh" is a reflection of that firm opinion. Chow is not afraid to proclaim his opinion despite Saundry and Gordon being his employer's friends. When Janet first suggests to him that he "get up early and then sleep in the heat of the day," Chow "decidedly" shakes his head, saying "No, no....Daytime sleep no good."<sup>48</sup> Even after the heat forces him to capitulate and Chow does wake up at five o'clock, he refuses to change his opinion that daytime naps are "no good" and will not sleep.

Chow is also vocal and expressive in his dislike for Mrs. Good, a neighbour. His reaction to Mrs. Good's complaint that smoke from burning tree stumps was blowing her way is a definite

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p.71.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p.28.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p.207.

"Hell". Janet reprimands him: "Chow!....Men in this country do not say that to ladies." But, Janet does not squelch him, for at the first sign of a northeast wind blowing in the direction of the Goods Chow "lit fire to every pile on the place. The piles were green and little inclined to burn, but the snoke!" \*\* Chow makes no apologies for his act of retribution; indeed, he goes off planning further schemes against Mrs. Good. Chow is human in his reaction: to those who treat him well he shows the utmost loyalty, but woe to those who step on his tail. His actions are consistent with his personality. Here McKowan has no intention of reproducing the stereotype of the evil and malicious Chinese: her account is humorous, and invites the reader to laugh with Chow rather than at Chow. Because Mrs. Good is prejudiced and selfish, the reader sympathizes with Chow and even derives satisfaction from his act of retribution. After all, Chow acted out of loyalty to Janet.

McKowan's portrayal of Chow is complete: not only is he a good worker, an ordinary man with human feelings and an individual with his own peculiar traits, Chow also has a sense of humour. On seeing Janet's pound of sunflower seeds, Chow laughs long and heartily: "'You no need him half,' he said, when he could explain himself." McKowan's portrait is all the more real because of Janet's claim that she "had not thought he

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\*\* Ibid., p.59.

possessed such a thing as a sense of humour."<sup>50</sup> This statement places Janet as an ordinary British Columbian, who though not prejudiced nevertheless still has her preconceived ideas of Chinese. Janet's reaction ironically makes Chow's sense of humour more easily believable.

McKowan criticizes British Columbians for their prejudice. Mrs. Good calls Chinese "heathens".<sup>51</sup> Through Chow, McKowan's criticism of her, and of similar British Columbians, is severe and to the point: "What for she go church all time? She get no good."<sup>52</sup> Mrs. Good claims to be a faithful Christian and, pharisee that she is, keeps to every letter of the law of decency. Yet, she has missed the crux of Christ's teaching: to love others as Christ has loved her. McKowan's criticism is doubly effective because it comes from the mouth of Chow, that "heathen".

Both Janet's Aunt Abigail and Janet's cousin Andrew, like Mrs. Good, are "doubly, trebly scandalised that a heathen Chinese lives right on the same place" as Janet; both would launch on lengthy tirades against Chow, against all Chinese in British Columbia and against China itself.<sup>53</sup> McKowan contrasts Chow and Andrew. Unlike Chow who serves Janet diligently and responsibly and loyally, Andrew, the "under, under secretary in the Legation

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p.109.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p.60.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p.65.



at Peking" probably does otherwise in his service in China. Janet's comment that she "hoped that Andrew served as faithfully and lived as decently among the Chinese as Chow does in Canada" is clearly tinged with sarcasm.

Like McKowan, Isabel Ecclestone McKay in The window gazer consciously rejects many of the prejudiced views and practises associated with Chinese through her portrayal of Li Ho, an affectionate, loyal and devoted servant who faithfully carries out his responsibilities, putting even his own life in danger in the process. McKay, for instance, censures the accepted practise of calling Chinese servants "boy". In both phrases in which "boy" appears, McKay leaves the word in quotation marks: "All the old-time Chinese 'boys' served tea as a matter of course"; "the appearance of the 'boy' reputed to belong to Dr. Farr."<sup>54</sup> The quotation marks set apart the word, thus implying that it should be and is unusual. McKay further shows her disapproval through "reputed". By saying "reputed to belong to Dr. Farr" instead of "Dr. Farr's boy", McKay emphasizes the fiction behind the alleged possession. McKay then juxtaposes this phrase with the comment "How old he was no one could have guessed" to show the silliness of calling a full-grown man "boy".<sup>55</sup>

In a passage about caring for children, McKay censures too the ignorant stereotyping of Chinese and the blind prejudice

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<sup>54</sup> McKay, Isabel Ecclestone, The window gazer, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1921), p.162, p.10.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p.10

against them. <sup>56</sup> McKay's light mockery of the character Aunt Caroline is unmistakable. Aunt Caroline's horrified expression on realizing the child Desire was brought up by a Chinese is grossly ironical in the light of Li Ho's obvious loyalty and devotion to Desire and her father. Even more ironical is Aunt Caroline's question about the child's having an aunt. McKay has already shown the stifling nature of Aunt Caroline's love and concern for her own nephew Spence, who "tries to escape her presence at every opportunity available" and is so desperate that "he was ready to like anything which was strikingly different from Aunt Caroline."<sup>57</sup> Her high regard for "Aunts", with a capital "A", especially aunts after her own heart, is therefore laughable. McKay shows Li Ho to be just as effective and affectionate a guardian as Aunt Caroline sees herself to be. Spence tells a white lie designed to humour his aunt's offended sense of morality and decency; this lie magnifies the foolishness of her horror over Li Ho.

Stereotyping is not limited to "maiden aunts" but insidiously permeates even to the educated white Canadian.<sup>58</sup> Spence, an educated and somewhat literary man, becomes irritated and angered by what he calls Li Ho's "celestial impudence." Like most other white British Columbians, Spence feels superior to his "yellow brother" such that "it went against the grain" to be

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p.137.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p.44.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p.91-92.

forced into doing something by a Chinese even though he essentially agrees with the Chinese. Similarly, although Spence's comment about Li Ho being "a Chink, but...human" seems commendatory, the word "Chink" is still condescending. <sup>59</sup>

McKay reproves her reader not only by exposing negative stereotypes but also by portraying a positive Chinese character. Li Ho can "speak perfectly good English if he wishes" and "certainly understands it." <sup>60</sup> He understands even the faintest shades of meaning in measured and academic speech. Furthermore, Li Ho is unusual in that he can write English. Indeed, "if the clear expression of thought constitutes good English, Li Ho's English is excellent." <sup>61</sup>

Li Ho is loyal and devoted to Dr. Farr, serving Dr. Farr even when Dr. Farr's "moon-devil" fits gradually take greater hold. Although Li Ho could have packed his bags and handed in his resignation at the first sign of Dr. Farr's illness, he of his own accord takes on the responsibility of protecting Desire and her mother from Dr. Farr, and the responsibility of the daily care and surveillance of Dr. Farr. Although no one blames Li Ho for the death of Desire's mother, Li Ho "blamed himself terribly.... [saying] it was his fault." <sup>62</sup> Li Ho feels responsible because he had been forced to stay away from the

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p57.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p.90.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p.210.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p.215.

home all night, and therefore was not there to watch over Dr. Farr when he was seized by epilepsy, or to protect Desire's mother from Dr. Farr's threat. Even following her death, Li Ho's job is still two-fold. After Dr. Farr's mind becomes unbalanced, Li Ho faithfully follows and watches after him, accompanying him closely "when the restlessness came on."<sup>63</sup> Indeed, Li Ho takes such good care of Dr. Farr that Desire calls him her "father's man."<sup>64</sup> At the same time, Li Ho fulfills his self-imposed responsibility of caring for Desire: he brings her up, making sure he always knows where to find her in case Dr. Farr has one of his attacks and turns violent. Recognizing Dr. Farr's weeping on being told Desire's matrimonial intentions as a sign of grave danger, Li Ho takes no chances but forces Desire and Spence to leave immediately. Li Ho continues to protect Desire by warning Spence and her, through letters, not to return. When Dr. Farr threatens to kill Desire on her unexpected return Li Ho is forced to fight and finally to kill him, incurring physical injury to himself. Li Ho is devoted to Dr. Farr, but when the doctor's mental illness means danger for Desire, Li Ho does all he can to protect her.

His loyalty to the dead man is evident. When asked by Spence to describe the events of the night which led to Dr. Farr's death, Li Ho is uncommunicative and evasive about how the death happened, about the fight in the kitchen, and about his

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p.214.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p.68.

ripped coat, blaming the moon devil, admitting to no fight and saying the coat had been caught in a bush. Although a possible reason for Li Ho's reluctance to explain the way the fight really began and the events following could be his fear of legal retribution if Spence were to press charges and stand witness, Spence's own fear for Desire's safety, Li Ho's sorrow over Dr. Farr's death and his consistent devotion to the dead man make this explanation unlikely. Li Ho is more likely trying to minimize his part in the protection of Desire, and trying to protect Dr. Farr's reputation. Li Ho's sorrow over Dr. Farr's death is obvious. He has a "curious lost look" and has to blink "rapidly" to force back tears. His only comment about Dr. Farr is, "He velly good man one time....all same before moon-devil catch 'um." <sup>65</sup> Li Ho's eulogy shows his deep affection and loyalty to the dead man: even knowing that Dr. Farr was responsible for the death of Desire's mother and that Dr. Farr has been extorting money from Desire's real grandparents for years, and even after fighting and killing Dr. Farr, Li Ho's only thought is for the life wasted, for the "velly good man" that has been swallowed up by the years of illness.

McKay herself, nevertheless, falls into the trap of stereotyping in several instances. Besides having "all the Oriental passion for fan-tan," Li Ho is "the eternal Sphinx wrapped in an everlasting yesterday"; he does not "have even a

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p.298-299.

beginning" but was "always there."<sup>66</sup> The "yellow parchment of his face was ageless; ageless also the inscrutable, blank eyes."<sup>67</sup> Despite her intentional denial of Li Ho's inscrutability in the description of his emotional response to Dr. Farr's death, McKay herself unconsciously uses the stereotype: Li Ho "keeps his secrets"; he possesses a "Chinese inscrutability"; Spence feels "his inscrutable eyes on his face"; Li Ho's eyes "looked blandly" into Spence's eyes; in the half-light the "inscrutable face" changes ever so little; Li Ho's "inscrutable, oriental eyes look for a moment into the frank eyes of the white man."<sup>68</sup> McKay undoubtedly presents this inscrutability as a racial trait, "the product of forces we can only guess at", not just an individual's eccentricity: one man, after "twenty years in China" learned that "the Oriental mind is beyond understanding."<sup>69</sup>

Like a Sphinx, Li Ho "knows everything", probably because he "never listens but he always hears."<sup>70</sup> Even if not told, "he will know anyway."<sup>71</sup> His knowledge extends from the profound and mysterious to the trivial: he knows the story behind the doctor's illness and disturbing behaviour, and always knows

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p.214.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p.10.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p.68, p.75, p.96, p.297, p.298.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p.68.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p.57.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p.75.

where to find Desire when she vanishes. Consequently, Li Ho appears in the right place at the right time: he saves Spence from the "staring-down" duel with the doctor by a timely arrival.

McKay's endeavour to counteract the strong anti-Oriental sentiments which pervade British Columbia in 1921 is commendable. But, her effort is not very effective. McKay fights a losing battle partly because the general prevailing sentiments are so strongly and pervasively against Chinese. Her censure is light in comparison to the tirades levelled against Chinese not only by novelists of her day but also by newspapers and magazines and politicians. Of greater importance, though, is her own succumbing to stereotyping. Despite her recognition of the stereotype, McKay is still ensnared by a bias that leads to the perpetuation of stereotyping.

In contrast to McKay, Robert Watson, in The Spoilers of the Valley published in 1921, vehemently denigrates everything Chinese, from Chinese music to Chinese marriages. He sees nothing admirable in the Chinese people: instead, he shows them as liquor lovers, thieves and superstitious fools. Watson reiterates every prejudice connected with Chinese, and repeats the usual reasons for desiring them out of the country: they are dangerous to Canadian society.

Watson is the only author who devotes significant attention to Chinese arts. He suggests that Chinese music is mere noise unpleasant to the ear. Sing sits before his stove "scraping away

on a Chinese fiddle, bringing the most unearthly cat-calls from the thing and singing to himself in a thin falsetto voice."<sup>72</sup> Watson's choice of "scrape" to describe the movement of Sing's bow on "the thing" is deliberate because only "scraping" can produce such "unearthly cat-calls." Sing's voice is "thin", stereotypical of the familiar Chinese operatic voice Canadians see as natural to all Chinese.

In the same vein is his description of Chinese drama. The theatre is "very badly lighted"; uncomfortable, "rough, wooden, backless benches" pass for seats.<sup>73</sup> Unlike in Western drama, the scenery on stage "required no description, being merely a number of plain, movable partitions, draught-screens and chairs."<sup>74</sup> More incomprehensible is the lack of a drop-curtain, so that scene shifters "worked in full view of the audience, removing furniture and knocking down partitions with hammers during the vocal rendering of some of the thrilling passages of the opera."<sup>75</sup> The Chinese "equivalent of a prima-donna" is dressed most gaudily in "silks emblazoned with gold spangles, tinsel and glass jewels, with a strange head-dress, three feet high, consisting of feathers and pom-poms."<sup>76</sup> Although considered a

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<sup>72</sup> Watson, Robert, The spoilers of the valley, (New York: A.L. Burt Company, 1921), p.301.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p.128.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p.130.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p.129.



"famous beauty", her face is artificially "painted and powdered to a mere mask." Her fingernails, an unnatural "two inches longer" than her even more unnatural "four-inch-long feet", make "flesh creep."

Watson implies that Chinese actors do not take their profession seriously. When a duel occurs on stage, the Empress' retinue "came out from the wings specially to witness the sight," as do the "rank and file of the Royal Bodyguard --with emphasis on the rank" who "stood idly by enjoying the spectacle." <sup>77</sup> For Watson, the actors seem to have turned audience; they have no discipline or order. Actors come on stage not because they are to be there according to the script but simply because they do not want to miss witnessing a scene. Watson's unnecessarily pejorative highlighting of "rank" emphasizes his negative depicting of the actors. Similarly, his statement that the Captain of the Guard, "as soon as he had finished dying, rose to his feet and walked calmly off the stage," ~~mocks~~ both the apparently lengthy time taken for the Captain to die and his breaking the illusion by walking off the stage afterward. <sup>78</sup>

As for musical accompaniment, the orchestra makes no attempt to complement the singing but instead makes "strenuous, and at times, very effective attempts to drown the squeals of

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

the Leading Lady." 79 The orchestra itself is in discord, each instrument following its own timing with no overall harmony. The conductor was "laying on, alternately, to a Chinese drum and what looked like two empty coconut shells, whacking out a species of rag-time all on his own, while the two other members of the band were performing on high-pitched Chinese fiddles, determined evidently on keeping up the racket at all costs." 80 Watson's low estimation of them can be seen in his sarcastic comment that "these were real artists and they played entirely from memory" unlike the white man who modestly and wisely depends on "sheet music." 81 Watson sums up the musicians attitude by their dress: shirt-sleeves.

In line with the other aspects of Chinese theatre, the plot, too, is not unified or consistent. Stringing events together is "absolutely necessary" because the play has to last "six successive evenings." 82 The brigand chief deserved to be "sentenced to death by nibbling -- a little piece to be skewered out of him every two hours, Chinese time" because of his "bold, bad, blood-thirsty" character and his unforgivable kidnapping of the only daughter of the Empress. 83 Yet, even after he later kills the Captain of the Guard, "a number of influential people

79 Ibid., p.130.

80 Ibid.

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid., p.131.

83 Ibid.

--Princes, Mandarins and things, including the recently kidnapped only daughter of the Empress" plead for his release on the grounds of his being a gallant fighter.

The audience is made up of "Orientals, who, for the most part, were dirty, vile-smelling and expectorating." <sup>84</sup> Watson takes pain to leave no doubt about their character: "There were not very many gentlemen there." <sup>85</sup> These Chinese were "stolid, gaunt-jawed, slit-eyed." <sup>86</sup> Although they seemed intensely interested in the performance, Watson calls into question the quality of the show by their response to it: not a single "hand-clap or an ejaculation of admiration or pleasure" came from those "sphinx-faced yellow men" throughout even "the most intensely dramatic incidents." <sup>87</sup> Watson comments derisively that "cabbages and bad eggs, so dear to the heart of the white actor, would have been preferable to that funereal silence."

To contrast the noisy, gaudy and artificial acting on the Chinese stage, Watson shows white man's acting to be natural and unpretentious, needing no props. Although the character Jim has no costume, no musical accompaniment and no make-up, his rendering of Robert Burns' "immortal poem on brotherly love" is arresting, commanding and "delivered with the true native feeling": "The intonation, the fervour and fire, the

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

gesticulation were the perfect interpretation of a poet, a mystic, a veritable Thespian. On and on Jim went in uninterrupted, almost breathless silence." 88 The Chinese audience is held spellbound by this performance, and "when he finished there was a round of applause, in which the Chinamen joined most noisily --an unusual thing for them who had sat throughout the entire evening's play of their own without the slightest show of appreciation." 89

Watson has intentionally misrepresented Chinese behaviour, normally noisy and involved during a play, so that he can draw this stark contrast in their reaction. Watson's intention of showing the superiority of Western art over Chinese attempts is unmistakable. To underline his point, Watson has Jim continue "impressively into the farewell exhortation of Polonius to Laertes, out of Hamlet." 90 Jim's recitation is of such intensity of emotion that he is "oblivious of all but the charm of the words he uttered, careful lest a single phrase might pass his lips without its due measure of expression. He finished in a whisper; his voice full of emotion and tears glistening in his deep-set eyes." This moving speech so "full of emotions" causes amazement to the Chinese audience unused to the power of 'real' art. Watson also juxtaposes Chinese acting against Jim's vigorous rendering of the "famous Black Douglas of Scotland,

88 Ibid., p.132-133.

89 Ibid., p.133.

90 Ibid., p.134.

fighting his last fight against the Moors in Spain." Whereas Watson earlier dismisses a duel in the Chinese play with the irony-filled comment that it was "very realistic", he now describes in full and compelling detail Jim's superior acting: "Parrying and thrusting with his imaginary sword, gasping, panting in assumed exhaustion, staggering, recovering and fighting again, then feigning wounds of a deadly nature." Although fighting an illusory enemy, Jim's duel is more 'real' and 'believable' than the Chinese duel. Watson makes his point clearly: Chinese art cannot be compared to superior Western art.

Watson shows Chinese marriage customs as uncivilized.<sup>91</sup> Although the tone of the passage seems to be a light-hearted teasing of Sing, Watson insidiously plants an extremely negative image of Chinese. Sing has no moral qualms about getting a second wife; indeed, Sing feels he has a right to be indignant that his wife did not obey his orders to purchase a fourteen-year old girl as a second wife. Watson criticizes too the apparently unromantic, business-like attitude of Chinese towards marriage. Sing is quite practical over the issue. The first girl offered is passable, but expensive for her moderate looks; the second girl costs more because she is slightly more mature, is better looking and has a more refined appearance. Sing bargains with the father of both girls over the sum of money to be paid. This purchasing of a wife degrades what whites see as "holy matrimony", making it something akin to teenage

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p.297-298.

slavery. Watson's choice of the early age of the girls is solely for sensationalism, to heighten the immorality Watson sees evident in Chinese. He emphasizes that Sing, a middle-aged man seeking out young teenagers for his mistress, is lecherous.

This picture is entirely misleading and reveals Watson's ignorance of Chinese custom and Canadian law. The prospective mistress would normally be older, at least seventeen, more usually in her early twenties. Only the very rich can afford time and money on a second wife. Since a second wife is reasonable only if the first wife cannot bear sons to carry on the family name, a hired help would have sufficed for Sing's wife. Even in China this practise of a second wife is not common and especially if the man comes from the labouring class. For an overseas Chinese who has difficulty saving sufficient money to pay his fare back to China and to have some spare so that he might live in relative ease for the remaining portion of his life, a second wife is a rarity. Watson has misrepresented the Chinese labourer: Sing seems unusually prosperous for a farm-hand. Besides, Canadian law then forbade the entrance of Chinese wives; a second wife would be of no use to Sing because she would not be able to follow him into Canada. Indeed, a second wife would be a bad investment, and no man would waste his hard-earned money so unnecessarily. Sing in his practicality would know better than to invest four hundred dollars in a wife he can only see once in many years, while that wife grows progressively older. He has a difficult enough time keeping his

extended family financially satisfied anyway.

Although Watson does not actually show Sing drunk, he does portray Sing as an avid alcohol-lover.<sup>92</sup> Sing is interested only in hard liquour: "scotch whiskey" and "sam souey". In contrast, the white men drink only lemonade, a drink which Sing scorns, claiming it is not good enough for a Chinaman. Watson has clearly reversed reality: Chinese in British Columbia have had a history of sobriety, whereas a common complaint about white labourers was their drunkenness after pay-day and during festivities. A possible reason for this reversal is that Watson wants to create a new stereotype of Chinese as secretly possessed by that evil vice of drink.

Watson echoes the stereotype of Chinese as thieves. Sing dons a mask of innocence when questioned about twenty missing chickens and blames the loss on coyotes but is cornered when Jim challenges him about the "bones in the garbage heap".<sup>93</sup> Watson does not leave the issue hanging on mere suspicion but substantiates the stereotype: "Suddenly Sing....rose, opened the oven door and brought out two beautifully roasted chickens, laid the pan down on top of the stove and rubbed his hands in pleasant anticipation." Watson leaves no doubt that Sing, and not a coyote, is guilty of stealing most, if not all, of the missing chickens: "I never knew the chink yet that could resist a chicken coop. He's even worse than the nigger is for that."

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p.298-299.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p.300-301.

Furthermore, Watson shows his contempt for Chinese as he ridicules Chinese superstitions, setting up in contrast the two white protagonists who are intelligent enough to know better than to believe such "tom-fool notion[s] these loonies have."<sup>94</sup> After hearing the explanation behind the widely used chicken oath, the two white men converse in a language chock-full of sarcasm and innuendoes directed at Chinese.<sup>95</sup> All superstitions held by Chinese are foolish and nonsensical, and the Chinese are thick-skulled and dense for accepting such notions.

Similarly laughed down is the Chinese belief that in the night black cats keep devils away. "Sing and his kind think that when there's no light, safety lies in having black cats around. Somehow his Satanic Majesty --poor devil-- is scared for black cats."<sup>96</sup> Watson makes no attempt to see behind this superstition. Black cats merge into the darkness and leave only their bright eyes glowing; such a sight would scare anyone who in the dark unexpectedly stumbles upon these cats, perhaps even devils. Watson makes no mention of the cats' eyes but directs his reader's attention to the laughable spectacle of "three ugly black cats" with "erect tails", whose most violent action is to

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p.270.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p.264.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p.270.



rub and purr around and against their master's legs.<sup>97</sup> Watson's real concern is to ridicule Sing's fear of the dark: "The dark and the devil work a sort of co-operative business against the chink. That is why Sing keeps his light burning all night."<sup>98</sup>

Watson is grossly wrong in the reasonings he offers for some of the superstition. Ah Sing puts "chicken, piecee pork, punk stick" on the grave of his sister-in-law allegedly to appease the devil who will "come and eat'm up," who will physically consume the food.<sup>99</sup> Watson's research is faulty and his reasoning is wrong. Chinese do not offer food on graves for the benefit of the person still alive, neither do they offer the food and joss-sticks to devils. Chinese believe that there is no spiritual food in the other world and that the departed soul depends for food on relatives or friends still living: those alive symbolically offer food to the departed soul. The person offering the food does not benefit from his act but merely carries out a responsibility in hope that perhaps someone will later do the same for him. The food itself is not believed to be physically consumed by the dead person, but spiritually accepted by the departed soul.

Watson ridicules Sing's superstitions but not for mere fun. Watson sees Sing, superstitions and all, as a dangerous and undesirable element in society. To underscore his point, Watson

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p.268.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p.270.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p.269.

shows how violent Sing can become when someone innocently sweeps some dust from a broom over him.<sup>100</sup> Watson bases a whole scene on Sing's alleged superstition that "Pointem bloom Chinaman, somebody b'long him die evely time."<sup>101</sup> Watson lends reality to Sing's belief with apparent facts: "one time, white man hit me bloom, --my lil boy he die same day away China."

Just as he is wrong about the meat offered at the grave, Watson is wrong about this superstition. Chinese do not think that a brush by a broom means the death of a loved one, but do believe that a spirit dwells within every object. Brushing someone with a broom will cause the broom-spirit to bring bad luck to that brushed person, but "bad luck" means general ill-fortune, neither necessarily nor commonly a death. Arguably, Watson could have meant this belief to be Sing's particular belief. However, Watson has already presented Sing as representative of all Chinese, "like most Chinamen."<sup>102</sup> Watson undoubtedly sets up this superstition intentionally to magnify the foolish naivete of Chinese, and Sing's violent reaction, thus stirring up to an even greater extent his reader's anti-Oriental feelings.

Watson overdoes and sensationalizes Sing's "outrageous" reaction to the "insult". Eileen had not swept dust over Sing intentionally; indeed, Sing "ran right into the broom." Yet, he

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p.306.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p.309.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p.307.

becomes dangerous as a bear. His normal "shuffling gait" is but a deception, for now Sing shows his true colours. He becomes "bear-like in his agility"; he frightens a lady, a poor innocent lady; he threatens and almost commits murder for such an insignificant offense. Because Watson's reasoning is wrong, Sing's reaction is correspondingly inaccurate. Watson admits that Sing has "a wholesome respect for the power of the white man's law."<sup>103</sup> All the more unlikely, therefore, that Sing would suddenly lose his head and go on such a wild rampage. No Chinese who believes a brush from a broom brings bad luck would react with Sing's ferocity. The Chinese may be angry and may even harbour that anger for a period of time; he might become physically abusive if extremely superstitious and on equal grounds with the offender. But, however superstitious he is, Sing's fear of the power of white man's law and his servile position make the violence highly unlikely.

Sensationalism aside, however, Sing is suitably "thrashed up" by Phil's Herculean throw; his eyes are swollen and he is limping; "An expression of the deepest humility and cringe was on his battered countenance."<sup>104</sup> This "slit-eyed Son of Confucius" who dares threaten poor helpless ladies is no match for white men. When whistled in like a dog and brought to face the natural superiority of two honest and upright white men, Sing is cowardly and servile. Gone is the bland Chinaman on whom

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p.309.

