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Geography of a “Foreign” China: British Intellectuals’ Encounter With Chinese Spaces, 1920-1945

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GEOGRAPHY OF A “FOREIGN” CHINA: BRITISH INTELLECTUALS’
ENCOUNTER WITH CHINESE SPACES, 1920-1945

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Abstract

This dissertation examines how eleven British intellectuals, who lived in or traveled to China from the early to mid twentieth century, represent Chinese spaces and how Chinese spaces shape their identities. This group of writers includes William Somerset Maugham, Robert William Swallow, Ann Bridge, Stella Benson, Maurice Denton Welch, Harold Acton, Osbert Sitwell, Peter Quennell, Christopher Isherwood, W.H. Auden, and J.G. Ballard. Multiple genres, including travel writing, diaries, poetry, and fiction, based on the authors' real experiences in China constitute the research corpus. Current scholarship has researched these works from historical and socio-political viewpoints, but the spatial perspective has been ignored. Edward Soja's *Thirdspace* is constructed through his reading of Henry Lefebvre's spatial trialectics. Soja develops Lefebvre's conception into an-Other space, in which alternative possibilities beyond the binary logic exist. Drawing upon Soja's concept of "Thirdspace," the project brings space as a critical means to supplement current social and historical perspectives and addresses different responses to the conventional framework of spatial binaries. The works written by British intellectuals based on their real experiences not only reflect their controlling gaze on Chinese spaces as a means of enhancing their knowledge but also explain the process of the role of Chinese spaces in reshaping the cultural identity of individual British intellectuals.

I argue that the spatial imagination constructed in British intellectuals' works, which is marked by their social, economic, cultural, and political identities, is in a constant process of negotiation. These British intellectuals' travel writings in and of themselves represent an in-between territory, in which things are in continuous movement beyond dualism and in incessant compromise. In the constantly shifting process of compromises, British intellectuals' different class, gender, and cultural identities are all at work, and their identities are shaped by Chinese spaces as well.

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Introduction

The early twentieth century witnessed an acceleration of global travel and transnational cultural exchange. The rise of modern transportation methods and the heyday of imperialism were significant factors for the rising intensity of global travels. The vast land of China seemed very enticing to European travelers as a travel destination that could stand in for any and all “Eastern” cultures. British intellectuals, including journalists, scholars, and writers, constituted a large portion of those new international travelers to China. Their novels, biographies, reports, and diaries record their experiences with local residents, architectures, customs, infrastructures, and the stuff of everyday life. Their mapping of a wide range of Chinese landscapes allows us to reconsider China’s culture, society, and history from the multiple perspectives of British intellectuals. No matter what aims they have (quick publications with potentially lucrative sales, recordings of personal life experiences, or simply an appreciation of—or a drive to appreciate, at least—Chinese culture), British intellectuals actively construct their own unique cultural geography of China.

The British travelers who came to China for a considerable amount of time and wrote on Chinese culture, people, history, and spaces constituted a large portion of the British intellectuals in China from 1920 to 1945. The travelers’ encounters with Chinese spaces can be interpreted as a process of cultural appreciation and aesthetic

pursuit from a cross-cultural perspective, and it can also be seen as their intention to find the fulfillment of their imaginary “East.” The travelers had little knowledge about China and could barely speak any Chinese, so their understandings of Chinese spaces were affected by their knowledge acquired from the British educational system or through reading. For the group of travelers who aimed to report on Chinese socio-political situations, they might travel to places with a severe natural environment, outdated transportation system, and dangerous war or social turmoil. Thus, different means of transportation, local topography, and politically and militarily strategic meanings of key cities in China were matters that they paid more attention to. For some travelers who intended to know Chinese people and culture, places with a long history, artistic designs, and particular customs were their destinations. By means of spatial exploration, practical observation, scientific investigation, and aesthetic imagination, the travelers represented Chinese from their unique points of view. Their writings show that the imperialist attitudes of some of these travelers could be open to change.

Besides these travelers, in regard to the British community in China in the early twentieth century, there existed mainly two groups—expatriates and settlers. Scholars in the field of history—most notably Robert Bickers—have researched extensively on Britons in China. For Bickers, “Britons in China were divided, roughly, into four often overlapping camps: settlers, expatriates, officials and missionaries” (*Britain in China* 14). Among the four superimposed categories, Bickers focuses on the general

structure and daily operation of the settlers' community. He further states British settlers in China were different from those in the British empire: "There were the small treaty ports people, whose fortunes were inextricably tied up with the existence of the British concessions and extraterritorial privileges. They worked in treaty port service occupations (administration, service sector, police), or worked for, or ran, utility companies, land investment and real estate firms" (15). The treaty ports were port cities established by unequal treaties and forced to open up to international trade by Western powers. The settler communities were located throughout China, including in the concessions (autonomous urban districts with British-governed municipal councils) in Tianjin, Zhenjiang, Jiujiang, Hankou, Xiamen, and Shamian (Guangzhou); British-controlled International Settlements (lands British people rent from local municipal governments to live and trade built on unequal treaties) in Shanghai and Gulangyu (Xiamen); smaller settlements in the other treaty ports; and formal colonies Weihaiwei and Hong Kong. They possessed a self-reliant system:

Settlers built large residential, commercial and industrial suburbs in the Chinese cities open to them, constructed racecourses, jetties, roads, harbours, parks (probably in that order), established public utilities, municipal administrations, *faux* hill stations on the Indian model, styles of architecture — such as Tientsin Gothic — newspapers, bodies of literature, publishers, schools, churches, Masonic lodges, hospitals, prisons and all the other social institutions and infrastructures that might be expected. The largest settler communities were self-governing; even the smallest were still self-replicating. (15)

In legations (diplomatic areas British ambassadors and their families worked and lived), concessions, and settlements, British settlers owned self-determining and self-sufficient political, commercial, and cultural systems, which allowed them ample

opportunities to keep their habitual daily practices and maintain British cultural identity despite the fact that they lived in China. Among the settlers' community, were some with even closer ties to China: those who were born there. In their later years, some would write autobiographical works based on their childhood or adolescence experiences in China; these experiences in China lingered in their minds and had a life-long influence on their thoughts and works. (This will be the subject of chapter 5.)

The British settler community had multiple identities: the British, imperial, and local "imagined" identities.¹ Shanghai, for instance, allowed British settlers to start a new life, as the city had advantage of a new social hierarchy formed by wealth and personal efforts and minor, ingrained systematic institutional powers. British settlers in Shanghai formed a society based on local conditions to safeguard their own interests. The city, as a social and cultural context, played a predominant role in shaping the identities of individual settlers, especially those who were born there, and in influencing their understandings of cultural interactions and the consistently changing world order. Part of this project will address the lives of the British settlers' community in Shanghai and their interactions with the Chinese spaces.

In addition to the British settler community, in chapter one, I also consider lives of the expatriates, especially those in Beijing, and their engagements with local public spheres. According to Bickers, the expatriates included "British businessmen who worked for the largest China companies (Jardine Matheson, Butterfield & Swire), or

¹ Robert Bickers discusses the identities of British settler community in Shanghai in his essay "Shanghaianders."

for the multinationals (British American Tobacco [BAT], Imperial Chemical Industries [ICI], Asiatic Petroleum Corporation [APC]), and whose interests and activities form the subject of most accounts of Sino-British relations” (*Britain in China* 15). Only British businessmen who worked for large Chinese or international companies and officials in diplomatic and commercial institutions for Sino-British relations were categorized as expatriates. I also extend the expatriate community to the accompanying families of British businessmen and diplomats and intellectuals who lived in China for a time and had the ability to involve themselves in Chinese culture and social circles despite having little knowledge about China before they came there. Bickers points out to what extent the British community in China involved themselves in local political life, noting: “There was no structured attempt by the British government to create a body of knowledge, or experts, to facilitate its engagement with China. Instead, British settlers in China dominated the British discourse, not missionaries, academics or those actively interested in Chinese culture and society” (36). The British settlers in treaty ports overwhelmingly direct the discourse, engaging with issues in both cultures and developing their independent knowledge system. Bickers’s work predominantly investigates the settler community in China in a socio-historical sense, but provides little discussion on the expatriates (as opposed to settlers), especially their political concerns and cultural preferences. One chapter of this project will make up the academic gap and also contribute specifically to our understanding of how British expatriates built private connections

with Chinese public spaces and whether they involved themselves in Chinese or British political discourses of public affairs.

The group of British intellectuals that I work on in this project experienced China between 1920 and 1945, and their works are set in this historical period. To clarify the scope of the project: it not only explores the political inclinations and cultural thoughts of the overall British community in China, as in the history study done by Bickers, it also examines British intellectuals' representations of Chinese spaces and their spatial practices in China. The British intellectuals that I include in this project were from the middle or upper classes and were willing to express their diverse perspectives on the Sino-British relationships and Chinese spaces and cultures in their literary works. This targeted and select group is class-based. Their trips to China were more than adventures and fortune hunts, rather they came for the exotic attraction of Chinese spaces to escape the patriarchal norms or stifling social atmosphere in Britain and/or for an aesthetic reorientation toward China and away from Britain. The research draws on multiple genres of literature, including travel writing, reportage, diaries, poetry, autobiography, and fiction. These genres work reasonably well together in this project because the literary works share this similarity: they were all written based on the authors' real experiences in China. The works concerning the British intellectuals' recorded or fictionalized experiences constitute the corpus through which I explore their interactions with Chinese cultures and spaces.

Besides investigating the global cultural and economic exchange that these travels represent, I mainly intend to map British and Chinese interactions and communications by doing a spatial analysis of British intellectuals' travel writings and other literary works from the early to mid-twentieth-century China. I will concentrate on British intellectuals' encounters with Chinese cityscapes and landscapes, as social and cultural identities are grounded in physical spaces, and the analysis of their representation of spaces promotes an understanding of the interaction of the observed culture and the observer. The considerable and significant types of space they encountered in China stimulated the travelers' keen sense of perception, and this in turn often prompted them to reflect on their own issues of identity. Special physical spaces catering to the foreign community, especially the Beijing Legation Quarter and the International Settlements, are strongly connected with the construction of British intellectuals' identities. The travelers' gendered, class-based, imperial, and cultural identities influence their representation of Chinese space and are also influenced by the diversified Chinese spaces that they visited to some extent. To research the interactions between British intellectuals and Chinese spaces does not mean denying that Chinese spaces were seen as objects to be observed, represented, and documented and their representation of Chinese spaces is subjected to the imperial logic. However, I mean to show that Chinese spaces play a role in shaping identities of individual British intellectuals, through which I intend to challenge our present understandings of uni-directional Orientalism and British imperialism.

I have chosen a twenty-five-year period here, for this period saw considerable changes worldwide, and within China and Britain as well. In China, the start of the Republican era (1912-1949) and the chaotic periods of civil revolution and wars brought enormous changes to the social and political landscape. This project especially focuses on changes caused by the presence of foreigners in China—the British living areas in treaty ports built on the concessions and the community’s extraterritorial rights (1843-1937) and the territorial invasion of Japanese army (1931-1945). In Britain, the two world wars and the rise and decline of imperialism marked the global order, including China. This period witnesses unprecedented global mobility along with the degeneration of the old world order and the formation of a new social, political, and economic one. Under the historical background of the coexistence of the expansion of imperialism and Britain’s sufferings from the two world wars, individual British intellectuals escaped from reality to reflect on their own national issues to China, seeing its vast and diverse spaces as one destination. The geo-political situations make this project a meaningful one to research the spatial practices of imperialism and semi-colonialism and the Orientalist representations of Chinese spaces as well as the British intellectuals’ demonstrations or critiques of those practices and representations. China’s closed door was opened by the Opium Wars—the First Opium War (1839-1842) and the Second Opium War (1856-1860)—and the two wars indicated the start of the territory invasion and military occupation of British imperialism and semi-colonialism. The victory of

Chinese nationalist revolution in the 1920s was a milestone of the national decolonization, which made British people in China reconsider their “informal” presence and the legitimacy of building settlements there. This process happened along with the British Empire’s reduced political control over its dominions and colonies after the First World War. Meanwhile, the role China played as an escape destination and an alternative philosophy to enlighten the British provided the possibility to rethink the Orientalist representations of the powerful and articulate center and the defeated and silenced periphery. Thus, this period forms a rich context to explore a meaningful geographical and historical critique.

The Scholarship of Travel Writing

Travel writing has been popular with readers since *The Travels of Marco Polo* were set down in the thirteenth century. It is a broad and constantly changing genre that can combine autobiography, literature, history, ethnography, and geography. Current scholarship in Travel Studies covers a wide variety of topics, and ranges from works that offer overarching or theoretical perspectives to investigations of specific destinations and cultural representations of travel writing in English in the past 500 years. *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, for instance, provides a broad introduction to travel writing from 1500 to 2000. The first of the three parts of the companion (“Surveys”) contains the chronological line of major shifts in travel writing in English since the year 1500; essays in Part Two (“Sites”) cover seven significant and representative places in different continents frequently visited by

European travelers (“Arabia,” “Amazonia,” “Tahiti,” “the Congo,” “Ireland,” “Calcutta,” and “California”); and Part Three (“Topics”) considers more theoretical topics associated with travel writing, such as gender and ethnography. This book can be seen as a guideline for understanding the genre of travel writing in English and provides a basis for my research on British intellectuals’ travels in China in the early twentieth century. The chronological research in the companion enables me to put my research on British intellectuals’ travel to China (1920-1945) into the historical trend of European travelers’ global travels. Specifically, Helen Carr’s contribution “Modernism and Travel (1880-1940),” is very helpful, as it addresses the importance of “ease of locomotion,” like trans-continental railways, the opening of the Suez Canal, and the rise of steamship companies, to modern travelers and also points to the complicity of travel writing with the expansion of colonialism and imperialism. The travel writings in this project do prove that “ease of locomotion” facilitates travel and imperial and colonial expansions, but sometimes they allow readers to find a foothold for resisting those all-encompassing ideologies. Cross-cultural concerns originating from personal interests make travel writings transcend the all-inclusive framework of colonial and imperial critiques.

Technological advance facilitated colonial expansion, which led to the perceived cultural superiority of the white races, while, at the same time, the global trade and cultural exchanges changed the West and allowed the travel writers to reflect on the

value of modern Western civilization. Carr's work also explains the changes of the genre of travel writing,

If in the nineteenth century, travel writing might often be produced by missionaries, explorers, scientists, or Orientalists (Livingstone, Darwin, and Burton, for example) in texts in which the purveying of privileged knowledge was a central concern, increasingly in the twentieth century it has become a more subjective form, more memoir than manual, and often an alternative form of writing for novelists. (74)

Novelists or poets became the main producers of travel writing, and the characteristic of travel writing was more literary and subjective. Recording their unique ideas and experiences was more important than conveying knowledge. Carr's analysis speaks to the historical period and general characteristic of travel writing to China that this project focuses on.

In addition to such encyclopedic discussions of travel writing, there are works concerning travel writings focusing specifically on British travels to and in China. However, on the whole, current scholarship concerning British travelers in China is still thin. In her work *The Lure of China: Writers from Marco Polo to J.G. Ballard*, for instance, Frances Wood is mainly concerned with how the people, cities, countries, food, language, flora, art, cultural heritage, architecture, history, and wars of China appear to European writers and appeal to their imaginations across eight centuries—especially in the early twentieth century. A cultural introduction to China does serve as “a subject of fascination,” Wood argues, “in the West for thousands of years” (1). However, her study offers only a general sketch of the fictional or biographical works of these writers rather than a critical and analytical one. Nicholas

R. Clifford's "*A Truthful Impression of the Country*": *British and American Travel Writing in China, 1880-1949* addresses how China is socially, politically, economically, culturally, and historically translated into British and American contexts by travel writers; and, at the same time, he considers the different historical backgrounds of China and England during the 70-year period covered by his survey. Concerning cities like Beijing, this critical work concentrates on the "authentic" and "antique" cultures observed by British and American travelers' "new eyes." Travels to Beijing are described as "journeys to antiquity," where the representation of traditions is the focus of travelers' observations. However, this research cannot avoid an Orientalist, uni-directional perspective, which specifically ignores the conversations that are happening between physical Chinese spaces and English representations of them. Places in China are more than objects subject to observation, but they creatively play a role in influencing the individual British intellectuals' understandings of Sino-British relations.

Besides these specific studies of British travelers' sojourns in China, I will also rely on works that focus on solely British literary travelling between WWI and WWII but that expand the destinations to include all parts of the world. Paul Fussell's *Abroad: British Literary Travelling Between the Wars* discusses the expansion of the British literary diaspora after WWI once the loosening of restrictions imposed by The Defense of the Realm Acts of 1914 and 1915 re-enfranchised travelers. A monotonous life at home and the rise of innate domestic philistinism constituted a

sufficient motive for literary figures to go anywhere else abroad and to express themselves. The domestic situations in Britain introduced in Fussell's work offer an alternative perspective to help me grasp the background knowledge and context-based stimulus for literary figures to take to the road. This might be the reason why Osbert Sitwell says "The East is an escape."

The two works by Wood and Clifford share the common feature of focusing on the lure of the mysterious culture of China and on the strengthening/changing cultural imagination of China. This practice cannot get rid of the logic of Orientalism, the representation and scrutinization of Chinese culture from a European perspective. Also, although Fussell's work does shed light on my research, it cannot avoid a British nostalgia toward an imagined China. My research project, on the other hand, intends to see how these British intellectuals' culture, gender, queer, and class identities impact how they interact with China's spaces. An analysis of the gap or negotiation between the objective situations, cultures, and geographies that dominate in Chinese thoughts and those to which these British intellectuals pay attention would be of great significance to anyone trying to grasp the logic underpinning Sino-British interaction.