"diffidence of any degree did not sit too well."<sup>105</sup> Gone, too, is the "familiar" Sing, the "wily duck of a civilized Chink" who "has a pat answer for anything you like to put up to him."<sup>106</sup> Instead, Sing "grovelled and cringed" before the two men, pleading, "I heap solly! I velly solly! I no mean hurt lady. I no do him any more. You no tell policeman Chief! You no tell him, Bossee Man Jim, Bossee Man Phil, Lady Misse Pedelston. Ah Sing he velly solly. Heap much plenty velly solly!"<sup>107</sup> At "Bossee Man Jim's" order "all right! You beat it, -- quick!" Sing immediately disappears "like a shot." Sing cannot stand before this masterful show of authority. Watson portrays Sing as a detestable animal who will try to bite and bare his teeth to someone weaker, but who will run yelping away with tail beneath his leg when seeing a firm hand.

Watson climaxes his barrage of negative portrayals of Sing with a statement about the lamentable Chinese immigration into British Columbia. Holding up Sing and his tendency to be superstitious as typical of all Chinese, Phil presents Watson's views which contain every stereotype: Chinese are half-civilized mongrels, they breed like rabbits to overrun British Columbia by the thousands, they are dirty and live in hovels. Chinese provide cheap labour to those unthinking, myopic and greedy farmers who will hire them at the expense of decent white

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p.263.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p.269.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p.309.

labour. A Chinaman can afford to work for less because he shows no moral responsibility towards society: he does not spend a dime on clothes to make himself more presentable to others, he lives like a rat, and he contributes nothing to Charity and Social Welfare. Watson emphasizes the gravity of this crime by capitalizing "Charity" and "Social welfare". A Chinese is also a superstitious heathen who does not go to church, who does not tithe and who works seven days a week. He merely slaves to drain away resources from British Columbia to China or Hong Kong.

Watson shows Chinese nature as unchangingly evil. Although white men have been kind enough to allow Chinese children into the schools, thus sharing knowledge with sons and daughters of "ignorant, superstitious Chinamen", these Chinese children show their pride and ingratitude by academically beating white youngsters in school. Nevertheless, despite their acquired knowledge, Chinese being naturally subordinate to the superior Caucasian are fit only for such menial work as "kitchen help." They may become Canadian citizens, and be even "Canadianised in appearance", but they will never be able to shed their nature. Sing later cuts his "pig-tail", but is still "brazen as brass." He becomes a Canadian, but is "still hanging on to the black cat theory."<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, Chinese cannot absorb the uplifting moral influence of whites nor imitate their shining example. Instead, the Chinaman, being also naturally depraved and evil, will once in a while commit "a most atrocious murder" of white

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p.365-366.

women.

A theme running through this novel is that "it oughtn't to be too late to...remedy" this threat of Orientalism in British Columbia.<sup>109</sup> Watson comes out strongly against Chinese because he desires not only to show the menace of Chinese in British Columbia but also to advocate action "now". Watson urges that "it may not be too late -- it is not too late."<sup>110</sup> Watson knows that the only way to keep Chinese out is through a national act passed by Canadian "politicians in the East and Over-seas": "it seems to be much too big a proposition for any of our own politicians to tackle single-handed." His whole novel is designed precisely to give his readers nation-wide a glimpse of the "menace" Chinese immigrants pose to the social, economic and moral well-being of Canada. Through his portrayal of Sing, and through "what we have seen to-day" in The spoilers of the valley, Watson hopes people lose sleep because of the problem. Watson wants to induce legislation concerning Chinese immigration sooner than might otherwise occur.

Like The spoilers of the valley, The writing on the wall by Hilda Glynn-Ward also published in 1921 is designed "to shock readers, but it was also intended to educate rather than entertain them."<sup>111</sup> However, whereas anti-Orientalism in The spoilers of the valley is but one of the themes, The writing on

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p.311.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Pat Roy, intro., The writing on the wall, p.vi

the wall "is...the only specifically anti-Oriental novel published in the province."<sup>112</sup>

The title itself reveals Glynn-Ward's theme. It alludes to the writing which appeared on the wall of King Belshaz'zar's palace to warn him of the impending judgement of his sins against God. <sup>113</sup> Like the king who has been "weighed in the balances, and art found wanting" so are the British Columbians because they have in their short-sightedness and greed allowed the Chinese to enter and overrun the province. Glynn-Ward focusses on the evil which comes with, and is a result of, the presence of Chinese, and she warns her readers that if they do not realise their wrong-doings and repent of them, their land will become divided and the Orientals will take over.

To achieve her theme, Glynn-Ward portrays the Chinese both collectively and individually in accord with every existing stereotype. The Chinese residences in the novel are windowless and rat-infested opium dens "littered with filth undecipherable," so "thick and slimy with unnameable filth of unsanitary humanity" that "the stench of cesspools rose to meet the soul-killing fumes of opium."<sup>114</sup> Glynn-Ward bases her description of the den on popular fears and on rumours of an extensive

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p.xxiii. This novel deals with both Japanese and Chinese, but because of the limitations of this thesis, only Glynn-Ward's references to Chinese appear.

<sup>113</sup> The Bible, Revised Standard Version, Daniel 5:25-28.

<sup>114</sup> Glynn-Ward, Hilda, The writing on the wall, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), p.115, p.33.

labyrinth of secret underground tunnels, gambling rooms and opium-smoking in Chinatown.<sup>115</sup> A trap door camouflages an opening from which steps lead "down, down into the underground." The opening words here attempt to create the impression of depth far greater than that of an ordinary basement in an ordinary house. The three passages which lead from the single main passage seem to be mentioned incidentally, but with them Glynn-Ward intentionally plants the impression of a network of passage-ways, each branching into even more passage-ways even as the original one passage has branched into three.

Chinatown itself is dark and gloomy: "the murky shadows" seem "alive."<sup>116</sup> A typical alley-way is "no more than a dark slit between two tumble-down houses," so dark that a man has to feel his way along the wall. The atmosphere within houses is a "thick, velvety darkness." Glynn-Ward apparently wants to show that the more one knows the Chinese, the more one knows the depravity within them, a depravity reflected in their love for darkness. The condition of shops in Chinatown, too, reflect Chinese character. Shops are sleazy. The Western goods sold are "cheap" and of poor quality; the Chinese sweetmeats are wrapped in pale and sickly-looking pink paper; the vegetables are wilted. Goods are not displayed but left unattractively in barrels, jars and open boxes.

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p.33.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p.32.



Young Lung Kow's shop and house are the only ones in the novel not associated with filth; even the Chinese farms are disgusting in their use of human excrement collected for manure from each house in Chinatown. However, even the apparent cleanliness and splendour of Young's abodes have an intended insidious function.

In keeping with his attitude of "suave politeness, polished and easy", and with his "priceless mandarin coat of saxe-blue silk embroidered with red and gold and purple dragons and bound in black," Young Lung Kow's shop is so furnished that "newcomers felt they must have been transported to the Orient."<sup>117</sup> He has a "great table of black teak...and chairs to match." The furniture, Young's gawdy attire and the cloisonné which Young shows people are specifically designed to transport unsuspecting white men into his world. Their loss of orientation then makes manipulating visitors much easier for the crafty Young. The "heavy...scent of joss-sticks and ancient eastern odours" are similarly designed to deaden the brain. By the time the servant brings in the tea visitors would feel "a little somnolent and heavy," and would have "almost forgotten what they had come for."<sup>118</sup>

Young Lung Kow's house is similarly designed to overwhelm visitors. "One of the most palatial on Highland Avenue," the house was "quite remarkable for its beauty of architecture....A

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p.72.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p.73.

winding drive between flowering shrubs led up to the door, or rather, porticoed entrance, at one end of a tiled verandah which was intersected with arches and columns....The hall was barbaric in its Oriental splendour. A fountain tinkled in the middle of the room."<sup>119</sup> Although without the joss-sticks, the same colours of gold, red, purple and blue pervade, the same dragons abound except they are on the tapestry rather than on Young's mandarin coat. Similar too is the presence of "heavy chairs of carved black teak." The overall effect is "sombre and oppressively splendid"; the word "oppressively" says all.

According to Glynn-Ward, every Chinese is an immoral heathen. The opium den is filled with "corpse-like figure[s], stark naked, and all in different stages of the influence of the God of Narcotics. Some pulled at their long pipes, others just lay back and stared with dull, unseeing eyes at the ceiling; others again seemed quite dead."<sup>120</sup> The term "stark naked" is sensationalism Glynn-Ward adds to accentuate the immorality of the Chinese; an opium smoker has no cause to strip before smoking the drug. such opium addicts are widespread amongst Chinese: "everywhere little black-clad men shuffled along soft-footed and swift, leaving as they passed a foul whiff of stale opium."<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p.106.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p.33.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p.31-32.

The Chinese are also compulsive and incurable gamblers: behind every shuttered window in Chinatown are "many Chinamen busy at fantan or chuk-a-luk."<sup>122</sup> Indeed, criminal activity in Chinatown is so rampant that "the sight of a man running brought no surprise to the wooden yellow faces" whereas it would immediately arouse suspicions elsewhere in the city.<sup>123</sup>

Chinese are immoral in their marital relationships. They openly have many wives as well as "other fancies who were not wives" but prostitutes.<sup>124</sup> Glynn-Ward expounds the underhand wiliness of Chinese immorality through her account of Eileen Hart, "the pride of her mother" and "the apple of her father's eye". Eileen falls into a fate 'worse than death' when she elopes with Wong Fu, an old schoolfellow. <sup>125</sup> Glynn-Ward's message is clear: Chinese may sometimes appear friendly and helpful, but all of them are immoral fiends. Despite Wong Fu's Canadian education through grade school, high school and even college, his inherent devious nature has prevented him from learning any of the white values. He has, including Eileen, five wives, and this a young man who cannot be more than in his mid-twenties. Eileen has practically been kidnapped, and is held a prisoner in the Wong household. The other wives keep watch over her to prevent her from escaping and are "beastly" to her.

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p.32.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p.31.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p.41.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p.83-87.

That is not Eileen's worst fate. Harry Hart sits "in utter despondency, his head drooped on his breast and staring with unseeing eyes at the floor, his arms hanging helplessly at his sides" not just because his daughter is now Mrs. Wong, but because he knows "what the Chinks do to white girls they get into Chinatown, -- never see the light o' day again, most o' 'em!" Eileen will be forced to prostitute herself. "Her beauty, her daintiness, her originality...her daring" and her youth heightens the tragedy and makes the wickedness more atrocious. Glynn-Ward blames "this danned system of co-education" for such tragedies.<sup>126</sup>

Chinese immorality reveals itself in another way. Well-treated servants attack and murder their mistresses. Glynn-Ward essentially repeats Watson's point, sensationalizing it through her graphic description of the murder of Mrs. Smith.<sup>127</sup> Glynn-Ward's characterization of the murderer Sam Wong leaves no doubt as to his turpitude. Sam is an outright liar. His assertion that "Mrs. Smith had wilfully crashed her own skull in against the chair while it was in his hand" is obviously a fabricated story. His testimony of self-defense is "highly improbable and...little likely to be believed" because Mrs. Smith is a white lady who would never threaten her servant so aggressively as to force him to defend himself. Sam cold-bloodedly turned upon his mistress without any provocation.

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p.85.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p.66-70.

His crime is all the more vile because Mrs. Smith has for years "shown him especial kindness in teaching him herself and allowing him to attend a night school." Sam is without any conscience and feels no pangs of remorse over his monstrous deed. He describes his chopping Mrs. Smith into little bits as he would describe cooking a dish of curry in a most "placid and almost amiable way"; he smiles in amusement as he recalls his inability to push the body through the small furnace door; he gruesomely accompanies his description of sharpening the chopping knife with appropriate gestures as if proud of his ingenuity and desirous to show off his skill.

Glynn-Ward sees Sam as a representative Chinese. Rose Morley's exclamation, "what a mercy you never let me have a China boy! Why, it might just as easy have been me as Mrs. Smith," implies that all Chinese servants are like Sam. Glynn-Ward seems to reject this generalizing of the actions of individuals by stating through Gordon Morley that "there are just as black crimes committed every day by white people. You can't make out that all Chinks are devils just because one of them's turned out bad. Look at Crippen; he did the same thing, and you don't avoid all white folk because of him." However, the force of this statement is undercut by Gordon Morley's being one of the villains in the novel who himself collaborates with the Chinese at the expense of his country. Therefore, Glynn-Ward's initial statement still stands: all Chinese are immoral, and unscrupulous, and diabolic; one is just like another.

Each of the other Chinese individuals Glynn-Ward presents fits the stereotype. Sing Lung, the Chinese cook who unloads opium from the Empress of Japan, moves "stealthily". Chinese servants are "silent-footed"; they "pad" across the room. Ling is part of the conspiracy binding his master Craddock Low to opium addiction. When Morley in his disgust calls Ling "rotten, yellow scum," Ling "only smiled."<sup>128</sup> Ling has no compunction about his part in the downfall of Craddock Low, and indeed seems to relish witnessing Low grovel before him. Even the Chinaman who is accosted at a street corner by a drunk Englishman is wretched, cowardly and insolent: "before he fled he gave his final answer to his persecutor. 'War heap good, killee plenty white man!' he cried -- and spat, and ran."<sup>129</sup> Chung Lee is inscrutable: he waits "patiently, stoically, as those of the East wait, with never a shadow of an expression on his thick and stolid face and never an extra gleam of expectancy in his narrow little pig eyes."<sup>130</sup> As the years go by, he waxes "fat and heavy on the proceeds of innumerable deals in illicit drugs and the profits from many gambling dens."<sup>131</sup> Chung Lee is a typical wily Chinese crook who derives prosperity through unscrupulous means.

An important Chinese character in this novel is Young Lung Kow. Young is ageless and inscrutable: "a man of some mysterious

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p.114.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., p.106.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p.23.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p.116.

age in the forties, wearing large spectacles that successfully concealed any hint of expression -- if any ever showed in those opaque Oriental eyes."<sup>132</sup> The opaque Oriental eyes do reveal Young to be an opium addict. He wears an "automatic grin" so common to Chinese characters in novels, "always smiling while his eyes are frowning." Although Young is a "symbol of the age-old civilization of the East" whereas the others are but part of the barbarous horde of unsanitary vermin, in Glynn-Ward's eyes this distinction does not separate him from the others. Despite his dealings with Chinese antiques and his splendidly architected home, Young's essential character is no different from that of Chung Lee. Young's cultural awareness is but a devious means of manipulating the whites around him. Glynn-Ward uses adjectives like "unctuous", "urbane", "suave", "polite", "oily", "smooth" and "polished" to describe Young. He is unscrupulous in his attempts to blackmail Morley. Young is "a mighty unpleasant fellow to fall out with."<sup>133</sup> His nature is so vile that it elicits fear from all around him. Although he is only the Assistant Controller of Customs, even the "Chief Controller of Customs never dreamt of signing any document or report that had not been 'OK'd' by Young Lung; in short it became a habit with officials to consult with him upon every move of routine or otherwise, almost as though they were afraid of him or of incurring his displeasure."

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p.72.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p.104.

Because the novel is directed at educating her readers about the evils of Chinese and the adverse effects they create in British Columbia, Glynn-Ward also exposes the Caucasian villains who actively collaborate with Chinese and, worse, who seek to import more Chinese into the province for gain and at the expense of the country. Her two main candidates are Gordon Morley and Craddock Low.

Morley's most unforgivable crimes involve unscrupulous and opportunistic dealings with the Chinese. Even before he becomes a Member of Parliament Morley betrays his country: "he bought land, he bought a big share in the mines, and every boat after that landed Chinks -- Chinks to clear Morley's land, Chinks to work Morley's mines, till Chinatown got bigger than the settlement."<sup>134</sup> Morley reasons, "Why, the whole blame country 'ud be at a standstill if it wasn't for yellow labour. There'd be no developing it, no trade, nothing. You could never get as much work out of a white man, even if they would work as cheap....A Chink lives on about five cents a day, and a white man would think he was starving if his food wasn't more than a dollar and a half's worth."<sup>135</sup> After he becomes an MP, Morley evades the head-tax and quietly pockets the money he is paid to bring the coolies in. Morley also betrays his country through the more insidious means of opium smuggling, an act which Glynn-Ward presents as threatening to the health and morals of

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p.38.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., p.40.



white society. Morley consorts with Chung Lee to the extent of inviting the Chinaman into his home to arrange the smuggling. Morley is the one who sets out in his own launch to intercept the Empress of Japan and who picks up the "\$20,000 worth of opium bobbing about in her wake."<sup>136</sup>

Glynn-Ward clearly censures Morley for being a politician "whose sole aim was self-glorification, power, money."<sup>137</sup> He is one of those "little souls with brains top-heavy with cunning, using their country and their fellows as stepping-stones to notoriety and a big bank account." The only campaign promise he fulfills is "Good roads and more of them for the farmer settlers."<sup>138</sup> Although this slogan sounds innocent, good and practical to British Columbians, in reality "these particular farmers who were clamoring for roads in this particular district were Chinamen who had brought a mixture of bribery and pressure to bear on the subject."<sup>139</sup> Ninety per cent of the direct beneficiaries from these initial roads were grateful Chinamen who paid Morley a "substantial little sum."<sup>140</sup>

Morley contributes nothing to the country, but instead paves the way for more ruin. Rather than push for "a law preventin' Chinks from havin' more'n one wife," he lets

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., p.25.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p.73.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p.13.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., p.14.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p.63.

legislations pass which entitles Chinese to study in the same public schools as white children, thus creating opportunities for tragedies like that of Eileen Hart to occur.<sup>141</sup> This legislation also allows Orientals to outnumber whites in certain schools where their education alongside Canadians makes them "uppish": "you even see that in the yellow brats coming out of school; they're cleverer than us and they know it."<sup>142</sup> In order to import Chinese at a profit, Morley uses his power as an MP to appoint Young Lung Kow Assistant Controller of Customs in the Port of Victoria. With Young holding the reins of the Immigration Office, Chinese immigrants have no problem pouring into the country: a great price for British Columbia to pay.

Yet, Chinese are worse than Morley. Despite his crafty wiles, the Chinese are even more unscrupulous, scheming and self-serving than Morley could ever be. Having ensnared Morley well, they turn the tables on him. Young Lung Kow, though obligated to Morley for his position of power, now turns Morley's favour into a means for blackmail. He uses his knowledge of "certain matters of the past." Morley becomes "a hunted animal caught in a trap" of his own making.<sup>143</sup> Having gained his position through underhanded means in league with devious people, Morley is now caught by those very devious people who can ruin him by revealing what they know.

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., p.86.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p.85.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., p.105.

Glynn-Ward's other villain in the novel is Craddock Low. Although the most brilliant barrister in British Columbia, he uses his talent not to serve his country but primarily to defend "most of the Chinese cases that come up in the courts."<sup>144</sup> He is even counsel for defence to Sam Wong, that "yellow devil" who murdered his mistress. Indeed, Low puts in great effort to produce a "brilliant and masterly speech in defence of the crime"; "such had been the excellence of the defence" that verdict and sentence pronounced are favourable and exceedingly light despite the "ghastly circumstances of the murder."<sup>145</sup>

His occupation, however, is only the tip of an iceberg. Although a lawyer, Craddock Low takes part in the conspiracy to smuggle opium into British Columbia. He is wise enough not to sully his hands with the actual process of smuggling. Yet, when Morley is held up at a police station Low runs all the way to warn Chung Lee of an impending raid because of his vested interest in the smuggling operation. Furthermore, Low is "instrumental in the importation of Chinese": he is the one who introduces Young Lung Kow to Gordon Morley. Therefore, Craddock Low shares the responsibility of laying "the foundations for the sale of British Columbia into the hands of the Orientals."<sup>146</sup> Like Morley, although he collects the full sum of the head tax from employers, Low pockets the money, using his knowledge of

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid., p.14.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., p.69, p.66.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., p.73.

laws dealing with Chinese immigration to hoodwink both the employers and the Dominion government. He evades paying the government by importing Chinese through "the merchant's clause that allows a Chinese trader to come in free" and through clause CI 9 which "allows Chinks to go and visit their happy homes on t'other side and return within the year on payment of \$1."<sup>147</sup>

Glynn-Ward denounces Low as one of those greedy "Capitalists who exploited the riches of their country and the necessities of the people in order that they themselves might profit, and live in ease and luxury"; he is responsible for flooding the province with the "yellow peril" when British Columbia is "overrun with them already"; he is one of those who "denying all the responsibilities of wealth and power lived merely by the rule of Devil-take-the-hindmost."<sup>148</sup> Since Glynn-Ward claims that Chinese "flourished and multiplied exceedingly," the weight of Low's responsibility is correspondingly multiplied.<sup>149</sup>

Yet, the Chinese double-cross Craddock Low as they did Morley, bringing Low total ruin through opium addiction. Glynn-Ward hints of his addiction early in the novel. On the occasion Low is ushered into the opium den to warn Chung Lee of the impending police raid, Glynn-Ward records that the open door "let out an atmosphere so nauseatingly foul that the

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p.71.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., p.73, p.19.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p.41.

unaccustomed would have turned back sick and faint. Low, however, passed in and the door shut behind him."<sup>150</sup> Low is able to withstand the stench and, indeed, does not even seem to notice it. Low could have become accustomed to the stench through visiting his clients in Chinatown. However, Low's Chinese clients would seek out an acclaimed attorney like him in his office; he would never need to stoop so low as to hunt for them in Chinatown. The only way Low can be exposed enough to the odour not to find it nauseating is by his visiting these dens to smoke opium.

At the trial of Sam Wong, although Craddock Low was "a little nervous", only "the Chinese present noticed how often his eyes strayed across to that section of the court in which they were sitting and met the narrow eyes of one Chung Lee, inscrutable and inexorable, fixed upon him such as a cat watches the mouse that is feebly and ineffectually struggling in his paws."<sup>151</sup> Low the opium addict is trapped by his habit and, therefore, by Chung Lee even as the mouse is trapped by the cat. Although part of the conspiracy which smuggles opium into British Columbia, Low never handles the white powder himself. Precisely because he has no direct access to opium, Low is dependent on the Chinese for it. He is nervous and fearful because he knows he has to win the case and win Sam Wong a light sentence. Otherwise, Low will have to suffer without the supply

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p.33.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p.69.

of opium he regularly needs to support his growing habit.

Because of his bondage to opium, Low's physical health and moral discernment slowly degenerate. In ten years "Low's face was emaciated and sallow as a man looks when he lives on a surfeit of dissipation. His eyes looked black because the pupils were so dilated as to leave no room for the iris, and there was a strange glaze over them that gave him the look of a sleep-walker. There was something about his shoulders, too....It was not that the lawyer stooped, but his shoulders were raised in a curious way, giving the effect that his neck was shorter behind than it was in front."<sup>152</sup> Low's body wastes away even as his morals desert him. He conducts "midnight orgies" which frequently include "queer guests...who were very certainly not of his own complexion." Instead of shocked sympathy on hearing the news of Eileen Hart's elopement with a Chinese, "a knowing smile came over his face and he winked...as he said, 'Cute old Wong, pretty little white girl! Bet he's having a good time now'....He went on leering, and, as if enjoying a huge joke, muttered again: 'They know how to get 'em! Pretty little Eileen, nice and young and fresh! They know how --'"<sup>153</sup> Low has become so depraved, through his use of drugs and his associations with the Chinese that he is highly amused by the corruption, especially of a "nice and young and fresh" white girl, and actually seems to approve, commend and even envy Wong Fu for

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p.87.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

achieving such an admirable feat. For the sake of "just a few grains -- quick," the man "who had been known as Craddock Low, once the most brilliant barrister in British Columbia" writhes on the floor "like a worm dropped from a spade."<sup>154</sup> He does not care that he emits "moans rising in crescendo to a hoarse scream," nor does he care that he squirms and grovels and begs in such a demeaningly vulgar manner before his Chinese servant: "the thing that had once been Craddock Low flung itself at the Chinaman's feet with frantic arms clutching about the Chinaman's knees. 'Give it me quick or I shall die -- quick!'"<sup>155</sup> Low is so desperate that he is ready to sell his soul for some opium; indeed, he has already sold his soul for it.

Thus, Glynn-Ward shows the evils of Chinese, of corrupt politicians and of greedy capitalists who would sell the province to Chinese for their own selfish gain. The emphasis is on Chinese though<sup>156</sup>: the downfall of Low and Morley puts the focus on the selfishness of unscrupulous double-crossing Chinese: even the craftiness of white men cannot compete with the craftiness of Chinese. Chinese are inherently evil, whereas even a villain like Morley has a conscience which forbade him from committing an ultimate betrayal of his people.

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid... p.113.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p.113, p.114.

<sup>156</sup> The overall emphasis of the novel is on the evils of Japanese whom Hilda Glynn-Ward sees as a worse menace than Chinese, but within her discussion of the Chinese, she clearly highlights the evil Chinese over the whites who betray their country.

Glynn-Ward drives home her message by showing her reader what British Columbia will become in the near future if British Columbia continues as it is in 1921. She plants the seeds for that future vision of British Columbia in her exaggerated and sensationalized description of the post-war province.<sup>157</sup> Although she bases her portrayal of frustrated returned soldiers who cannot find jobs on reality, Glynn-Ward exaggerates the extent to which Chinese have prospered during the war years. She creates the impression that Victoria and Vancouver have been taken over by myriads of Chinese who have grasped the opportunity of "the Great War" to amass their fortunes. Many Chinese shops line Granville Street and the two cities are "swamped with Oriental stores trading in European merchandise and beating the white man at his own game." "John Chinaman" is the traditional term for Chinese; thus, Glynn-Ward's phrase "John Chinaman whizzing past...in a luxurious, high-powered car with his wife and family" clearly implies that all Chinese have become prosperous. The many lowly vegetable peddlers and laundrymen now own "up-to-date motor-cars" and manage businesses "too large to be stuffed into baskets." Chinese who had once worked under white men now employ white girls. Glynn-Ward even projects the shedding of the queue by Chinese, a symbol of their freedom from Manchu rule, as a sign of insolence. Similarly, Glynn-Ward sees Chinese adoption of European clothes as affectation and pomposity caused by their new-found wealth.

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p.77.