This project focuses on the interactions between British intellectuals and Chinese spaces, which includes how the Chinese spaces change the British travelers' perceptions and influence their identities. The following questions are addressed in order to explore this interaction: How is the Chinese landscape mapped differently

from a foreigner's perspective? How are the travelers' identities shaped by Chinese spaces? How do travelers speak to one another considering their identities of gender, class, and educational background? What kind of spatial politics is implied in this process? In this project, I argue that the cultural geography constructed in British intellectuals' works, which is marked by their social, economic, cultural, and political identities, is in constant process of hybridity and negotiation. These British intellectuals' travel writings act as an in-between territory, in which everything is subject to negotiation. In the constantly shifting process of negotiation, the British intellectuals' different class, gender, queer, and cultural identities are all at work and play a role in determining their representations of Chinese spaces, and their identities are shaped by Chinese spaces as well. As we examine works of these British intellectuals, we should neither ignore the China that exists beyond their imagination nor lose sight of their imagination and strategies for engaging with it.

The Theoretical Framework of Thirdspace

Drawing upon Thirdspace theory, this project aims to explore how British intellectuals in a transnational context respond to binarism and set up a new area of negotiations of meanings and representations in "in-between" spaces where cultures meet and negotiate. Thirdspace theory forms the underlying theoretical framework for this project, while related theories regarding transnational context, unbalanced power structures, and post-colonial criticism will also be included. This project will give a thorough analysis of how related theories contribute to the framework of Thirdspace

in each chapter. Edward Soja points out the significance of space in understanding the world and the necessity of spatiality as a supplement to the social and historical perspectives that are commonly used in social sciences. A third dimension of spatiality is infused into the conventional coupling of historicity-sociality: Soja uses the concept of Thirdspace as a new mode of thinking. As Soja puts forward, “In its broadest sense, Thirdspace is a purposefully tentative and flexible term that attempts to capture what is actually a constantly shifting and changing milieu of ideas, events, appearances, and meanings” (2). Soja gives a new framework for understanding the formations of meanings and representations—the continuous changes of “ideas, events, appearances, and meanings” in a fluid environment. This idea inspires me to challenge the traditional, fixed, and established British spatial representations of China and to use the “triple dialectic” of sociality, historicity, and spatiality to explore British intellectuals’ encounters with Chinese spaces.

Soja proposes a new way of interpretation that foregrounds space and spatiality, when he takes a geographical expedition through Henry Lefebvre’s works, especially Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space*. Soja points out the importance of considering “(re)conceptualization of the relation between centers and peripheries ... [as] ... a deep critique not just of this oppositional dichotomy of power but of all forms of categorical or binary logic” (7). Soja further explains, “When faced with a choice confined to the either/or, Lefebvre creatively resisted by choosing instead an-Other alternative, marked by the openness of the both/and also ..., with the ‘also’

reverberating back to disturb the categorical closures implicit in the either/or logic”

(7). The conception of “an-Other alternative” expands the geographical imaginations beyond dualism and further explains how meanings and representations are under a process of deconstruction and reconstruction. This thought transcends the binary logic and encourages a space of openness in which a multiplicity of dimensions that might be considered uncombinable is encompassed. Based on his understanding of Lefebvre, Soja states:

Thirdspace itself, as you will soon discover, is rooted in just such a recombinatorial and radically open perspective. In what I will call a critical strategy of “thirling-as-Othering,” I try to open up our spatial imaginaries to ways of thinking and acting politically that respond to all binarisms, to any attempt to confine thought and political action to only two alternatives, by interjecting an-Other set of choices. In this critical thirling, the original binary choice is not dismissed entirely but is subject to a creative process of *reconstructing* that draws selectively and strategically from the two opposing categories to open new alternatives. (5)

Soja’s conception of Thirdspace sheds light on the interpretation of British travelers’ binary choices in this project. When they traveled or stayed in China, British intellectuals all experienced moments of binarism and engaged in “in-between” situations. The moments of spatial binarism include their personal involvement in the local public sphere, the choices between British and Chinese style mansion/décor, British women’s dilemma of working outside or staying at home, etc. The British intellectuals were “in-between” situations when confronting binarism: they had to deal with to what extent they inclined to the two sides of either/or choice. Thirdspace does not merely indicate the existence of a simple “in-between” position, but allows us to see how binary choices in this location are subject to deconstruction and

reconstruction in a constant process of negotiation. Their cultural identities, class-based, gender-related, empire-associated, embodied in those “in-between” spaces determined their choices. In this case, a transnational public sphere, a unique identity of the local British community, and a woman’s special status in another country, for instance, came into being after a creative process of reconstruction of factors deriving from the binary oppositions. The hybrid features in a cross-cultural and transnational context will be detailed in each chapter.

Besides the “three-sided sensibility of spatiality-historicity-sociality” (Soja 3) and spatial imaginations beyond dualism, Soja states the third layer of his definition of Thirdspace,

Thirdspace too can be described as a creative recombination and extension, one that builds on a Firstspace perspective that is focused on the ‘real’ material world and a Secondspace perspective that interprets this reality through ‘imagined’ representations of spatiality... we are ready to begin our journey to a multiplicity of real-and-imagined places. (6)

This geographical feature of Thirdspace—the real-and-imagined spatiality—put forward by Soja also gets its theoretical implications from Lefebvre. Soja summarizes Lefebvre’s three kinds of spaces: the perceived space (spatial practice), the conceived space (representations of space), and the lived space of representation (representational space). For Soja, the “real” Firstspace is the objective and material spatial forms, and the “imagined” Secondspace is mental and perceptive forms of spatial representations, which have similar meanings with Lefebvre’s perceived and conceived spaces respectively. According to Lefebvre’s definition, representational space “is the dominated—and hence passively experienced—space which the

imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects” (Lefebvre 39). Lefebvre’s representational space is distinct from and encompasses the other two forms of space: “What Lefebvre described specifically as lived space was typically seen as a simple combination or mixture of the ‘real’ and the ‘imagined’ in varying doses” (Soja 10). Thirdspace, a new form of spatial awareness, is constructed based on the material and mental forms of spaces and expands its meaning and scope much beyond them. By interrogating spatial practices and representations of space, in this project, Thirdspace provides a real-and-imagined terrain for understanding cultural negotiations in a transnational context. The combination of spatial practices and representations of space brings the British intellectuals a new cultural strategy of mapping as something other than an enlightenment mechanism for knowing.

Thirdspace inspires me to think about an-Other space as an alternative to the conventional binary spatial framework. Thirdspace, from social, historical, and spatial perspectives, also clarifies that individual, community, or context is not a fixed and established category and is always in a process of negotiation. This idea explains the heterogeneous nature of the British community, among whom individual members have their distinct thoughts and acts. The identities of individuals are not fixed categories but are subject to change as they had different experiences in China. The environment they lived in, such as the settlements, not only indicates, shapes, and strengthens their imperial and British identities but also forms their local identities. In

this regard, the categorical and binary logic is destabilized, and identities are reshaped in the process of compromises.

Chapter Planning

Soja's ways of organizing his book is also a practical example for developing the structure of my project. Soja states, "I have tried to compose every one of the chapters of *Thirdspace* as a new approximation, a different way of looking at the same subject, a sequence of neverending variations on recurrent spatial themes" (9). This academic writing style inspires me to approach the subject of Sino-British relations with each chapter as a new start from a different perspective and to move toward the theme of British intellectuals' interactions with Chinese spaces in a constant process of exploring new territories.

Each of these writers makes different contributions to the theoretical framework of *Thirdspace* in a transnational context. Because this project organizes those writers within one framework, I shall divide my project in thematic chapters rather than deal with each author separately in individual chapters. Each chapter focuses on a specific theme and contributes a distinct perspective to how British travelers interacted with Chinese spaces in that context. Putting one author's work in a particular chapter does not necessarily mean the work only conveys one theme. The textual richness of those works is impossible to include in one project. Although this project was divided into five chapters, the chapters mostly speak to and only sometimes diverge from one another. The chapters coexist in a sequential turn but form a collectivity of "a

sequence of neverending variations on recurrent spatial themes” (Soja 9) as they explore how British intellectuals interacted with Chinese spaces in this or that regard.

In Chapter one, I start the project with an examination of the connections between the private and the public spheres in a transnational context. The “in-between” space of the public and the private includes the physical space of, say, diplomats’ living rooms/gardens and the conceptual space of the transnational public sphere. I choose to put this spatial theme first because building a private connection with the Chinese public world was the first step for the British expatriates “getting to know” China. This chapter looks at works by Harold Acton (1904-1994), Ann Bridge (1889-1974), and William Somerset Maugham (1874-1965), each of whom brings different perspectives on the cultural choices of the British community and British individuals in the “in-between” spaces. Some British expatriates saw themselves as “collectors” and “connoisseurs” of the world and put their collections in the residential interior, a place for demonstrating and performing their aesthetic and cultural preferences. The expatriates’ “in-between” positions kept them away from the social and political issues in both China and England because of cultural barriers and physical distance. Specifically, the diplomats’ and their families’ frequent change of residency and their willingness to save themselves from routine diplomatic life and work are also reasons for their concerns about mundane topics rather than political conversations. Meanwhile, some expatriates in academia had a close connection with Chinese literati and scholars and participated in parties or salons focusing on

cross-cultural themes instead of political ones. Documenting this process of cultural encounter and cross-cultural relations offers the possibility of challenging the homogeneous cultural identity of the British community and investigating how hybrid culture comes into existence in a transnational context.

The second chapter will research how Stella Benson (1892-1933), as a British female expatriate in China, responded to the dualism of the public and private spaces in a transnational and cross-cultural context. Benson's everyday practices shown in her travel writing and diary are the research materials of this chapter. The mutual influences of geography and gender is the main theme of Doreen Massey's *Space, Place, and Gender*, in which she shows the patriarchal hierarchy of relating women to domesticity and home and also to a lack of mobility and progress, and how hegemonic spaces and places are products of social relations, including gender. By drawing on Soja's strategy of "thirding-as-Othering," this chapter will transcend the binary framework of relating Man/Woman dualism to the binary of public/private spaces and explore how Benson negotiates these binaries in her own way. Also, Soja's conception of Thirdspace, in which meanings and representations are in continuous compromises, helps me explain Benson's negotiations of multiple identities, gender and imperial-based, in a transnational context.

In the third chapter, I conduct a close reading of the primary sources of three works about the cityscape and local residents' daily lives in Beijing, and put them at the intersection between Chinese and British cultural norms. In *Sidelights on Peking*

life, the cross-cultural background of Robert Swallow (1878-1938) enables him to understand situations of and experiences in Beijing with European conceptual frameworks and key notions such as “cosmopolitanism,” “*flâneur*,” and “public sphere.” Peter Quennell (1905-1993) kept an account of what he experienced in Beijing in his *A Superficial Journey Through Tokyo and Peking*. Quennell’s representation of Beijing participate in the conversation of Chinese and European discourses of the city and the country during a historical period when China was transforming from tradition to modernity. Osbert Sitwell (1892-1969) concentrates more on the cultural characteristics of local topography in contrast with those of Britain in aspects of urban planning, architectural style, and mentalities of residents shaped by local topography. By interpreting representations of rural and urban spaces, I talk about the feasibility of employing European city/country logic to characterize China’s landscapes. What is more, British travelers have a strong passion for the cultural antiquity of Chinese cities like Beijing, which derives from their cultural imagination or nostalgia toward a pre-industrial society.

The fourth chapter will examine two works of travel writing which are characterized by war reportage with a focus on how transportation to and in China facilitated their observation of Chinese spaces and how the topography and the war in China increased their difficulties to finish the process of their observation and documentation. The two works include *One’s Company: A Journey to China in 1933* written by Peter Fleming (1907-1971) and *Journey to a War* written by the poet W.H.

Auden (1907-1973) and the novelist Christopher Isherwood (1904-1986). In Fleming's and Auden and Isherwood's cases, the travelers' consistent physical movement to and across the country by different means of transportation made the Chinese spaces open to their observation and narration, while there were moments in both Fleming's and Auden and Isherwood's journeys that show their inability to complete their journeys because of the topography and the war in China at that time. Their failure to reach destinations and their incomplete journeys explain an-Other alternative of observing and documenting spaces—the British travel journalists' failure to accomplish their journey and their spatial representation of an imaginary China.

The fifth chapter will deal with how the British intellectuals who were born in Shanghai and older generations of their families witnessed and were engaged in the history of Shanghai's landscape and how their social and cultural identities were changed through the exploration of the local landscape. Denton Welch (1915-1948) and J.G. Ballard (1930-2009) are British writers who were born and lived in Shanghai. This chapter mainly researches on Welch's *Maiden Voyage* and Ballard's autobiographical novel *Empire of the Sun* regarding their adolescence or childhood experiences in Shanghai. The social and cultural landscape they experienced in Shanghai served a predominant role in developing their more systematic ways of thinking and mature views of life. Going out of the safer "in-between" space—the International Settlement where they lived—they were horrified but stimulated by the

“alien” landscape of the areas in Shanghai beyond the scope of the international community. The process moving from the Settlement to the Chinese residences or the internment camps indicates a series of changing social, economic, and political orders, through which their identities were reshaped.

The writings of this group of writers create a body of literature, one focusing on the British intellectuals’ physical connections with Chinese spaces. The writers’ diverse narratives and textualities form a critical diversity that their different cultural identities are embodied in but also exist as a collective that contributes to the understanding of cultural communications between China and the Great Britain. Throughout the five chapters, British intellectuals’ mapping of China’s landscape, including unique perspectives that shape their geography during short- or long-term stays throughout the country, demonstrates a panoramic picture of their interactions with Chinese spaces. I will also locate the spatial analysis in the “Thirdspace” framework to investigate the cultural negotiations between China and Britain and to explore the possibility of resisting the dominant orders from the peripheral and the marginalized positions.

Chapter One. The Interior Space and Public Sphere: Political Engagement and Cultural Choices of British Expatriates

Building a private connection with Chinese society is a start for British expatriates to get to understand China. The spheres between the public and the private are buffering areas for them to establish contact with Chinese people, culture, and spaces. While British expatriates found themselves in “in-between” situations in which their cultural backgrounds influenced their political engagement in local affairs and their cultural choices, their British identities were also impacted to some extent by their encounters with China. By “in-between” spaces, I mean those spaces between the public and the private. These include physical interior spaces, which on the one hand are part of the private house but on the other are connected with Chinese society and the conceptual public sphere in a transnational context.

This chapter will address the historical and cultural role of British expatriates’ interior spaces, including living rooms, salons, gardens, and party venues in China, and the involvement of the expatriate community in the public sphere in a transnational or diasporic context. Soja establishes space as a critical method and inspires a new spatial direction to explore social and historical phenomena: How did the living room/garden, as physical spaces, possibly express the expatriates’ cultural

choices? To what extent did or did not the expatriates in China engage in the local public sphere? To sufficiently analyze the cultural compromises they made, this chapter focuses on how the British community in China seeks a balance between keeping their cultural identities and integrating into the local cultural atmosphere. I argue that instead of getting involved in policy-making and participating in local political life, some expatriates' "in-between" situation exempts them from thinking exclusively about issues in both territorial states (Britain and/or China). British expatriates, physically away from Britain and finding it culturally difficult to identify with China, put themselves in an awkward status of being distanced from social and political topics in both cultures. Thus, how they perceive the world allows them to interact with their surroundings, encounter and present their ideas from cross-cultural perspectives. They in turn contribute to the way they are allowed to perceive the world. Some of them are often portrayed as caring little about social-political topics but more about cultural communications or the minutiae of their daily lives.

Somerset Maugham's *On a Chinese Screen*, Ann Bridge's *Peking Picnic* and *Facts and Fictions*, and Harold Acton's *Memoirs of an Aesthete* and *Peonies and Ponies*, all of which were written by expatriate authors or present the lives of British expatriate communities in China, will be the focus of this chapter. According to Paul Fussell, Maugham and Acton are categorized as a group of writers, who are "the vanguard[s] of the British Literary Diaspora ... in the 20's and 30's" (11). Fussell further points out, "This diaspora seems one of the signals of literary modernism, as

we can infer from virtually no modern writers' remaining where he's 'supposed' to be"

(11). Going abroad enriched their spiritual minds and freed them from a narrowed horizon. In the case of Bridge, her purpose of travel originated from her husband's changes of working places rather than from an intention of sparking literary inspiration. However, her writings about lives abroad do contribute to the broader genre of "the British Literary Diaspora."

Maugham² was an English playwright and novelist, who won a widely recognized fame since the publication of his autobiographical novel *Of Human Bondage* in 1915. He started to travel throughout Asia and the Pacific including China through the late imperial era of the 1920s and 1930s. With the help and company of his lover Gerald Haxton (1892-1944), Maugham sought an inspiration and gathered human materials from his journey to write novels, essays, and travelogue. His short essay collection *On a Chinese Screen* records vignettes from his sojourn in China in 1920 and his interactions with local British expatriate communities. Bridge³ is the pseudonym of Mary Ann Dolling (Sanders), Lady O'Malley. She was married to Owen St. Clair O'Malley in 1913 and went to Beijing⁴ to accompany her husband

² Researches on Maugham's novels and travelogue commonly address to what extent his works express British imperialism and how his works represent "East-West" interactions. See Christine Doran, "Popular Orientalism: Somerset Maugham in Mainland Southeast Asia"; Chummei Du, "Travel Along the Mobius Strip: Somerset Maugham and Gu Hongming East of Suez"; Isaac Yue, "W. Somerset Maugham and the Politicisation of the Chinese Landscape." British expatriates in China depicted in Maugham's travelogue are seldom explored.

³ The majority of Bridge's novels are written based on her real experience as a British diplomat's wife and discuss Western women's account of Orientalism and multiculturalism. See Isil Bas, "Fact and Fiction: Subverting Orientalism in Ann Bridge's *The Dark Moment*"; Rachel Bright, *China As I See it: The Resident Writing of British Women in China, 1890-1940*; Nicholas Parker, *Literary Evasions of the English Nation in the Twentieth Century*.