Although Chinese had "made gains during the war," these were "quiet, unspectacular gains." Certainly they did not own "the greater part of the city of Victoria"; neither did they own "luxurious, high-powered motor-cars" nor were the towns "swamped with Oriental stores." Glynn-Ward is more accurate when she writes that "They have a monopoly of the vegetable trade all over BC, and of the potato market also." Chinese did grow "90 per cent of the produce supplied to the Vancouver market," and "around Victoria...all greenhouses but two were owned by Chinese who swamped the market with early tomatoes, lettuce and flowers."<sup>158</sup> However, Glynn-Ward exaggerates when she claims that "the white man has to feed his pigs on his potatoes when the Chinaman enters into competition" because only slightly more than "55 per cent of the potatoes were grown by Chinese."<sup>159</sup> Exaggerated too is her claim that there are "more white men working for Chinese masters on the land than ever owned vegetable patches for themselves!" These exaggerations are to stress the gradually increasing power and wealth of Chinese and, thus, their gradually increasing hold on British Columbia.

Because of this early picture, Glynn-Ward's later and even more exaggerated fantasy of a totally Chinese-dominated British Columbia seems believable. In this "glimpse into the future" of British Columbia, Chinese have taken over the politics of the province: "the mayor and all the aldermen except two were

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p.100; Morton, p.235.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

Chinamen."<sup>160</sup> The policemen were Chinese who "waxed peculiarly offensive and even dangerous when approached by a white man with a case against their own countrymen." The Attorney-General is that same "yellow-devil" Young Lung Kow. Even the business sector is completely in the hands of Chinese: "there were only four mills in Vancouver now that did not belong to them"; "they own the stock of every canned milk factory in town, they own the sugar refinery, every vegetable bought in Vancouver is grown by them...they have more than a little interest in this big new meat combine that's just been formed"; "there are mighty few groceries now that are owned by white men"; "all the stores on either side [of Granville Street] bore the names of Chinese...owners, and all were prosperous and full of trade"; "The CPR was now owned by a company of Chinamen and the manager of... [Hotel Vancouver] was one Chung Lee, once a vegetable vendor"; even "gasoline...had been cornered by the Chinese."

Because of their political clout and their economic prosperity, Chinese have also taken over the best residential areas: "nearly all the houses in the West End belonged to Chinamen and very few white people lived there now. None of these men owned motor-cars, they had sold them long ago." Indeed, "work was so scarce for white men in these days that any who had not money enough to get out of the country were forced to take what they could get": menial jobs which used to be performed by Chinese. "White men and women served behind the

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., p.131-136.

counters and ran to do the bidding of imperious Chinese women who came to do their morning's shopping." Once high-ranking officials like the "erstwhile Customs Officer at Victoria" are forced into manual labour. Glynn-Ward even hints of the slavery of white men under Chinese: "down in the trench were white men at regular intervals, working for dear life with pick and shovel, while along each side of it walked two Chinamen, the foremen, who saw to it that there was no sort of slackening in the work of the men under their charge." The only items missing are whips in the hands of the foremen.

In this vision, Chinese have also accomplished the deliberate spread of typhoid: "90 per cent of all vegetables contained typhoid germs...40 per cent of the canned milk in tins of a certain brand, and with the sugar...packages done up in blue paper were perfectly free, but those in red paper invariably contained cultures of germs." The epidemic affects only white people, killing them "like flies", while "the Asiatics are peculiarly immune to this particular disease, innured to it by countless generations of living without sanitation."

Glynn-Ward puts the evil of Chinese in further relief by juxtaposing them with Lizzie Laidlaw, her heroine. Lizzie is the exact opposite to traitors and to evil Chinese. She is physically attractive and wholesome, morally upright and, most important, unselfishly patriotic: the kind of citizen British Columbians should emulate.

Lizzie's appearance is the exact antithesis to that of the Chinese. She effuses goodness and purity. Her "healthy glow", the "wholesome roses in her cheeks", her "attractive white teeth" and her fresh complexion make the shrunken faces and unhealthy pallor of Chinese seem even more sickly; her thoughtful eyes are antithetical to the inscrutable opaque eyes of Chinese; her "kind smile" contrasts the automatic grin of Chinese; her "soft", "low" and "sweet" voice loudly comments on the senseless loud jabberings of Chinese; her "quick" and "light" step is the converse of the Chinese slow shuffle. By setting up Lizzie as a madonna-like figure on whom the sun rests "like a halo", Glynn-Ward makes the nature of Chinese even more diabolical.

Glynn-Ward denounces Chinese exploitation of British Columbia by comparing it with Lizzie's selfless and sacrificial love for her nation. Lizzie persuades her husband McRobbie to accept the position of Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia not for glory, money, status or "pomp and circumstance," but because of duty to her country: "It is your duty....Those who are rich like you must pay for it in responsibility some time or other. Seems to me that poor old BC wants a good man and strong at the helm just now....If you turn it down you'll be shirking your bit the same as ever those laggards they call 'conscientious objectors' did!"<sup>161</sup> Although the McRobbies hate "living in the public eye" and see the position as one that

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., p.109.

"points uphill", Lizzie is ready to sacrifice privacy and ease because she realizes the need for strong leadership in British Columbia.

After McRobbie become Lieutenant-Governor, Lizzie makes herself so useful to him that he "fell into the habit of discussing politics with her and came to rely more than a little upon her opinion."<sup>162</sup> Her judgment was "sane and far-sighted" at all times. Loyal, faithful and loving, she upholds her husband when he faces the difficult decision of whether or not to pass the act which would grant extension of franchise to Chinese land-owners. Lizzie does not panic or become hysterical but instead is tactful, loving and patient. Her words are inspiringly "stout and comfortable"; she encouragingly assures him of her willingness to suffer alongside him for righteousness sake: "I would rather live on dry bread...than be rich and dependent on the goodwill of a Chinaman!"<sup>163</sup> Lizzie, the angelic patriot, supports her husband in his fight for integrity right to the end. Lizzie's heroic attempts to protect her country make Chinese efforts to exploit, undermine and destroy British Columbia seem even more detestable. Compared to her, the Chinese in the novel seem even blacker characters. The opium smokers who threaten the morality of white society, the unscrupulous characters of Chung Lee and Young Lung Kow, the lecherous Wong Fu and the murderous Sam Wong all become more hideously vile in

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., p.121.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., p124, p.123.

contrast to Lizzie Laidlow.

Glynn-Ward's conclusion is obvious. Chinese are immoral, filthy and degenerately self-seeking parasites detrimental to white British Columbia; they should be driven out and kept out before they overrun the land and take over the nation. All who associate with them are blacker than black villains. The writing on the wall repeats many of the same points about Chinese as does The spoilers of the valley because like Watson, Glynn-Ward seeks to shock Canadians all across the nation with this accumulation of information about the Chinese, and thus persuade Canadians of the reality of the threat which she sees the Chinese posing to white society.

The trend of the four novels Janet of Kootenay, The window gazer, The spoilers of the valley and The writing on the wall is clearly increasingly towards stereotyping. Even McKowan writing in 1919 has to make a conscious effort to defend Chinese from stereotyping and unfair prejudice. McKay in The window gazer continues the attempt to defend Chinese, but her own stereotyping and the overwhelmingly popular sentiments against Chinese embodied in both The spoilers of the valley and The writing on the wall undercut her efforts.

## Chapter 2

After the passing of the Exclusion Act in 1923, anti-Oriental sentiments gradually died down. From 1924 to the mid-nineteen forties, novels with substantial Chinese content rather than passing references came into print. Gordon of the lost lagoon by Robert Watson in 1924 and Gold, gold, in Cariboo! by Clive Phillipps-Wolley in 1926 both show the beginnings of a gradual move towards a less prejudiced and a more balanced depiction of Chinese. However, anti-Chinese sentiments flared briefly again during the early thirties because of Chinese enfranchisement. The novels The gleaming archway by Alexander Maitland Stephen in 1929 and Whispering leaves by Alex Philip in 1931 reflect these sentiments. The log of a lame duck by Audrey Alexandra Brown in 1938, Cariboo runaway by Frances Duncan in 1942, and Cariboo road by Alan Sullivan in 1946 together reflect the ensuing decline of anti-Oriental feelings.

Gordon of the lost lagoon arrests attention not because of its excellence as a work of literature but because of the one section which deals with Chinese. This section is significant because it reveals a change in Watson's attitude towards Chinese since The spoilers of the valley. His relatively generous depiction of Chinese in this later novel can be directly related to the historical Exclusion Act. Whereas The spoilers of the valley was published two years before the Act, Gordon of the lost lagoon came off the press a full year after it. In 1921 the

Chinese issue was alive, and filled the minds of British Columbians daily; by 1924 Chinese were all but forgotten by the average British Columbian who could now rest in the knowledge that no more Chinese would be admitted into the country. Consequently, the depicting of Chinese in Gordon of the lost lagoon is more objective and less tinged with racial prejudice. The final legalization of the Exclusion Act has tempered Watson's earlier vehement feelings.

Watson's change may not seem immediate because he still lightly ridicules the Chinese of Blackwater. A notice of arrest of Chinese reads,

WHEREAS

Man Hung,	Wun Lung,
Sing Sing,	Kee Hoy,
Lam Chop,	See Saw,
Lap Wing,	Pee Bo,
Chew Gum,	Ling Cod,
Lain Duc,	Sam Suey,

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Mee Yeow and others, have purchased merchandise from William Davidson, proprietor of the Cohoe General Store, AND WHEREAS the aforementioned have not paid for such merchandise, be it known, HEREBY, HERETOFORE, HEREOF, HEREFROM and HEREAFTER BY THESE PRESENTS by the Grace of Goodness and Mercy, the Beauty of Cleopatra and the Queen of Sheba; the Wickedness of Charles Peacé the Burgalar; and the humour of Harry Lauder; the Chicken Oath and the Ordeal of the Burnt Paper, --that unless all and every debt is paid in full within twenty-four hours, each and every Chinaman, individually and collectively, in and out of Blackwater, will be jailed and strung up by the thumbs until his toe-nails drop off.

Signed, Sealed and Delivered in the present year of our Lord.

Peter Pumpkin  
Lord High Executioner<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Watson, Robert, Gordon of the lost lagoon, (New York: Hinton, Balch and Company, 1924), p.158-159.



Watson obviously pokes fun at the Chinese in his choice of names on the list of Chinese debtors. Further, the notice makes a travesty of Chinese ignorance and their blind fear of white man's law. Watson creates a comic effect by using a super-abundance of conjunctions like "whereas", "hereby", "heretofore", "hereof", "herefrom" and "hereafter", and by appealing to such dubious and fictitious authorities as Cleopatra, Queen of Sheba, Charles Peace, Harry Lauder, the Chicken Oath and the Ordeal of Burnt Paper. Being "jailed and hung up by the thumbs until his toe-nails drop off" is also absurd. These four methods are but means to uncover the ignorance and unthinking credulity of Chinese who would believe in the existence of a character like "Peter Pumpkin, Lord High Executioner", who would mistake "an automobile-license, several years back-dated" for a "sheliff's" badge, and who would be "immediately impressed and tremendously overawed" by the threat of being strung up by the thumbs. Despite his ridicule, however, Watson does not censure the Chinese as he does in The spoilers of the valley. His ridicule of Sing's superstitions in that book is to show Sing's uncivilized nature, his immoral and violent character and, thereby, reveal the danger of allowing Chinese into the country. In contrast, the ridicule of the Chinese residents of Blackwater is free from malign intentions and merely for fun.

The narrator refers to "the Chinamen of Blackwater," to "oriental debtors" and to "Chinese quarters" of the town. <sup>165</sup> "There was an old Chinese settlement at Blackwater, consisting of Chinese laundrymen, Chinese market-gardeners, cooks in the surrounding logging camps and workers in the local salmon cannery." <sup>166</sup> Conspicuous in these descriptions is the absence of derogatory adjectives which Watson sprinkled so liberally and copiously in his earlier novel. Whereas he uses "Chink" consistently in The spoilers of the valley, that term is completely absent in this novel. Even more conspicuous is the absence of Watson's earlier characterizing Chinese as heathen, evil and immoral, and therefore detrimental to white society. Absent, too, are the lengthy tirades against Chinese and the standard reasons, economical, racial and moral, for keeping them out of the country.

Indeed, Watson even seems to concede the existence of some relative goodness in Chinese. The narrator claims astonishment on discovering that Chinese "had acquired the 'owing' habit...to the total extent of six hundred dollars."<sup>167</sup> Watson implies that whites, usually the ones in debt, have taught the otherwise conscientious Chinese, traditionally considered "good pay," that same deplorable "owing" habit. This portrayal is markedly different from Watson's earlier portrayal of Sing. Although Sing

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., p.156-157.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., p.153.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

seemed to have "a wholesome respect for the power of the white man's law," he attacks Eileen because of his superstitious and violent nature. In contrast, the Chinese of Blackwater learn their bad habits from their white counterparts.

The next novel with significant Chinese content is Gold, gold, in Cariboo!. Although Phillipps-Wolley does not openly condemn or censure white men for their prejudice, he does show that the prejudice is unjust through the juxtaposition of the behaviour and attitudes of Ned Corbett and Steve Chance and, to a lesser degree, Rampike.

The miner Ned Corbett has a close relationship with his Chinese cook, Phon. Corbett does not view Phon primarily as a Chinese or even as a servant. From the very first introduction, Phillipps-Wolley states that Phon has "a great affection" for Ned Corbett who "treated him with the familiarity of old friendship."<sup>166</sup> Corbett is considerate, kind and loyal to Phon: he never uses derogatory terms but only teases Phon about going to the "hee-hee house"; he affectionately calls him "you idiot" and "old Phon"; he risks his stake at the claim by travelling slower for the sake of his exhausted servant; he lends a supporting hand to Phon's staggering walk. Unlike many masters who hardly pay attention to their Chinese servants and therefore do not know their changes in feelings and moods, Corbett listens to Phon and is sensitive to changes in the tone of Phon's

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<sup>166</sup> Phillipps-Wolley, Clive, Gold, gold, in Cariboo!, (London: Blackie and Son Limited, 1926), p.16.

speech. Corbett also regards Phon's ideas worth considering. He is sincerely concerned over Phon's physical and mental health and is so worried for Phon that he becomes irritated by the insensitive Steve Chance's light and heartless whistling. ↗

The only occasion Corbett curses Phon is when he is faced with the choice between losing both Phon and Chance down a ravine, or killing Phon that Chance might live.<sup>169</sup> Even at this point, Corbett considers them both "his friends." In the final analysis, however, Phon is still only the Chinese servant and Corbett "his master." Corbett cannot be expected to do otherwise; Phillipps-Wolley would have been unrealistic had Corbett chosen to save Phon instead of Chance. In a tense and crucial moment, Corbett can be excused for calling Phon "that cursed Chinaman." After all, Phon is the cause of the danger they are in. Yet, Corbett is reluctant to kill Phon, and will do so only if Phon forces him to do so. Corbett values life, especially that of his trusted and loyal servant. He delays, raising his rifle slowly, and shouts a warning to Phon to give him a "last chance."

To contrast Corbett's unprejudiced attitude towards Phon, Phillipps-Wolley shows Chance's contempt for Phon from their first recorded conversation. In response to Phon's claim the "debbils"<sup>3</sup> told him all three men will be gambling for gold together, Chance is patronizing and contemptuous of Phon's superstitions, and laughs "carelessly" at Phon's fear of another

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., p.114-115.

miner. Phillipps-Wolley's authorial intrusion establishes that Steve's attitude towards Phon is caused by, and only by, the fact that Phon is Chinese: "What did it matter what a Chinaman thought! A little yellow-skinned, pig-tailed fellow like Phon was not likely to have found out anything which had escaped Steve's Yankee smartness."<sup>170</sup> Chance's dislike and contempt for Phon is deeply rooted. Despite a laugh and an apparent tease in calling Phon "jolly saucy heathen", Phon is still a "heathen" who comes too close to overstepping the line between friendliness and familiarity. <sup>171</sup> Like an animal which has misbehaved, Phon needs to be put into place by "a kick"; he needs to be shown who is servant and who is master; he needs to be reminded that he is but a Chinese and that Chance is an American. Chance thinks of Phon only as a "herring-gutted Chinaman". <sup>172</sup>

Like Chance, Rampike, another miner, harbours stereotyped views about Chinese. To him, Phon can live on dirt or on nothing at all; "any Chinese can do that." <sup>173</sup> Furthermore, Chinese are lying, treacherous and thieving heathens. Phillipps-Wolley contrasts Rampike with Corbett, who does not even pause to entertain such an idea, but immediately defends Phon and rebukes Rampike: "you aren't fair to him. No Westerner ever is fair to a

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p.105.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., p.184.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., p.198.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., p.247.

Chinaman." 174

In a further attempt to break the stereotype, Phillipps-Wolley also shows Chance as a parallel character to Phon. Like Phon, Steve, too, contracts gold-fever. Chance was not "far behind" Phon in the frenzied "scramble" for the gold Phon uncovers from under a boulder. "Together the two delved and scratched and picked about the bed-rock."<sup>175</sup> Like Phon, Chance becomes wild when he discovers gold; like Phon, too, Chance loses control of himself and allows his greed to overcome him.

Phillipps-Wolley himself is not entirely free of prejudice, however. Despite his conscious paralleling of Chance with Phon, Phillipps-Wolley unconsciously parallels Chance with Ned Corbett. Immediately before describing the abandoned way Chance delves and scratches and picks about the bed-rock for gold nuggets, Phillipps-Wolley has Corbett and Chance looking at the gold and thinking "it cannot be for this common, ugly stuff...that men toil and strive, live and died, and are damned!"<sup>176</sup> Although these thoughts could conceivably have flashed across Corbett's mind, they are certainly not consistent with Chance's character as Phillipps-Wolley has already drawn it. No man who considers gold such "common ugly stuff" would subsequently go on his hands and knees as if before an idol to be worshipped. Phillipps-Wolley also makes the mistake of

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid., p.248.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., p.209.

claiming Phon to have "a great affection for the two men, who treated him with the familiarity of old friendship." Chance does not consider Phon a friend and holds Phon in amused contempt and disdain. These inconsistencies reveal Phillipps-Wolley's unconscious bias. Although consciously desiring to break the stereotype, he is nevertheless a product of his age. He tries to put Chance in a good light by showing cordiality where prejudice lives. These attempts are artificial and inconsistent with the rest of the novel. Phillipps-Wolley cannot help his unconscious bias that all white men are really decent men underneath; nevertheless, that bias exists and, indeed, emphasizes the insidiousness and pervasiveness of stereotyping.

Phillipps-Wolley's unconscious bias can be seen in other ways. He himself occasionally forgets the existence of Phon in the telling of the tale. Phillipps-Wolley details the position of each of the white men present as they hike towards Lillooet: "...Cruickshank leading the first five ponies, then Roberts plodding patiently along on foot, then another five ponies, and then, as long as the narrow trail would permit of it, Ned and Steve trudging along, chatting and keeping the ponies on the move."<sup>177</sup> Although a member of the party Phon is forgotten; his presence not acknowledged; his position in the line-up forever a mystery.

Phillipps-Wolley also repeats the stereotype of Chinese as gamblers. He immediately moves from his description of Phon's

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p.62.

physical appearance to showing Phon's incurable love for gambling. Phon so loves to gamble that he rushed dinner: he "dived into the tent, and rattled about the tin plates and clucked as if he were calling chickens to be fed"; after dinner, he "rushed in to take away the remains."<sup>178</sup> Phon pays no attention to Corbett's wise warning that he would lose a month's pay: "You'll see as much of the hundred dollars as you did of the devil."

In juxtaposing Phon's gambling with Corbett and Chance's decision to stake three claims on a gold mine they have not yet seen, Phillipps-Wolley seems to undercut this stereotype. Although Chinese may generally be gamblers, so too are Caucasians: as Phon points out, "Chance he go gamble, Phon he go gamble too. All go gamble togedder." All take risks, only in different ways; all gamble, only the games they play are different. Whether the game be gold mining or card-playing, the basic principle behind both is risk; both are gambles. A difference exists, nevertheless, between the gambling of Corbett and Chance and that of Phon: "he was a celestial. He played for the stakes. Both the whites played...for the fun of the game."<sup>179</sup> According to Phillipps-Wolley, then, the gold was all that mattered to Phon, not the thrill of knowing one had played hard and honest and clean. Phillipps-Wolley reveals his own prejudice: he himself succumbs to the insidious teachings of his

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., p.16-17.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., p.31.



society in his portrayal of Phon as greed-driven.

Although Phillipps-Wolley does not describe any opium dens or actually show Phon smoking opium, he does have one reference to it. He likens the sight of gold to such as Phon "had only dreamed of when the opium had possession of his body and soul."<sup>180</sup> Although this seems an innocent phrase with no actual derogatory connotations, it insidiously reinforces the stereotypical association of Chinese with opium. Because Phon is the only main Chinese character of the novel, he represents Chinese. The stereotype is enough to conjure up the negative images connected with Chinese and opium: vile-smelling, smoky and dirty dens, Chinese as perverse, evil and naturally degraded, opium-addiction spreading like wild-fire into the white community, with innocent white youths enslaved by the habit and naive white girls kidnapped and sold into prostitution to support a habit.

Despite Phillipps-Wolley's unconscious lapses into stereotyping, his novel, like Watson's Gordon of the lost lagoon, is a definite step towards correcting the attitude of British Columbians. The third novel The gleaming archway by A.M. Stephen is, however, a sharp deviation from this trend already set by Watson and Phillipps-Wolley. Stephen totally reverts to the negative stereotype typical of Glynn-Ward. The gleaming archway is written in 1929, six years after the Exclusion Act in 1923. During this period, Chinese who had previously been but

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., p.209.

menial workers began to consolidate their position in British Columbia. They slowly moved into the retail and wholesale business not only in Chinatown but into the territory of white businessmen. Therefore, the early thirties saw a renewed increase in anti-Chinese sentiments, this time led by businessmen. The gleaming archway reflects this renewed mood: it seeks to awaken memories of Chinese vice such as gambling and opium smoking, of a filthy Chinatown, and of a Chinese population inherently diabolical and sly.

A long passage describing Chinatown seems to show some admiration for the exotic elements of Chinese life.<sup>181</sup> However, a closer inspection reveals a prejudice which invalidates that seeming admiration. "Quaint little wooden shops and markets filled with weird foods and picturesque bric-a-brac", "red posters, splashed with hieroglyphs in black ink", "gorgeous mandarin gowns, encrusted with gold embroidery" and "coloured silks, tenuous as cobwebs": these are the aspects of Chinese culture which British Columbians seem to accept with favour.

Yet, this admiration is reluctant and tinged with condescension. The adjective "quaint" suggests antique, odd, fanciful, or whimsical. As such, the "quaint little wooden shops" are, though pleasing to some degree, nevertheless abnormal to white British Columbians whose judgments are, of course, in Watson's eyes, unailing and invariably

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<sup>181</sup> Stephen, Alexander M., The gleaming archway, (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Limited, 1929), p.196.

correct. Stephen further states that "pungent odours" which emanate from these very shops are "unpleasant to Western senses"; this phrase further undermines the apparently positive connotation of the word "quaint". Similarly, the choice of "weird" to describe Chinese food goes beyond the literal meaning of "unfamiliar". Like "quaint", "weird" connotes an abnormal deviation from the acceptable. Furthermore, Stephen applies the verb "glared" to those innocent red posters to arouse indignation in his readers, an indignation he himself feels: no Chinese poster should have the gall to glare at passing whites, especially when above such evil-smelling dens. Stephen's choice of "hieroglyphs" brings to mind the popular opinion that "the diabolical Chinese alphabet" is "more primitive than those of the savage tribes of American Indians." Even the seeming recognition that Chinese have enough aesthetic sensibility to possess a Chinese fiddle is undercut by the comment that the closest to musical notes which the fiddle produces is but a "discordant squeaking."

For Stephen, therefore, this close juxtaposition of the cultural aspects of Chinese with the atmosphere of lust and crime he sees prevailing in Chinatown is not meant to relieve the condemnation of Chinese by pointing to the more admirable contributions to British Columbia. Instead, Stephen's choice of words clearly shows his intention to make suspicious even those aspects of the Chinese inheritance which may seem laudable.

The remaining picture Stephen paints devotes itself to every stereotyped vice of Chinese.<sup>102</sup> Unlike other civilized white residential areas with their decent streets and roads, Chinatown consists of alley-ways. The seemingly innocent Chinese homes are but decoys for illicit gambling houses. "Ah Mee's joint on Dupont Street" is known as an opium den as well as a gambling house.<sup>103</sup> A sinister air comes from the people who inhabit or frequent the building. The Chinese doorman, like Knowle's Chinaman, is stealthy. Stephen portrays him as a diabolical panther who has spotted his prey and is ready to pounce on his innocent and unsuspecting victim: he has small glittering eyes, a suspicious smile and a too-abjectly servile manner. He is unctuous, unduly suave and oily-tongued. Stephen even supplies him with "claws tucked into the wide sleeves of his silken jacket"; the silken jacket only emphasizes the feline cunning of Chinese who hide behind a veneer of smooth respectability. The gamblers, white and yellow, men and women, are unhealthy looking and "for the most part sinister"; the women, "powdered and rouged" with eyes "unnaturally bright by reason of their painted lashes," are in all probability prostitutes. The carefully guarded front door, the heavy bolts, the silently swinging door, the narrow spaces, the "thud of ponderous iron bars being shoved into wooden sockets" all add to the sinister air of vice and lust.

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p.197.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p.193.

Like Stephen's novel, Alex Philip's Whispering leaves is related to the renewed anti-Oriental feelings of the thirties. Whispering leaves is written in 1931, two years after The gleaming archway and eight years after the Exclusion Act in 1923. In those eight years, British Columbians seem to have become complacent in their attack on Chinese, a complacency in evidence in the literature produced. No novel published during these years raises any significant voice against the yellow peril, and indeed Gold, gold, in Cariboo! even condemns unfair stereotyping. Together with Stephen, therefore, Philip stands out conspicuously in his condemnation of Chinese. Just as one of Philip's characters seeks to "keep the historical old place from falling into the hands of an alien race," Philip himself, kindled by the renewed anti-Orientalism, exhorts British Columbians to remain diligent in their battle. To do this, he emphasizes three aspects of Chinese: the smuggling of Chinese coolies, opium smuggling, and the character of Chinese.