⁴ Beijing is also transliterated as Peking by using Wade-Giles as shown in the title *Peking Picnic*. Wade-Giles is a romanization system for Mandarin Chinese and was created based on Beijing dialect. It was the familiar system of transcription in English-speaking world for the first half of the twentieth century. The usage of Wade-Giles commonly appeared in British intellectuals' writings at that time, especially transliterating Chinese names and places. In Mainland China, it was replaced by hanyu pinyin romanization system in 1958. In this project, the names of places are transliterated in hanyu pinyin.

when he took a diplomatic position there in 1925. In 1927, she returned to England and started to work on writing. In 1932, her first and also best-known novel, *Peking Picnic*, was published, which won her the Atlantic Monthly prize. In *Peking Picnic*, Bridge mainly presents human relationships and the life of an upper-class heroine Laura Leroy in exotic locales based on her own experience of the British foreign community in the Beijing Legation Quarter. Her subsequent novels based on her experiences abroad when she accompanied her diplomat husband mainly characterized similar life of heroines in different countries. The Legation existed from 1861 to 1959 and was the area of Dong Jiao Min Xiang, a hutong (lane) located in the Dongcheng District, right to the east of Tiananmen Square. After the Second Opium War, an extraterritorial Legation Quarter in Beijing was erected, which took in charge of administrative affairs under the jurisdiction of foreign countries. Another expatriate author, Acton⁵ also lived in and situated his writing background in Beijing. Acton was born to a family of baronets near Florence, Italy and received education in Eton College and Oxford, which cultivated his interest in art and literature. During his stay in China from 1932 to 1939, Acton studied Chinese language and traditional Chinese drama and poetry. He then wrote extensively on translations of Chinese classics and new poetry and also recorded his life there in his memoirs and novels. Acton's *Peonies and Ponies* is a portrait of expatriate community life in Beijing. The title

⁵ Scholars have researched Acton's translation of Chinese plays and poems and aesthetic representation of Chinese culture. See Xingzhong Guan, "The Pursuit of Beauty by an Aesthete: A Study of Harold Acton's Manuscripts of Popular Chinese Plays"; Lijuan Huang and Jiajun Tao, "Imagining China in the Discourse of English Modernism"; Guilu Ge, "Western Spiritual Crisis and Oriental Cultural Support: Themes Concerning China in Harold Acton's Novels."

symbolizes cultural difference, peonies being a dignified and graceful indication of Chinese culture and ponies an old-fashioned entertainment of English elites in Beijing. His autobiography, *Memoirs of an Aesthete*, records his life in China, mainly in Beijing, including his travels, his ideas about Chinese culture and politics, and his communication with local prestigious elites. The Beijing Legation Quarter, the background of Bridge's and Acton's works, was a place where a large British legation was located. British expatriates who lived along with other European and American expatriates together constituted the residents in the Legation Quarter.

All of the three writers demonstrate the heterogeneous identity of the British expatriate community. When working toward the lives of British expatriates in China, they show how individuals of this community incorporated their different cultural choices into their interior spaces and their participation in transnational public spheres. The analysis will be broken into three subsections: the places they lived in, the people they interacted with, and the topics they were concerned with based on both actual and fictional materials. The three perspectives provide different examples of cultural negotiations and constitute a panoramic picture of British expatriates' private connections with the Chinese society. In some cases, unique cultural identities of British expatriates were not especially emphasized in terms of their interior decorations and social circles. But many British expatriates along with other European expatriates decorated their dwelling places with European styles and interacted with European communities which were not confined to the British expatriates in Beijing.

Residences and Interior Decoration

The residential house separates the individual life from society, but the idea of dwelling places as a mark for the dichotomy of the public and the private is by no means absolute. According to Lefebvre, “the space of a room, bedroom, house or garden may be cut off in a sense from social space by barriers and walls, by all the signs of private property, yet still remain fundamental part of that space” (87). The residential house, despite existing as personal property and for private activities, is still part of social space. The place for dwelling is also for socializing, and the residents in private houses are also part of the community. Benjamin expands the scope of the residential house as a continuous existence of the public and the private and regards its appearance as a symbolic carrier of personal ideas via its collection and display of the outside world. “The interior is the asylum of art. The collector is the true resident of the interior. He makes his concern the transfiguration of things. To him falls the Sisyphean task of divesting things of their commodity character by taking position of them. But he bestows on them only connoisseur value, rather than use value” (Benjamin 9). Domestic design serves as a predominant means of demonstrating one’s aesthetics and of distinguishing the educated middle-class from other strata of society. Benjamin’s discussion about the relationship between interior decoration and one’s artistic appreciation implies that an individual, as a manager of the household, is an artist of the house. Victoria Rosner also points out the importance of private life beyond the category of private sphere in *Modernism and the*

Architecture of Private Life: “The home is not often conceived as a progressive site.

Yet for [Virginia] Woolf, as for many others, the home was seen as a kind of laboratory for social experimentation” (5). I will show that the interior of houses serves as a non-linguistic way of expressing the expatriates’ personalities and attitudes towards the world, indicating their understanding of cultural interactions.

The houses in which the British community lives in China are not merely shelters that offer a sense of belonging in an unfamiliar and exotic environment, but also an indication of their inhabitants’ attitudes toward life and the outside world. The residential decoration indicates the viewpoint and personal identity of the owner inhabiting the house. Through the selection of decoration in the house and unique combination of ornamentation, the owner of the house externalizes himself/herself while also expressing dominant cultural themes of his/her day. In this sense, the interior design also articulates their ideas about the social, political, economic, and cultural circumstances of the society that they live in. Numerous fictional figures in the works of Maugham, Acton, and Bridge and the authors themselves express their thoughts and values through the means of decorating their dwelling place.

A combination of Chinese and European/American housing styles is apparent in Maugham’s depictions of the dwelling places of the British expatriates that he came across in his travels. In *On a Chinese Screen*, the chapter “My Lady’s Parlour” depicts a woman’s decoration of her rooms in her efforts to turn a small, old Chinese temple into an English dwelling house. Maugham does not detail the location, but Woods

holds the idea that the temple is “probably in Peking” (121). The temple was built for a very holy monk three hundred years earlier, and has been becoming derelict due to lack of funding. Ravages of age and neglect brought its graceful appearance and interior decoration into decline. The Englishwoman replaces the authentic Chinese classical style with European décor: “The raftered ceiling was still beautiful with its faded gold dragons on a faded red; but she did not like a dark ceiling, so she stretched a canvas across and papered it. Needing air and sunlight, she cut two large windows on one side” (Maugham, *On a Chinese Screen* 14). The dark ceiling and wall are modified by a covering of bright canvas, and additional windows function as a way for allowing more air and sunlight in. She further makes some alteration to the interior decoration. “Since the columns, great red sturdy columns, oppressed her a little she papered them with a very nice paper which did not look Chinese at all” (15). The solemn atmosphere is shifted into a jaunty one. The paper, bought from a local shop, is the touch to make the room cheerful. The place to burn papers and pray was turned into “an American stove” (15). To give the room an “artistic” and “cozy” look, “bright chintz,” “pictures, and wedding presents” are placed as decorations (15). After the completion of her work, the temple is remade in the London countryside style. Structural design, material selection, and decoration emphasize the aesthetic difference between Chinese and European cultures. Isaac Yue argues that the lady’s alteration to the Chinese temple “allow[s] us to establish a sense of intentionality in Maugham’s scenic narration—one that encodes the landscape with a critique of

imperialism regarding the white men's inability to adapt to and appreciate Eastern cultures" (78). The lady's renovation and replacement with European and American styles are evidence of her cultural preference and maintenance of her cultural identity although she resides on Chinese soil. I agree with Yue that Maugham incorporates his critique of imperialism and cultural superiority into his depiction of the lady's practices—an alteration to authentic Chinese landscape.

Maugham continues to depict the cultural choices of British expatriates when designing their dwelling places and sees whether there are expatriates who genuinely appreciate local cultures. In the vignette "Fear," he depicts another missionary's place lying on a little hill outside the gates of a populous city.⁶ The missionary, Mr. Wingrove, has a different taste from the common decoration style of his peers. His house is typical of the European style but with some Chinese, especially Tibetan decoration. In his study, "there were books from floor to ceiling, a table littered with papers, curtains of a rich green stuff, and over the fireplace a Tibetan banner. There was a row of Tibetan Buddhas on the chimney piece" (48). My understanding of the inclusion of Tibetan decorations in his room is probably due to his missionary work, as many people in Tibet have a religious belief of Buddhism. The drawing room is furnished in a fully Chinese style that rarely appears in any other missionaries' houses. It is equipped with "a Chinese carpet," "Chinese pictures," an "elaborately carved" "blackwood table," and a "white porcelain" figure (49). Mr. Wingrove looks very

⁶ Robert Bickers categorizes missionaries as an independent group, but he also confesses there is an overlap between his four categories. This chapter includes missionaries coming to China for their missionary work in the expatriate community.

decent, gentle, and solemn, which demonstrates he has a nice family and educational background, while his wife is depicted as having vulgar intonation, unpleasant appearance, and retiring manners: the couple is not from the same social class. They live in a relatively enclosed environment and their social circle is rather limited—two evangelists here, two young Chinese lady teachers, and a group of Chinese students there. Maugham notices “a flash of icy hatred” in Mr. Wingrove’s eyes when Mr. Wingrove is talking about the Chinese teacher. Maugham tries to explore what seems contradicting in Mr. Wingrove: “I saw the disgust in his soul for all that his will loved ... his missionary life revolted him ... He would not go home because he could not bear to see again what he cared for so much ... perhaps he had married that vulgar wife in order to cut himself off more resolutely from a world that his every instinct craved for” (53). Maugham believes that Mr. Wingrove has given up what he once loved so passionately and forced himself to accept the mission. Maugham also thinks Mr. Wingrove tries to hide his disgust and hatred toward the Chinese and he hides his disapproval of Chinese culture as well although he seems to be a connoisseur of Chinese arts. For Maugham, missionaries cannot identify with another culture in their minds. The Chinese decorations only exist as an indication to remind him of cutting off from his past. The décor in houses of the Lady and the missionary proves their cultural superiority and ambivalent attitude about Chinese culture.

Unlike expatriates in Maugham’s works, Acton and his fictional protagonist, Philip Flowers, as members of the British community who were passionate about

Chinese culture, chose to live in authentic Chinese mansions in Beijing and made some European-style practical alternations to them. After Acton arrived in China and travelled throughout the country, he found a teaching position and took up residency in Beijing. Acton moved into a well-designed spacious Chinese mansion with three courtyards and a side garden in Guangshen Hutong. In his sitting room, Acton chose Chinese style decorations, “a dozen long scrolls of birds with their arboreal or floral affinities and pictures showing scenes” from Wu Sanguai’s defeat of the rebel Li Zicheng (362). Acton also made renovations to the original Chinese design. Acton carpeted “the front courtyard with free green grass” and built “a swimming pool” (362). The regular Chinese courtyards often used bonsai to decorate for additional access to greenery, and the swimming pool was rarely seen in any Chinese traditional houses but commonly seen in large impressive European houses. The mansion in *hutong* is commonly designed in traditional Chinese style—a quadrangle or rectangular courtyard, the four sides of which are smaller houses. The three-courtyard type is designed for big families, with the first for entrance, the second for hosting guests, and the third for private living space, especially for women and children. He kept the original Chinese design but added European-style functional alternations to the original one—a cultural attempt of eclecticism. The Chinese mansion and decorations, for Acton, are part of his access to authentic Chinese culture rather than a symbol of cutting from his past. As an “aesthete,” he respects cultural diversity and is willing to know more about China. I will illustrate how he interacts with Chinese

intellectuals in the subsequent section. Here, the interior space performs a role of an-Other space, in which a combination of Chinese and European styles is taking place. This exemplifies Acton's understanding of cultural interactions—a philosophy of eclecticism.

Acton's exploration of possible integration of Chinese and European styles is prevalent in his works, including his novel *Peonies and Ponies*. In *Peonies and Ponies*, Philip Flower, a mild, middle-aged Londoner, who resembles Harold Acton in some key features, appreciates Chinese residential style as Acton did. Flower's imagination of the capital Peking, the advocacy of traditional Chinese culture and lifestyle, the obsession with traditional Chinese arts such as Peking opera, music, antiques, and painting, the love for common people's everyday life, and even the pursuit of philosophy from Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, all right echo Acton's characteristics, experiences, and personal preferences. Flower lives in the traditional Chinese style courtyard, in which "the sun beamed through the paper windows; birds twittered in the courtyard" (192). This Chinese dwelling style has its advantages and shortcomings. Without roofs over head, the center of courtyard is open to the air and bright. However, the indoor lighting and ventilation are insufficient due to the paper windows and enclosures on all four sides. In addition, there is no modern European-style sanitation system with water pipes, so it is inconvenient for personal care and household maintenance. The home of another protagonist, Elvira MacGibbon, is located in the northeast quarter of the Tartar City of

Peking.⁷ Unlike Acton and Flower, Elvira disparages the symmetrical and regularly shaped courtyards in Beijing: “[W]ithin a few days of her arrival she found herself engrossed in revolutionizing the sanitary arrangements of an old Chinese mansion... With her utter contempt for symmetry and balance, such scruples as first assailed her for settling down in the most formal of rectangular courtyards were soon dissipated by the adjacent garden” (7). Her initial dissatisfaction is balanced by her affection for the garden. “Everything in Elvira’s garden, a characteristically Chinese arrangement of gnarled trees and pseudo-mountains of super-imposed rockery” is authentic and simultaneously attracts the European eyes (3). Living in this Chinese mansion, Elvira still keeps her living style, decorating with European designs and organizing parties. When Philip is invited to one of Elvira’s parties, he thinks the pavilion of Elvira is marred by “rattan rocking chairs of Western design and cocktail paraphernalia” (3). Despite the fact that Philip and Elvira have different perspectives toward Chinese architecture, both of them are exploring the possibility of adding European decorations to Chinese mansions. The room’s décor is part of their private life and also an expression of their aesthetic and philosophical understandings of cultural interaction—a possible attempt of combination of Chinese architecture and European interior decoration. Acton’s protagonists agree with his cultural eclecticism.

Different from those who prefer to live in Chinese courtyards, Ann Bridge’s characters transplant the authentic European styles, including the residential house

⁷ The Inner City of Beijing was called the Tartar City in Qing dynasty (1644-1912), because the Manchu rulers only allowed Manchus to live there. Tartar was the general name of the nomadic ethnic minority people in the northern China, which referred to the Manchus here. The Han Chinese, who were separated from Manchus by walls, lived in the Outer City.

and its inner decorations, to China. Her characters live in European-style mansions in the Legation of Peking. The whole house of the protagonist, Mrs. Laura Leroy, is of European design with downstairs and upstairs, and the servants have quarters of their own in a spacious compound outside: “Mrs. Leroy’s drawing room [was] so English, and so unusual in Peking. There was not a single Chinese thing in it except the earthenware bowls in which freesias stood blooming everywhere” (Bridge, *Peking Picnic* 50). Mrs. Leroy’s house is decorated with masterpieces of artists, like “Henri Fantin-Latour,” on the wall and with non-Chinese patterns, such as “formal chintzes and rugs,” all of which are uncommon in Beijing (50). The equipped furniture, like “the Queen Anne tallboy” and “escritoire,” is in the English style (50). The appearance of Laura’s house is also European in style, with “the open French window and a broad tiled verandah” (38). Oleanders stand outside of the edge of the garden as fences, below which “in shallow pots” are “white stocks and wallflowers” (38). Most of the garden is lawn. A low stone parapet separates the lower garden from the upper one. In the upper garden, “an avenue of lilacs” coexists with the rose-red “flowering cherry and plum” and overlaps with shades of gnarled ancient trees (38). There are also “stone seats” and “a pergola” making the whole garden lovely and formal (38). The plants, stone seats, and a pergola show Laura also makes concession to the Chinese style considering its useful functions and the availability of local plants. A “*peng*,” an “extension of the roof,” is designed along the southern side of the house (27). It is commonly used in Beijing for keeping the sunny side of the house in the

shadow and letting the fresh air in for the purpose of keeping the room cool in summer. The moment of staying in this mixed-style garden brings an illusion to Laura of being in her home in rural Oxfordshire: “She [Laura Leroy] was in that garden, muffled so deep in trees, sheltered so by its grey stone walls, watching the wagtails tripping about the green deep turf between the flower beds outside the old yellow house” (40). Laura’s home is in Oxfordshire, which is important to her. The scenery and atmosphere of Laura’s garden, which resemble that of rural Oxfordshire, seem to bring her back to the English countryside when she was young. “Her two worlds met for a moment under the sky that arched over both, and then that distant one invaded the present and blotted it out” (40). Things in the present moment seem to disappear. In her imagination, she sees her grandparents and childhood friends. In this sense, the transplantation of British style into a Chinese garden brings Laura a sense of belonging and even an illusion of home. Laura’s interior décor proves her strong determination to keep British cultural identity. On the other hand, it is difficult to deny the environment in China has changed her greatly after she goes home:

She would be suffocated again by England’s smallness and muffling greenness, maddened by its petty irrational humps and hollows, after the masterly geometrical flatness of the China plain; oppressed by its grey dripping skies, after that high light firmament in which the sun glitters like a burnished shield from dawn till evening for nine months of the year. The very people in the streets and lanes would vex her eye by their ugly parti-coloured ungraceful clothes, after the beautiful universal blue garments of the Chinese countryside, the dignified grey and black robes of towns. (178)

Laura’s long stay in China makes her get accustomed to the Chinese environment.

Her experiences and understandings about China are different from the tourists she

encounters in *Peking Picnic*, and these are the moments that she cannot explain to Europeans, even her “best and dearest” friends in Oxford. The décor can arouse a sense and further remind one of a place that has a similar décor. Thus, two places with similar décor are closely connected and give the expatriates a sense of home even in a foreign land. Transplanting the Oxford garden to China or having an illusion of looking at the same Chinese landscape in Oxford gives her the same sense of division of life. The transplanted Oxford garden in Beijing is in an ambivalent position: it is English and not-English, it is home and not-home, it is an-Other space that Laura has a sense of home and strangeness. Laura is an alien to both her home nation England and her new “home” in China.

All three writers intend to explore the possibilities of resolving the tensions between Chinese and European architectural and aesthetic notions, but they are pulled in different directions by the antinomy and harmony of two cultures, which demonstrates their diversified viewpoints about cultural negotiations. Acton’s house layout maintains the traditional Chinese style and at the same time emphasizes the practical functions of the European installations. Incorporating English style green grass and a swimming pool into the traditional Chinese symmetrical and square notion, Acton expresses his understanding of how Chinese architecture as an essence of traditional culture can gracefully survive and how to rejuvenate the traditional Chinese architectural style with English notions of comfort and function. Maugham recognizes the cultural phenomenon of the utilization of Chinese artistic decorations

by foreign missionaries in Chinese mansions that they rent, but he reveals their lack of a true appreciation of Chinese culture due to disparity and feelings of cultural superiority. Also, he depicts the European style modification of the authentic Chinese temples to satisfy their cultural taste to maintain their cultural identity as much as they possibly can. Bridge explores the possibility of duplicating the European living rooms and gardens—a way that she can have a feeling of being at home. She and her protagonists are obsessed with the transplantation of European style to Chinese spaces, which shows her strong inclination to display her cultural difference. At the same time, her protagonist Laura makes a compromise to adopt the architectural design with practical purposes in the northern China—*peng*—to keep the room cool in summer and to cultivate local plants. Thus, the alternation to architectural designs and choices about interior decorations elaborate their different cultural inclinations.

Social Circles and Regular Gatherings

The physical and tangible space of inner rooms shows their connoisseur-owners' aesthetic tastes and understanding of cultural interactions, while the invisible public sphere is also of great importance to explore. The invisible public sphere indicates the extent to which British expatriates were possibly engaged in local social and political affairs. Jürgen Habermas, in his work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, conceptualizes the “public sphere,” as a public space out of the control of the state in which individuals can involve in economic and political debates and exchange private views about public affairs. Because Habermas's theory is grounded in a

specific historical time and place, it seems to ignore the exclusive nature of the public sphere. How does a theory developed to understand bourgeois European experiences remain practical and constructive when applied to analyze the extent to which British expatriates in China got involved in local political life? Nancy Fraser offers some answers to these questions in her work on the transnational public sphere. Fraser points out the two major presuppositions upon which Habermas's Westphalian framing of public sphere rests: "the [classical] public sphere is conceptualized as coextensive with a bounded political community and a sovereign territorial state, often a nation-state" (9). Fraser reconsiders the concept of public sphere when its sphere overflows the bounds of nation-state and the political community does not merely consist of its fellow citizens. She further states two essential features of the concept of the public sphere regardless of the socio-historical conditions upon which it is constructed: "the *normative legitimacy* and *political efficacy* of public opinion" (20). She answers the possibility of meaningfully interrogating the legitimacy and efficacy of public opinion in a transnational context:

In general, then, the task is clear: if public sphere theory is to function today as a *critical* theory, it must revise its account of the normative legitimacy and political efficacy of public opinion. ... Thus, the legitimacy critique of existing publicity must now interrogate not only the 'how' but also the 'who' of existing publicity. Or rather, it must interrogate parity and inclusiveness together, by asking: participatory parity among whom? Likewise, the efficacy critique must now be expanded to encompass both the translation and capacity conditions of existing publicity. (24)

Fraser's discussion intends to justify the legitimacy of interlocutors regardless of their citizenships and make transnational powers accountable in the era of post-Cold-War

and globalization. Her criticism of Habermasian public sphere makes the theory applicable in the transnational context and gives theoretical implications for transplanting the transnational public sphere into the context of the early twentieth century China. However, she categorizes foreigners in another territory as one group without considering the difference their residential status can make, the experiences of settlers and expatriates and tourists are very different. The unique situation that the British expatriate community was faced with cannot be fully addressed by her theory. What's more, her work focuses on the presuppositions of the publicity of opinions beyond territorial nation-states, but it is also possible that the expatriate community's diasporic status and enjoyment of extraterritorial rights allow them to ignore public events and policies of both their motherland and the country they reside in. This section and the following one will focus on who constitutes a bounded community and whether terms that interlocutors address are about the public interest.

The social circle of the British expatriates includes interpersonal networks of the European people in the Legation and treaty ports, occasional visitors from Britain, and a small number of Chinese intellectuals and servants who provide services for the British. The three writers' depictions of the social circle of British expatriates are all based on their own experiences and observations. Expatriates were in their own bounded community but had only loose connection with broader British and Chinese societies. The British expatriate community was in an-Other position that they were physically and culturally distanced from or close to both British and Chinese societies.

By looking at the extent to which the expatriates interacted with the two societies by using examples as depicted in works of these three writers, we can see their political inclinations and cultural choices. In spite of having the same nationality and territorial residence, different identities and backgrounds led to different choices of engagement with or estrangement from British and Chinese societies.

The social circle of Bridge and her characters is predominantly among the local European community, a diplomatic and commercial one, in Beijing. There was a small world—their socialization took place among communities in the Legation. The Legation was a unique place in the sense that it was located in China but built on extra-territorial rights and occupied by foreign powers. Bridge, a counselor's wife, lived in and interacted with social groups of the Beijing Legation Quarter. In the Beijing of the 1920s, Bridge states, “with so many new and wonderful things to do and to see, one was less dependent on people outside one's own Legation” (*Facts and Fictions* 19). The Legation supported a self-reliant community. During her short stay in Beijing from 1925 to 1927, she obtained significant amounts of help from the local diplomatic corps who knew more about and lived longer in China. Bridge acquires inspiration from the social circle that she interacted with and relies considerably on her personal experience to construct characters and to develop plots: “Eric Teichman, the Chinese Secretary, knew more about China than almost any Englishman then living” there, would always like to offer help by using his knowledge; and his wife, Nellie, helped Bridge “in every way” and “became a life-long friend” (19). The First

Secretary, Gordon Vereker, doted on Bridge's daughter Jane and gave Jane "a beautiful pony, Vanity," which helped her to win "the Ladies' Hunt" (19).⁸ The English wife of the Belgian Minister, "very knowledgeable about local customs and personalities," helped Bridge out when dealing with information on China (19). The Dane, Henrik de Kauffmann offered her "a lovely temple in the Western Hills" for holiday (19-20).⁹ The social circle laid a sufficient foundation for Bridge's creations of upper-class heroines in an exotic environment. Her novel *Peking Picnic* mainly depicts the relationships of the group living in the Legation, and Laura Leroy, at the center of the group, usually offers prudent and intelligent suggestions regarding love affairs and how to deal with political and personal emergencies. Laura and her friends plan a trip to Jietai Temple, an established temple in the Western Hills, but their party is disturbed by the attack of bandits—a group of renegade soldiers. The party is imprisoned and finally rescued after suffering through moments of extreme violence. The plots and settings in part originate from Bridge's own experience: she once stopped for lunch in Tanzhe Temple, where the party is surrounded by bandits in the novel. Although she does not specify the corresponding prototypes of the main characters in her actual experiences, Bridge's fictional characters are created from her real impressions about and experiences with her social circle in the Legation.

⁸ Bridge's other Beijing novel, *The Ginger Griffin*, depicts the Legation's obsession with ponies, horses, racing, and steeplechasing as their pastimes.

⁹ The temples outside of the Beijing city wall in the Western Hills served as resorts for European people, especially staffs of embassies, moving there for summer. They rented rooms with their wives, children, and servants and decorated with European style furniture. Bridge's description echoes with that in the second chapter of Acton's novel *Peonies and Ponies*. Acton notes, "these temples merely provided an occasional change of décor. It was pleasant to pretend, as if one were in London, that one had to escape from the wear and tear of City life" (*Peonies and Ponies* 14). Britons rented the temples to keep British way of life and escaped the routine life in Beijing. They also kept their British diet with lamb and mint sauce. The temple in Maugham's "My Lady's Parlour" may be rented by the lady in a similar way in Beijing although Maugham does not specify the location.

The social circle in the Legation represented in *Peking Picnic* also has frequent social interactions inside but keeps itself closed off from the rest of Beijing society. This social circle, connected by kinship, friendships, and working relationships, forms the enclosed social system of the Legation. Mrs. Leroy, the wife of an English diplomat, had accompanied her husband to on his assignment to Beijing. Her husband, Henry Leroy, is a Commercial and Oriental Attaché in the British Legation and responsible for war-related affairs. He has sufficient free time to develop personal interests in Oriental studies and writes extensively on Chinese linguistics and Chinese commercial history. At the start of *Peking Picnic*, the protagonist Mrs. Leroy is sitting in the garden of a large house in the Tartar City. She is at an “At Home” in Scandinavian Legation, a social circle of the Legation Quarter in Beijing. It is a mixed party with diplomats from different countries: “the German Counselor,” “the Italian First Secretary,” “the Flemish Minister,” and “the Japanese Minister” (Bridge, *Peking Picnic* 5). Their common work of managing relations between countries serves as the foundation of this social circle. Besides the minor characters of diplomats whom Mrs. Leroy has occasional communication with, the main characters are the core members of Mrs. Leroy’s social circle. The social circle of Mrs. Leroy consists of her husband’s colleagues, their families, and infrequent visitors coming from Britain, and the whole story is organized around Mrs. Leroy’s social circle. In *Peking Picnic*, temples in the Western Hills are places for Mrs. Leroy’s and her friends’ occasional summer trips to have parties. The “party,” with Mrs. Leroy at its center, is a loosely

connected group consisting of members of Laura's social circle. People who are invited are far from common: diplomats, army officers, British elite travelers, and their families. General Nevile and his wife, Nina, plan the expedition to the temple out of Beijing to enjoy a weekend of leisure. Nevile's niece, Miss Annette Ingersoll, and an American novelist, Annette Hande, also accompany the couple to the picnic. Laura Leroy, her nieces Lilah and Judith, and other men who work in the Legation, including Derek Fitzmaurice, Major La Touche (Sir James), and a French man, the first Secretary in the Legation and Head of the Chancery Henri Delanche, are also invited. Nina invites a guest from Cambridge, Professor Vinstead, who has gotten a traveling fellowship to study the "Oriental" psychology and has gotten a travelling fellowship, to the party to appreciate the countryside scenery as well. Although members of the group have different backgrounds, their similar experience of living in a foreign land forms this enclosed and self-supportive social circle.

Besides its closed-off nature, Bridge believes European community in Beijing is one with its closely connected members as well. Habermas elucidates a way that is helpful for explaining the formation and operation of the social system in the Legation. Habermas brings the rise of the bourgeoisie to the center of discussion, a group of which is closely connected with economic relations. Members of the bourgeoisie are predominant in the public sphere: "Along with the apparatus of the modern state, a new stratum of 'bourgeois' people arose which occupied a central position within the 'public'" (Habermas 22-23). The national economy empowers the bourgeoisie and

also becomes the primary focus of the public debate: “These elements of early capitalist commercial relations, that is, the traffic in commodities and news, manifested their [bourgeois’] revolutionary power only in the mercantilist phase in which, simultaneously with the modern state, the national and territorial economics assumed their shapes” (17). Habermas relates the rise of bourgeois interlocutors in the public sphere to the development of economy. The theoretical formation of the bounded community is well explained by Bridge in her descriptive words. For the purpose of the expatriate communities there, Bridge points out, “everyone in Peking is here to transact business of some sort with someone or other—we are, the colleagues are, the business people are” (*Peking Picnic* 30). The aim of work, as their common interests, is the basis of forming a social circle of limited group. Bridge continues to explain: “in practice it’s been found that business is transacted more easily between people who know one another socially than between those who only meet officially. Hence the system” (30). The existence of their social circle starts from business and other affairs related to work and in turn conveniently facilitates the business. Bridge’s description demonstrates this group shaped by the transaction of business speaks to the formation of a bounded political community in the Habermasian sense.

In the Legation, the self-reliant bounded British community has only occasional contact with British society and little communication with local Chinese society. Because of the long distance from and limited means for the latest information about Britain, Bridge has limited interaction with her homeland. Her main connection with

the British society (apart from personal letters) is through her communication with those visitors coming from Britain to the Legation. Bridge made close friends with Lady Gosford, “a lady-in-waiting to both Queen Alexandra and Queen Mary,” while she was visiting her son, Lord Acheson, who worked for the British-American Tobacco Company (Bridge, *Facts and Fictions* 22). In *Peking Picnic*, Mrs. Leroy has a short love affair with Professor Vinstead, who comes to Beijing for academic research. Communication with British visitors serves as a predominant means for knowing about British society. In contrast, Bridge’s characters have very little chance for direct contact with the Chinese. The only local residents that British women have interaction with are those who provide services for them such as rickshaw, drivers, and servants. Meeting bandits is contingent upon an unexpected situation in their otherwise routine life. In their trip, they happen to be kidnapped by some Chinese bandits and are finally rescued by soldiers of the British Legation Guard. With the language barrier and their unwillingness to get to know Chinese people, Bridge’s British community is extremely insular and has little communication with Chinese people. The Legation provides possibilities of developing a local identity of the community—self-reliant one but distanced from both British and Chinese societies.

Unlike Bridge and Acton, Maugham is not a British expatriate in China, but his interactions with British communities in China lays a solid foundation for his work as well. His biographer Selina Hastings relies on materials from *On a Chinese Screen* to summarize the people that Maugham met and recorded during his Chinese travel:

The Americans and Europeans he encountered, the lives of doctors, diplomats, traders, missionaries, and their women, were the subject of his closest scrutiny, and his notes are full of their stories: the consul, the taipan, the desperate-to-be-married spinster, the missionary who had come to hate his calling, the agent of British-American Tobacco driven half mad by homesickness, the saintly mother superior in her white-walled convent who talked nostalgically of her family home in the south of France. (242)

Maugham offers a full sketch of such foreigners working in different professions in China, most of whom share similar features of feeling isolated and of being unable to identify with the local culture as the British people in Bridge's works. He expands his scope to the American and European expatriate community and describes multinational dinner parties of the Legation Quarter that he visited. The participants were of different nationalities: "the Swiss director of the Banque Sino-Argentine," "the Minister of Guatemala," "the Chargé d'Affaires of Montenegro," "a Russian princess," "the first secretary of the British Legation," and officials of "the French Military Attaché" and their families (Maugham, *On a Chinese Screen* 27-28). There were also "Chinese servants in long silk robes and four-sided hats with cocktails and zakouski" (27). For the expatriates, such as the embassy staffs, diplomats, and their families, it made no difference where they lived, "for they did precisely the same things in Constantinople, Berne, Stockholm, and Peking" (29). Maugham implies that no matter which country they lived in, they kept their lifestyle and ways of thinking. The situation that they did nothing different and almost nothing different happened to them makes them lose interest in getting to know the country they stay in. This logic also applies to men who run or work for businesses in the treaty ports. This group of people includes "number one at Jardine's, the manager of the Hong-Kong and

Shanghai Bank with his wife, the A.P.C. man and his wife, the B.A.T. man and his wife, and the B. & S. man and his wife” (32).¹⁰ They devote particular care to the old-school and exquisite food, manners, and tableware, which might have vanished from the dinner tables of Europe. Maugham depicts a “Tall silver vase in which were large chrysanthemums [that] made it possible to catch only glimpses of the persons opposite you, and tall silver candlesticks [that] reared their proud heads two by two down the length of the table” (31). The decoration shows the foreign community here are extremely particular about table manners and they still keep an old-fashioned means of the European upper class. In addition to manners, they also care about their dress and the way they are served. Carefully plated entrees are arranged for each guest, and each dish is served with a proper wine. They wear elegant evening clothes as a means to show off their identities. Having diplomatic privileges and recognizing their social importance, the foreign community in the Legation has a kind of cultural superiority and needs cultural tags, such as table manners, to strengthen their European identities and further their cultural superiority. Hence, they have a self-reliant system with little connections with both British and Chinese societies as Bridge indicate.

Acton’s and Maugham’s observation of foreign community echoes with Bridge’s illustration of diplomats and their families in the Beijing Legation Quarter, but he himself has more close connections with the local Chinese people. For him, the

¹⁰ Number one means the most important person in a company. These people, the APC man, the BAT man, and the B & S man, were businessmen who worked for the multinationals (British American Tobacco (BAT) and Asiatic Petroleum Corporation (APC)) and large Chinese company (Butterfield & Swire (B & S)).

foreign communities kept physical distance from but had more close cultural affiliation with their motherland. Acton briefly summarized the monotony of the Legation Quarter—a metaphorical “English public school” with “jolly boys” and well-dressed ladies “under the aegis of the headmaster-minister Sir Miles Lampson” (*Memoirs of an Aesthete* 238). Besides performing the diplomatic function, the Legation Quarter serves more like an oasis for foreign communities:

While American women adapted themselves cheerfully to local conditions, European women soon became desiccated and amorphous: many of them had come here searching for recipes against life-weariness or merely to economize in comfort. Thus Peking society was very similar to that of Florence: the expatriates were free to wallow in their pet eccentricities and hoist themselves on to imaginary pedestals. (238)

The foreign communities come to Beijing as an escape from their mundane lives or as an approach to cost-effective life rather than for the purpose of pursuing Chinese culture. Considering their intention, it makes no difference which country they select as their international travel destinations—although escapes from the patriarchal, masculine, and heterosexual norms and the established social hierarchy in Britain were also reasons for some of their journeys to China, as we will see in later chapters.