Philip's first point warns that despite the Exclusion Act, the danger of Chinese immigration is not over yet because Chinese are still entering the country through illegal means. He shows the vulnerability of British Columbia to this threat. The irregular coastline and the rugged terrain is ideal for smuggling. "Some of the inlets reach as far as a hundred miles inland. They land their Chinamen...in some hidden spot on the coast and walk 'em over the mountains. They send one man ahead and if there is any danger in sight they scatter like a bunch of

quail. They don't use the regular trails except in the dark."<sup>184</sup>  
The problem is accentuated by the difficulty of identifying the new-comers: "If they had left China with any mark of the Orient in their attire they were well disguised now in nondescript workmen's overalls and jumpers"; "One Chinaman walking on the road looks like another."<sup>185</sup>

The evils of smuggling Chinese into Canada are obvious: it perpetuates and heightens the problem of cheap Chinese labour at the expense of white labour. Most farmers "don't hire nothin' but Chinks," even for their "head man."<sup>186</sup> "Chinamen had a hold in this country" because they buy British Columbian land and prosper on it.<sup>187</sup> A good example is Lin Hung. His farm with its "fat well-tended soil" and "plenitude of labourers" has all the signs of prosperity: "the ridges were heavily timbered, and the sweeping meadows below this, right to the edge of the lake, were lush and green."<sup>188</sup> It has "a disconnected irrigation flume, evidently recently built." The farm buildings are modern, and "Lin Hung's land was enclosed by modern wire fences." In contrast, an old white Canadian from a wealthy family and "always a gentleman" has had to sell most of his original

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<sup>184</sup> Philip, Alex, Whispering leaves, (Ottawa: Graphic Publishers Limited, 1931), p.289.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., p.269-270, p.289.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., p.41.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., p.85.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., p.84, p.66.

five-thousand-acre estate. His farm, with its "rotting and crumbling" rail fences, shows extensive signs of dilapidation and neglect due to insufficient funds.<sup>189</sup> The message is that the more Chinese are smuggled in, the greater the suffering of white British Columbians who will be forced off their own land.

The Exclusion Act did not deal with the problem of opium-smuggling and opium addiction amongst the whites. Philip therefore exposes the evils of opium smuggling by showing the effects of opium on a Canadian, Jockey Cameron. Philip's portrayal is exaggerated, sensationalized and designed particularly to display the evil of the addiction. Philip draws a pitiable picture of a sincere and well-bred man who through youthful ignorance has fallen victim to opium and has become "a scrub and a bum."<sup>190</sup> Cameron is initially "a very handsome and attractive man...he had once possessed a charming personality."<sup>191</sup> He comes from a good family, from "real people."<sup>192</sup> However, Cameron is misled into vice: "I ran away from home when I was a kid and got in with the wrong gang around the racetracks and went to hell long ago. I'm only twenty-six now, so you can imagine how much sense I had....I was just a punk kid." Cameron's sincerity in explaining his background draws empathy; he is essentially an honourable man who realizes

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid., p.66.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., p.243.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., p.214.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., p.243.

the despicable state into which he has degenerated.

Although not immediately stating the cause of Cameron's decline, Philip clearly shows that Cameron's hell is opium. According to Philip, Cameron's pale-faced appearance is unmistakably that of a drug addict: "his skin and the whites of his eyes were of a most peculiar bluish-yellow. That, with the contracted pupils of his eyes, gave him a sinister appearance. He was palpably nervous as evidenced by his shifting eyes and jerking hands....The fingers of the left hand were yellow with cigarette stain, the fingernails long and dirty. His shirt collar and cuffs were soiled. There was a steaming sweat on his face; uncleanliness exhaled from him and enveloped him like a fog. Certainly he was an unwholesome object."<sup>193</sup> After a visit with Lin Hung, however, Cameron's face becomes "placid. The strong hands were quiet, all trace of nervousness gone. There was a dreamy look in his eyes and he seemed as cool as if he were standing under an electric fan." The drug is obviously opium because Lin Hung is the one who comes in quest of Cameron. The opium pipe had become a symbol of Chinese culture as much as had the queue and the tea cup. Given the stereotyped portrayal of Lin Hung in Whispering leaves, the connection between a drug-addict and an evil Chinese character can only lead to one conclusion: opium.

In his desire to ascertain that his reader does not miss this important point, Philip belabours his already clear

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., p.195-196



association of the evil of opium with Lin Hung by essentially repeating the same description of a nervous drug-craving Cameron who after seeking out Lin Hung for his fix immediately becomes calm and controlled. <sup>194</sup> Philip directs his reader's attention to the same indicators as before: Cameron's hand, eyes, and nervous movements. Cameron is utterly dependent upon the drug, and therefore upon Lin Hung. Philip stresses the corrupting effects of opium by drawing a melodramatic, vivid and detailed picture of Cameron's appearance and behaviour after prolonged deprivation. Cameron is reduced to an incoherent frenzy, a "wild thing": "clothing torn, face bleeding, eyes wild and staring", "tongue lolling from foam-flecked lips", eyes "maniacal", speech "inarticulate maunderings."<sup>195</sup> Like a madman, too, Cameron has superhuman strength: "Repeatedly he flung his body against the door. It seemed as if only a giant in strength could break the bolt, but it snapped under the bombardment of the human projectile."<sup>196</sup> Through this very graphic portrayal of the downfall of a decent white youth to become a depraved murderer, Philip makes his point clear: opium smuggling can only lead to the ultimate downfall of white British Columbians.

The first two points Philip makes about the smuggling of people and of opium show the effect of Chinese in the land. The third point shows the nature of Chinese as cowardly and

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., p.213-214.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., p.294, p.295, p.304.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., p.305.

primitive and utterly diabolical. Philip shows Chinese as not only cold-blooded murderers but also as dirty cowards who dare to strike a man only from the back and only when that man is unsuspecting, and who then turn tail to flee from direct confrontation in terror-stricken panic.<sup>197</sup> Philip leaves no doubt as to the cowardice of one Chinese whose fear of pursuit from one white man compels him into thinking that "two men were on his trail." In contrast, a white man single-handedly braves a full dozen Chinese, stands his ground even though greatly outnumbered, and manages to "shoot two boy and break jaw and smashum head four more."<sup>198</sup>

Lin Hung is a typical stereotyped Chinese: scheming, underhandedly powerful and stealthy. He is obsequious and excessively servile. He has no scruples about invading the privacy of a guest or about making an unsanctioned and surreptitious examination of the contents of another person's belongings. Like every stereotyped Chinese, he is a "drug-fiend".<sup>199</sup> He is cold-blooded, unfeeling and totally without scruples. He cracks one man on the head; he would have gladly murdered another had he not been stopped; he would also have shot a third if not interrupted; he orders his Chinese boys to kill a fourth, a doubly serious crime because that man is a policeman. Lin Hung, "too damned quick on the killing", never

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., p.166.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., p.271.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., p.268.

attempts to find bloodless solutions to problems: "Much better killum too quick than too late."<sup>200</sup> Lin Hung respects and values no life but his own. Whereas even a hard-core white criminal who is wanted for murder does not kill unnecessarily, Lin Hung without hesitation kills all in his way: "'Long time I no give jockey dope. Two tlee day he go clazy. Logan he come home dlunk. I nail door his cabin. Put lotsa gasolene makee good fire. Some day old man Lee he go work in mine....Maybe somebody put lotsa dynamite in lock. Bong! Too bad old man have accident.' He rubbed his hands and leered....'Evellytling velly nice, you see?'"<sup>201</sup>

Lin Hung's physical appearance matches his evil personality. He has "claw-like fingers," "thin, cruel lips" and "saffron, parchment-like skin."<sup>202</sup> His "fevered bulging eyes" with their narrowed pupils" burn with "a hectic light."<sup>203</sup> His voice is "a bland Oriental voice," often reduced to a deceptive and wicked purr.<sup>204</sup> Philip likens him to the serpent in the Garden of Eden; his movements are those of a snake's quiet slipping along the ground, with only a "faint scuffing sound" to

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid., p.271.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., p.273.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., p.269, p.273, p.268.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., p.268, p.273.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., p.269.

mark his progress. <sup>205</sup> His speech is a hissing foreign tongue. Despite his apparent position as a "henchman", Lin Hung is actually the one who has a hold over his employer, Hendricks. Lin Hung kowtows to no one. Whereas Hendricks initially curses Lin Hung, Hendricks quickly backs down to a conciliatory "Oh, all right...." <sup>206</sup> The immoral Chinese still "stalked red-handed in this land of beauty, peace and colour."

The next novel which refers significantly to Chinese is The log of a lame duck by Audrey Alexandra Brown. Brown's novel, published seven years after Whispering leaves, is a direct contrast to Philip's novel. Except for one instance where she describes a Chinese character as being "of portly presence and much natural stateliness of mien", Brown's depiction of Chinese is without stereotyping. Instead, it is contrastingly balanced and strikingly objective. She does not see any inherent evil in Chinese but presents them as ordinary people. She relates both unflattering and favourable stories about Chinese, especially about children.

Brown's Mr. Wing, though a well-off merchant, neglects to register the birth of his two daughters: because they were girls "he hadn't bothered." <sup>207</sup> Both Lily, aged two, and Diana, aged five, are discovered living in the cellar. "They couldn't stand

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid., p.48.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., p.106.

<sup>207</sup> Brown, Audrey Alexandra, The log of a lame duck, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1938), p.7.

-- their legs were bent under them and they dragged themselves about with their hands." Brown describes the children's condition objectively without horrifying embellishment or gruesome details. Her analysis of the circumstances of the children is guarded and, as an outsider looking in, she gives the benefit of doubt: "What would have happened to them in the end one can't say, of course; but the circumstances looked suspicious." After the children had been removed to the hospital, Mrs. Wing seems "more like an interested stranger" than a mother. Brown, however, immediately adds that both children "adore" their mother, talk about her "morning, noon and night" even after three years at the hospital. Although intentionally recording Mrs. Wing's behaviour as perceived by a Caucasian, Brown clearly does not want to leave the impression that Mrs. Wing is an uncaring mother. Had she been a neglectful mother, the children could not have remained so attached to her after so long a separation, during which their mother had only been to visit them "once or twice".

Brown describes the two girls themselves as ordinary children. Lily is a "twinkling sloe-eyed" chubby little Chinese. Of a friendly nature, she "stretches her hand through the bars of her crib," yet because she is naturally reticent, she "doesn't know what to do" when she receives a response but relapses into impassivity.<sup>208</sup> Diana sings wrong words to a carol, replacing "Join the giant half-past five" for "Join the

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., p.7.

Triumph of the Skies" and "Holy Kites" for "Holy Night" because her English is not fluent.<sup>209</sup> Brown describes this incident with humour, and carefully states that Diana, though singing the wrong words, sings with "no less devotional fervour" than the other children.<sup>210</sup> When the two leave the hospital, Brown writes that "Diana will be greatly missed; she was a most cheerful little soul, and though only eight was really helpful and could be trusted with the babies."<sup>211</sup>

Brown balances her depiction of a mercilessly practical Wong Chong with a story of an unfortunate gardener. Wong refuses to kill a sickly chick because he "can't eat him."<sup>212</sup> Although "it would really have been kinder to put...the chick out of his pain at once," Wong has no such compassion and looks only for material gain from his actions. To balance this picture, Brown sympathetically presents the dilemma of the Chinese gardener who has married a Caucasian woman: although the gardener loves on his daughter, she hates him because he is but an "ignorant Celestial" and because "she was very Chinese in her looks -her skin was white, but she had the black hair and the almond eyes: she was very beautiful."<sup>213</sup> Brown shows the agony caused by racial prejudice: the daughter resents her Chinese heritage even

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid., p.36.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., p.41.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., p.114.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., p.187.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., p.241.

though it has given her great beauty. Brown emphatically shows that the fault lies not with the Chinese gardener: he dearly loves his Caucasian wife and his children. Indeed, when his wife is seriously ill, "one could not keep him out" of the room. He would be "kneeling up on the bed and hanging over her and crying." 214

Cariboo runaway by Francis Duncan rejects the stereotype even more systematically than does The log of a lame duck. Duncan's novel was written in 1942, eleven years after Whispering leaves by Alex Philip. By that time, most of the active anti-Chinese sentiments had disappeared, at least "changes were slowly taking place."<sup>215</sup> Even the "newspapers began to support the Chinese in their quest for enfranchisement." Duncan's novel is consistent with this climate of greater tolerance for Chinese; it shows the gradual awareness of British Columbians to stereotypes and attempts to re-educate the society. This novel is important because it is a teenage adventure story directed at a reading public of white youths.

Instead of the stereotype, Duncan presents a rounded Chinese character. Pei Ah Sung is a "small Chinese man" with a "calm smile" and a "gentle foreign voice."<sup>216</sup> Duncan uses the neutral word "Chinese" to describe Ah Sung's racial background.

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214 Ibid.

215 Morton, p.250.

216 Duncan, Frances, Cariboo runaway, (New York: Bobbs-Merril, 1976), p.80.

Similarly, the word "foreign" is neutral: Ah Sung's speech is different, but just different. Ah Sung is also quite different from the stereotype who lures innocent white youths into a life of vice and immorality. Seeing Tim and Elva Parkhurst, one of whom is obviously quite sick, on their own in a rough mining town, Ah Sung unhesitatingly offers the children a place to rest and food to eat. Instead of vice and immorality, the children find comfort, protection and safety. Duncan turns the tables around: Tim and Elva faced danger, vice and violence in the company of white men; in contrast, the children are best protected from vice and violence when living with a Chinese. "For the first time since leaving Victoria, Tim felt truly safe!"<sup>217</sup> Rather than luring youths from their families into vice, Ah Sung seeks to bind families together. He is a parent himself, and realizes Tim's mother would be worried about her children's whereabouts and safety: "Mother need to know you not hurt."<sup>218</sup> Therefore, he tells Tim to write home so that his mother may be assured. Ah Sung teaches Tim the value of keeping the family unit together in spirit through communication.

Ah Sung treats the children with the concern of a parent. "'Father in jail. No look after you. I look after.' Ah Sung tapped his chest with his thumb. 'Not have you in trouble. That

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid., p.81.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., p.82.



is that!"<sup>219</sup> On reaching his home, Ah Sung helps Eva into a bed, "took off her boots and jacket, then gave her a nightshirt and pulled the curtains so she could undress."<sup>220</sup> Ah Sung's actions are gentle and kind: knowing Eva's weakness from her illness he helps her take off her outer garment and her footwear, but then allows her privacy to undress and change. Ah Sung then proceeds to give her food: "While Tim supported Elva's head, he spooned it into her." The image Duncan evokes is that of a parent gently and patiently spoon-feeding a sick child some gruel. As for the Chinese herbal medicine Ah Sung gives Elva, Duncan reassures her readers about the goodness of the brew: to Tim, its smell evokes thoughts of "meadows in the sun, white clouds, his mother's gentle smile." A brew associated with the peace of meadows in the sun, the light fluffy purity of white clouds and the love of a mother's gentle smile cannot be for anything but good.

Far from the inscrutable Chinaman, Ah Sung is openly expressive. Like all human beings, he has a variety of different emotions depending on his differing circumstances. With his own Chinese friend, Ah Sung is capable of talking "excitedly".<sup>221</sup> In front of the children, however, he presents a more composed mein. Ah Sung's black eyes show "sympathy" when Tim receives the news of his father's imprisonment. When thanked by Mr. Parkhurst

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<sup>219</sup> Ibid., p.97.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., p.81.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., p.83.

for rescuing his children, "Ah Sung covered his embarrassment with dignity."<sup>222</sup> He registers a "look of shock" on realizing the high stakes Mr. Parkhurst had gambled for.<sup>223</sup> Ah Sung's eyes "flashed" with anger on hearing Elva's plan to stay in her father's cabin, alone with her brother, and he bursts out saying, "You not tell adult no worry!"<sup>224</sup> Ah Sung puts on a "mask-like expression" only so that Tim will not suspect his father has been imprisoned on the charges of murder. Ah Sung does not want to frighten and worry Tim by an untimely revelation before finding out more about Tim and his family. Another time, Ah Sung dons an "inscrutable look" when he does not approve of Elva's decision to stay alone. Ah Sung is not trying to hide his feelings for he goes on to express himself in no uncertain terms. Instead, the inscrutable look is what reveals his worry.

Duncan also moves away from the stereotype of Chinese homes as crowded, filthy and smelly. Ah Sung lives alone; there is no overcrowding. His log house is "indistinguishable from the rest, except for the sign over the door in...Chinese writing."<sup>225</sup> Ah Sung's house is like any other miner's, not any dirtier nor much cleaner. "So many things were the same, yet different. There was the usual pot-bellied stove, but beside it was an iron grill,

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., p.89.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., p.90.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., p.97.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., p.80.

only a few inches high. There was the bed, which Elva occupied, but rolled in the corner were pallets. In the middle of the room was a table with two chairs, but on the table sat a glass jar, half-filled with water." Chinese have the same needs as whites; Chinese need to cook, to sleep, to sit and to eat. Ah Sung uses a grill instead of the stove, he sleeps on pallets instead of the bed, he uses crockery of a different style; the different items serve the same essential functions. Furthermore, "there was a different smell to the house. Not unpleasant, Tim decided, just different." Instead of having an unbearable stench, Ah Sung's house just has a different smell, different mainly because the food cooked is different and is cooked differently. Ah Sung himself is a clean and tidy man. He makes Tim wash up with hot water before going to bed. After breakfast, Ah Sung "washed the few dishes, put them in the cupboard, and told Tim to roll up his blanket and pallet."<sup>226</sup> He also "washed and pressed" Tim's trousers, and gave both children clean nightshirts.

Duncan shows that the Chinese concept of home is similar to that of the Caucasian: a clean and properly furnished home, a stacked up wood-pile, and the smell of home-cooked food on the stove. At night, Ah Sung settles down with a newspaper just like any white father does at the end of the day. The language of the paper may be different, but the activities of families remain the same. Duncan further focuses on the family as a possible

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid., p.82.

common ground for Caucasians and Chinese. In a conversation between Ah Sung and Mr. Parkhurst, Ah Sung says,

"I know. Got childs in China. Elder son this size." He pointed at Tim. "I know about childs: Be proud of these."

It was Mr. Parkhurst's turn to be embarrassed. "I am. They've given me new hope."

Both men stared at each other, the small oriental and the tall caucasian, smiling a kinship which bridged their nationalities and backgrounds.<sup>227</sup>

Whereas previous novels focussed on Chinese as cheap labour and opium smokers, and on Chinese families as but a means of propagating more Chinese, Duncan looks beyond the stereotype to see Chinese families as units formed by basic relationships. Ah Sung too has children in China; he loves them and is as proud of them as Mr. Parkhurst is of his children. Duncan not only shatters the stereotype, she sees a similarity in human relationships as a way to bridge the differences in upbringing and culture between the two races. Thus Duncan shows the foolishness of people who "no talk to Chinaman" just because they are of a different race.

Duncan also moves away from Chinese as gamblers who lure whites into vice. Duncan is vague as to whether Ah Sung has a part in running a gambling house, but makes clear that even if Ah Sung does have a gambling house, having that in itself is not evil. Ah Sung does not force a man to gamble, and "by itself, gambling not bad."<sup>228</sup> Ah Sung even tries to dissuade Mr.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., p.89-90.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., p.84.

Parkhurst from gambling so seriously, but Mr. Parkhurst only changes to a different kind of game. Ah Sung himself does not gamble. In contrast, Tim remembers "all the poker games they'd seen on the road" where whites gamble even without the temptation of a gambling house.

Duncan focusses attention on the "singsong cadence" of Chinese speech.<sup>229</sup> Unlike most authors who dismiss Chinese speech as unintelligible and therefore jibberish, Duncan chooses "singsong" and "cadence" to bring to mind a musical quality. Thus Duncan sees an aesthetic quality which others dismiss as just another Chinese oddity. Duncan is also accurate in her representation of Chinese speech. Ah Sung does not say "auchee" or "likee". His spoken English is different only in the syntax, grammar and tenses of sentence construction: Duncan debunks the stereotype of Chinese speech.

Chinese food and drink is also neither unpalatable nor weird, but delicious even though different. Ah Sung eats rice with Chinese dishes; Tim learned that rice tasted "bland and uninteresting by itself, certainly not up to pie, but mixed with the other dish -- meat and vegetables, he guessed -- it was delicious!"<sup>230</sup> Chinese tea, too, is "unlike the tea to which Tim was accustomed." Tim quickly develops a "liking for the sweet-smelling, watery brew and Jasmine was his particular

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<sup>229</sup> Ibid., p.17.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., p.81.

favourite."<sup>231</sup> He grows to like Chinese food and drink so much that when they have a celebration, he takes some rice as well as the other western food. Duncan is realistic in this portrayal: Tim still likes his western food, he has only acquired an additional taste for Chinese food. Duncan invites her reader to be more receptive to Chinese; like Mrs. Parkhurst who is initially reserved about Chinese but later comes to accept and like them, Duncan's readers might find themselves pleasantly surprised.

Duncan clearly wishes to break the picture of Chinese as evil, dirty, and immoral. In her enthusiasm, however, she might possibly have presented a more moderate picture of the attitude toward Chinese than one which actually existed in reality. She records this temperate conversation between two miners:

"These damn Celestials," they heard a miner say.  
"Stick around after everyone gives up and makes a lousey fortune from the leavings."

"They can have it," his friend replied. "You have to work too hard down here. The big loads are up north. I was here in '58 and after the first working there was nothing."

"They're patient, you have to give them that," the first one said grudgingly.<sup>232</sup>

Duncan is accurate when she records the hostile feelings of the first miner towards Chinese miners. "Damn Celestials" would have been a common term amongst the gold miners, but even that is rather mild considering white miners' reputation for colourful expletives. The second miner's reply, though, is unusual. The

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., p.96.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., p.24.

literal meaning of his reply reflects accurately the typical white miner who would prefer the easier pickings of the big loads: R.E. Wynne records that "the greed of the white miners...was greater than their industry and perseverance."<sup>233</sup> However, there is a sense of magnanimity towards the Chinese in the second miner's reply which does not seem to corroborate Wynne's conclusion that "it would be easy enough to find unsuccessful white miners who thus bore a grudge against Chinese for their very success."<sup>234</sup> In a circumstance where "from the very first season of their arrival in British Columbia the Chinese angered white miners," magnanimity towards Chinese on the part of any miner is rather unusual.<sup>235</sup> Furthermore, any objective newspaper correspondent might conceivably be impartial enough to report that "Chinese industry often triumphs where British indolence gives up. These men...may be styled lucky where the truth is they worked at times when white men with just as fair chances, were idling around."<sup>236</sup> However, to have even the first miner concede the existence of a virtue in those "damn Celestials" is, though plausible, highly unlikely. Duncan uses "a miner" and "his friend" rather than specifically identified characters with names; she intends the two miners to be spokesmen for all miners, a kind of everyman miner. However, she

<sup>233</sup> Wynne, p.139.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., p.139.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., p.108.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., p.139.

is wrong. Her portrayal is plausible for some individuals but does not reflect the average miner; it more probably reflects her conscious effort to debunk the stereotype of Chinese.

Cariboo road by Alan Sullivan in 1946 is a continuation of the trend set by Cariboo runaway. Sullivan's novel depicts tolerance; in this case, tolerance towards Chinese washmen. Sullivan does not go as far as Duncan in delving into the character of Chinese, but his novel clearly shows none of the racial prejudice so prevalent in the earlier British Columbian novels.

In the particular case of Cariboo road, the temperate picture is a reflection of reality. Although fictitious with fictitious characters, events and conversations, the novel is nevertheless based on historical events. Even though the story of the Bowers family is fictitious, it recounts the excitement of Cariboo in 1865: the overnight growth of Barkerville with the discovery of gold by Billy Barker, the building of the Cariboo Road, the presence of camels in the Fraser Canyon. Characters like Billy Barker and Judge Begbie are actual people who lived during that period. Morton records that "for its size and its strange conglomeration of people -- Negroes, Chinese, French, Italian, British, Americans and Canadians -- it [Barkerville] was a fairly peaceful community."<sup>237</sup> In such a community where gold was plentiful and no one had to go hungry, tolerance prevailed and violence was minimal. Therefore, although Chinese laundrymen

<sup>237</sup> Morton, p. 17.



were persecuted along with those of their nationality in times of economic hardship, the prosperity of the Cariboo at that time allowed them to live peacefully for a while.

Sullivan's choice of this period of a relative lull in anti-Chinese prejudice is significant. Glynn-Ward, Watson in The spoilers of the valley, Stephen and Philip all intentionally choose to describe certain stereotypes of Chinese and set their novels during particular periods that would fit with the inflammatory message they want to convey. Conversely, Sullivan's choice of Barkerville in 1865 reveals his desire to perpetuate only the non-prejudiced treatment of Chinese.

Sullivan does not go very much beyond the physical appearance of Sing, his main Chinese character. Sing has a "fat chin" and a "bland friendly smile that meant nothing."<sup>238</sup> Like Li Ho of The window gazer, "what Sing felt only Sing knew." He does not express his thoughts or feelings, keeping them to himself. "Plenty much Chinaman nevah tell"; "of him they knew as much -- and no more -- than he desired them to know."<sup>239</sup> The only statement Sullivan makes of Sing's thinking is vague. Sing "liked Mr. Knott, having found that their respective philosophies were well matched, and Mr. Knott's views of life and death were, for a white man, unusually sound."<sup>240</sup> What that

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<sup>238</sup> Sullivan, Alan, Cariboo road, (Toronto: Thomas Nelson, 1946), p.165.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., p.275, p.272.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., p.273.

philosophy is and those views are, however, is left unsaid. Sing is therefore very much a stereotype. Sullivan also repeats the stereotype of Chinese as opium smokers: Sing sits "smoking a mixture of Virginia twist and opium; his loose body was lax, his manner contemplative, and with oriental calm he surveyed the violent exertions of a rabble of white men."<sup>241</sup> This "oriental calm" is yet another stereotype. Unlike Duncan who looks at the human emotions and behaviour of Ah Sung, Sullivan remains in vague generalities.

Just like Phillipps-Wolley, who occasionally forgets Phon in his relation of the story, Sullivan, too, forgets Sing in one of his passages. Despite Mr. Knott's reminder to Mrs. Bowers, "Ain't forgetting Sing, are you?" in her invitations to a poetry reading evening, Sullivan himself fails to mention whether Sing does attend the evening; neither does Sullivan describe Sing's part in the activities of the night.