In contrast with those living in the Legation, Acton had more interactions with local intellectuals and academics. In spring 1932, the first time he arrived in Beijing, Acton chose to live in a Chinese mansion in *hutong*, a traditional Pekingese residence, because he was tired of the Legation Quarter, despite the fact that foreigners were concentrated there and lives were thus more convenient and comfortable. His social circles included Chinese intellectuals who had a thorough knowledge of both China

and Europe. For Acton, “Princess Dan Pao-ch’ao [Dan Baochao], Rose Feng, Dr. and Mrs. Chang Hsin-hai [Zhang Xinhai], accentuated my first impression that the Chinese were the most adaptable people in the world” (278). The Chinese people mentioned in Acton’s works shared the common features of being well educated with global perspectives. Dr. Zhang was an English literature scholar who later became an ambassador to Poland. His wife (Han Xiangmei) was a feminist. It was through the Zhang couples’ referral that Acton found a teaching position in Peking University and was brought into the academic social circle of Beijing. On an excursion to Miaofeng Mountain organized by Dr. Zhang, Acton was also accompanied by two other professors from Beijing Normal University: Liang Zongdai, a Cantonese, and Yang Conghan, of Mongolian origin. According to Acton, they spoke remarkable English and Liang made a much deeper impression on him because of Liang’s personal preference for French literature and contemptuous attitude toward English literature. Acton defended “Shakespeare and Elizabethans against Racine and the Pléiade” (282). Acton has a special appreciation for attending cross-cultural salons. He usually attended at the salons or tea parties¹¹ held by the aesthete Zhu Guangqian (1897-1986) or the writer Lin Huiyin (1904-1955). Acton’s interaction with the Chinese intellectuals enriched his life, which had given him “an insight into the life outside the

¹¹ “Tea party” is literally translated from chahuahui, which means talk over tea. This form of gathering originates from the tea party chayan in the Northern and Southern dynasties for treating guests with tea instead of wine. In modern China, with the spreading of Western culture, the French café and the British afternoon tea were brought to China, which greatly reformed the traditional form of tea party. “Tea party” developed and became the most important ritual for intellectuals in the Republic China to chat informally, share ideas, and enhance friendship. Tea parties or salons of Zhu Guangqian and Lin Huiyin were two most representative ones, which attracted the most prestigious literati in Beijing academic circle during their age. For historical record of Acton’s participation in the salons of Zhu and Lin, see Xiao Qian, “In Memory of Sir Harold Acton” in *Selected English Works of Xiao Qian*.

Legation Quarter” (284). After communication with the Chinese, he had a general impression of Chinese intellectuals that they acquired the philosophy of eclecticism, an acquisition of both cultures while also maintaining their Chinese integrity. The philosophy of cultural eclecticism is an-Other alternative of clinging to a supposed Chinese or British way of thought.

Based on his real experience, Acton intended to use his fiction to present lives of foreigners and the mutual influence between Chinese and foreigners. He notes, “I was writing a novel to illustrate the effect of Peking on a typical group of foreigners and the effect of these foreigners on a few Chinese. Peking is the real hero of the novel” (379). There exists a natural and undeniable relationship between his Memoirs and his novel *Peonies and Ponies*. The characters in his novel are based on his life experience and daily communications: “My characters were amalgams of actual people: whose characters are not? Had I drawn them straight from life, not only would the book have been libellous, it would be dismissed as pure, or impure, grotesquerie” (379). Through collage and rearrangement to remove identifiable characteristics of real people, representative characters with condensed features of the foreign community are shaped. Acton’s interactions with both European and Chinese people in Beijing are condensed and displaced into main characters in his novel *Peonies and Ponies*: Philip Flower, a fictional representation of Acton himself, Elvira MacGibbon, an artist coming to China for inspirations, Tu Yi (Alice), a Chinese middle-class lady who received education in France, and Feng Zhonghan, a Chinese scholar working in

experimental verses in the vernacular, etc. Acton's experience in the salons with multi-cultural attendees inspired him to create a counterpart in his novel *Peonies and Ponies*: "It was Elvira MacGibbon's virtual At Home day. People dropped in continuously, a high if not very animated average of Beijing's foreign community, and 'anybody who was anybody' was encouraged to bring friends and acquaintances, especially if they were recent arrivals" (2-3). This is not a self-regulated social circle, but it welcomes the whole foreign community as well as Chinese literati. This has some characteristics of Lin's salons, both of which expect the attendance of people with different cultural backgrounds. The novel expresses Elvira's intentions to hold salons and to include Chinese people in her gatherings: "Elvira was no slave to Western contacts. She was in Peking to grasp a new attitude toward China. She wanted to 'get at' the Chinese, to enter the penetralia. Above all she desired a *salon* for the New China to congregate in and friends who were Chinese to the core, mentally as well as racially *pur sang*" (17). Elvira believes the importance of salons for the New China, because, for her, no corresponding one exists for women to attend in Chinese history. Elvira thinks, "Such a female had no counterpart in Chinese life: they failed to comprehend what she was driving at. Why this perpetual combustion at their expense?" (17). Indeed, women's participation in salon-like activities can be traced back to Ming dynasty (1368-1644) in China.¹² Elvira's statements indicate her

¹² Indeed, the cross-cultural phenomenon of salon-like formations or corresponding activities headed by hostesses can be traced back in both English and Chinese traditions. The informal talk over tea in domestic space is named differently in Chinese and British contexts. In Europe, the tradition of salons originates from the seventeenth-century France, which was theorized as "public sphere" by Jürgen Habermas. At the same time, a similar cultural phenomenon in China has been occurring in the Jiangnan area since the late Ming dynasty. The female poetry club in the inner chamber performed similar functions for women to express their ideas. The

lack of background knowledge about China. Her intention “to enter the penetralia” shows her will to “know” China with her cultural superiority, and her description of Chinese as “mentally as well as racially *pur sang*” demonstrates a problematic racial expression. However, if we consider her words and actions in 1920s Beijing, it is impossible to deny that the introduction of European salons into the Chinese context and invitation of Chinese friends into their social circles are significant for cultural communication. In spite of their diverse perspectives toward Chinese and European cultures, the main characters in Acton’s novel join in the conversation of cultural communications and show us multiple models for how to “be” European in Beijing.

This section illustrates an-Other position of the self-reliant community, which was either distanced from or close to British and Chinese societies in this or that sense. British expatriates along with other Europeans formed a bounded community to a certain extent in the Habermasian definition. The social circle formed by business is an example of the bounded community as indicated in Bridge’s work. However, Habermas fails to explain the category and feature of a community in the transnational context. Fraser’s theorization of the legitimacy of public opinion in the transnational context is constructed on two key features of a community: inclusiveness and equality, which means the discussion should be open to all and all participators enjoy equal opportunities to state their ideas. The community welcomed

Chinese counterpart salon-like domestic poetry club in seventeenth-century China allows women in the inner chambers to establish a poetry club as a social form of community with female relatives or female friends from outside of the family. The main difference of these two salon traditions was that the poetry club in China in the late Ming dynasty was not mixed. The social hierarchy strictly restricted mixed-gender salons or tea parties among different patriarchal clans. For more details about the Chinese women in inner chambers, see Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*.

all regardless of their citizenships and encouraged their participation regardless of their backgrounds. This case is especially exemplified in Acton's work. Acton criticizes the exclusiveness of the self-reliant European community, the feature of which is detailed in works of Acton, Bridge, and Maugham, and offers a possibility to interact with Chinese elite circles. Acton and his protagonists organized or attended salons which included Chinese literati and scholars in Beijing.

Topics and Terms

The third aspect that these three writers are all concerned with is the topics that they discuss in parties and salons. Three different characteristics of parties or salons are displayed in their depictions: Maugham's multinational parties, Acton's cross-cultural salons, and Bridge's mixed-gender parties. This categorization does not mean they are exclusively featured, but they overlap in the sense that the three parties are all multinational, cross-cultural, and mixed gender ones. The parties are defined in a certain way only because they had that dominant feature. The salons and parties served as places for the British elite's academic conversations and diplomats' social communications. Their situations were complicated by transnational discourse. Fraser states two essential features of the efficacy of public opinion: "the communicative power generated in civil society must be translated first into binding laws and then into administrative power ... the public power must be able to implement the discursively formed will to which it is responsible" (22). Fraser intends to build a connection between the views of non-residents and the national power, but this

practice may affect the operation of the sovereign authority of the nation that foreigners reside in. Her discussion also ignores the fact that there may be no common interest among the expatriates to form a shared view about the public interest. Their position of being either distanced from or close to both British and Chinese societies led to their alternative choices: the British expatriates paid more attention to topics of their own daily lives and cultural interactions than to political issues and social developments, whether in Britain or in China. Maugham's work shows that the diplomats' frequent change of residency because of work in different countries makes them care little about local social and political affairs. What's more, the European group's strong willingness to keep their national identities limits them to an old-fashioned state of mind and stops them from thinking about new circumstances in an alien environment of China. In this sense, it is considerably difficult for the European diplomatic community to reach a common standpoint regarding specific situations that the expatriates were faced with.

Bridge indicates an escape from work is also a reason why the expatriates are concerned with mundane topics rather than with political issues. In *Peking Picnic*, with enjoyment of beautiful songs and scenery in the mountains, the free-wheeling talk orchestrated by Mrs. Leroy alleviates herself and her social circle from diplomatic conversations. The party is unfettered and free to express their inner feelings instead of saying something carefully calculated but meaningless just for diplomatic purposes. The party represents a British way of leisure. The organized

parties on holidays held among members in the Legation offer them an opportunity to return to an authentic European lifestyle that they appreciate regardless of where they are staying. The British expatriates' situations, namely their dislocation from their home nation Britain and difficulty of identifying with Chinese culture, on the one hand, alienate Mrs. Leroy's party from both British and Chinese societies and make the party care little about local social and political issues. The topics they discuss are love, sex, marriage, art, national characteristics, and interpersonal relations: "We [the party] have a romantic idea of love, and we like to bring all beautiful things, like nature and music and so on, into it" (161). The extensive scope of topics relates to the party's central discussion of romantic love in an alien land. On the other hand, their "in-between" positions give new perspectives to defy the Europe's stereotyped ideas about China. The most engaging topic for the party is the love affair between Henri Delache and Little Annette Ingersoll, which leads the party to topics concerning how national characteristics, gender, and age work in a romantic relationship. Also, the group emphasizes the existence of national stereotypes of European countries toward each other and toward China. Considering that Henri is a Frenchman and Little Annette is a British woman, the party can enjoy the psychological observation of national personalities. "According to Henri, ... Englishwomen were physically superb ... and intellectually on the whole rather dull, without subtlety and therefore without mental attraction" (108). For Laura, who always plays a dominating role in the party and is familiar with all, "They [Frenchmen] like to keep their mind sharp

and bright, like scissors, and to use them for snipping up ideas into patterns, instead of using them like big soft brushes to paint rather large vague pictures, as we do” (109).

Despite the difference, couples with different nationalities may develop a happy relationship if they take it as a serious relation and not a flirtation.

Laura then leads the discussion to the national impression of China, a distraction from the love affair conversation. For the travelers, who sojourned there for a limited time, their understandings of China originated from the established European system, especially education, pop culture, and propaganda. As Professor Vinstead conducts “oriental” research, he holds a biased opinion that “The Chinese were going to be very baffling—perhaps the most baffling race on earth, psychologically” (109), as he never set foot in China and contacted with Chinese before. The expatriates, such as Laura and the General, on the other hand, neither intend to idealize Chinese people nor to defame them. Laura says, “The Chinese are frightfully well worth understanding; they have some marvelous qualities, but they have a lot of most peculiar characteristics as well, you must recognize the whole lot to get them right” (110). Her words imply that in a world one is familiar with, he or she may have a limited scope toward things, so things, which cannot enter his or her world, do not display their full aspects. Furthermore, the General intends to defy the pre-existing stereotyped descriptions of the Chinese for Europeans¹³—“a race of lascivious intellectuals, wearing pigtails and smoking opium, with kite flying and murdering

¹³ The stereotyped images of Chinese people at that historical period were shaped by “the yellow peril,” especially the creation and popularization of “Dr. Fu Manchu” in literary works and pop culture. The racial color-metaphor portrays Chinese people as threat to the Western world. The fear of “the Orient” actually serves as a means to strengthen xenophobia and racial discrimination and legitimize the expansion of imperialism and colonialism.

Europeans as their chief recreations” (110). In the novel, the General intends to use the facts he knows and interprets during he stays in China to repudiate the racist stereotypes, but his words indeed demonstrate how hard that is:

I suppose eighty per cent. of them cannot afford opium, for one thing, and they’re not all intellectuals, for another. A hospital fellow here told me that a very high percentage of the coolie class are practically cretinous, only use about two hundred words all their lives. And their murders are generally due to pure hysteria, or done for money. But they’re frightfully good fellows, on the whole—amiable and merry, and thundering workers, and much more honest in their way than either Europeans or Americans. (110)

His expressions are racist stereotype itself. On the one hand, The General intends to praise that Chinese people, in general, have good personalities—friendliness, merriness, and honesty—just like Europeans and Americans, and may behavior morally better in some aspects. The General attributes the murders to mental issues or financial reasons. On the other hand, his descriptions of the “coolie” class repeat racist stories. It is difficult to reach their goal—neither intend to idealize Chinese people nor to defame them. In a transcultural conversation, dropping the biased ideas is of significant importance because one nation’s imagery of another usually based on imaginations, misrepresentations, and falsifications. In a world one is familiar with, he or she has a limited scope toward things, so things, which cannot enter his or her world, do not display their full aspects. This world is the dwelling and social circle of British expatriates in Beijing.

The party continues discussing the topic of love and sees how age determines ideas. Literary works, developing with the expansion of imperialism, always depict an exotic land with holiday romance. In Bridge’s works, a certain proportion of British

people traveled to China to cure their broken heart and expected an affair there.

Meanwhile, low cost of living and a privileged life built on unequal treaties guaranteed them more pastimes and little economic pressure. Mentality rather than financial status was their primary concern. Young people and older people have different attitudes when they fall in love. For Miss Hande, an American novelist, young people's love affairs are one of the most difficult subjects for writing. When "older people fall in love, there are all sorts of complicated¹⁴ forces and elements in the situation, and it makes a much richer material" (188). Older people "have much richer natures and a wider experience than the young folk have, and so you get emotional reactions of intrinsic value" (188). In contrast, when young people fall in love, they just feel crazy about each other, which is too simplified to be interesting.

For Laura, "women around about forty tend to go in for one of two things, lovers or detachment—but quite often as detachment as the other" (189). She agrees with Miss Hande that the love of youth is simpler "than the slow, painful, and consuming love of middle age" (208). Their discussion regarding love of couples of different ages reflects the marital status of Laura Leroy. "Her life in China was rather lonely and rather empty, with Henry absorbed in his own occupations, and the Children away" (311). As a married woman in a remote place overseas, Laura is bustling with "little things—clothes and notes and comings and goings and people and interruptions and more clothes and more notes" (41). She cannot get emotional support from her husband and can only make life busy with her pastime. Her "hunger for love and

¹⁴ This spelling is Bridge's approximation to an American accent.

affection” is difficult to satisfy, which shows her dissatisfaction with marriage and leads her to develop a love affair with Professor Vinstead (311). Professor Vinstead thinks women’s sexual desire and domain in sexual relations are suppressed due to the moral standards of Victorian and Edwardian eras. He has a Freudian interpretation of women’s repressed sexual desires: “The normal healthy thing is to take it [sex] in one’s stride in youth; get it into proportion and leave it there” (119). For older people, “[i]t’s very like alcohol in its action,” which performs the same function of stimulating the higher centers (118). The party is concerned with topics concerning romantic love ranging from background difference and age to gendered advantages based on their academic analysis and daily experience. Topics they discussed prove that they are away from politics and social issues.

Acton explains a third possibility that the topics addressed are not political—the attendance in literati’s academic salons. In *Peonies and Ponies*, the topics the expatriates discuss in Elvira’s party/salon have cross-cultural features. In his conversation with a poet, Lancelot Thistleby, one guest, Doctor Li, shares his understanding of the Chinese culture at that time:

Our old culture is dying. Let it die! A more virile culture, a finer creativity, is quickly taking its place. We are living in a period of national renaissance, Mr. Thistle.¹⁵ The whole of the Chinese nation believes in progress now. We love and revere your H. G. Wells, your Bertrand Russell, your Sinclair Lewis. We study their writings with affection and happy anticipation. (19)

Doctor Li also intends to invite Mr. Thistleby to give a lecture at the Mo-teng University, which Doctor Li teaches. The introduction of “Western” ideas to China

¹⁵ This is Dr. Li’s misunderstanding of the poet’s family name.

was a historical trend in Chinese modern history. Besides this cultural trend, Alice Tu (Yi Tu), a young Chinese lady who has studies in France, talks with Elvira about the traditional views of marriage and women's sufferings from the restraints of the social environment. Alice explains, "my family considers itself [marriage] progressive, but in essentials it remains conservative. What does it matter if the bride's sedan-chair is replaced by a motor-car? Underneath it all the conventions are the same. In China, progress is measured by motorcars" (24). The arranged marriage still exists although Alice receives education abroad. However, because of cultural difference, Elvira cannot understand why it is so difficult for Alice to prevent the arranged marriage from affecting her. Cedric Aspergill, the Don Juan of the Diplomatic Corps, talks about his experience of incorporating Beijing street-cries into his music for European ears and of getting inspiration from Chinese theatres. However, for a Chinese scholar Feng Chung-han, "The music that Cedric supposed he was interpreting will never, perhaps, be accurately described by an Occidental, but it was the very reverse of these pallid genteel strains" (30). Feng's idea that Cedric misunderstands Chinese culture and the Chinese music is incompatible with the European one is opposite to the idea of Cedric. In contrast with Bridge, Acton had a successful attempt of how they communicate and what terms are addressed. Despite of the fact that agreements on opinions and mutual understandings are difficult to reach, the cross-cultural salon provides a place for communications between the European and Chinese intellectuals and even for failures to communicate. Acton specifies the type of topics discussed in

cross-cultural salons that open to intellectuals regardless of their citizenship. Free talks in those salons possibly promote scholarship and practices concerning the introduction of “West” learning to China and women’s social status in modern China. The hostess of the party in *Peonies and Ponies* is different from Lin Huiyin,¹⁶ whose salon Acton attend in reality, as I have discussed above. Lin was an ideal organizer and the center to lead the talks. Her intelligence, taste, and personality were the most important factors in the salon, which determined whether the salon strongly tempted talented people to share their insightful views and what topics the group focused on. No matter who is the hostess, the cross-cultural salon is an-Other space in which cultural communications are taking place and where the meanings of terms are in a process of compromise.

Conclusion

This chapter specifies three cultural positions and choices, which are articulated through interior space and salon/party: Firstly, the majority of British expatriates in China usually took measures to maintain their British cultural identity and to keep their distance from the Chinese in aspects of living area and lifestyle. This group can be exemplified in Bridge’s works, in Maugham’s descriptions of diplomats and the lady, and in certain characters sketched by Acton. This social circle, diplomatic and commercial, included British businessmen who worked for large Chinese or international companies and officials in diplomatic and commercial institutions for

¹⁶ For more information about salons in modern China, see Dongmei Fei, *Salon: A New Urban Culture and Literary Production in China, 1917-1937*.

Sino-British relations. Secondly, British expatriates who stayed longer in the treaty ports but were not life-long settlers, mainly for missionary works, had more interactions with local people, but did not have genuine sympathy with Chinese culture. Thirdly, some sinophiles seek connection with the local Chinese culture. Acton and his protagonist Philip Flower, as examples of this category, developed a philosophy of eclecticism. Acton and his character Flower lived in the courtyard, wore Chinese robes, and studied Chinese culture, while they did not give up their British way of life—adding a lawn and a swimming pool.

Moreover, the majority of British expatriates filled their lives with mundane activities and conversations and did not participate in the intellectual rigors of the public sphere. Acton's protagonists tried to include topics about Chinese music and women's social status in the discussion, but failed to engage in the Chinese context properly. This is related with an-Other position of the group—a self-reliant community along with the whole European community in the Legation Quarter being either distanced from or close to both British and Chinese societies. Their frequent changes of residency because of work and their status of being physically away from Britain and culturally away from China eliminate their participation in public spheres in both Britain and China. The British expatriates were not the subject of China in which they sojourned, and as for Britain in which they were subjects, their topics, such as national characteristics, love affairs, and arts, became only objects of uncritical nostalgia and apolitical concern.

Chapter Two. Beyond Home and Workplace: A Woman's Place in the Transnational Context

In chapter one we saw how three authors with fresh spatial experiences in China made different choices regarding their decoration of interior spaces and participation in the transnational public sphere which resulted in diverse levels of cross-cultural understanding. This chapter will focus on a woman's place in a transnational context by analyzing works and diaries of Stella Benson. Benson expresses her own ideas concerning imperial occupation or cultural affinity in a transnational context: "There are three ways of occupying an alien place—first, to absorb; second, to be absorbed; third, neither to absorb nor to be absorbed" (*The Little World* 24). Benson's thought agrees with the three modes of cultural interaction discussed in the first chapter to some extent and transcends the binary political, economic, and cultural relations between (to use Benson's own language) the "occupier" and the "occupied." Her idea also indicates the spatial practices of occupation of or involvement in "an alien land" and different choices at the time of representing that land. For British female expatriates in China, how does gender impact the experience and perception of "occupying an alien place"?

Benson actually participated, culturally and politically, in "occupying an alien place" more than any of the authors or characters in chapter one, as she lived in

multiple places in China in the 1920s and early 1930s. Benson was a novelist, suffragist, and travel writer, who sought for professional opportunities outside of home and traveled across the world for a broad spectrum of knowledge. In June 1918, Benson started her transcontinental journeys, eventually traveling extensively around countries such as the United States, Japan, China, and India. Her experiences were recorded in her travelogue *The Little World*. Katrina Gulliver states, “A self-described feminist, Stella Benson went to China when she was already a moderately famous novelist. She did not make her career writing about China, although China features in some of her works” (56). Gulliver’s idea underscores Benson’s ambivalent attitude toward China as a place to live and to represent. Her journey to and stay in China offered her ample materials to compare cultural difference and to write, while, at the same time, she explored the possibilities being “a ‘Modern Woman’ in an environment she often saw as backwards” (56).

In China, she worked temporarily for non-Chinese affiliated institutes: a mission school in Hong Kong and then an American hospital in Beijing. During her travel up the Yangtze River, she met her future husband James Carew O’Gorman Anderson (Shaemas, as Benson calls him), who worked for the Chinese Customs Service (CCS). After they got married, besides occasional international travels, Benson spent a large majority of her time with her husband in China, in places like Longjing, Mengzi, and Hong Kong. Especially when she was in colonial Hong Kong, she participated actively in local internal issues. Benson’s published works, including the novel *Tobit*

Transplanted and travel writings *The Little World* and *Worlds within Worlds*, as well as her unpublished diaries provide a witty observation and a profound understanding of the social and cultural spaces in China from the perspective of a British expatriate woman. Her published travel writings and novels set in China were less known to common readers and seldom researched by scholars today although she was eminent in her time.¹⁷ However, it is impossible to deny the importance and meaning of her works, because her unique observations and perspectives get to detailed and easily overlooked areas about Chinese culture and local daily lives and supplement and act as a corrective to European male writers' academic and diplomatic writings.

The aim of this chapter is to investigate how Stella Benson, as a British female expatriate in China, responded to the notional dualism of public and private spaces in a transnational context by tracing Benson's everyday practices as shown in her travel writing and diary. Her case raises such questions as: how did women deal with their conventional roles in a transnational context? Living in a diasporic situation, how did Benson negotiate her multiple cultural identities as a colonial woman? How can a writer be a professional woman in a male-dominated colonial society? How did marital status affect Benson's stay in China? How did the social and cultural contexts in inland China and colonial Hong Kong at her time affect her experiences? How was she changed by China?

¹⁷ Current scholarship concerning Stella Benson mainly works on her personal life story, including how she interacted with her surrounding social circle and how she developed her role as a writer. See Joy Grant, *Stella Benson: A Biography* and Katrina Gulliver, "Stella Benson, 1892-1933." What's more, some researches are about Benson's literary contribution, especially her contribution to British women's First World War writing. See Debra Rae Cohen, "The Secret World: Stella Benson Re-Genres the War Story."

Home provides women a sense of stability and security, but it also means spatial and social boundedness. The mutual influences of space and gender is the main topic of Doreen Massey's *Space, Place, and Gender*, in which she explains how the patriarchal hierarchy relates women to domesticity and home. Massey points out the importance of taking account of the influence of mobility on women's social status and puts forward an idea that "The limitation of women's mobility, in terms both of identity and space, has been in some cultural contexts a crucial means of subordination" (179). Through physical mobility, an expansion of the scope of living space facilitates the establishment of women's sense of self in social relations. However, transcending the barrier of private and public spaces is not an end to questions related with women's social status. In Benson's case, her international travel beyond the national boundary is a starting point in researches on her new places in a transnational context.

Rather than relating some conventional idea about Man/Woman dualism to the binary of public/private spaces, this chapter intends to explain Benson's participation in gendered spaces beyond spatial dualism and her negotiations of multiple identities in the transnational context. Benson's experiences in Hong Kong serve as an example for exploring the negotiations of her multiple identities, gender-based and imperial related. Benson's different roles in Mainland China and colonial Hong Kong as well as her marital status complicated her connection with Chinese spaces. That said, the cultural and political contexts in these two places decided her different engagements

in different public spheres and her distinct maps of local landscape. Benson's marital status is another influential factor in determining her political involvements in local affairs. This chapter will be organized based on how her marital status and her role in the cultures she visited shaped her multiple identities. Initially, this chapter will specify how travel provided Benson with more professional opportunities as a writer who wanted to see and depict the world. The next part will focus on how her marital status affected her choices between home and work in Mainland China. The last part will explore how she dealt with her multiple identities as a colonial wife when participating in activities related to one specific phenomenon: the licensed prostitution of Chinese girls in Hong Kong. Those three parts illustrate how her descriptions about China and her unique spatial practices as a woman negotiated with the male narratives and experiences and how her life in China impacted her redefining of self.

Benson's Sojourn in Beijing and the Pursuit of Self-value

In Benson's time, women were finding it easier to travel to distant continents by train or ship due to the development of modern transportation system. Since the spread of imperialism facilitated the safety of European women's travels, being of single status and traveling alone were not barriers for women. Travel, especially trans-continental travel, offered women opportunities to go outside of their home and even abroad. As opposed to some women who had socially assigned work, such as female missionaries, Benson traveled individually as an independent scholar and tourist for personal interest. Transcontinental travels allowed Benson to move some

way toward achieving professional fulfillment. Benson's extensive travels throughout China enhanced her inspirations and imaginations and expanded her scope of knowledge and understanding of cultural differences.

Traveling and taking part in social activities, for Benson, were ways of challenging the ideological convention: a woman's place is in the home. When she was in Britain, her famous works, *I Pose*, were inspired by her travel in the West Indies, and her work at the Charity Organization Society provided materials to her other novels *This is the End* and *Living Alone*. Transnational movement further enriched her mind with more interactions with different cultures in the world. What's more, her works which record her experiences in China contribute to the genre of travel writing. Benson constructed a "map" that defined her own notions of safety and exploration as a female writer and sought possibilities of traveling without her father or brothers' company. Taking account of Benson's life in China proves for individual female travelers they might choose to sojourn in places with large European communities and to travel with other women.

Going to China was, for Benson, a pursuit of an alternative way of life. Benson's experience in China is unique among female writers in the sense that she worked to support herself financially while she was sojourning there. Different from Bridge who accompanied her husband to Beijing and had no job there, Benson sought working opportunities in an alien land. Despite a lack of professional training, Benson could find suitable jobs to support herself. After her short stay in Hong Kong, she accepted

an offer of three months' work in an American-run hospital supported by the Rockefeller Foundation in Beijing in May 1920. Benson explains what she did in detail: "I sit in my hospital office in Peking—in my capacity of X-ray assistant—side by side with a skeleton" (*The Little World* 38). The job financed a decent life. Her interactions with the European and American communities guaranteed her a convenient life and a sense of safety. She developed her social circle—a group of British who had read or at least heard of her books, such as Mrs. Hillier, a person helped her a lot after she just arrived in Beijing—and rented house from English host and hostess. Just after she arrived, she wrote, "Mrs [sic] Hillier and her sister Mrs [sic] Gardner, a kindly eyed hearty voiced person, brought me round to my new home & job."¹⁸ The secretary of the hospital Benson worked, Miss Barchet, was another person who went to places of interest in Beijing accompanying Benson. Also, Dr. Zuckers in the hospital was also a fan of Benson's works, who had read *I Pose*, and hoped she could accept an offer to teach English for some "budding Chinese scholars" in an English Department for one year.¹⁹ The reliable European social circle echoes with Bridge's idea that an open community welcomed all European and American visitors and offered them essential help. This especially helped single European women to get accustomed to local life and secure a sense of safety when traveling abroad.

¹⁸ Benson, Stella. *Women, Writing, and Travel. Part 1. The Diaries of Stella Benson, 1902-1933*. from Cambridge University Library. Marlborough: Adam Matthew Publications, 2005. Available at Lamont Library Microfilms of Harvard University (INDEX FILM A 1285.1). The subsequent quotations will only write Diaries, reel number, and the date of writing. Diaries, Reel 6, Monday, 24 May 1920.

¹⁹ Diaries, Reel 6, Tuesday, 25 May 1920.

Beijing is an ideal place to duplicate her British social circle and way of life, and also to nourish her imaginations and creations. Benson's description of Beijing takes a large proportion of her travel writing *The Little World* although she only lived there for almost four months as we can tell from the recordings in her diary. Beijing, between the wars, brought a relaxing life for foreign expatriates there, which also fitted the situation of Benson. She was entirely involved in the world opening to her—exploring the dragon symbols throughout the streets of Beijing and experiencing the urban design of Beijing, a city with gates in duplicate and a maze of walls. She enjoyed sporadic trips in the Western Hills, which provided European and American expatriates in Beijing temples to rent for delightful holidays or weekends.²⁰ Benson kept her British lifestyle of short trips and camping—trips to the Great Wall and camping at the Ming Emperors' Tombs. She was astonished by the marvelous masterpiece made by superb techniques—"Even against the evidence of my own eyes I cannot believe that the Great Wall of China is built of solid ordinary stones laid one upon the other. Rather it seems moulded out of the stuff of which the mountains themselves were made long ago, when the world was plastic and empty of all save possibilities" (Benson, *The Little World* 47). It was extremely late when Benson arrived at the Ming Tombs. "By starlight we could not see the heads of the great pillars of the hall or the chequered and peacock-coloured ceiling; we could barely see the dragooned outline of the side-pavilions in the courtyard" (48). The buildings and

²⁰ Having occasional trips in the Western Hills is also depicted in Harold Acton's and Ann Bridge's works as I discuss in Chapter One.

decorations here inspired Benson to reflect on a meaningful question of whether the greatest emperor could remember his humble people or think “the pale and brittle bones of a man” were basic stones for the advancement of history (48).

Besides her spatial practices of traveling, Benson participated in the geographical narrative as she challenges the patriarchal narrative that connects women with nature and uncultivated land. Through transnational mobility, Benson incorporates women into the geographical narrative of imperialism. Benson states,

I used to think that rootlessness meant lack of prejudice—that being foot-loose meant also being mind-loose - (in the best and most refined sense). But now, as an empire-builder myself, I do not believe that travel broadens the mind after all. It seems to me that the further away from the Strand [home] you go, the more your mind shrinks. Often the Empire-builder Home At Last from Vast Spaces has a mind that has shrunk to a mere button. (*Worlds within Worlds* 1)

When thinking about how to view the target culture she visited, Benson changed her attitude from avoiding the influence of her native culture to maintaining the unique thought cultivated by her own culture. Benson emphasized the necessity of connection with the culture of motherland as a standard to reflect on the culture one travels to.

This idea enforces the central political and cultural position of the British Empire and incorporates women into the imperial discourse. Katrina Gulliver interprets this thought with Benson’s understanding of British community’s relation with Chinese spaces, “This disparagement of the expatriate community tallies with the idea that China was not the chosen destination of the most talented Britons. It also links clearly to her view of the Metropole as intellectual centre” (71). I agree with Gulliver that Benson prefers to live in the center of the British empire, London, allowing her to

maintain her talent and follow the latest literary trends. For me, “the Metropole” also refers to big cities, such Beijing, which enrich her mind with new cultural experiences and social and political situations at her time. To some extent, I can understand why she denies the role of China as an ideal destination: she suffered from intellectual bare life in remote places for the majority of her time in China. I will illustrate this in detail in the next section.

Exploration of the outside world does require economic independence but it empowers women to challenge the social convention that they should stay at home to be docile daughters and obedient wives especially prevailing in the Victorian context. During her travels, Benson’s job assisted her daily living expenses to earn her an independent life. More importantly, in Benson’s case, travel also accumulated writing materials for her profession, as Benson’s travel advanced her knowledge of Chinese customs, landscape, and social and cultural situations. These experiences formed the basis of her travel writing, such as *The Little World*, set in China.

Yunnan/Northeast China and the Marriage of a Female Writer

Transcontinental travel may explain how freedom from home emancipates women from social conventions, but long-term residency as expatriates in another country complicates the situation. Besides the opportunities that travel brought to women, the new social and cultural situations in an alien land revealed challenges as well. The conventional views that a woman’s place is at home and a woman’s role is to give birth to children and to take care of family still existed as prevailing rules

among the European expatriate community in China in the early twentieth century.²¹

Traveling at will in another territory does not necessarily mean that women will legitimately live the way they pursue. We can see this when we consider how Benson's marital status affected her choices between home and professional work in China. After she got married to Anderson, she had to deal with the dilemma of looking for a sense of stability and belonging at home and working as a professional woman. Faced with this situation, Benson attempted to look for an alternative possibility—a middle position between professionalism in work and intimate companionship from family.

Benson recorded how marriage changed her attitude toward travel: "When I was young, I travelled by mistake, but now I do it on purpose. I go about the world now ... with a real helpful husband instead of in dangerous loneliness" (*Worlds within Worlds* 1). Her marriage gave her a sense of security and allowed her to re-define the geographical map of safety for female travelers. According to the records of her diaries, on September 27, 1920, Benson arrived at Chongqing with two wives whom she knew from the British community in Beijing and met her future husband Anderson. Then, after they got married, with her husband's company, remote places with potential dangers and an inhospitable living environment were included in her

²¹ This can be learned from Benson's biographer Joy Grant's description on how Benson was impacted by the rumor that she could not give birth to children. "For month after month passed, and Mrs Anderson failed to become enceinte. Her disappointment must have been compounded by the knowledge that whatever the gossips might be saying it was not by her own choice" (Grant 202). Grant also quote Benson's diary on January 31, 1932. It says, "We had a great blow to-day[sic]; ... I must forget about a baby." Grant continues to write, "Evidently Shaemas had a recurrence of syphilis. Stella does not comment in her diary on the danger to his health and hers: her emotion centers on the fear that it may never be wise for them to have children" (202). This also proves that having no children was one of the couple's conflicts.

travel map. Benson accompanied her husband to work in some industrially less developed areas where border posts of the CCS were established. In October 1922, the newly married couple moved to Mengzi, Yunnan province, as Anderson accepted a position there. Then, in October 1925, the couple again went to another peripheral place—a treaty port called Longjing in Northeast China. Benson spent the majority of their time in the ports, but she continued to travel throughout Asia and North America and back to England occasionally.