Sullivan, however, does not associate any prejudice with the stereotype. All the miners were gamblers, with Mr. Bowers himself amongst the number. Sullivan does not put the label "vice" on the gambling of Chinese in contrast to that of the white men. Instead, Mrs. Bowers draws comfort from the fact that Sing refuses to sell his share of the mine; Mrs. Bowers reasons that since Chinese are "shrewd" gamblers and Sing is a Chinese, their decision to keep the mine cannot be too much of a gamble. Although the idea of all Chinese being shrewd gamblers is still

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., p.272.

a stereotype, Sullivan changes the stereotype from a negative to a positive one. Similarly, Marta's statement about Mrs. Bowers taking in laundry does not quite exhibit a warm welcome for the Chinese: "Honey, I'd quit that -- here's more Chinks coming in every day. No white woman can stand up to 'em when it's a case of soapsuds."<sup>242</sup> The word "Chink" is certainly derogatory. Nevertheless, except for "Chink", the statement is objective and factual. The conversation between Lemuel and Mrs. Bowers, too, is objective and factual:

"My trade is good. I hope you hold yours."

"Why shouldn't I?"

"Competition -- there's four Chinamen arrived this week; they're setting up near the blacksmith shop, and prices are down. But I reckon to come here right along."

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Neither Lemuel nor Mrs. Bowers decry the Chinese for lowering the price: Lemuel's explanation is factual and he does not even use "Chink" as Marty does. Mrs. Bowers' only reaction is to look grave and wistful, and to admit that "that's bad," this reaction despite the money she gets from washing clothes being her sole source of income. Indeed, when she finally does hang up the washtubs her explanation to Judge Begbie is, "what with the price of soap, an' starch, an' those Chinamen it just ain't good enough."<sup>244</sup> She does not, therefore, lay the blame solely on the Chinese. Even the Judge's reaction is impartial. Despite his

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<sup>242</sup> Ibid., p.94.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., p.110.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., p.131.

earlier observation that "the mere sight of the washing on your line means a good deal: it reminds them [the miners] of something they don't want to forget, and wonder when they'll see again. You're quite a blessing in Richfield, Mrs. Bowers, and not in disguise either," Judge Begbie knows that the Chinese are only trying to make a living and therefore cannot be blamed for creating competition. <sup>245</sup> The emotional value attached to Mrs. Bowers' clothes line is important to the men of Richfield who are starved for the love of mothers and sisters and wives they left behind, but even that sentimental value does not overshadow the miners' sense of economics: they prefer to save money than to have the pleasure of seeing their clothes on Mrs. Bowers' washline. As such, the Chinese laundrymen of Richfield are useful to the town. Although not welcomed with warmth, they are at least treated without disdain or contempt.

Sullivan even gives Sing an important though minor role in the novel. Sing is an equal partner in the Red Jacket mine, and the other partners treat him as such. When Mrs. Bowers gathers some men to accompany her in her wait for her husband and Lemuel to return from hunting, Sing is included as one of the party. Indeed, Mrs. Bowers appeals to Sing for an opinion when she becomes anxious: "I can't stand this any longer -- perhaps somebody got hurt that time. Mr. Sing, what about it?"<sup>246</sup> Sing's decision is the one finally acted upon: "I guess maybe go see --

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., p.90.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., p.290-293.

evellybody go." When they reach the collapsed mine Mrs. Bowers again appeals to Sing: "Those two!...where are they? God help us now....Oh, Mr. Sing! where are they?" Sing continues to observe and make conclusions from his observations. While the other men and women are still crying out in "helpless uncertainty" at the sight of the slide, Sing remains unalarmed though puzzled. His eyes and ears are already busy looking and listening for some clues that will help him reconstruct the events preceeding. He is the only one who notices small details like the presence of "tlee men but five lifles." He is the first to notice the very faint knocking sound "like somebody hit piecee wood with piecee lock," and his is the quick mind that deduces the presence of men trapped alive under the slide. More important, Sing is the one whose quick thinking brings about the realization that digging at the slide without tools to keep the soil from sliding back will be a futile excercise, just as digging without more men will take too long, and thus risk the lives of the buried men. Mrs. Bowers' s plea, "don't leave us now Mr. Sing," testifies to Sing's importance: Sing is depended on for actual help as well as for psychological assurance. Sing is the hero who saves the two men from death.

These seven novels written in the years after the peaking of anti-Chinese sentiments in 1923 form an inverse pattern to that of novels before the Exclusion Act: increasing fear of and frustration over Chinese created increasingly more stereotyped Chinese characters in novels, and increasing security and relief

resulting from the Act allowed the rise of increasing sympathetic views of Chinese. This pattern in British Columbian novels shows the close link between the social and economic conditions of the province and the art of fiction. The writer of fiction would take these background conditions into consideration in his choosing of themes, characters, settings and plots.

### Chapter 3

One of the more interesting authors in British Columbia is Frederick Niven who represents in microcosm the gradual change in the British Columbian perception of and attitude towards Chinese from 1896 to 1946. This change, already observed in the general trend of British Columbian literature, Niven's writing specifically charts. Although he wrote many novels, only four of them set in British Columbia refer to Chinese, but these four are important because they reveal Niven's gradual move away from an initial highly emotional prejudice against Chinese to a later admiration for them, even to the point of defending them from other prejudiced British Columbians.

Written just three years after the Anti-Asiatic riot in Vancouver in 1907, Niven's first book The lost cabin mine refers to Chinese only in passing. Every reference reflects both the general prevailing perception of Chinese as stealthy, cunning and vile as well as Niven's own prejudice.

Every Chinese character is stereotyped. Niven's use of "smiling" to describe Mr. Laughlin's "smiling Chinese cook" is not meant to conjure a picture of friendliness and sincerity but of suspicious servility.<sup>247</sup> Similarly, the attendant's "bland smile" is suspicious because it creates a mask meant to hide an underlying deceptiveness which the protagonist, Apache Kid,

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<sup>247</sup> Niven, Frederick, The lost cabin mine, (Toronto: Henry Frowde, 1909), p.11.

effectively and alertly exposes. <sup>248</sup> Chinese will lie and wheedle for a mere half dollar; Apache Kid's generosity in giving the attendant the half dollar "for his truthfulness" only emphasizes the attendant's "lust for gold." The Chinese cook "arrived quietly on the scene"; the Chinese attendant is "soft-footed." <sup>249</sup> Both sneak around quietly and stealthily. Niven sees this furtiveness as a racial trait: "the Chinese attendant passed...quiet as is the wont of his race." <sup>250</sup>

Niven's prejudice is undisguised. The men on the coach boycott the dining hall of Rest Hotel because the cook is Chinese: "What's the colour of your hash slinger? Still got that Chink?" <sup>251</sup> That the man who is most vociferous in his protest is a "big, red-faced, perspiring fellow with bloodshot eyes" shows the strength of the prejudice: although having taken in a fair amount of alcohol, he is still alert enough to protest the presence of a Chinese worker. The words and behaviour of Niven's protagonist show Niven's support of this stance against Chinese workers. Apache Kid, an admirable gentleman who quickly wins the confidence and respect of the readers, is Niven's voice. Apache Kid refuses to eat at the hotel: "I won't eat here...because I likewise object to the Chink, as he is called. You see, he works for what not even a white woman of the most saving kind could

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., p.30.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., p.18, p.25.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., p.27.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., p.60.



live upon." Although Apache Kid himself hesitates to call Chinese "Chinks", he nevertheless does not see anything wrong with that derogatory term. Apache Kid's reasoning is in line with the popular complaint of the 1900's against cheap Chinese labour. Even his admission of gratefulness to Chinese in one instance is reluctant; Apache Kid does not like to be indebted to Chinese.

Niven's description of a "Chinese joint" further shows prejudice. He intentionally moulds the readers' important first impressions through his careful choice of adjectives and images. The "quick, voluble pattering talk", a "babel of talk", and the noisy "rattle of dominoes" create an atmosphere approaching that of bedlam. Niven capitalises on the stereotype of Chinese as compulsive gamblers to accentuate the greed of Chinese as well as to show that they are naturally given over to vice. These Chinese gamblers are also cowards: they are easily "agitated" in fear of white men, but on assurance of safety they "bent again over their tables" to return quickly to their gambling.

Niven's message through Apache Kid's unwavering concept is clear: the Chinese, allowed into the country only through the mercies of white residents, should keep to their place. Part of the resentment Apache Kid feels is precisely because the Chinese have had the gall to progress from just selling rice and cranberries to running a regular store; they have made good. Apache Kid sees their being confined indoors during white celebrations and festivities as rightful and fitting; it reminds

them of their lowly place in society. Niven juxtaposes the foolish and shameful antics of a drunken white man, with the calm steadiness of the Chinese shopkeeper as an exhortation to his fellow white men, an object lesson to teach them to behave with the dignity that goes in accord with the nobility of their race. Niven does not elevate the Chinese in the process of this exhortation: the shopkeeper still waved farewell to Apache Kid "in a gesture of the utmost suavity and respect."<sup>252</sup>

Niven's second novel, The lady of the crossing published in 1919, repeats many stereotyping phrases and ideas, but an ambiguity and inconsistency in his references reveal an increasing sympathy for Chinese. Timpkin's Chinese servant, Sing, has a typically inscrutable and bland face, one "like smoked ivory": "the Chinaman's expression could not, of course, be read at all. That was beyond the power of Caucasian to fathom."<sup>253</sup> This novel, like Niven's earlier one, does not neglect to complain about cheap Chinese labour. Timpkin has to run an economical yet competitive boarding-house; to survive he reluctantly uses cheap Chinese labour. However, he resents that his servants are actually "laying up treasure for themselves" on wages that a white man would starve on: "on your uppers in the

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<sup>252</sup> Ibid., p.87.

<sup>253</sup> Niven, Frederick, The lady of the crossing, (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1919), p.39, p.89.

Western States is on velvet in Canton. Queer fellows, Chinks."<sup>254</sup> Any action against Chinese is therefore rightful and fitting. Chinese have a monopoly in the produce-raising business and sell at such a low price that white farmers cannot compete. Timpkin's friend advises that "All we want is a produce-raiser or two on the town council, and the Chinks will get the tip either to up-prices or to pull out."<sup>255</sup> The proposal to use power to kill competition from Chinese farmers meets universal approval from the leaders of the community. An even better solution is "to get elected sanitary inspector and find the Chink's village up there unsanitary, and a menace to the waterworks!"<sup>256</sup> Whether or not the Chinese farms are unsanitary is besides the point; these men are interested only in ridding themselves of the Chinese competition.

Niven's description of the Chinese farmers themselves bears all the usual elements. The Chinese farmers "run about like rats"; they are like "mites in cheese"; they always "swarmed like bees when...together."<sup>257</sup> Niven carefully picks these similes to create a definite picture. Arguably, some pronouncements may not be Niven's own views; after all, Niven does portray one of the speakers as wooly-headed and selfish. However the protagonist's words certainly reflect Niven's view.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid., p.255.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid., p.247.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., p.248.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., p.157, p.159, p.158.

Rats are destructive, dirty and popularly known as carriers of dreaded diseases. Moreover, to refer to a man as a rat is to call him a coward or a cad. Mites are parasitic insects destructive to their hosts. Furthermore, rats, bees, ants and mites all reproduce quickly and abundantly. These metaphors thus create an image of a repulsive people: Chinese are dirty, destructive, diseased, cowardly and parasitic, reproducing themselves to form swarms of unhealthy communities.

Despite these stereotypes, Niven does move slightly away from the totally negative portrayal of Chinese he had given earlier. Timpkin's Chinese servants still moved quietly: Tom appears "as if conjured up"; he enters the dining room at the boarding house "with velvet tread."<sup>258</sup> Yet Niven's following passage describing Tom's sympathetic response to the Timpkins' financial plight denies this stereotype: "For once his expression was clear to Occidental eyes. As he looked, and looked away, sympathy was on his podgy face." Similarly, another passage, this time about the other servant Sing, rejects the stereotype:

When Sing brought in the lamps and hung them up there was a jewel-like quality in the floor space, a dull gold and amber effect. Through wide-open windows the lapping of water along the lake front sounded restful, and kindly, and friendly. Sing, slipping about behind the supper-party, in a white jacket, imitating on his own initiative the stewards on the lake-steamers, smiled no cryptic smile, but that of a servant well pleased.<sup>259</sup>

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., p.280, p.96.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., p.281.

Niven emphasizes the tranquility of the scene by adding "and" and a comma before each of the adjectives "kindly" and "friendly"; he juxtaposes Sing's slippered movements with this phrase "restful, and kindly, and friendly" to put to rest any suspicions over Sing's character. Sing is indirectly a part of that friendly supper-party even if he only moves behind the guests. Indeed, he helps create the magical atmosphere by the lamps he brings in. As if to eliminate all further doubts, Niven invites friendly amusement at Sing in his white jacket "imitating on his own initiative the stewards on the lake-steamers." Sing is no evil figure but simply "a servant well pleased." Niven still uses phrases which retain the sense of mystery associated with Chinese, but these phrases have none of the negative connotations of stealth and vile cunning Niven previously associated with the quiet Chinese walk.

Niven's move towards a more objective and sympathetic portrayal of Chinese in this novel is, though still a rather hesitant move, nevertheless a definite step. His description of Chinese singing as "somewhat eerie" and like "a mosquito-hum" shows that he holds Chinese music in no high regard. <sup>260</sup> Similarly, the proclamation that Chinese farms are "creepy" unavoidably colours the reader's perception. <sup>261</sup> Nevertheless, Niven's ambiguous feelings are apparent. His description of the farms reveals a kind of beauty. He likens the scene to "a

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., p.159.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

mountain-top lake"; it is peaceful and serene.<sup>262</sup> The fields are orderly, well-kept and perfect: "astonishingly trig and 'just so'." In a way, even the Chinese music from a fiddle and the singing completes the scene. The "single-string" thinness of the song with its touch of plaintiveness fits in with the impression of relatively thin mountain air and lonely mountain-top lake.

A later rather objective description of the Chinese at work also reflects Niven's ambiguity. One character's repeated observation that the Chinese are "creepy" shows her fear and disgust; what meets her roaming gaze over the farms makes "her smile brief"; she sees no "mountain-top lake." In contrast, she felt more at ease with "that recondite town, the pleasant white-man town, that seemed to have no secrets."<sup>263</sup> Yet even this character finds that instead of Astley Mountain "an ivory pagoda" should have been there to complete the dainty tranquility of this idyllic pastoral scene.<sup>264</sup> Indeed, she considers Astley Mountain a "hump", "menacing", "uncouth", "grim", and "forbidding". Astley Mountain is offensive and inappropriate to the peculiarly delicate beauty of the farms. This inconsistency clearly shows Niven's ambiguity, as does his choice of verbs, adjectives and nouns to describe the actions of the Chinese farmers: "hoeing", "ditching", "weeding", "tiny",

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<sup>262</sup> Ibid., p.158.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., p.161.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., p.159.

"narrow", "paths", "beds", "bamboo poles", "shoulders",  
buckets". All are words with no negative connotations.

In his conclusion to the novel, Niven writes that "the Chinamen have gone off to 'squat' somewhere else, or to clear some parcel of land for a white man and make it fit for his uses, sitting rent free the while, and laying aside a nest-egg for China on what they raise on it while clearing it and preparing it, as the method is -- a method which seems to give satisfaction to both parties to such deals, the white and the yellow."<sup>265</sup> Niven's statement that this method seems to give satisfaction to both white and yellow is sentimental and indeed false. He himself has shown how the men of the town have been most eager to pounce on any excuse to run the Chinese out despite the cheaper prices of vegetables Chinese offer. One of the townsmen actually "pulled a Chinaman's pigtail, from brooding over cheap labour."<sup>266</sup> Nevertheless, this statement, though sentimental, does show Niven's tempered attitude towards Chinese and his recognition that Chinese do make some contribution to the province.

Niven's next novel referring to Chinese is Wild honey, written within a year after Phillipps-Wolley's Gold, gold, in Cariboo! in 1926. Except for minor passing acknowledgements of the presence of Chinese cooks and gold-miners, Niven's only reference to Chinese is his sympathetic description of a Chinese

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<sup>265</sup> Ibid., p.315.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., p.181.

store.<sup>267</sup> Its atmosphere is "not out of that side of China that is starvation and leprosy...but allied to the other side, of suave antiquity, placidity, the beauty of fine ginger-jars, the sayings of Lao-Tsü." This statement is significant because Niven chooses to portray what Stuart Creighton Miller calls the "ancient greatness and hoary wisdom" of China rather than the second image of "a stagnating, perverse, semi-civilized breeding ground for swarming inhuman hordes."<sup>268</sup> Whereas Chinese are likened to rats, mites, bees and ants in the earlier The lady of the crossing, Wild honey seldom uses the derogatory term "Chink".

The tone of the entire passage is one of curiosity, interest and awe. Whereas the Chinese shopkeeper is the one who shows respect to Apache Kid in The lost cabin mine, Slim and his friends are the ones to behave respectfully and cordially to the Chinese storemen of Wild honey. They speak only when necessary, and when they do, their speech is quiet and subdued as if they were in a sacred temple. The three men do not have any preconceived prejudice and, therefore, are free to appreciate the Chinese ways. They are tickled by the binding of the Chinese book and think it "awful cute." Their observation that Chinese write backward is tempered by their recognition that there are no correct ways of writing, only different ways. Niven

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<sup>267</sup> Niven, Frederick, Wild honey, (New York: Jacobsen Publishing Company, Inc., 1927), p.221-222.

<sup>268</sup> Miller, p.11.



emphasizes this by repeating that the perception of "backwards" is only "according to...[their] notion of what's fore and aft."

The narrator also appreciates Chinese attire and calls the Chinese "cue" by its correct name, not the derogatory "pigtail". Because of their openness and lack of bias, the three men conclude that they had had "a visit to China on a magic carpet," an interesting experience. Niven stresses their sincerity and lack of prejudice by adding in brackets that Slim "did not mean" to be fresh in his calling the Chinese storekeeper "John"; Slim did not mean the term to be derogatory, as it usually was. Whereas the passage in The lost cabin mine emphasizes only the evils of Chinese, this passage in Wild honey shows an appreciation of the "Chineseness" of the store.

The transplanted published in 1944 was Niven's last novel to refer to Chinese. It comes between Frances Duncan's Cariboo runaway in 1942 and Alan Sullivan's Cariboo road in 1946. In this novel, Niven's reformed views about Chinese reveal themselves in an open criticism of foolish prejudice. He essentially repeats the sympathetic description of the Chinese shop in Wild honey, but this time in even more detail. Niven also shows a closer relationship between a white man and his Chinese servant, a relationship quite rare in British Columbian novels.

In his earlier novel, Niven took the passive role of defending Chinese by presenting positive Chinese characters and unprejudiced white attitudes. In this novel, however, Niven

actively defends a Chinese shopkeeper.

"A Chink!" bellowed the man who sat beside Wallace.... "Do they have Chinese here?"

"Yes, SIR!" said the loquacious one. "There are places where they get cold-shouldered even as washee-men but not here. It's a dam' good store and Ho Sang and his young nephew Wong Li are good fellows."<sup>269</sup>

The man who calls Chinese "Chinks" is promptly put into his place by his fellow travellers. A Caucasian defending the Chinese is rare in British Columbian literature. Indeed, this event is the opposite of that similar one with Apache Kid in The lost cabin mine. Niven now turns the tables; the Chinese will "trust you too, and grubstake you if you look right to them."<sup>270</sup> Instead of the trustworthiness of Chinese being in question, Niven points the finger back at the Caucasian and reminds his readers that some white storekeepers will "soak" their customers even worse than the mythical "Chink".

Instead of just recording the presence of the scent of spices as in The lost cabin mine and Wild honey, in The transplanted Niven uses the scent to comment on the foolish prejudice against Chinese. Niven records that when Wallace first steps over the threshold of the store, he "passed into China on a whiff of spices. 'A caravan from China comes, For miles it sweetens all the air.'<sup>271</sup> During his two to three years away from home, Wallace has seen enough to be properly educated. In

<sup>269</sup> Niven, Frederick, The transplanted, (Toronto: Collins, Sons and Company, 1944), p.16.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid., p.29.

contrast, his friends, who have never been to China nor even associated closely with any Chinese, and who are still under the potent "influences of early years in the home," would undoubtedly say that "the lines were romantic nonsense and that China stinks!" Niven thus criticizes Caucasian adults who pass on such prejudice to their children.

As in Wild Honey, Niven rekindles memories of a China of greatness to counteract the existing stereotype. Wallace mentally affirms that the fragrance from the spices is "as evocative of China as might less pleasing odours be."<sup>272</sup> Niven turns the focus from the negative China to a reminder of other more positive aspects. Niven again focuses on the positive when Wallace no longer thinks in terms of Bret Harte, the American novelist and short-story writer of the late nineteenth century who perpetrated the stereotype, but instead thinks of "Marco Polo and Cathay" and feels he would like to ask Ho Sang about "Confucius and...Lao-Tsu" rather than ask for "flour and bacon."<sup>273</sup> Continuing in this trend, Niven describes Ho Sang as reminding Wallace of "the God of Contentment, in porcelain, that he had once seen."<sup>274</sup> By adding the phrase "in porcelain" Niven brushes aside all controversy about religion, presenting instead a figure of beauty, a work of art.

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid., p.30.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., p.29.

Chinese shops are basically not much different from Caucasian; Chinese sell tinned goods from California, Oregon and British Columbia just like any other merchant. The shopkeeper is friendly, stately and courteous. Niven makes the shopkeeper personal by giving him a name, Ho Sang. Similarly, the assistant is Wong Li. Niven strengthens the bond between Wong Li and the reader by inviting the reader to laugh in sympathy with Wong Li's repeated efforts to pile up the rice mats, "mats that slipped and tried to glissade and had to be humoured into place."<sup>275</sup> Ho Sang is considerate. On noticing that Wallace is uncomfortably warm, Ho Sang thoughtfully opens a window to let in fresh cool air. Ho Sang "spoke first in Chinese, then in English, translating, it would appear, what he had said in their own tongue"; he speaks in Chinese because he feels more at ease and is more fluent in it, but translates to English so his customers can understand and follow his actions. Niven carefully shows that in Ho Sang's business dealings there is no hidden deviousness. <sup>276</sup>

In addition, Niven shows Wong Li in close relationship with Wallace. Wong Li later becomes Wallace's cook, "general servant, his major-domo and friend."<sup>277</sup> Wong Li even nags Wallace.

"Time we go," said he Wong Li firmly.

"Oh, is it time for us to go?" said Wallace.

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., p.30.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

"Yes, time we go. You tell me yesterday I go too.  
And sure time you go. You know what Indians call you?"

"No."

"They call you white chief."

Wallace laughed.

"Well, I never heard that," he said.

"Everybody know but you, then," said Wong. "White chief must be there in time. Time we go."<sup>278</sup>

This easy comradeship goes beyond a mere servant-master relationship. Wong Li feels comfortable enough to continue nagging and teasing Wallace, and Wallace in return regards his servant with the same teasing affection.

Thus, Niven's initial prejudice which surfaces in The lost cabin mine of 1907 has by The transplanted of 1944 totally reversed. Niven's stance becomes a defence of Chinese and a criticism of those who are still prejudiced. This gradual change parallels the overall change in attitude by British Columbians towards Chinese as reflected in the literature, The spoilers of the valley and The writing on the wall gradually giving way to Gold, gold, in Cariboo and, later, to Cariboo runaway and Cariboo road.

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<sup>278</sup> Ibid, p. 178.

#### Chapter 4

Although the number of novels referring to Chinese before 1946 is miserly compared to the total number of British Columbian novels in that period, the number is impressive in comparison to the number after the nineteen-sixties. Except for two brief statements in George Bowering's Mirror on the floor, only two modern novels have relatively significant references to Chinese, both presenting Chinese favourably: The big stuffed hand of friendship by Norman Newton and The stone angel by Margaret Laurence.

George Bowering in Mirror on the floor makes only minimal references to Chinese. Except for those to Nancy Chan, Bowering's references are limited to the traditional Chinese cafes and grocery shops. Stereotypically crafty, fat Mickey Chang runs a sleazy cafe where illegal liquor is gurgled down throats behind the door of the "dingy can" and heroin is sold under tables. As a university student, Nancy Chan is apparently no such stereotype. But, Bowering contradicts this apparent break in stereotype: his description of her as "flower of the Orient" is not meant to flatter; he further juxtaposes it with "catty claw-woman," a phrase which conjures bitchiness and feline craftiness.<sup>279</sup> Nancy knows "a lot of the arty farty crowd". Bowering implies through that phrase that a Chinese girl

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<sup>279</sup> Bowering, George, Mirror on the floor, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1967), p.51.

like Nancy would naturally associate with such a crowd.

A uniquely modern feature in both A big stuffed hand and The stone angel is the presence of a Chinese woman. Until 1946, novels presented only Chinese men. Chinese women were sometimes mentioned, but they never appeared on the scene as characters. In direct contrast, both Newton and Laurence focus their references to Chinese around Chinese women, Shirley Chang and Sandra Wong. In both cases, the Chinese women have no depth of character. This attitude is especially true of Newton, whereas Laurence's superior skill in writing presents a more credible person in Sandra Wong. Nevertheless, Laurence, too, does not attempt to delve into the "Chineseness" of Sandra's personality.

Norman Newton's The big stuffed hand of friendship published in 1969 makes limited references to Chinese. Except for the existence of Chinese restaurants, questionable Chinese cafes, fan-tan games, the Chinese Freemasons, an elderly Chinese on the street and the small Chinatown, references to Chinese revolve around Shirley Chang. These are limited partly because the focus of the novel is on the Indians in British Columbia. Newton does not know or understand the Chinese as a people and can therefore write only superficially about them, a superficiality further augmented by his bad writing. Yet despite these limitations, Newton clearly repudiates racism.

Although Shirley Chang is Chinese, Newton does not present her as having Chinese characteristics. He sweepingly describes her as having "pretty Chinese features" without detailing what

those features are or from whose point of view they are considered pretty.<sup>280</sup> The novel is written so that the reader sees the action unfold from the perspective of all the major and even many of the minor characters. Yet Newton hardly reports from Shirley's point of view even though she is a major character. The reader usually sees her through the eyes of a second person. In the one section where the reader is allowed into her thoughts, Shirley only dreams about falling in love like any other schoolgirl. Consequently, the reader has little empathy with her. Shirley's subsequent pregnancy and attempted suicide after her Caucasian boyfriend Ben callously breaks off their relationship elicits no surprise; her realization that "she had been a fool" and that Ben was "not worth" dying for raises no sympathy.