In Mengzi, although living in a harsh environment of old-fashioned house, unpleasant food, and 4,500 feet height, Benson seemed content with her new experience there as a housewife. Benson writes, “In Mengtsz [Mengzi], Yunnan, half-way between Yunnanfu [Kunming] and Tonkin, we came to live. In Mengtsz I found myself settling down domestically for the first time in my life, going to market as though I were a housewife in Putney, S.W.” (*The Little World* 114). Benson articulated her refreshing experiences when going to the local market as a housewife: “On ponies and on foot, in buffalo-carts and ox-carts, with or without captive pigs, ducks, chickens, foxes, or leopards, every one is coming into Mengtsz market through the dark gate that pierces the thick wall of the city” (114). This bustling and crowded market was very new to Benson, and even probably for the housewives from London. Living in a place of worldly pleasures and worries, Benson switched her role from a writer to a “housewife,” although it does not mean Benson spent much time in housekeeping.

Being a housewife can mean a loss of independence and the possibility of struggling with an isolated life and possibly an unhappy marriage. In Mengzi and Longjing, Benson's social circle was extremely limited, merely containing CCS employees, missionaries, and their wives. Benson had few opportunities to use Chinese unless she had to communicate with their Chinese servants and housekeepers. Thus, she had few opportunities to communicate with local people because of language barriers and different social class.²² Among the small European community in Mengzi, Benson had nobody to share her ideas and feelings, because CCS wives spent the majority of their time in attending parties and displayed little interest in art, antiques, or literary works. Benson's biographer Joy Grant summarizes the social routines of the tiny European community, "It was the function of the wives, English and French, to provide endless round of At Homes, parties and dinners—not so pointless an occupation as might appear" (198). Those activities was not attractive to Benson, and "from most social events Stella came home unrefreshed, and wounded in her self-esteem" (200). Benson had a strong feeling that she was different from the social group and could hardly involve in the majority of the community. She cared more about the latest literary publication and the most recent news of the literary social circle in England rather than daily social communications there. The couple's tense matrimonial relation led to an estrangement between them: the bad temper of Anderson and his dissatisfaction with their sexual life along with the temperamental

²² In treaty ports, Benson had limited communication with people who could speak simply English. For example, in Longjing, their cook, Yi, a Korean, could speak pidgin English. See *Worlds within Worlds*, page 243. See Grant, *Stella Benson: A Biography*, page 204.

personality and the declining health state of Benson led to their disappointment in one another, which is “a period of intense strain for both of them” (197).

The Europeans’ self-contained living status also originated from the outdated transportation system. The CCS ports were located in remote and less-developed areas. The above discussion has illustrated the natural environment in Mengzi. Grant explains the situation in Northeast China²³ with seasonal extreme weather conditions and less developed transportation, “The only viable link with the outside world as far as Europeans were concerned was the railway, but at best its service was irregular, and could be interrupted for weeks on end when the winter snows came. Internal communications were primitive, the roads mere wagon tracks” (223). Benson expresses her disappointment about the living condition there, “When I arrived in Manchuria [mostly in Northeast China today] two years ago, it was like straying into a nightmare. No train, it seemed to me, had ever inflicted upon its passengers so many frozen draughts, so many unwashed fellow-travellers, such uncomfortable and verminous seats or such a treeless, bladeless, khaki horizon” (Benson, *Worlds within Worlds* 248). The under-developed infrastructure and indescribably cold weather

²³ European and American citizens’ travel restrictions also attributed to the competing foreign powers on the railway construction and the complicated political situations in Northeast China. Despite the existence of China central governments (Manchu dynasty and the Republic of China), the construction of railway fomented the intrusion of Russia and Japan into Northeast China. Russia built the Chinese Eastern Railway along which towns, military garrisons, stations, and employees were Russian. The railway started from Manzhouli to Valdivostok, and then extended southwards to Dalian. This maneuver facilitated Russia to take the lead in their battle with Japan in Northeast China to win the first round. In 1904, Japan took over the south part of the Chinese Eastern Railway, and renamed it the South Manchuria Railway. From then on, Japan began to take a more leading role in south region of Northeast China in the second round among the foreign powers. To colonize the land, Japan enticed the last Emperor of the Manchu dynasty after his abdication to “rule over” Northeast China in 1932. The international society questioned the legitimacy of the government. Since most countries, such as the United States, England, and France, did not recognize the Japan’s puppet state of Manchukou as an official nation, foreigners travelling in this territory could not get protections.

worsened the European community's connection with the outside world and made the harsh living conditions there unbearable for Benson.

Benson spent most of her time at home in Longjing and had a limited social circle in the treaty ports. In her daily contact with the Japanese wives, Benson was sympathetic with them, as they seemed never allowed to express their opinions. She writes, "My visits are her [the barber's wife] only chance to express herself" (188). Benson felt that the Japanese barber's wife was another her, because they had similar experiences and sufferings and could understand each other: Both of them had nobody to speak to; both were depressed about the death of the puppy, Emmy. Benson wrote, "It was as though a ghost of lovely and sorry unreason has shimmered itself into two, and the two halves walked away from each other in the form of an English female novelist and a respectable Japanese tradesman's wife" (190). Benson recognized similar sufferings of women across the cultural divides, regardless of their nationalities and professions. The marriage led her to re-think how marriage changed a professional woman's life and how to balance her role as a writer and a wife.

Benson's occasional travel as well as her persistent writing rescued her from isolation and the intellectually bare life in the remote ports of the CCS. During those years, she was always trying to seek a way of achieving professional success and at the same time accompanying her husband as much as possible in China. Her life in the CCS ports, such as Mengzi and Longjing, was like two edges of a sword. On the one hand, Benson relates cultural superiority and center to "Metropole," so she was

dissatisfied with the isolated and intellectually bare life in the ports. She enjoyed the cultural atmosphere of British community in Beijing, where she had her readers and could travel extensively the places with cultural and historical values. “Metropole” also means the center of British Empire—London. Benson was reluctant to return to the ports during her one visit at home: “When I am going to China just on the eve of the coming out of my book—the happiest & most exciting times of my life are these—we both got furious & Shaemas would not stop blaming me for my arrogance, would not soften at all.”²⁴ This implies her unwilling to leave the artistic and cultural atmosphere in London. On the other hand, it is undeniable that her life in the CCS ports did provide sufficient materials for her to participate in the discourse of British world literature or we can say “British Literary Diaspora.” During her stay in Mengzi, she signed contracts to re-organize her essays about people and customs in China in a collection named *The Little World*, the essays of which were published first in different newspapers. Also, the limited scope of living space and social circle in Northeast China did not confine Benson to the household, and she continued to write with materials she collected from local culture and care about issues of women and European exiles that she identified with. The political complexity in Northeast China during her stay was very intriguing to Benson. Benson’s living experiences in Northeast China provided materials for her prize-winning work *Tobit Transplanted* and her travel writing *Worlds within Worlds*, which helps her to win a celebrity among the literary circle at her time.

²⁴ Diaries, Reel 7, Friday, 23 June 1922.

Hong Kong and The Dilemma of a Colonial Wife/Suffragist

Compared with the inner-war status of Mainland China at that time, Hong Kong was a relatively safe society with more comfortable living environment for British residents. In 1920, it was the first time for Benson to sojourn and work there for more than four months.²⁵ Then, in 1931, Benson accompanied her husband to live there again.²⁶ At that time, Benson had to encounter new situations in a society that showed an ambivalent attitude toward colonial women. In colonial Hong Kong, as a British woman, Benson was part of the colonizing society, but her social status was closely related to that of her father or husband. Benson perceived participation in the public sphere as a means for female agency and intended to enhance female participation in the public sphere, but the patriarchal system hampered her work as a suffragette. Benson developed her unique views based on her personal experiences rather than counting on the British thoughts on women in Asia.

When she first arrived at Hong Kong, as a single British woman, Benson enjoyed freedom to develop her social circle and to choose her jobs. Benson's middle-class origin offered her elegant social etiquette and sufficient knowledge to better acquaint herself with upper classes. Benson "entered British colonial society at top level" (Grant 146), as she developed a friendship with the wife of the officer who commanded the Wiltshires. Benson was invited to live in the lady's house on the Peak and went to "dinner at Government House, or at the races, or at a regimental dance" in

²⁵ Diaries, Reel 6. She stayed in Hong Kong from Tuesday, February 10 to Wednesday, May 12, 1920.

²⁶ Diaries, Reel 9. She arrived at Hong Kong on August 6, 1931.

the company of the lady (146). To alleviate financial concerns, Benson found jobs to support herself. Her family background facilitated her profession as a writer but also asked for the necessity of work to support her because of her adequate knowledge but moderate financial support from family.²⁷ More importantly, she saw professional work as a means to achieve equal rights for feminists and to free women from Victorian constructions of womanhood. When she first arrived in Hong Kong, Benson taught at the Anglican Diocesan Boys' School in Victoria, Hong Kong, where her students were Chinese or Eurasian. There were many reasons for her to quit the job: her discontent with the payment, the cultural barriers, such as her students' understanding of Bible as "superstition," and Benson's biased ideas of non-European children as "inattentive" (Benson, *The Little World* 27-28). Her impression of Hong Kong at that time was that it was difficult for her to edge in and to stay inside of it.

Later, in 1931, when Benson lived again in Hong Kong with her husband, her situation was more complicated because of her marital status. In her editorial introduction to Stella Benson's diaries, Marlene Baldwin Davis summarizes how Benson's marriage to Anderson complicated her situation as a colonial wife. Davis says,

[The marriage] began Stella's struggle of being a professional married woman in a male-oriented colonial society. ... Stella neither accepted women's mirroring role, as described by Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* (1929), nor the very nature of this hierarchical system. Benson

²⁷ She was born to a well-educated upper middle class family with her learned mother Caroline Cholmondeley and her father Ralph Benson, a well-cultivated man of the landed gentry. The well-educated family background developed her strong literary interests. In her adolescence, her father left home and only came back occasionally, which led to financial worries of the family. When she grew older, to better support herself, she worked constantly as a writer and occasionally as a teacher, an editor, or an employee in a variety of institutes when traveling globally.

was part of the second wave of 'New Woman' who sought a career outside of the home and out of the country as well. (4)

As a suffragette, Benson believed women's power could challenge the hierarchical system especially by working outside of the home and even in another country.

Benson's role as a colonial wife allowed her wider scope of materials and practices to contemplate women's new roles in a transnational and colonial context. Jane Berney notes, "Benson's diaries reveal the tensions caused by her position as part of the colonising elite and her more circumscribed position as a woman" (934). Benson's gender complicated her role as an "Empire-builder" when she intended to participate in the internal affairs of colonial Hong Kong. Women, as agents of European colonization, performed roles of both colonizers and the colonized, who participated in the process of colonial domination and gender-related negotiations. The colonial context in Hong Kong created and was shaped by new social hierarchies and gender relations.²⁸ She was entangled with her positions as a colonizing elite and a subordinated woman. Benson enjoyed the extraterritorial rights and high-quality life as a colonizer, while she also suffered from discrimination because of her gender. She cared about the emancipation of licensed Chinese prostitutes as a suffragette, but she was discouraged from actively participation in the affairs of the colonial government.

As a colonial wife, Benson enjoyed a favorable lifestyle. The English colonials usually built their houses on the Peak, which guaranteed a good view and more

²⁸ Current Scholarship working on the colonial context in Hong Kong and gender relations mainly focuses on the colonized Chinese women and their fighting for social and political rights in the period of colonial Hong Kong or later on British women's dealing with their identities and new roles in the society in post-colonial Hong Kong. See, for example, Philip Howell. "Race, Space and the Regulation of Prostitution in Colonial Hong Kong"; Pik Wan Wong. *Negotiating Gender: The Women's Movement for Legal Reform in Colonial Hong Kong*; Pauline Leonard. "Migrating Identities: Gender, Whiteness and Britishness in Post-colonial Hong Kong."

desirable living environment.²⁹ Benson lived with her husband in one Peak house, a cooler one with panoramic view in contrast with those in the area of Victoria below. From their house, they could enjoy the scenery of the harbor and remote islands (Grant 270). When they were free, the couple customarily went for a walk. Benson wrote in her diary, “James and I went for a rather beautiful walk from the Peak Station down to the monastery by the sea—the path all flowery with blossoming shrubs and the sea a sharp sled color as a background to every loophole in the woods.”³⁰ Her leisure time was occupied with teas, parties, tennis games, and visits to beaches and temples, which she mentioned multiple times in her diary. Although she was bored of this living style, her favorable life was strongly related with her role as a colonial wife.

On the other hand, discrimination due to patriarchal ethnic and class difference still prevailed among the British colonial community. The officials of the colonial government formed an order of priority based on their executive powers. The heroine Kitty in Maugham’s *The Painted Veil* discovered the rule just after she arrived: “[H]er social position was determined by her husband’s occupation ... when they dined at Government House the Governor took her in as a bride; but she had understood quickly that as the wife of the Government bacteriologist she was of no particular

²⁹ Living in houses on the Peak means better access to sunshine and view and symbolizes higher social status among the British community. Maugham’s novel *The Painted Veil* specifies this by giving detailed descriptions of Kitty and Walter’s house and her lover Charlie’s house. “The verandah was in shadow ... In the Happy Valley, on the side of the hill, for they [Kitty and Walter] could not afford to live on the more eligible but expensive Peak” (8). By Contrast, “The Townsends [Charlie] lived on the Peak in a house with a wide view over the sea” (255). Walter is a bacteriologist, and Charlie is a Assistant Colonial Secretary. They have a huge salary gap, so houses on the Peak are more affordable for those with better income like Charlie .

³⁰ Diaries, Reel 9, Sunday, 7 December 1931.

consequence” (10-11). This indicates that woman’s social status was determined by that of her husband. Benson, as a wife of the CCS, was in a peripheral position of the community, because her husband was even an employee of a foreign country.

Benson engaged herself in reporting the situation of the licensed prostitution by visiting brothels and interviewing the Chinese prostitutes. In her diary, she wrote, “I found myself upon a committee for enquiring into international traffic in woman by order of the League of Nations.”³¹ This practice was a continuation of her persisting care for unfair treatment due to gender difference. She recorded in her diary where the girls came from: the prostitutes in Hong Kong were almost Chinese girls with “no licensed foreign prostitutes here. ... Chinese girls were brought from country districts in China, not by force as a rule but by smooth promises and the government licenses them ... after (rather perfunctorily) ascertaining that they really choose to live the prostitute life.”³² Benson’s biographer Grant gives background information concerning the miserable fate of the Chinese prostitute girls in Hong Kong. Grant demonstrates, they “had been sold to procuresses by poor parents, often in infancy, trained to prostitution in China, and brought into the colony when ripe for work” (283). The girls in fact had no alternative choices but were forced into prostitution against their will.

Initially, as a colonial woman, Benson did not fully understand the reason why those Chinese girls became prostitutes and attributed the reason to “the laziness” and

³¹ *Diaries*, Reel 9, Tuesday, 9 December 1930.

³² *Ibid.*

“pleasure seeking” of those Chinese girls.³³ Later, after she interviewed the girls and saw their living conditions, Benson started to show her sympathy toward the girls who were not treated in a respectful way. On March 4, 1931, accompanied by Mrs. Forster and Mrs. Mow Feng, Benson went to the brothels located in Yaumatei. When talking about her reasons for going there, Benson said, “I want to put down exactly what we saw and heard without comment, since I am trying not to make up my mind on the question which I really have collected all the knowledge I can.”³⁴ At Mrs. Mow Feng’s school for prostitutes, the Chinese girls “had been licensed as prostitutes three years ago at the age of fifteen, being still under age now, aged 18,”³⁵ although the actual legal age for licensing them formulated by the colonial government was twenty-one. The only means for the girls to free themselves from prostitution was to pay back the money that had been spent on them, especially the money procuress spent to buy and to raise them and the payment for their singing classes, but the fact was that the constantly increasing debts made it impossible for the girls to escape. The inner decoration of the cubicles was extremely simple: “Each cubicle was furnished with a bed filling up half of the cubicle, a dressing table covered with tawdry ornaments, two huge spittoons, a small wash basin, and a perfect encrustation of gaudy pictures.”³⁶ The girls were forced to live in such cramped space almost all the time, because “the brothel mistresses discouraged (them) going out even for an

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ *Diaries*, Reel 9, Wednesday, 4 March 1931.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

hour.”³⁷ At the same time, “the girls said they had no-one to turn to and lead [sic] very separate lives in their cubicles.”³⁸ Besides limited living space, their payments were too low to cover their living expenses, which was worsened by colonial government’s ignorant attitude. Benson points out, “The other thing that seemed to me very evident is the fact that the government’s toleration of the system actually makes the enslavement of the girls more rigid, since the corruption that is the rule among government employees adds so much to the indebtedness of the girls.”³⁹ Benson criticized the institutional structure and the corruption of the colonial government, which showed Benson herself as a colonial female writer contemplating how the colonial and patriarchal system made colonized women subordinated.