Shirley has no depth; the various glimpses Newton offers into her personality do not create a composite character. The questions the protagonist, Simon, asks about her are never resolved: "Why did Shirley keep telephoning him? Did she find him attractive, or was she merely playing with him because she knew he found her attractive?"<sup>281</sup> Although Newton hints that sexual attraction underlies Shirley's relationship with Simon, some inconsistencies make this doubtful. Newton's statement that "neither wanted to hang up" from their "long and utterly

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<sup>280</sup> Newton, Norman The big stuffed hand of friendship, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1969), p.11.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid., p.14.



pointless" telephone conversations late at night implies a mutual reluctance.<sup>282</sup> Although Simon clearly fantasizes about Shirley, Shirley's own attitude remains unclear. Her behaviour towards Simon seems merely friendly and remains consistently so even after she attempts suicide. She speaks to him in a "matter-of-fact voice" and assures him he need not feel uncomfortable: "she patted the bed with her hand. 'Come and sit down,' she said, 'I'm not diseased or anything.'"<sup>283</sup> She "still liked him" and behaves in her usual candid way, explaining to him her feelings after the car "accident" just as she had previously confided without guile her feelings about Ben's openly expressing desire to make love to another girl. In contrast, Simon, whose feelings had clearly been "based on desire," discovers himself "acutely embarrassed" by his lack of feeling for Shirley after the accident: "now that he no longer desired her, he no longer felt very brotherly."

Newton is ambiguous about whether Shirley is being craftily coquettish or just simple-minded. Her remark about "just standing here" in her "little old Baby Doll pyjamas" seems provocative, but her manner of speech and her following heart-felt profession of hatred for her brother negates any possibility of her being provocative.<sup>284</sup> Shirley seems to be merely without depth of character. She switches from pouring out

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., p.186-187.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid., p.73.

her woes, to talking about the weather, to expressing hatred for her brother and contempt for Chinese boys, to relating her desire for a house with different decorative styles in each room, to offering a dirty joke, to inviting Simon to walk her home after work. Despite the apparent seriousness of her invitation, her pressing Simon to take a day off from work just so he can walk her home, when he turns her down Shirley cheerfully and flippantly concludes with, "Okay...maybe some other time. Goodbye."<sup>285</sup> Shirley does not stop long enough at each subject to be coy; she seems unaffected by Simon's reply. Yet she is wily enough to pretend that Simon is a stranger when she is with Ben, though she is simple-minded in not realizing that Ben is only using her. She has no control over Ben and, in her feeble and unsuccessful attempts to ward off his advances, can only resort to "childish obstinacy" and "sad pedantic frowns." Though the meaning of "sad" is ambiguous because Newton uses it liberally in the most unlikely places, Shirley's willingness to succumb is obvious: "her eyes were uncertain and misty with longing, and the set of her body was slack and gentle."<sup>286</sup> Nevertheless, Shirley claims to be "a good girl, and didn't like boys who only thought of pawing her when she was out on a date with them."<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> Ibid., p.74.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid., p.11.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., p.75.

Newton seems to present Shirley as purposefully coy, yet she is not consistently so. Her motives remain unclear. She seems but shallow, silly and flighty, yet she has unexpected moments of gravity and seriousness. Newton does not explain these changes in moods and temperament, and thus leaves no clear understanding of Shirley's character and psychology. Even his other flat characters are recognizable, but Shirley is not. Attempts to develop her into a person fail. Because he is unable to understand her as a Chinese, Newton is unable to handle Shirley as a person. He wisely writes only about her universally human characteristics, but does that badly and unconvincingly.

Nevertheless, that Newton is clearly against racism is evident in the final fates of four characters. Newton presents Ben as careless in using Shirley for mere pleasure, as heartless in making promises he never intended to keep, and as cowardly in breaking off their engagement through a letter rather than in a personal confrontation. Ben receives due punishment for his selfishness and cruelty: he is badly beaten up by Stanley, an Indian.<sup>200</sup> Stanley beats up Ben not because of Shirley, but because he thinks Ben has "seduced his sister." Nevertheless, Ben the villain still receives his just reward. Similarly, Jennifer and Percy O'Connells. They discuss Shirley as if she were an object rather than a person, referring to her as "dark

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid., p.197.

meat", thus implying their white superiority.<sup>289</sup> Percy's smug condescension "tends to peep through when other races are being discussed." Jennifer's claim that Chinese women "can't be trusted, especially when there's money lying around," and her comment that "they're seldom as clean as they look" are ironical because Jennifer herself is crude, distasteful, dirty, unkept and pretentious.<sup>290</sup> Both Jennifer and Percy receive their deserved end during a riot: they are vandalised by Indian youths, and Jennifer is humiliated as a "pretentious bitch" because she affected to be descended from British nobility.<sup>291</sup> The third character, Bertram Rawlins, the headmaster of a school, calls Shirley by the derogatory term "Chink". He also meets with a humiliating end. When a fire burns a hotel in which he is committing adultery, he reveals his deviant sexuality for all to see: he jumps into the safety net naked except for some red and green silk, a fez, and silk bloomers. Rawlins had "to resign in disgrace," his prospects of becoming the next mayor utterly dashed.<sup>292</sup>

In a better-written novel, The stone angel published in 1964, Chinese play but a minor role. Margaret Laurence's attitude towards them is unambiguous. Laurence shows the possibility of bridging the gulf between Caucasian and Chinese Canadians

<sup>289</sup> Ibid., p.41.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., p.42.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., p.195.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., p.199.

through the interactions between Hagar Shipley and Sandra Wong. The presentation of the historical past is objective, without any attempt to give a judgement.

The protagonist, Hagar Shipley, shares her last days alive with a young Chinese girl. Sandra Wong's face is "delicately boned, olive-skinned. Her eyes...are dark and only slightly slanted. Her hair is thick and black and straight, and it shines."<sup>293</sup> Laurence's choice of words creates a favourable impression: the use of "delicately" to describe the relatively smaller Chinese stature, the emphasis on "only" to minimize the difference in Sandra's features, the use of "and" in "thick and black and straight" to slow the reader, forcing him to appreciate the beauty of the well-groomed hair. Sandra speaks like Caucasian Canadians; "Obviously she was born in this country."<sup>294</sup> Laurence not only emphasizes the similarity of Sandra's speech to that of Caucasians, she states clearly that Sandra is Canadian. Hagar's certainty that Sandra "is the granddaughter of one of the small foot-bound women...smuggled in, when Oriental wives were frowned upon" creates the possibility that Hagar owes her inherited house to the passage money of Sandra's grandmother.<sup>295</sup> Laurence purposely brings up this incident to show the irony of Canadian history: the very

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<sup>293</sup> Laurence, Margaret, The stone angel, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968), p.286.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

people whom Canadians tried to restrict from entering the country are the ones to whom this Canadian owes a debt.

Laurence acknowledges the gap between Caucasians and Chinese and shows that the gap is not impossible to bridge. On discovering that Sandra's father runs a store, Hagar said, "Well, well. So did mine." Immediately, Hagar realizes the superficiality of her comment: "that's the wrong thing to say. So much distance lies between us, she doesn't want any such similarity."<sup>296</sup> Rather, their conversation together is in itself a bridging of the distance. Hagar attempts to reassure Sandra when the girl communicates her fear and anxiety about her imminent operation.

"I have to have my appendix out," she says. "They're going to get me ready soon. It's an emergency. I was really bad last night. I was real scared and so was my mom. Have you ever had your appendix out? Is it bad?"

"I had mine out years ago," I say, although in fact I've never even had my tonsils out. "It's not a serious operation."

"Yeh?" she says. "Is that right? I've never had an operation before. You don't know what to expect, if it's your first time."

"Well, you needn't worry," I say. "It's just routine these days. You'll be up before you know it."

"Do you really think so? Gee, I don't know. I was pretty scared last night. I don't like the thought of anesthetic."

"Bosh. That's nothing. You'll feel a bit uncomfortable afterward, but that's all."

"Is that right? You really think so?"

"Of course."<sup>297</sup>

Both Hagar and Sandra communicate on a deeper and more

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<sup>296</sup> Ibid., p. 288.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., p. 287.

significant level here: in their interchanges they are sharing themselves and allowing themselves to be known. Sandra's fear, pain and anxiety Hagar can understand and sympathize with. Hagar's lying to reassure Sandra is a way of reaching out: Hagar later recognises her lie as being "spoken at least and at last with what may perhaps be a kind of love."<sup>298</sup>

Laurence does not romanticize the gradually growing bond between Hagar and Sandra, but paints a realistic picture. After the initial establishing of relationship, they continue to respond naturally to each other, though they do not always feel kindly or friendly towards each other. With the arrival of the nurse, Hagar withdraws herself to a smug superiority over Sandra's uncertain, querulous and appalled questionings: "Fancy being alarmed at such a trifling thing. I lie here smug and fat, thinking -- She'll learn."<sup>299</sup> Hagar does not want to be associated with Sandra's fear in front of the nurse. Sandra returns from the operation reproachful and angry at Hagar for having falsely assured her that she would not feel "bad". Hagar initially responds with guilt and self-reproach but, being the headstrong individual she is, quickly switches from regret to annoyance at what she sees as Sandra's whimpering self-pity. Their differences become more obvious when Sandra discovers that Hagar is terminally ill and will soon die. Sandra, sixteen-year-old teenager, is fearful of death, and so although

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<sup>298</sup> Ibid., p.307.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., p.289.

they initially shared the common bond of being in hospital, Sandra withdraws from Hagar and pleads that the nurse move her to another room.

Nevertheless, they do continue to share times of comradeship. Hagar's sympathy for Sandra's plight binds them again in a common alliance against the nursing staff. Hagar senses Sandra's "anguish and her terrible embarrassment" over her need to relieve her bladder: "She's never before been at the dubious mercy of her organs. Pain and humiliation have been only words to her. Suddenly I'm incensed at it, the unfairness. She shouldn't have to find out these things at her age."<sup>300</sup> Hagar has herself been subject to the pain and humiliation of uncontrollable bodily functions and therefore feels "sympathy for the girl, none for the eternally frantic staff."<sup>301</sup> Hagar even makes the effort to get Sandra a bedpan from the bathroom, and in the process braves the icy floor, her own cramped and flabby muscles, and her own tortured lungs. The horrified expression of the nurse who arrives in time to catch Hagar still out of bed only solidifies the growing affinity between Hagar and Sandra:

"Mrs. Shipley --"

"Yes?"

She stifles her laughter, but it breaks out again.

"Oh, I can't laugh. I mustn't. It pulls my stitches. But did you ever see anything like the look on her face?"

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<sup>300</sup> Ibid., p.300.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.



I have to snort, recalling it.

"She was stunned, all right, wasn't she, seeing me standing there? I thought she'd pass out."

My own spasm of laughter catches me like a blow. I can't stave it off. Crazy. I must be crazy. I'll do myself some injury.

"Oh -- oh --" the girl gasps. "She looked at you as though you'd just done a crime."

"Yes -- that was exactly how she looked. Poor soul. Oh, the poor soul. We really worried her."

"That's for sure. We sure did."

Convulsed with our paining laughter, we bellow and wheeze. And then we peacefully sleep.<sup>302</sup>

Laurence shows their unity by the emphasis on "we" although Hagar was the only one out of bed. She also parallels Sandra's claim that she could not laugh, "mustn't", because laughing pulled her stitches, with Hagar's similar claim to be "crazy" because in laughing she could do herself "some injury." Later, Hagar and Sandra together feel the material of Sandra's blue silk brocade housecoat, sharing in the beauty of the embroidery: "red and gold, crysanthemums and intricate temples." The two also share the cologne Sandra's mother brought her. Hagar even assimilates Sandra's slangy terms: "I have to smile at myself. I've never used that word before in my life. Okay -- guy -such slangy words....They mark a person."<sup>303</sup>

Through the bond between Hagar and Sandra, Laurence shows the way bridges can be built between the two races. Although Hagar never learns much about Sandra's family or background or way of life, the two women have at least begun to share themselves with each other. Laurence is aware of the history of

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<sup>302</sup> Ibid., p.302.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid., p.301.

the Chinese in British Columbia, but does not attempt to accuse or excuse anyone. She chooses to relate a gruesome story about a Caucasian, who smuggled in Oriental wives at a time when Chinese women were "forbidden": he charged "huge sums for the passage," and packed the women "like tinned shrimp in the lower hold, and if the Immigration men scented the hoax, the false bottom was levered open, and the women plummeted." Laurence relates this story factually and without sensationalism.<sup>30\*</sup> She shows clearly both that the Chinese "knew the chance they took when they began" and that the Caucasian could not be blamed for being enterprising: "who could help it?"

Both Newton and Laurence, and Bowering for that matter, are products of the generation that grew up after the Exclusion Act, and have been exposed to a much different atmosphere than that existing at the turn of the century. Whereas even novelists like Audrey Alexander Brown, Frances Duncan, Frederick Niven and Alan Sullivan would have been exposed to some extent to the early anti-Chinese sentiments prevalent in British Columbia, Newton and Laurence grew up in an atmosphere that no longer publically regarded Chinese as a threat; they could afford to accept Chinese, defend Chinese, and even criticize prejudice against Chinese. The Holocaust by Hitler which made racism a shameful word further reinforced their attitude. The lack of prejudice in their novels is therefore not surprising.

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<sup>30\*</sup> Ibid., p.158.

## Chapter 5

Although the years after the Exclusion Act saw the beginnings of a movement away from racial prejudice and stereotyping, no author except Ethel Wilson stands as an antithesis to Glynn-Ward, the champion of the anti-Chinese camp. Mrs. Wilson lived through the pre-Exclusion Act years of vehement anti-Chinese sentiments and riots, and died only in 1980. She forms, therefore, the bridge between the older generation of writers before 1946 and the new writers after the second world war. Wilson is aware of the stereotypes and consciously breaks every one of them; her three novels and two novellas which refer to Chinese together give a consistently positive image.

In Swamp angel, Wilson describes the imagination of the protagonist, Maggie Lloyd, when following an old Chinese man: "What called him there? What were his thoughts? Who were his friends? How did he live? What were his hopes?"<sup>305</sup> Wilson is the first British Columbian author to create a Caucasian character sympathetic enough to long "passionately" to know the workings of the Chinese mind. Even Ned Corbett in Phillips-Wolley's Gold, gold, in Cariboo! does not seek to discover the reasoning behind Phon's thinking. The questions Maggie asks show a desire to know Chinese as human beings, not just as stereotypes. Most authors

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<sup>305</sup> Wilson, Ethel, Swamp angel, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1962), p.25.

are content to record that Chinese are different; Wilson, however, goes beyond mere acknowledgment. Maggie takes the first step towards understanding Chinese in her desire to know them. Wilson's choice of an "old Chinaman" as the object of wonder is not accidental. An old Chinaman would have lived through the early years of racial discrimination. His thoughts, feelings and hopes, therefore, will have been shaped by his reaction to the treatment Chinese have historically received in British Columbia.

Although Maggie "passionately longed to know" the Chinese thinking, belief and way of life, she does not make an effort to know Angus Quong better when he works for her. Wilson shows Maggie interacting with everyone at the lake: Vera, Halder, Corder, even little Alan. To Angus, however, Maggie only gives orders for jobs which need doing. She does not question him about his family, ask him about his aspirations or query into his thoughts. This inconsistency is a flaw in the author; howbeit the error does not negate Wilson's desire to understand the Chinese, a desire substantiated by her writing as a whole.

Wilson devotes an entire chapter of Swamp angel to describing the Quong home and family. This particular chapter is not essential to the plot. Maggie's contemplations in the taxi-cab give sufficient background to explain Joey Quong; an introduction to Angus, Joey's brother, does not necessitate chapter eight. Furthermore, like many other passages in the novel the chapter is not from Maggie's point of view: Maggie

could not have described the Quong bedroom, or the night scene when the children change shifts, or the family discussion of her business proposition to Joey. This chapter is Wilson speaking: it is an authorial intrusion to shatter the notion of Chinese as violent, heathen and opium-smoking.

Wilson's description of the Quong living quarters is accurate and free from condemnation. In contrast to the phrase "filth and unbearable odours," Wilson's phraseology is neutral and factual: "There was not much light and not much air."<sup>306</sup> Whereas the Victoria Colonist graphically describes Chinese living quarters as "'mere cubby holes' where 'the Celestials pack themselves at night like herring on a platter,'" Wilson simply acknowledges that "in fact some of the rooms were not entire rooms but had been divided by partitions.... This does not sound very pleasant, especially as other families lived adjacent." Even this acknowledgment Wilson qualifies as she goes on to say, "Actually it was very pleasant indeed." Partitions are necessary "for purposes of visual privacy" and are even an advantage because they keep the family closely knit: "the Mother never failed to be vaguely aware of what was going on among her children." Furthermore, although these partitions were "varnished to a light yellowish colour which looked sticky," Wilson states definitely that it "was not" sticky.

Wilson consciously rejects the traditional idea of the shrivelled old Chinaman running a sleezy, smoky opium den. Joe

<sup>306</sup> Morton, p.88; Wilson, Swamp angel, p.42.

Quong's boys "had often been approached by dope peddlers and could have made a lot of money in the business, but now the peddlers did not approach them unless they were new to the place. It was well-known that Joe would take the hide off of his boys, if they had any truck with those peddlers, and, anyway, the boys despised them."<sup>307</sup> The Quong boys, therefore, are healthy, young and clean. Wilson has no thematic reason for including this passage; the plot has nothing to do with dope-peddlers. This short paragraph remains as part of the text simply because Wilson wants to dispell the stereotype. Wilson does not pretend that no Chinese drug pushers exist; what she clearly does show is that not all Chinese are drug pushers or drug users.

Wilson breaks yet another stereotype in Swamp angel. Joey tells his father about Maggie's business proposition and "they both thought it was pretty funny."<sup>308</sup> The Mother reacts with, "That was an awful woman and Joey was not to have anything ever to do with her, out to get young boys like that. But both Joe and Joey said No, she was not that kind of person at all, she was a lovely woman, but still they couldn't understand it." Wilson reverses the stereotype. Most novelists write from the Caucasian point of view, echoing the stereotype of Chinese as kidnapers of youths, luring them into immorality and vice. Wilson, however, writes from the Chinese point of view. She

<sup>307</sup> Ibid., p.44.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

shows that Chinese too have their fears and misconceptions and stereotypes of whites, and she ridicules British Columbians' own fears by showing how foolish these very fears are when applied to them instead of to Chinese.

Wilson reverses also the stereotype of the dirty laundryman. In The innocent traveller, when Rose prepares to iron her blouses, "she raised each iron in turn to her cheek to test the heat, but she could not tell. So she spat on the iron, a delicate spit, sizzle, sizzle, that told her exactly how hot the iron was."<sup>309</sup> This action "always enraged Yow." When Rose spat upon his irons, he roared "No Spitty Iron!" in such a menacing way that Rose was quite frightened. Wilson writes that "this was queer of Yow, because it is well known that his compatriots in the laundry business were not so finicky."<sup>310</sup> Yow is clean; not all Chinese are dirty. The purposely vague phrase "it is well known that" emphasizes Yow's reality in contrast to the elusive stereotype. Wilson parallels Rose with Yow's compatriots: they all test their irons by spitting on them. Rose's innocent and laughable defiance of Yow breaks the stereotype of dirty laundrymen: their actions, too, are done in innocence and necessity.

Wilson's depicting of the way Chinese speak English is a great improvement on previous authors who present the "wantee

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<sup>309</sup> Wilson, Ethel, The innocent traveller, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1949), p.198.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid., p.200.

washee laundlee" stereotype. Although her observations are astute, her evaluation is not always correct, probably because she does not understand the Chinese language, did not know any Chinese socially and did not know the reasons for Chinese speech being the way it is. Nevertheless, Wilson's ear for rhythm, talent for mimicry and memory for the way words would sound help her capture consistently the essence of Chinese speech.

The Chinese structure sentences differently from the English. The Chinese language has no tenses, only verbs and an indication of time with words like "yesterday", "today" or "tomorrow". Wilson is therefore correct when she has Yow say "All time wash dish Lady Powkes' house", using the simple present tense "wash" instead of the continuous tense "washing." Like most Chinese not educated in English, Yow structures his sentence in Chinese before translating literally into English; tenses do not exist for Yow. Chinese also make no distinction between male and female in second person speech. Instead of distinguishing among "he", "she" and "it", Chinese have an asexual word translated as the universal "he". Yow refers to Aunt Topaz as "He crazy"; a bicycle is "He American wheel"; Yow's Chinese friend comments of the bicycle that "He look all same lady wheel."<sup>311</sup> Further, Chinese do not indicate plurality by 's'. "Two dollar" is without 's'.<sup>312</sup> Yow tells Poey, "Three

<sup>311</sup> Wilson, The innocent traveller, p.198; "Lilly's story", Equations of love, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1952), p.139.

<sup>312</sup> Wilson, The innocent traveller, p.170.



housemaid nurse. Three breakfast. Three lunch... Three dinner": plural nouns have no 's'. Unlike English, the Cantonese dialect has no 'r'. Therefore Cantonese speaking Chinese have difficulty pronouncing 'r'. Wong in Hetty Dorval says "Lush" for "Russia"; "very" becomes "velly". 313

Because Wilson depends only on her memory, her representation of Chinese speech is sometimes inconsistent. Both Fooy and Yow say "procent" for "percent". 314 Had Wilson been accurate the 'r' would have been dropped: "pocent". Similarly, Wilson is not consistent in using "dollar" for the plural: at times she lapses into "fifty-five dollars" and "forty-five dollars." 315 In any case, "dollar" should be without the 'r'; a possible substitution is "dollah". Wilson has Yow say "velly" in some places; at others, Yow says "welly". The Chinese tongue has no difficulty pronouncing "v": Yow has no reason to switch from "velly" to "welly".

Sometimes Wilson is ambiguous. In Hetty Dorval, Wong says "crazy", not "clazy". Wilson indicates that Wong can speak correct English: he "still spoke perversely among the risen generation the kind of English that his father spoke." 316 The slip could therefore be Wong's. However, the slip could also be

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313 Wilson, Hetty Dorval, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1947), p.48; The innocent traveller, p.197.

314 Wilson, The innocent traveller, p.169.

315 Ibid.

316 Wilson, Hetty Dorval, p.47.

Wilson's. Not all of the errors are necessarily Wilson's, though. In University of British Columbia Special Collections, the manuscript of The innocent traveller reads "He vely good cook." The published version prints "He very good cook."<sup>317</sup> Wilson could conceivably have requested the change herself; more likely though, the change was an error by the editor or the type-setter.

Although novelists like Frederick Niven have written objectively about an individual Chinese shop, showing its interesting and exotic elements, no author has portrayed Chinatown as other than riddled with dirty opium dens and gambling joints inhabited by undesirable characters. In contrast, Wilson writes that when Maggie "saw the names Gum Yuen, Foo Moy, Jim Sing, Hop Wong, Shu Leong...those syllables ravished her as with scents and sounds of unknown lives and far places."<sup>318</sup> During her trips to Chinatown Maggie "smelled the smell; felt the lure in the air; bought the smallest of the peacock feather fans; fingered and resisted the bowls of yellow, of green, of blue rice-china; then fingered and bought one small six-sided yellow bowl. It seemed to her that she held in her hand all beauty in a cheap yellow Chinese bowl."<sup>319</sup> These passages reveal more about Maggie's reaction to Chinatown than about Chinatown itself. Nevertheless, Wilson's writing contains

<sup>317</sup> Wilson, The innocent traveller, p.171.

<sup>318</sup> Wilson, Swamp angel, p.24.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid., p.25.

an important difference from all previous works in that Maggie perceives Chinatown not with biased prejudice, nor even mere objectivity, but with an openness that allows her to recognize beauty even in a cheap bowl and a peacock feather fan. Indeed, their simple beauty is so captivating that Maggie's attempts to resist the temptation of owning them goes to no avail. She does not even attempt to resist buying a peacock feather fan, though she manages to find enough restraint to choose only the smallest. The exotic smells are more than just interesting; they "lure" her. The Chinese names are not just different; they ravish her.

In "Lilly's Story", Chinatown consists of "several stale and dark passages." Gambling rooms are "full of very potent cigarette smoke and other smells which announced a different world, a Chinese world"; "The room was crowded with grouped Chinamen. One could see them through the smoke, clustered around tables, squatted upon the floor, all talking loudly in Chinese shorthand....Shanghai Alley was riddled darkly with gambling dens, one much like the last, all smelling vilely of some kind of smoke, all resounding loudly with voices clacking like typewriters (much argument)...." <sup>320</sup> Wilson's descriptions are factual: they present Chinatown as it is without romanticism or condemnation. The metaphor "clacking like typewriters" carries no emotional value; the vile smells are only that of cigarette smoke.

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<sup>320</sup> Wilson, "Lilly's story", p.135.

Wilson recognizes that Chinatown is "a different world, a Chinese world"; therefore, white customs and values cannot apply.<sup>321</sup> Although she cannot help thinking that gambling rooms are "no place in which to spend the night," she recognizes that "that is what Yow did for choice."<sup>322</sup> Wilson is careful to state that Yow spends the night "losing a little or winning a little from his cronies (no big stuff)." Just as the family he serves sleeps "blamelessly in silent rooms" Yow's fan-tan games are blameless: played amongst cronies, no big stuff. Wilson concludes this passage with the reassurance that bad-tempered as he might be, Yow, after all, "did not drink." Wilson's point is explicit: just as white society has its own customs, so too does the Chinese society. When night falls, Yow's "real life now began, and the innocent Hastings family were left to their silly and mysterious occupations."<sup>323</sup> Wilson's tone here is intentionally ambiguous. The Hastings are innocent compared to Yow's mysterious nightly disappearances and his gambling; in Yow's eyes, however, his job at the Hastings household is but a means of earning money. His real life begins when he enters Chinatown. Here are his friends, this is the time when he can speak his own language and share his thoughts and feelings with other understanding Chinese, these are the hours when he relaxes and has his innocent fun of gambling for small stakes. To Yow,

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid., p.136.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid., p.135.

the activities of the Hastings are indeed silly and incomprehensible. Wilson condenses this thought in her statement that "the two races had always to understand or believe in each other across a great area of fog-like confusion and misconception."<sup>324</sup>

Besides breaking stereotypes, Wilson also gives an authentic insight into the Chinese way of life. Mr. Quong's taxi office is "a sort of small and crowded social club where people spent their time talking. Sometimes there was much argument. Some members of the club drifted in and stayed there all day, saying nothing. They then went away somewhere, and no one knew what they thought, if they thought, or where they went, and no one cared."<sup>325</sup> Wilson is rare in her insight into Chinese way of life. The passage is an authentic and accurate description of the openness and hospitality of most Chinese shop-houses, indeed of the atmosphere existing in most Chinese homes. Neighbours do walk in and out of each other's homes, staying to talk or just sitting around in silence as long as they wish. Wilson's description is no stereotype but a reflection of reality.

However, Wilson makes a slip in her concluding the passage with "no one cared." Neighbours in this kind of community are concerned, and the comings and goings of neighbours are often discussed within families. Wilson herself describes in a later passage the Quong family's discussion of Maggie's offer of

<sup>324</sup> Wilson, The innocent traveller, p.171.

<sup>325</sup> Wilson, Swamp angel, p.43.

partnership with Joey: "The rest of the family soon knew what this character had said, because all the boys had experiences of one kind and another and everything was discussed."<sup>326</sup> Similarly, although Mr. Quong's friends would have been left to come and go, to talk or remain silent as they wished, any absence of a regular visitor or silence by a habitual gabber would have been noted with concern.

Wilson is the only British Columbian author to refer to Christian Chinese. Although there have been Christian Chinese in British Columbia since the turn of the century, the stereotype Chinese is a heathen with evil habits, foolish superstitions and no faith. Wilson breaks this stereotype with her reference in Swamp angel to not just an individual Chinese believer but to a thriving and long-established church: the "black words" on the sign outside the church are already turning grey and the board is "weather-worn."<sup>327</sup> "What Christ did they see before them? Was Christ a Chinaman, a Jew, a Christian? He was still Christ." Wilson's conclusion that Jesus is still Christ whether the worshipper is white or yellow puts Chinese believers in the same camp as Caucasian believers: all are sinful men saved through the grace of Almighty God.

Like Evah McKowan, Wilson presents a humanly complex Chinese character: Yow, the cook in "Lilly's Story". On a superficial reading, Wilson seems to conform to the stereotype.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid., p.44.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid., p.25.

Yow is "a formidable Chinaman, tall, peck-marked, and with a droop of one eyelid which added cynicism to his already disillusioned face....He walked with a proud and swaggering gait. His look was derisive."<sup>328</sup> Wilson's short description of Yow's history in China seems to confirm the stereotypical evil nature apparently indicated by Yow's physical appearance. He admitted that in China "he had killed two men, one slowly, one quickly" and that he himself had ~~been~~ "beaten to within an inch of his life."<sup>329</sup> Yow is apparently a crook; he has committed murder and seems to delight in this fact. Yow certainly seems to have neither morals nor a sense of responsibility. He does not seem attached or devoted to the Hastings family; instead, he "kept the children in their place by means of the simple threat 'I killen you!'"<sup>330</sup> He is an "insolent...devilish servant, rude to the younger ladies of the house, hostile to the men."<sup>331</sup> Yow "borrows" without permission the big, heavy bicycle for his nightly gambling trips to Chinatown. He would have given it to his girlfriend too, had he not been caught taking it. He gradually steals a wedding trousseau. Indeed, Yow is apparently a prime model of the wily, immoral murderous Chinese cook.

Wilson's vivid portrayal of Yow is far from superficial though. Yow is a human being in all his complexity. Wilson's

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<sup>328</sup> Wilson, "Lilly's Story", p.134.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

portrait of Yow is balanced: for all his wickedness, Yow is nevertheless a good and clean cook with a "ferocious neatness". He recognizes goodness and "worshipped the venerable Mrs. Hastings" for her "simple goodness and heavenly piety."<sup>332</sup> Yow is "mad over old Mrs. Hastings....He loved Mrs. Hastings steadily, purely and disliked all other white people on principle."<sup>333</sup> In her manuscript, Wilson adds that when Mrs. Hastings appeared "oh so soft, oh so sweet was he. He even attended family prayer to please her. He served her tenderly, and, as often as he was fired, he came back the same day in order to be near her." Wilson's reason for deleting this passage in the printed version is unknown, but even without it Yow's devotion to Mrs. Hastings is plain.

Wilson does not attempt to justify Yow's theft of the trousseau but does give an explanation for his succumbing to temptation. Wilson establishes firmly the bride's wealth and "the great size and beauty" of the trousseau. Wilson also describes in great length and detail what Yow saw, the sumptuous silk garments, seemingly unwanted and so untidily bundled up: "piles of silk stockings, layers of lawn and silk nightdresses tied together with silk ribbons, layers of petticoats tied together. He saw camisoles threaded through with pink and blue

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<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid., p.137.



ribbons; he saw knickers with embroidered frills at the knee."<sup>334</sup> Wilson then establishes Yow as innocent of premeditated crime. He had generously helped the ladies move the trunk containing the trousseau to the box-room because there was no room for it in the house. In keeping with his ferociously clean and neat nature, Yow shifts "all the trunks around until the box-room looked orderly again." Seeing a piece of lace hanging out of the trunk, Yow naturally and innocently opens the lid to put the lace in. Wilson also establishes Yow's passion for Lilly: Yow is "sai over Lilly"; "his love for Lilly was a desire that consumed him....She was all that Yow wanted."<sup>335</sup>

Given these circumstances, Yow's succumbing to temptation is understandable. Wilson specifically indicates that his discovery of the trousseau was on "the day after Yow had first spoken to Lilly"; the day after Lilly "looked at Yow obliquely and walked away to another table."<sup>336</sup> No wonder then that after seeing the abundance of silk garments so carelessly thrown together, Yow "fingered these things a little and began to think."<sup>337</sup> The picture Wilson presents is not of a sneaky Chinese servant with no moral sense intentionally robbing his employer, but of a fallible human being overwhelmed by the sight of untold riches with which he might finally win his lady-love.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid., p.138.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid., p.137.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

<sup>337</sup> Ibid., p.138.

Yow's three passions reflect his complete being. His love for old Mrs. Hastings brings out his unwilling gentleness and loyalty and goodness; his passion for gambling, so incomprehensible to Caucasians, embodies all that is Chinese in Yow; his consuming desire for Lilly drives him to criminal theft. All three loves are but different aspects of the same man.

Wilson realizes the active part Chinese have played, and continue to play, in the development of British Columbia. Chinese servants have contributed to the homes in British Columbia; Chinese labour has built railways and roads; Chinese market gardeners, Chinese workers in canneries, lumber camps and mines have all contributed to the economy and the development of industry. Therefore, in addition to presenting the Chinese with authenticity and Chinese characters in their complexity as human beings, Wilson includes Chinese in both the Swamp angel and The innocent traveller as an essential part of the theme, the importance of human relationships.

A central theme in Swamp angel is that of relationships. Wilson shows Maggie Lloyd involved in and moving through several of them; Wilson even shows a relationship of inter-dependence amongst the creatures of nature. Part of this theme is Wilson's inclusion of the closely knit Quong family. Mrs. Quong is always aware of what is going on among her children; the family shares and discusses its daily experiences with each other; it works as a unit in the taxi business, each contributing his share. The

family lives in harmony, the children never desiring to quarrel among themselves. Wilson even extends this idea of closely knit Chinese beyond the family to the community. Mr. Quong's taxi-office is a social center for the neighbourhood, where people come together to talk, to argue or merely to enjoy each other's presence. This picture of unity starkly contrasts with Maggie's initial unfulfilled desire for such a "family", a desire for which Maggie ultimately finds fulfilment when she realizes the truth of Mrs. Severance's words to her: "your little Chinese boy...and you and me and who knows what. We are all in it together. 'No man is an Island, I am involved in Mankind'...."<sup>338</sup> The theme of the novel is wholly encompassed in this quotation from John Donne.

In The innocent traveller, Wilson expounds even more clearly this central theme. The innocent traveller is a "pastoral of innocence celebrating the domestic joys of Family"; above all, "it is the sense of Family which gives the world its unity."<sup>339</sup> The family forms a natural unit of interacting people, and within such units lies the significance of each individual. The family is not the only unit, however; any group of interacting people forms a unit. Individuals in each unit relate to each other and are responsible to some extent for their actions because in interacting, each individual impinges

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<sup>338</sup> Wilson, Swamp angel, p.150.

<sup>339</sup> Stouck, David, "Ethel Wilson's Novels", Canadian literature 74, Autumn 1977, p.77.

on the others. The active human relationship is the important factor, not the formal functional position of the individual.

Yow plays an important part in the theme because he recognizes the importance of the natural unit called Family. The family is so important to him that he returns all the way to China simply "for the purposes of having a baby." Yow's sense of family goes beyond his own immediate family: "China people more different. Last February China New Year my family have large party seven hundred people. All my kah-san. All my generation. You no care. You no ask all your family. I not hear you go telephone seven hundred people, all your generation. You no care. I care. I know all my generation."<sup>340</sup> Like Topaz who writes to and receives letters from relatives all over the world, Yow is in active communication with his relatives; he knows all his "generation".<sup>341</sup>

Yow's relationship with the Hastings forms another unit. Although the relationship is that of a convenient business contract, Yow's very presence in the kitchen makes him a part of the household unit. His character, personal habits and various eccentricities encroach on the lives of the three women he works for and, reciprocally, each of their characteristics and values impinge on Yow's life. Yow dominates the ladies, gives them dinner earlier than they wish, is rude, smokes his "very

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<sup>340</sup> Wilson, The innocent traveller, p.166.

<sup>341</sup> Yow has seven hundred cousins because "family" to the Chinese means the extended family.

stinking small cigar" and loudly bangs his pots and pans in the kitchen. Although Rose is generally united with Yow "by a common tug against Aunt Rachel who was a little prone to command," Yow often terrifies Rose with his dreadful facial contortions when she crosses his will.<sup>342</sup> Between Yow the cook and Aunt Rachel the housekeeper rages an ever-present war for power. Although they frequently dislike Yow, both Rose and Aunt Rachel use him in that they vicariously get "a bit of their own back" at Topaz through his rude, openly repeated judgment of her as "He clazy."<sup>343</sup>

Yow's relationship with grandmother is less complicated. Grandmother misunderstands and misjudges Yow; Yow, in turn, has no understanding of grandmother's piety. Grandmother thinks "Yow is so good, so kind"; therefore, Yow sincerely dons his "West end respectability" if only during the day-time.<sup>344</sup> "Such is the power of goodness, that <sup>g</sup>Yow (who was quite the wickedest person that Grandmother had ever seen, only she did not know this) revered the grandmother deeply."<sup>345</sup> After the house breaks up with the death of Grandmother, Yow commits a crime for which he has to go to prison: "He would never have done anything like

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<sup>342</sup> Wilson, The innocent traveller, p.198.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid., p.171.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid., p.196.

this if he had still been with the grandmother."<sup>346</sup>

Yow is not the only Chinese cook in The innocent traveller. Foey serves as cook for the Hastings during Yow's absence. Foey is Yow's "kah-san"; they belong to the same family. Thus, Foey's presence emphasizes the importance of relationships in a functioning unit. Foey is very different from Yow; their only similarity is their passion for fan-tan. Whereas Yow is scheming and able to drive a good hard business bargain, Foey, mild-eyed behind his steel-rimmed spectacles, gives in to Yow without much opposition. Foey is respectful; he "was not strong and could not aspire to a difficult or expert job"; unlike Yow, "he was so poor a cook that Rachel would not want to keep him when Yow returned."<sup>347</sup> Because Foey is vastly different from Yow, "the atmosphere in the house in general was more peaceful" after Yow leaves.<sup>348</sup> "Hardly any change could be observed in the conduct of the house" because both Yow and Foey fulfill the same function of cook; the atmosphere changes, however, because each as an individual creates differing units even though the rest of the individuals in the unit remain constant. Yow and Foey are both cooks but each is also a participating individual in the Hastings household.

Wilson's authenticity, her desire to break the stereotype, her recognition of the Chinese world as different from

<sup>346</sup> Ibid., p.223.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid., p.171.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid., p.172.

Caucasian, her presentation of complex Chinese characters and her incorporation of these characters into the theme of her novels are all clearly seen in her printed works. Manuscript passages that do not appear in the printed text confirm that Wilson's portrayal of Chinese is deliberate.

In the manuscript of "Lilly's Story" Wilson writes that Yow had such a small dear bedroom which was sacred to him. No member of the family would have dreamed of entering it. Next door to that was a washroom unit toilet which was sacred to him too. The children thought it unfair that Yow should have a toilet to himself while the nine people in the big house had only one toilet between them. But such is the silliness of things that no one offered to share Yow's toilet.<sup>349</sup>

Wilson is clear in her criticism of the white ladies who neither offered to share Yow's toilet nor even dreamt of entering Yow's room. Having already emphasized Yow's cleanliness and neatness, Wilson's statement that his is a "small dear bedroom" indicates that no one should have had any qualms about entering it.

A passage in chapter two of the manuscript of Swamp angel describes the land around the Fraser River. Although later deleted from the final copy, it discloses without doubt Wilson's attitude towards Chinese.

At the foot of the slope is, of course, the Fraser River which although one of the least lovely of rivers in these parts is still a wide river and, here, a navigable river, and tugs pass up and down in their small... [indecipherable] Chinese vegetable gardens span the distance between road and river for large areas. Look at the rows of seedlings criss-crossing each other on the brown earth as we pass rapidly by. The clustered full-grown cabbages here a muted green, and sage, and

\* "Ethel Wilson papers", University of British Columbia Special Collections, Box 1-2.

purple. They seem always to hold some drops of rain. Small figures crouch, and work their hands in the good river earth. There the acres of finely hand-woven tool-worked soil. We soon pass by, wrapped in our nice underclothes and suits, our motorcars and our... [indecipherable] but the small Chinese figures, immemorial in line and posture, continue working there, intent on the earth, and tomorrow you will buy a head of celery and complain.<sup>350</sup>

The sentences just before "Look at the rows of seedlings..." are pleasantly descriptive. Wilson suddenly changes the soothing flow of words with the command "Look". She no longer leaves the reader as a comfortable spectator; the command and the simple pronoun "we" in the same sentence force the reader to enter the narrative and participate in the actions described. Following the command is another description, that of the Chinese gardens. By placing commas after "green" and "sage" Wilson forces the reader to read more slowly in order to savour fully the picture of those full-grown cabbages in all their glistering beauty. Wilson then invites the reader to look at the Chinese figures. The figures are actively present because Wilson uses active verbs: "crouch" and "work".

In the next sentence, Wilson ensures that her reader remains with her by again using the pronoun "we". This time, Wilson directs the reader's attention to himself. In contrast to his luxury, the small Chinese figures, "immemorial in line and posture, continue working there, intent on the earth...." Wilson's lashing pen does not spare her reader: "tomorrow you will but a head of celery and complain." Although she initially

<sup>350</sup> "Ethel Wilson papers", University of British Columbia Special Collections, Box 4-1.



identifies with her reader, she now points a sharply accusing finger at him: "you" with the fine underclothes and suits and motorcars, "you" who, unlike the Chinese who work intently on the good earth, have never ever planted a single seed.

Wilson removed this passage from the final text probably for artistic reasons. The passage is too long and detracts from the main plot. Wilson probably decided against it also because it is too outright a criticism of her readers. If so, she was right. Wilson was not afraid of standing up for her beliefs and convictions, but since she had found better, more subtle ways of persuading her readers to abandon their prejudices, this crude method of direct criticism is unnecessary. Nevertheless, the existence of this passage in the original manuscript confirms her deliberate intention of changing the stereotype and enlightening her readers.

Similarly, Wilson deletes the following passage from the final text of "Lilly's Story" because it does not fit into her overall description of Chinese gambling dens: "There were no Chinese women. Chinese women were not in those days allowed to come into Canada, so Chinamen had to be satisfied with white women or with Indians. Generally speaking, though, it seemed as if they preferred truck gardening, cooking in restaurants or for families, and gambling."<sup>351</sup> The passage plainly shows Wilson's desire to explain that which white society saw as uncivilised

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<sup>351</sup>"Ethel Wilson papers", University of British Columbia Special Collections, Box 1-2.

and immoral Chinese behaviour. By saying "Chinamen had to be satisfied with..." Wilson rejects the presumption that white women were more desirable to Chinese: in fact, Chinese would have preferred their own wives, of their own race. Wilson paints the more accurate picture of Chinese men who seek only to work, to earn money and to have some ways of relaxing and whiling away their leisure hours.

In fighting the stereotype, Wilson sometimes falls into the trap of idealizing the Chinese. In Swamp angel, she presents an idealized picture not only of Mr. Quong but of his whole family. Mr. Quong is "urbane", that is, refined and elegant in manner; his white shirt shines; his face is of a "smooth ivory colour."<sup>352</sup> He possesses "the kind of benevolent influence that spreads as far as he has jurisdiction, and, by virtue of his character, usually radiates a little further still."<sup>353</sup> Joe's expression was "benevolent since he was a benevolent man. He was also very sagacious and was not easily deceived."<sup>354</sup> A shrewd, discerning, wise, always smiling and Buddha-like figure, Mr. Quong even has the added virtue of being strict though not dictatorial: Quong is firm, but gentle. His "word ran throughout these connecting rooms where his children slept, played, studied, and ate, and it flowed up and down the stairs and into

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<sup>352</sup> Wilson, Swamp angel, p.43.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid., p.42, my emphasis.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid., p.79.

the taxi-office...."<sup>355</sup> Mr. Quong's command runs and flows; Wilson uses soothing words to describe his authority. Even when his younger children "pushed the smallest ones on scooters and tricycles" or "got in people's way," they are but "admonished" by Quong. They are not caned or beaten as most Chinese children would normally be disciplined, but are advised of a fault, administered a mild reproof, merely warned.

Just as Mr. Quong is idealized, so too is Mrs. Quong. She is a "small insignificant woman of enormous character"; nevertheless, like the indomitable empress dowager, her "powerful domination" is felt by all.<sup>356</sup> Wilson even capitalizes Mrs. Quong's title, "the Mother". In the original manuscript, Wilson initially writes, "The children spoke to their mother in either language." Wilson then changes "their mother" to "the Mother" in the printed text. Instead of making Mrs. Quong specific, Wilson transform her into the epitome of motherhood. This transformation not only places Mrs. Quong higher than all other mothers, including Caucasian mothers, it also elevates Mrs. Quong to the ideal.

Like their mother and father, the Quong children are perfect in their goodness. The children "never desired to quarrel among themselves." There was "almost ceaseless noise and

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<sup>355</sup> Ibid., p.42.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid., p.43.

clatter, but the noise was not of crying or of anger."<sup>357</sup> Wilson is correct in saying there is almost ceaseless noise and chatter because the Quong home is a busy taxi-office as well as a home. Friends walk in and out as they wish and, moreover, the house is in the middle of busy Chinatown. However, part of that noise should definitely include that of scoldings and cryings and beatings because a large family of nine children would unquestionably mean fights and quarrels and frayed tempers. Wilson's statement that "the noise was not of crying or of anger" because the children "never desired to quarrel among themselves" is, therefore, idealistic. The youngest little boy who is blind would be loved and accepted as a natural part of the family, but Wilson's claim that he is "so much beloved and watched over by his brothers and sisters that one might say that he was luckier than many other little boys" certainly paints too perfect a picture. Wilson saves herself from gross sentimentality in this instance only by her reluctant admittance "but that, of course, could hardly be."<sup>358</sup> The idealism remains though: "The family lived in harmony from morning till night and slept in harmony from night till morning."<sup>359</sup>

Wilson's idealism is not confined to Swamp angel. Hetty Dorval has a short passage describing a Chinese: "Wong was a rarely happy man. Philosophical, kind, cynical, amused, shrewd,

<sup>357</sup> Ibid.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid., p.42.

comfortable, and as powerful as he cared to be. He served many, but was a servant to none. He...went into his shop...nodding, omniscient."<sup>360</sup> Wilson idealizes Wong: no man is omniscient. By ascribing these thoughts to an adult rather than to a sixteen-year-old whose judgment need not be reliable, Wilson solicits the reader's agreement to her assessment of Wong. The picture is romantic: Wong, the old, fat Chinaman "stood outside his café in the bright sunshine. His grandchildren played near the door."<sup>361</sup>

Wilson's notable achievement in presenting an authentic, realistic and sympathetic portrait of the Chinese is, notwithstanding her lapses into idealism, like a gust of refreshing air blowing away the murky fog that hangs over most literary presentations of Chinese. Wilson is the bridge connecting the past with the present. Novels before 1946 are set in the era of the birth of British Columbia, when British Columbia was still a frontier-land: the gold rush, the building of the railway, the development of new towns. Such are the novels of Eva M. McKowan, Isabel Ecclestone McKay, Robert Watson, Hilda Glynn-Ward, Alex Philip, Clive Phillipps-Wolley, Frederick Niven, Frances Duncan and Alan Sullivan. This world was one of Chinese cooks and houseboys, Chinese laundrymen and Chinese vegetable-peddlers. The atmosphere predominating was both one of anti-Orientalism and of superficial stereotyping.

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<sup>360</sup> Wilson, Hetty Dorval, p.48.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid., p.47.

Novels after 1960, on the other hand, belong to a new world where Chinatown had become a tourist attraction, where Chinese children are usual at universities, and where the average Chinese no longer speaks pidgeon-English. Now the prejudice has almost disappeared, though often the stereotype remains. This world is the one familiar to Margaret Laurence, George Bowering and Norman Newton. Because Wilson has lived through the early unsettled years and has also tasted the modern world, her writings integrate both worlds: Yow belongs to the older era whereas the Quong family belong to the modern era. Wilson does not merely write about Chinese, she systematically breaks all the stereotypes and boldly criticizes the prejudice that caused them.

In this sense, Wilson is very much a modern author although she spent the greater part of her life before 1960. Yet Wilson transcends even the modern authors who wrote after her. Whereas Chinese are but incidental to the writings of Newton and Laurence, Wilson's presentation of Chinese is deliberate. She integrates them into the theme of her novel, making them essential to the plot. Thus, Wilson is the author who stands in the fore-front of British Columbian literature with respect to the presentation of Chinese. The only other authors who can stand as seconds, and even then far removed and poor seconds, are Evah M. McKowan in Janet of the Kootenay and Frances Duncan in Cariboo runaway.

## Conclusion

British Columbian literature shows a close link between the socio-economic conditions and British Columbians' view of Chinese. Westerners have historically possessed two opposing images of Chinese, and which of these images becomes predominant in British Columbia depends largely upon whether British Columbians see Chinese as a threat. In the light of this observation, the most recent novel Needles by William Deverell can be a significant landmark in British Columbian literature.

The turn of the century in British Columbia was a time of turbulent economic upheavals, testified to by the formation of numerous anti-Chinese societies, parades and riots. The early novels Why not sweetheart, The lost cabin mine, Trail of ninety-eight, The singer of the Kootenay and The lady of the crossing testify to the existing vehement racial prejudice. Although Janet of Kootenay and The window gazer attempt to present a balanced portrait of Chinese, the negative stereotype first introduced by diplomats, missionaries and traders predominates. The novels The spoilers of the valley and The writing on the wall reflect the peaking of these anti-Chinese sentiments, which resulted in the passing of the Exclusion Act in 1923.

With the passing of the Act interest in Chinese began to wane such that by the nineteen-forties novels show a marked decrease in prejudice. Indeed, except for the brief period of

renewed bitterness against Oriental enfranchisement as reflected in The gleaming archway and Whispering leaves, the novels Gordon of the lost lagoon, Gold, gold, in Cariboo!, Wild honey, The log of the lame duck, Cariboo runaway, The transplanted and Cariboo road show an increasingly conscious attempt to correct the stereotype. Yet none of the authors feel comfortable enough to undertake an explanation of the world of Chinese: although rounded humans, Chinese in these novels have hardly any distinguishing Chinese characteristic. Indeed, Niven does not even present the human, but appeals to the superficial ancient positive stereotype of Marco Polo and Confucius.

Although novels after 1946 generally carry on the positive characterization of Chinese, the stabilised and indeed prospering economy in the province meant that Chinese had again become incidental to white British Columbians. Therefore, novels referring to Chinese hardly appear, and only in two novels The stone angel and The big stuffed hand of friendship are they of significance.

Against this background Ethel Wilson stands conspicuous. Wilson is unusual in that she not only systematically disproves each aspect of the stereotype, she is the only author who presents authentic Chinese characters and insightful glimpses into the Chinese way of life. No other author gives such realistic accounts of the home-life of ordinary Chinese.

British Columbian literature as a whole exhibits some general traits. First, no British Columbian writer is from the



working class. Although some worked on railway construction or in lumber camps, their families and their education were middle or upper-middle class. Furthermore, some of the authors are women, women who certainly never worked in railway or lumber camps. Their main contact is with Chinese servants in the homes. Though all these writers knew about the hostility, and some themselves felt hostile towards Chinese, none were advocates of violence.

This explains the lack of physical violence inflicted upon Chinese in British Columbian novels. Although Chinese are often vocally denounced and damned, the ordinary white character never lets his frustrations overcome him. Alex Philip's Whispering leaves condemns Chinese and portrays them with every frightful vice the white world associates with them, yet he has no character direct violence at them; what violence occurs the Chinese themselves initiate. Except for the lawful retribution the Chinese deserve, the worst any white man does in that novel is to verbalize his disgust: "Chinks everywhere. Pretty soon they have us all wearin' our shirts outside our pants and eatin' rice with chopsticks. If I had my way I'd -- " <sup>362</sup> Thus, even Whispering leaves, one of the most inflammatory novels against Chinese, does not depict any violence nor advocate violence against Chinese. Only in The madonna of a day is there a "big row between the fellows at the flume and the heathen

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<sup>362</sup> Philip, Whispering leaves, p.42.

Johnnies."<sup>363</sup> Nevertheless, Lily Dougall makes clear that those involved were white miners with "stupid heads", men who lived in the wilderness away from civilized people.

Secondly, the Exclusion Act forms the watershed for references to Chinese culture. Before 1923, references are rare and made only in passing. Chinese art, theatre and music seem non-existent. When mentioned, they are but a means which Chinese employ for their evil ends. Glynn-ward's The writing on the wall best illustrates this point. Young Lung Kow is cultured; he appreciates good Chinese architecture, furniture and clothes. Yet, his appreciation is utilitarian: they help him disorient his prey, and thus facilitate his control. The only exception to this pattern is Watson's The spoilers of the valley. In this novel, Watson examines Chinese theatre in its own right. Yet, his bias is obvious: he ridicules every aspect of Chinese theatre as primitive and offensive to civilised senses. After the Exclusion Act, however, references to Chinese culture become relatively more frequent, and are positive, helping to shatter the stereotype. Niven and Wilson both use this technique consciously for precisely that effect. Niven in his later novels directs readers' attention to "the beauty of the fine ginger-jars," to the scent of spices and to Chinese porcelain; Wilson similarly chooses to write of peacock fans and Chinese bowls.

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<sup>363</sup> Dougall, p.132-133.

Thirdly, all the novelists present Chinese in their traditional occupations: menial labourers, houseboys, servants, laundrymen, cooks, shopkeepers, merchants. British Columbian law restricted Chinese from certain professions until 1951, when the anti-Chinese clauses in Crown leases were dropped. Therefore, authors until Wilson are bound to portraying Chinese in traditional roles. Yet, even after 1951, Chinese continue to appear in these roles. Both Sandra Wong of The stone angel and Shirley Chang of The big stuffed hand of friendship are convenient schoolgirls; Sandra's father owns a shop.

Fourthly, British Columbian fiction consists of various genres and forms including didactic novels like The singer of the Kootenay by Robert E. Knowles, propaganda tracts like The writing on the wall by Hilda Glynn-Ward, teenage adventure stories like Cariboo runaway by Francis Duncan and historical novels like The great divide by Alan Sullivan. Yet this fiction consistently presents the same basic attitudes towards Chinese: stereotypical and often prejudiced like that of Knowles and Glynn-Ward, or balanced and usually defensive like that of Duncan and Sullivan. Furthermore, although the novels vary in their attention to Chinese, ranging from merely a short phrase in the entire novel like in The singer of the Kootenay to an essential integration of Chinese into the plot like in The writing on the wall or into the theme like in Swamp angel, the authors address their readers assuming that all are aware of this stereotype. Thus, Knowles' single reference to Chinese is

as much a reflection of British Columbian attitudes as Glynn-Ward's extensive picture of Chinese. The latest British Columbian novel which refers to Chinese, Needles by William Deverell published in 1979, perhaps counters all the gains made after 1923. Deverell admits that his concern is not so much to write a classic novel as to produce a popular thriller which will sell. That he has succeeded in capturing the attention of Canadians is attested to by the good reviews he received, the Seal Books First Novel Award which the book won, and the broadcasting of an interview with Deverell on prime-time national news hour.

Negative stereotype is Deverell's choice. Deverell is different from the other authors in this study who consciously include Chinese in their novels. Whereas authors like Glynn-Ward, Watson and Philip set out to denigrate Chinese so as to warn British Columbians of the threat Chinese pose to the province, and other authors like McKowan, Duncan and Wilson seek to change the prejudiced stereotype, Deverell is interested in Chinese only to add sensationalism and suspense. Deverell is a popular writer catering to a popular audience; the reviews he receives testify to the popularity of his novel: The globe and mail raves, "Seamy and steamy, sexy and sassy"; The Windsor star claims, "intelligent, intriguing, alternately suspenseful and action-packed"; the Edmonton sun declares, "Horrrifying...fascinating...A rattling good thriller...A

stunning success."<sup>364</sup>

Yet the similarities between Needles and the anti-Chinese literature of the early century are remarkable. Although Deverell has no intentional thesis to show the evil and, therefore, undesirable nature of Chinese, his novel nevertheless repeats many stereotypes. Both the Chinese community as a whole and the individuals in that community are evil and undesirable. Deverell includes the typical Caucasian who has been lured into drug addiction by drugs smuggled into the country by the Chinese. The two main characters, Dr. Au P'ang Wei and Jennifer Tann, are but superficially Westernised; Deverell exposes the stereotype beneath their veneer.

As in The writing on the wall, the Chinese community in Vancouver is "powerful", and respected members of the community have enough sway to be on the backs of both the mayor and the attorney-general about door-to-door searches in Chinatown. This portrait is reminiscent of Glynn-Ward's sinister portrait of a Chinatown that refuses to release Eileen Hart from its clutches, claiming ignorance over the whole matter.

Deverell also reiterates the popular stereotype which Watson repeats in both his novels The spoilers of the valley and Gordon of the lost lagoon: Chinese are ignorant and in fear of the white man's law. In Deverell's novel, Ming's "fear of the witness box" is an abstract but deadly fear which "clutched at

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<sup>364</sup> Deverell, William, Needles, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart-Bantam Limited, 1979), cover of the novel.

his bowels."<sup>365</sup> Jennifer tells Ming he must "speak the truth" to the judge because the judge "is a great and powerful man....In the court he is an emperor, and his net stretches wide, and nothing escapes its meshes."<sup>366</sup> That Jennifer, a Chinese, is the one who manipulates Ming's fear is ironical. Even in Gordon of the lost lagoon the person who uses this tactic of manipulation on Chinese is a Caucasian.

Deverell seems to acknowledge some good from the Chinese heritage. He states that in itself "the essence of Taoist medicine was love of humanity" but that Dr. Au is the one who scorns this principle, teaching himself the "darker side of the old arts and...the points of pain and the meridians of death....the twelve death-points of karate."<sup>367</sup> However, Deverell states that Au "prided himself that he had not become a dilettante at acupuncture, using his gifts wastefully." Although Deverell includes no overt authorial intrusion affirming or condemning Au, the words "dilettante" and "wastefully" themselves negate Deverell's seeming impartiality. Au is not one who interests himself superficially or merely for amusement. Au is a professional whose skill is an art; Deverell compares Au to "an artist, a master."<sup>368</sup> Musical terms are metaphors for Au's movements. Au "tinkled the piano of the fat man's torso"; he

<sup>365</sup> Ibid., p.127.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid., p.128.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid., p.4.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid., p.3.

"composed toccatas of pain"; he "discovered chords of anguish"; he extracts "dissonant songs of confession and repentance"; his fingers "strike flesh percussively." Deverell's language invites admiration of Au's skill in performance. By implication, those who do practice Taoist medicine for the love of humanity are the dilettantes, the ones who waste their skills and claim no respect. Thus, although Deverell seemingly concedes the existence of good in Chinese medicine, he severely undercuts and undermines the impact that seeming goodness might have.

Deverell includes the innocent Caucasian trapped by drug addiction. As in Glynn-Ward's novel, a brilliant lawyer succumbs. Although differences exist in the circumstances surrounding Craddock Low and Foster Cobb, the similarities are strong enough for a meaningful comparison. Like Low, Cobb is one of the best prosecutors available, "the toughest courtroom tactician on the Coast," a "sharp cross-examiner."<sup>369</sup> He has a "courtroom brain" and talks "good."<sup>370</sup> Like Low, too, Cobb's performance is marred by drug addiction. Cobb hesitates to take on the case against Au, being unsure of "whether he could take it unless he kicked junk."<sup>371</sup> Cobb is heavily addicted, taking up to five caps of heroin a day. The drug he needs comes from Chinese: "the thought that the stuff was probably White Lady

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<sup>369</sup> Ibid., p.28.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid., p.22.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid.

from the factories of Dr. Au made him feel dirty."<sup>372</sup> Cobb is helpless in his dependence on the drug even as Low has to humour Chung Lee for his supply of opium.

Deverell employs the same technique Philip uses in Whispering leaves: Deverell does not merely state that Cobb is an addict but graphically supplements the statement with passages showing the extent of Cobb's suffering. When the effect of each dose wears off, Cobb has difficulty seeing "through the veil of wet film on his eyes, a veil which made the pupils look like glass beads."<sup>373</sup> Deprivation of the drug even for a few minutes upsets his bodily functions: "his cramps tore through him again, and he held his head over the waste basket while his abdominal muscles contracted and pulsed, delivering nothing. If he kept up, he would be spitting blood."<sup>374</sup> Deverell includes too the usual withdrawal symptoms of "shivering" although the room was "really very warm."<sup>375</sup> These passages are sensationalism. They accentuate the evil of Au, and heighten the irony of Cobb's dependence for drugs on the very man he is trying to convict.

Deverell is more sophisticated than early writers like Watson and Glynn-Ward: he gives a psychological reason for Au's behaviour. Beneath the modern jargon of psychology,

<sup>372</sup> Ibid., p.24.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid., p.19.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid., p.20.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid., p.147.



nevertheless, Au is cold, merciless, inscrutable, cruel and evil. Deverell ascribes Au's appearance after becoming insane to psychological changes. Yet Au's physical appearance is suspiciously like that of the stereotype. Like an opium addict, Au's eyes are "hollow" and seemed "glazed, tranced," then they "slowly focus...and suddenly...sharpen and glisten coldly." <sup>376</sup> Au also "looked skeletal and drawn." <sup>377</sup> Au is a "sociopathic personality with some sexual dysfunction," the result of an imposed castration when he was twenty-five years old.<sup>378</sup> He is at the "edge of sanity, peering into the abyss."<sup>379</sup> His illness "seemed to centre somewhere in the brain," causing him headaches and pains in the heart.<sup>380</sup> When exposed to extreme stress, he does crumble over the edge of sanity, developing a "paranoid psychosis, delusions of persecution."<sup>381</sup> Deverell's attempt at explaining Au's behaviour psychologically is not satisfactory, however, because even before the castration Au already shows deviant behaviour: Au is driven by the conviction that "the true pleasure of sex comes from pain."<sup>382</sup>

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<sup>376</sup> Ibid., p.250, p.251.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid., p.251.

<sup>378</sup> Ibid., p.50.

<sup>379</sup> Ibid., p.195.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid., p.185.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid., p.50.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid., p.269.

Despite the modern flavour introduced by the jargon of psychology, Deverell clearly utilises the stereotype. Au's naturally depraved nature reveals itself in his eyes. Like Chung Lee whose eyes prey upon the lawyer in The writing on the wall, Au's eyes prey on Cobb, transferring "massed, malignant energy."<sup>383</sup> So great is Au's hatred that although Cobb's back is to the Chinese, Cobb "suddenly felt a primal shudder rush up his spine." Au's soul is evil; therefore, the windows to his soul reflect only evil. Au has "mastered the art of self-control and through it the art of controlling others whose minds and wills are weaker."<sup>384</sup> Just as Ling Hung controlled his underlings, Au commands unquestioning obedience from his followers. Of course Au, like Ling Hung, is greatly aided by his followers' dependence on him for drugs: "They're junkies, you see. They'll do anything for the Surgeon's junk. Get all wired up on junk, they'll do anything."<sup>385</sup>

Au has "no loyalty, no guilt, no conscience." Au is inscrutable: cold, unemotional and controlled. At his trial, Au "steps calmly into the prisoner's dock....He is serene. No flicker of emotion touches his handsome dark face."<sup>386</sup> Like Sam Wong of The writing on the wall, Au's inherent nature is evil and does not absorb any of the values of Western culture. Au has

<sup>383</sup> Ibid., p.195.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid., p.83.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid., p.94.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid., p.82.

been to medical school in England, and has been influenced by Western culture to a certain degree. Yet despite his education, Au has appropriated for himself only the superficial. His furniture includes pieces from the Period of Louis Sixteenth; his appearance is dignified and cultured; he "wore an English-tailored three-piece suit, conservatively cut."<sup>387</sup> The morals and values Au has been unable to absorb. Like Sam Wong too, Au delights in committing murder. Au finds pleasure in torturing his unfaithful follower, considering the process a "luxury".<sup>388</sup> Au's use of acupuncture only heightens the stereotype of Chinese and his perverse pleasure in castrating others completes the portrait of an evil Chinese.

Deverell's portrayal of Au's drug smuggling syndicate is also reminiscent of The writing on the wall and Whispering leaves. Au's syndicate handles heroin, "delivered at the docks of the port of Vancouver by Chinese merchant seamen."<sup>389</sup>

Deverell goes even further than Glynn-Ward or Philip. Au's smuggling is but a small link in a world-wide chain of illicit drug trade by the Ch'ao-chou family. Au had built "with singular devotion, a profitable trade route: Burma, Bangkok, Hong Kong, with links to North America through Vancouver; he had

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<sup>387</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>388</sup> Ibid., p.3-4.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid., p.23.

mercilessly expanded captive markets in the New World."<sup>390</sup> The link through Vancouver would "ultimately complete a circuit to Montreal and New York, perhaps thence to Amsterdam and Paris."<sup>391</sup>

Deverell's Jennifer Tann, the other main Chinese figure, is superficial, inconsistent and stereotyped. Jennifer is an unreconciled mixture of several personalities. She is the liberated woman, the shy person, the effusive schoolgirl and the evil Chinese. Deverell does not attempt to create a rounded or integrated figure because his interest is not in characters for themselves but in the contribution these figures make to a thrilling plot. Thus, Deverell switches from one aspect of Jennifer's personality to another according to his needs, resulting in that irreconcilable mix.

The significance of Jennifer's being Chinese is brought into the foreground early. She is chosen to be Cobb's assistant maybe because she is "Chinese-Canadian" and would "give the trial some balance" against "white hordes" appearing to come "down on some poor ignorant yellow-skinned immigrant trying to make his way in a new country."<sup>392</sup> Jennifer is in the novel to break the stereotype. Unlike most Chinese who are short or average height relative to Caucasians, Jennifer is tall. Her dress is unorthodox, even to the point of being outlandish. She

<sup>390</sup> Ibid., p.24.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid., p.203.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid., p.35.

wears "huge hoops in her ears, a loose embroidered blouse, and a full-length skirt of rough material that...looked suspiciously homespun. The whole effect was uncomfortably bohemian."<sup>393</sup> Not only is Jennifer unconventional in dress, her behaviour is that of a western liberated woman of the late seventies. She introduces herself unmistakably as Ms. Tann, swears constantly, and has "been through the whole radical trip."<sup>394</sup> Indeed, Jennifer is proud of being a fourth generation Chinese-Canadian and resents the stereotype of "storekeeper's daughter obviously gold-digging in the family mine."<sup>395</sup> Jennifer "can't dig" a "fat-cat Shaughnessy family" whose stuck-up noses crinkled at the sight of her as if they "smelled fish and onions."<sup>396</sup>

Jennifer does not hesitate to air her opinion. She unambiguously responds with raised eyebrows and a softly uttered "My God" to a lawyer's condescending gallantry "And what...is a lovely lady like you doing in a place like this?"<sup>397</sup> Jennifer is sharp-minded and sharp-tongued; she is intelligent and witty, seeming never to be at a loss for words. She does not back down even when faced with an opponent as imposing as "Rear Admiral M. Cyrus Smythe-Baldwin, Q.C., V.C., and OBE," a "hell of a lawyer" who had "always demonstrated a deadly precision in locating the

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<sup>393</sup> Ibid., p.36.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid., p.171.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid., p.44.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid., p.36.

jugular in the crown's case.<sup>398</sup> Jennifer cuts him short with an interruption.

Deverell, however, is not consistent in his stereotype-breaking portrayal of Jennifer. Instead, he frequently reverts to the stereotype. Like Shirley Chang in The big stuffed hand of friendship who talks continuously and switches from one topic to another, Jennifer "chatted gaily about herself, about her travels (she had been in the Far East, searching for her roots), her hobbies (jade and delicate Oriental watercolours), her forms of recreation (yoga, swimming -- she had been a lifeguard -- and, predictably, backgammon). She gaily tripped through one topic after another, pausing only sometimes to catch her breath."<sup>399</sup> Deverell could have given more depth to Jennifer. Her search for roots hints of a struggle for identity in the simultaneously Chinese and Caucasian environment in which she was brought up. Yet Deverell quickly passes over this issue, considering it unimportant enough to leave as an aside in brackets. Similarly, a more serious discussion of Jennifer's various hobbies and choice of recreation could have made her a more real and rounded character. But like Newton, Deverell is content to leave people as stereotypes.

Obvious mistakes show the casualness with which Deverell writes about Chinese. Although he is initially correct in

<sup>398</sup> Ibid., p.25.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid., p.44.

describing Jennifer as having "dark Oriental eyes," Deverell's superficiality reveals itself in his later description of her as having "almond green eyes." This description is not a slip of the pen, for later in the same page he again says "her eyes flashed green." Chinese have either black or dark brown eyes unless there is an intermarriage. Deverell gives no indication that Jennifer's family is anything other than pure Chinese. Deverell also undertakes to present Jennifer as being in an emotional dilemma over her desire for Cobb through interjecting "guilt, guilt, guilt" into the narrative.<sup>400</sup> However, the interjection is too flippant, artificial and forced. Deverell does not delve deeply enough into her personality; he does not explain why the liberated, self-assured Jennifer should feel guilty. Jennifer remains too light-hearted throughout the passage.

In another instance, Deverell shows Jennifer sympathetically responding to Cobb's confession of heroin addiction. Jennifer seems genuinely moved by Cobb's plight and desires to be of help. Yet immediately after this scene, Deverell returns to the superficial and diverts attention from Jennifer. She does not reappear until eight pages later, after Deverell has packed into the plot two more ironical surprises. Deverell's next reference to Jennifer does not even show her interacting with Cobb but only briefly reports their apparently

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<sup>400</sup> Ibid., p.112.

deepened relationship.<sup>\*01</sup> Deverell enlarges on Cobb's feelings, using explanatory words like "excoriated", "warned", "calm", "gentle", "remorseful" and "apologetic" but in contrast, states only Jennifer's observable actions. Whereas Deverell shows that Cobb's change in behaviour is a result of his new supply of heroin, Deverell does not disclose the reason Jennifer phoned Cobb, what her reaction is to being told to leave; and how she felt on hearing from an apologetic Cobb whose main concern is to get her to do some research for the trial. Deverell shirks dealing with Jennifer, presenting her next in a nail-biting episode where Au's henchmen attempt to murder Cobb. Forgotten are the initial glimpses Deverell allows into Jennifer's character; Jennifer remains superficial, sacrificed to the action-packed plot of the novel.

Deverell's inconsistencies abound. Despite being a lawyer by profession, Jennifer does not behave like one. Although she stood up to "Rear Admiral M. Cyrus Smythe-Baldwin, Q.C., V.C., and OBE" in one instance, Deverell shows her as no different from Ming in her awe and fear of the imposing Caucasian lawyers, of the pomp and ceremonies and of the national network of the Canadian legal system in other instances. She speaks like a schoolgirl, with a lilting voice that is "almost gushy."<sup>\*02</sup> She may be a "walking compendium of current Canadian law" but she is easily impressed and overwhelmed by the proceedings in court.

<sup>\*01</sup> Ibid., p.180.

<sup>\*02</sup> Ibid., p.33.



She is awed and afraid of Cobb's mood at the trial, intimidated by "vibrations from his tension, overpowered by the energies pulsing in this room."<sup>403</sup> To her uninitiated naivete, the action around her seems like "a fantasy....An old English movie....The pomp and ceremony: medieval."<sup>404</sup> Jennifer feels out of place; she fantasizes like a schoolgirl, exaggerating the importance of her presence at the trial: "Her heart leaped. California-style courtroom shoot-out. Here's innocent Jennifer Tann in the middle of some bloody melee, guns blazing, people screaming. She's hit! And the career of the first great woman criminal lawyer nipped before the bud can blossom...."<sup>405</sup> The discussion between her superiors emphasizes her ignorance: "All this stuff was just blowing past Tann."<sup>406</sup> So overwhelmed is she that when she speaks, her voice sounds "like a mouse squeaking."<sup>407</sup> Indeed, Jennifer is so impressed by Cobb that she can only gaze at him with a "shine in her eyes."<sup>408</sup> Deverell here contradicts his earlier description of Jennifer as the assured lawyer who knows her facts and is not intimidated by even an experienced lawyer as Smythe-Baldwin.

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<sup>403</sup> Ibid., p.82.

<sup>404</sup> Ibid., p.93.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid., p.94.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid., p.95.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid., p.89.

Deverell reverts to the stereotype whenever it suits his purposes. Jennifer is a habitual drug addict. She attends parties where there are "a few joints floating around."<sup>99</sup> Deverell leaves unanswered her question of whether her addiction is "a terrible thing" and whether she is "evil", thus leaving room for condemnation. Cobb's own addiction to heroin does not cancel the implicit condemnation but strengthens it. Deverell shows Cobb suffering under his addiction and fighting to overcome it. Cobb's shame about his addiction strongly contrasts with Jennifer's boastful enjoyment of drugs. She takes drugs regularly, and has no hesitation in offering them to others. She has a stock of drugs ready on hand, she is familiar with the procedures of fitting the hashish into the pipe, and has smoked dope long enough to learn how to get "stored".

Given this portrait of Jennifer, her compassion for Cobb in his struggle against addiction seems incongruous. Both extremes of her behaviour occur on the same night. If this contradictory behaviour can be accounted for, Deverell has certainly not done so.

Deverell also portrays Jennifer as the evil Chinese lady who lures white men into vice. The "Dragon Lady", Jennifer has a "conniving little heart" that actively contrives to lure Cobb into an affair.<sup>100</sup> She plans her strategy of enticement carefully and deliberately: she stretches herself "lengthwise on

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p.44.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p.46.

the chesterfield, her bare feet on its arm, her skirt hem somewhere above her knees -- and inching, it seemed, gradually higher -- her hands behind her head. She was smiling, glowing."<sup>11</sup> Jennifer even boldly invites Cobb to touch her "pair of amazing legs." When these tactics fail, she then attempts a different technique: she plays soft music and has Cobb talk about himself in the hopes that he would slowly relax. All ploys unsuccessful, Jennifer goes straight to the point. She "stood up, went to him, and kissed him on the mouth. She held herself to him for a long time. He was filled with the smell and touch of her."

Deverell completes the picture of Jennifer as a "Dragon Lady" with Cobb's dream. In the dream, Jennifer gives Cobb five thousand micrograms of "blotter acid" and betrays him to Au. Despite her being Canadian, Jennifer's first loyalty is to her Chinese heritage: "I cannot betray my people. There are laws."<sup>12</sup> Jennifer's true nature is that of cold inscrutability: "Her voice was matter-of-fact. Too calm....She was smiling. Serenely. Her eyes were ice....without expression, without feeling." Although a dream sequence, this picture of Jennifer is part of the "terrors of...[Cobb's] subconscious" and, by extension, part of the subconscious of British Columbians. Furthermore, "needles" are associated with Au's cruel use of acupuncture, as well as with Cobb's hallucinations during his

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.169.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.245.

withdrawal from drugs. Both are negative associations tying in with the title of the novel. In describing Jennifer's eyes as sending "thin needles" into Cobb's heart, Deverell puts Jennifer squarely in the same category as Au, whose eyes spell death.

Deverell's novel explodes the myth that British Columbians have done away with their stereotype of Chinese. British Columbians may have pushed the stereotype to the back of their minds, but it still exists and, indeed, hovers dangerously close to consciousness. Of course, Needles is only one novel and sweeping conclusions cannot be based on such meagre evidence. Yet the last twenty years of British Columbian literature has seen no novelist the equal of Ethel Wilson. Since the sixties, British Columbian novelists have silently relegated Chinese into the background, and doing so at a time when the Chinese population has steadily increased and Chinese have become a familiar sight in all occupations and at all levels of society. This silence may be significant, especially when a novel like Needles is the one that thunders onto the scene. The literature of British Columbia has thus far been a faithful reflection of the social and economic climate: Needles could indicate the beginning of a reversion to old British Columbian attitudes.

APPENDIX 1

Orientals in B.C. in comparison to total population of province

	1870	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Chinese	1,548	4,350	8,910	14,885	19,565	23,533
Japanese	-	-	-	4,597	8,587	15,006
East Indian	-	-	-	-	2,291	951
	1,548	4,350	8,910	19,482	30,443	39,490
Total pop.	8,576*	49,459	98,173	178,657	392,480	524,582
%	18	8.7	9.0	10.9	7.8	7.5

\*numbers refer to whites only. There were also some 440 Negroes and many Indians.

Figures compiled from Second Census of Canada, 1881, vol. I, p.218, Fourth Census, 1901, p.482, and Sixth Census pp. 6, 354, 355. The figures for 1870 were taken from the B.C. "Blue Book" for 1870.

Appendix 2

1896	<u>The madonna of a day</u>	Lily Dougall
1901	<u>Why not sweetheart</u>	Julia W. Henshaw
1909	<u>The lost cabin mine</u>	Frederick Niven
1911	<u>The trail of ninety-eight</u>	Robert W. Service
	<u>The singer of the Kootenay</u>	Robert E. Knowles
1912	<u>A man in the open</u>	Roger Pocock
1916	<u>Big Timber</u>	Bertrand W. Sinclair
1919	<u>The lady of the crossing</u>	Frederick Niven
	<u>Janet of Kootenay</u>	Evah M. McKowan
1921	<u>The window gazer</u>	Isabel Ecclestone McKay
	<u>The spoilers of the valley</u>	Robert Watson
	<u>The writing on the wall</u>	Hilda Glynn-Ward
1922	<u>The hidden places</u>	Bertrand W. Sinclair
1924	<u>Slag and gold</u>	Phil H. Moore
	<u>Gordon of the lost lagoon</u>	Robert Watson
1925	<u>The crimson west</u>	Alex Philip
1926	<u>Gold, gold, in Cariboo</u>	Clive Phillipps-Wolley
1927	<u>A river of gold</u>	R. V. Brandon
	<u>Wild honey</u>	Frederick Niven
	<u>The painted cliff</u>	Alex Philip
n.d.	<u>The leases of death</u>	M. B. Gaunt

1928	<u>Redgold</u>	Charlotte Gordon
1929	<u>The gleaming archway</u>	Alexander Maitland Stephen
1931	<u>Whispering leaves</u>	Alex Philip
1937	<u>The great divide</u>	Alan Sullivan
1938	<u>The log of a lame duck</u>	Audrey Alexandra Brown
1942	<u>Cariboo runaway</u>	Frances Duncan
1944	<u>The transplanted</u>	Frederick Niven
1946	<u>Cariboo road</u>	Alan Sullivan
1947	<u>Hetty Dorval</u>	Ethel Wilson
1949	<u>The innocent traveller</u>	Ethel Wilson
1952	<u>Equations of love</u>	Ethel Wilson
1954	<u>Swamp angel</u>	Ethel Wilson
1962	<u>Royal murdoch</u>	Robert Harlow
1964	<u>The stone angel</u>	Margaret Laurence
	<u>Woodsmen of the West</u>	M. Allerdale Grainger
1967	<u>Mirror on the floor</u>	George Bowering
1969	<u>The big stuffed hand of friendship</u>	Norman Newton
1976	<u>Spit Delaney's island</u>	Jack Hodgins
1979	<u>Needles</u>	William Deverell

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