Benson brought lack of agency of the Chinese prostitutes into light, but she had no inner impetus and practical actions to liberate the girls. Although Benson cared about the miserable situations of the girls, as a suffragist in her diary she had no obvious record of willingness or attempt to rescue them from the “institutional slavery” as licensed prostitutes. It is possible that in her mind her responsibility was to study and report this issue for the League of Nations. Katrina Gulliver comments, “Making such a ‘choice’ [of prostitution] was an option for a woman who was a modern agent in society. The attitude that such women were all victims requiring rescuing defines women as objects. ... She believed in social reform through legislation rather than the missionary focus on salvation for ‘fallen women’” (73). Gulliver notices the

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

importance of “social reform through legislation” to solve the problem, but regarding prostitution as personal “choice” and further interpreting the option as a prove of agency indeed embrace the masculine norms and colonial logic. The Chinese women actually did not have choices. Also, Benson never reflected on how the girls could support themselves financially if they were freed from prostitution. She did not recognize the obstacles the girls would meet in society to live individually: intolerance from the patriarchal society and lack of labor skills to make a living. Furthermore, in spite of being a suffragette and feminist, it was almost impossible for Benson to rescue the girls from their current situation, because helping those girls escape from prostitution would also have meant interference in the colonial government’s internal affairs. Considering the situation that “white men so enormously outnumbered women,”⁴⁰ the colonial government, with the purpose of stabilizing different social classes, especially sailors and soldiers, gave tacit constant to the legalization of licensed prostitutes. To be more specific, it was difficult for colonial women to fully interfere in or get involved in the affairs of the colony, as their social status was strongly connected with that of their husbands. Jane Berney gives a thorough research on Benson’s important role in the abolition of licensed prostitution in the 1930s colonial Hong Kong and specifies the difficulties Benson faced as an active feminist. Berney says, “Benson was clearly aware that any active participation by wives in political life was frowned upon by the governmental elite in Hong Kong and could threaten their husband’s career” (942). Benson’s biographer

⁴⁰ Diaries, Reel 9, Wednesday, 11 February 1931.

Joy Grant agrees with Berney and specifies the attitude of the colonial government, “The Governor, Sir William Peel, had made it quite clear that he regarded the League’s enquiry into ‘tolerated brothels’ as an unwarrantable interference in the internal affairs of the colony—and already in his brief time in office he had sent home men whose wives had shown lack of ‘tact’” (284). In spite of the difficulties, what made it feasible for Benson to report the prostitution issues was that her husband’s position working for the CCS and non-affiliation with the colonial government allowed her more autonomy to question the colonial government’s policies in Hong Kong.

Conclusion

Transcending the patriarchal dichotomy of relating woman to home and domesticity, Benson proves how transnational mobility allows women new opportunities and challenges. Benson’s travel to and stay in China, as part of her global travel, enhanced her scope of knowledge regarding the Chinese culture and spaces and offered her rich contents for writing and facilitated her profession. Her marital status put her in a struggle of how to balance her role as a wife and her profession as a writer. For the purpose of accompanying her husband, Benson went to remote places of the CCS ports and suffered from harsh living conditions. However, she continued her work and acquired inspirations from local social situations and cultural atmosphere, through which Benson particularly conveyed her understanding of lives of expatriates and women. In Hong Kong, she encountered with more

complicated situations as a colonial wife. On the one hand, Benson's social status was connected with that of her husband, and she underwent unfair treatment because of her gender. Thus, Benson participated actively in the public sphere to enhance female agency and reported the situations of licensed Chinese prostitutes. On the other hand, as a colonial woman, she did not fully understand the restrictions of the imperial-colonial structure imposed on Chinese prostitutes and could not solve the girls' miserable situations in a practical level.

The two phrases that Benson spent—in Mainland China and Hong Kong—explain two forms of “occupying an alien place” as a tourist or an empire-builder—a rational observation of or an active participation in social affairs in the targeted culture that she visited. Benson writes, “We grown-up travellers are either tourists or empire-builders; continents are things to observe intellectually or to take root in—never things to stumble over” (*Worlds within Worlds* 1). She makes either/or setups to illustrate observations of space or spatial practices of “tak[ing] root.” Beyond the either/or setup, Benson's case proves the existence of women's practices of breaking the spatial limitation of women through mobility in a feminist spatial narrative. Her international travel and travel writing exist as indications of her consciousness of transcending the patriarchal spatial practice and narrative of relating women to home and domesticity.

Chapter Three. Imagining Beijing in the City-Country Relation: English

Representations of Urban and Rural China

Beijing, an ancient capital in China, attracted many British travelers to sojourn there and to recount their experiences in Beijing. In 1927, Robert William Swallow, a Chinese-born British independent scholar, published *Sidelights on Peking Life* based on his experience in Beijing when he worked as an English professor in Peking University. Swallow's work concentrates on the customs, theaters, and restaurants in Beijing indicating a varied life of leisure. In the 1930s, a group of Oxford intellectuals, Peter Quennell and Osbert Sitwell among them, also made voyages to China and wrote up their observations of Beijing. Sitwell's *Escape with Me! An Oriental Sketch-book* expresses his appreciation of Beijing culture and architecture, while Quennell's *A Superficial Journey Through Tokyo and Peking* shows his pity about the deterioration of Beijing's buildings, which were damaged by fire and neglected and had not yet been rehabilitated. Beijing in this project stands in for numerous other Chinese cities, for Beijing, as the capital, is the most traditional cosmopolitan city with a long history in China. These works map the urban and rural cultural spaces of China from the British intellectuals' perspectives in ways that do not always align with conventional ideas about the urban and the rural in the Chinese tradition.

Their writings elaborate their different perspectives of depicting Beijing and convey

their distinct understandings of Chinese spaces in a cross-cultural context.⁴¹ These three writers' cultural background leads to their diverse means to represent life and cityscape of Beijing: Swallow has a deeper and more comprehensive understandings of Beijing, showing lives of local residents, as he was born in China and lived in Beijing for a few years; Quennell and Sitwell, who were both Oxford graduates, were travelers to Beijing and concerned more about the local culture that they observed rather than local residents' daily lives.

This chapter will look at how these British intellectuals' cultural identities interact with China's urban and rural spaces, with an inclination toward urban space of Beijing. By interpreting representations of rural and urban spaces, I intend to talk about the feasibility of employing European city/country logic to characterize China's landscapes and the possibility of Chinese urban and rural landscapes working in shaping British intellectuals' thoughts. To explore the urban and rural cultural spaces in which social and cultural identities of these British intellectuals are grounded, I intend to address the following research questions: Does the relationship of urban and rural areas in China act as a pair of binary oppositions defined by European urban theories? Do they perceive it as a modern city? How does that compare with the Chinese view of the city? How should we interpret the British writers' nostalgia toward ancient Beijing? How a cross-cultural perspective of urban and rural narratives

⁴¹ These three works have been widely quoted as examples to explore social and physical transformations of Beijing in the field of history and urban study. See Michael Meyer, *The Last Days of Beijing: Life in the Vanishing Backstreets of a City Transformed*; Anne-Marie Broudehoux, *Modernity with Chinese Characteristics: Urban Image Construction in Fin-de-siecle Beijing*; Jasper Becker, *City of Heavenly Tranquility: Beijing in the History of China*. The three critics categorize these three works of Swallow, Quennell, and Sitwell as historical facts to deepen understandings of the history of Beijing and ignore how their cross-cultural perspectives contribute to the understanding of Beijing in contrast with Chinese ideas.

of China is demonstrated through these writers' practical observation, scientific investigation, and aesthetic imagination?

Methodologically, I will conduct a close reading of the primary sources and put them at the intersection between/beyond Chinese and British ways of thinking. Their works demonstrate how established British spatial representations of China are open to an-Other pattern—different combinations of Chinese and British concepts and ways of thoughts. British travelers have a strong passion for the cultural antiquity of Chinese cities like Beijing, which may derive from their cultural imagination or nostalgia toward a society before industrialization. However, since the Opium Wars, China had been longing to become “modern,” a goal which was also reflected in city construction—a modern city—being equipped with well-organized and high-quality infrastructures. The discussion between enthusiasm with the imagined ancient Chinese city and Chinese municipal government's effort to modernize the city is also intriguing to explore.

Chinese and European Rural-Urban Conceptions

The city and the country as distinctive forms of human communities and civilization forms, in either European or Chinese contexts, commonly coexist as a pair of mutually constituted entities. Raymond Williams in his well-known book *The Country and the City* generally summarizes the contrast between country and city “as fundamental ways of life,” based on English practices and beyond (1). For Williams, there has conventionally been a dualistic conception of country and city: country as “a

natural way of life” of innocence and city as “an achieved center” of learning; and country as “a place of backwardness, ignorance, limitation” and city “as a place of noise, worldliness and ambition” (1). Williams further points out that the real history of country and city does not follow this strict dualistic pattern due to the existence of diversified forms of organization of “the country” and the myriad functions of “the city.” There is “a wide range of settlements between the traditional poles of country and city: suburb, dormitory town, shanty town, industrial estate” (1). What is more, “[t]he country and the city are changing historical realities, both in themselves and in their interrelations” (289). The histories of country and city and of their interrelations have specific meanings in the age of Capitalism.

Capitalism and the Industrial Revolution greatly changed the landscape of country and city and their interrelations. In the past few decades, modern literary and cultural studies have gone through a “spatial turn” that has seen the blossoming of urban studies. These cultural representations and practices of identifying modern life with city life are a global trend, whether in European or Chinese scholarship.

European thoughts in the modern age regarding city and country, especially regarding the modern urban experience, are codified by theorists such as Georg Simmel and Walter Benjamin. From sociological and psychological perspectives, Simmel, in his notable work “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” compares the mental life of inhabitants of rural spaces with that of urban dwellers and theorizes how urban experiences alter fundamental understandings of human existence. Lots of momentary

impressions, changing images, and sharp discontinuity in a single glance “are the psychological conditions that the metropolis creates” (Simmel 25). These fresh experiences, which can only be created in the metropolis, bring urban residents new psychological feelings. Simmel further explains that “[w]ith each crossing of the street, with the tempo and multiplicity of economic, occupational and social life, the city sets up a deep contrast with small town and rural life with reference to the sensory foundations of psychic life” (25). In the metropolis, a new relationship built on money and exchange is what the city dwellers invest their trust in after their continuous struggles of adaptation and adjustment in contrast with the meaningful relationships established over time in the country. Simmel’s urban cosmopolitan expresses similar meanings as the *flâneur* of Benjamin. Benjamin, in his significant, unfinished work *The Arcades Project*, specifies modern and industrialized experiences brought by modernity with nineteenth-century Paris. Benjamin quotes Baudelaire’s poetry about Paris as an example on which to construct the theoretical framework of modernity. In Benjamin’s words, “[f]or the first time, with Baudelaire, Paris becomes the subject of lyric poetry. This poetry is no hymn to the homeland; rather, ... the gaze of the *flâneur*” (10). The *flâneur*, an amateur urban spectator wandering the arcades and boulevards and feigning disinterest with a blasé attitude, symbolizes the alienation of Capitalism and of the city, which is a fresh experience in contrast with that of the country. Benjamin sees that Baudelaire’s *flâneur* is a product of the urban cosmopolitanism described by Simmel—taking on the affect and

practices of *flâneur* is one way to cope with the “mental life” created by the metropolis. Works of these two critics are touchstones for anyone who works on the European thoughts of associating city with experiences of modernity.

The Chinese corresponding translation of “city,” *Chengshi*, consists of two characters, *cheng* (“city” and “wall”) and *shi* (“market”). A *cheng*, as an administrative center, is typically surrounded by walls, which were originally built for military defense. *Shi* expands from the mere meaning of market to populous commercial centers, such as treaty ports and manual manufacturing centers. The Chinese equivalent of “country” is *xiangcun*, in which *xiang* especially refers to an administrative unit existing between the county and the village, and *cun* means village. *Xiang*, the character itself, also contains strong emotions connected with *guxiang* (hometown), which are influenced by the traditional Chinese idea of patriarchal clan living in the same tribe. *Cun*, usually called *nongcun*, figures as an agriculture-related area and community. When discussing the traditional Chinese urban-rural relations, Yingjin Zhang cites F. W. Mote’s idea of a cultural continuum of country and city in traditional China. Zhang points out that, “a cultural continuum of country and city was discernible in traditional China, not just in such aspects as architecture and government but also in terms of everyday life and cultural activities” (4). That is to say, in many aspects, such as fundamental political, economic, and cultural activities, no great gap existed between the country and the city in ancient China. On the other hand, Zhang also admits that the city in ancient China did mean more exposure to

“official recognition, academic distinction, or financial success, and ... a cultivated communal life” (4). In general, there was no significant gap between the country and the city in Chinese traditional concepts.

The urban-rural relationship in China was suddenly changed in the late nineteenth century, due to the impact of Western civilization—the worldwide Capitalist and imperialist expansion and the rapid development of modern technology and industrialization in cities. Domestically, the political, social, and cultural systems in China experienced a series of significant changes—the collapse of the imperial political system in 1911, the establishment of a republican China in 1912, and the May Fourth New Culture Movement, namely the Chinese Enlightenment, in 1915. Yu Zhang interprets the social changes in the early twentieth century China as an impetus for the new urban-rural relationship. In her work *Going to the Countryside*, Zhang states: “One of the social consequences of May Fourth Enlightenment was a deepening of the cultural divide between the new urban-based intelligentsia and the folks in China’s vast rural hinterland” (8). The village started to be associated with the idea of backwardness, especially economically and culturally. However, “the late 1910s and 1920s young generation from local gentry families ... went to the city to become aspiring nationals and cosmopolitans but still needed to reconnect with their rural home” (8). For literati in the 1920s, rural hometowns and homecomings were still an unbroken tradition and a historical practice for a reflection of Chinese Enlightenment and modernity.

For criticisms regarding the conception of Chinese modernity, literary and cultural studies of urban life specifically focus on exploring a Chinese urban modernity that excludes the rural villages from modern Chinese experiences. In these works, Shanghai, including its urban cultural productions and constructions and diversities of urban sensibilities and aesthetics, predominantly serves as the example *par excellence* of China's experience with modernity during the first half of the twentieth century.⁴² Urban culture in Shanghai was significantly influenced by that of the West, the historical reason for which will be illustrated in chapter five. Other scholars tend to rethink the modern with analysis of writings of the Beijing School, *jingpai*, and their depictions and interpretations of Beijing. Yingjin Zhang agrees with some existing scholarly studies that “question the very status of Beijing as a city—as an equivalent of what Western discourse customarily conceptualizes as ‘city’” (4). For Zhang, it is doubtful to conceptualize Beijing in the 1920s and '30s as an equivalent of “city” in the “Western discourse.” Different from Shanghai, which could be sufficiently characterized within European urban theory, Beijing, in the cultural landscape of modern China, was situated at the intersections of Chinese tradition and introduced “Western discourse.” The Beijing School, a group of writers, wrote about the mentalities of common local residents and everyday life of authentic Chinese style rather than about urban culture and the development of capitalism. Agreeing with Yingjin Zhang to some extent, Shu-mei Shih, in her work *The Lure of the Modern*

⁴² See, for example, Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern*; Zhen Zhang, *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen*; Alexander Des Forges, *Mediasphere Shanghai*; Wen-hsin Yeh, *Shanghai Splendor*.

further points out the writers based in Beijing were uniquely positioned to criticize Occidentalism and advocate for maintaining the quintessence of traditional ethics and cultures. The Beijing School takes a philosophical position of neo-traditionalism, which is “resentment toward the Occidentalists’ totalistic rejection of tradition and assertion of complete Westernization, and the perceived threat of an accompanying loss of cultural agency and identity” (Shih 159), a cultural attitude in opposition to the highly Westernized sense represented by the Shanghai School, *haipai*. A more recently published work is Weijie Song’s *Mapping Modern Beijing*, in which Song intends “to explore the literary topography of space and emotion” (2) and further to “decode a city-text and chart a literary topography” (5) of Beijing. Adopting Simmel’s theory of exploring city by diagnosing “the state of mind” of urban residents, Song mainly focuses on the relations in the triangle—changing cityscapes in Beijing, a modern subjectivity, and new literary representations and perceptions. Song argues that “literary topography, or literary act of mapping, is produced after a subjective, sentimental, and sometimes scientific journey, akin to the physical and psychological journey of a writer charting and exhibiting familiar or new terrains” (34). Song links the writers’ mentalities and the modern landscape of Beijing, which offers a new perspective to see how maps of modern Beijing are represented. The three scholars, from different points of view, emphasize a special understanding of the modern represented in Beijing’s topography and in works by the Beijing School. Their theoretical conceptions lay a foundation for a research about how European

travelers represented the topography of Beijing differently from a transnational and cross-cultural perspective. British travelers' representations of city-country relation are actually in a conversation with those of the Chinese mode. I argue that British travelers represent and imagine Beijing as a pre-industrial symbol, which is in an opposite position to the European mode of "city" and "modern."

The Projection of European Conception onto Beijing Cityscape

Robert William Swallow, whose Chinese name was Yan Ruibo, was born in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, where his father was a local British Baptist priest. After graduating from a British university in 1902, he returned to China to teach in Shanxi University. From 1912 to 1916, he served as an English teacher in the preparatory course at Peking University, which gave him the opportunity to observe lives in Beijing carefully. In 1927, he published *Sidelights on Peking Life* based on his stay in Beijing. The whole book contains more than one hundred pictures depicting daily lives in Beijing and a map of the city.

Hardy Jowett (1871-1936), whose Chinese name was Zhou Yongzhi, manager of Asiatic Petroleum Company, wrote an introduction to the book. According to the introduction,

Born in China, our author speaks the language with fluency and clarity. ... He is perfectly at home with officials of all grades, and having spent many years on the teaching staffs of Chinese Colleges and Universities the modern professional mind hides few secrets from him. With students of both new and old China he is familiar and can and does accommodate himself to their games and pastimes. The sons of the highest in land have been committed to his care as private tutor and have not forgotten him yet though years have passed since he was their mentor. (VI)

This shows that Swallow has been integrated into Chinese society and developed a Chinese way of leisure. His fluent and authentic spoken Chinese and his ability to get accustomed to local life make him communicate freely with Chinese people and get along well with officials of all levels in China. Also, his working in universities and his experience as a private tutor for families with higher social backgrounds help him expand his social circle and have a comprehensive understanding of Chinese education, politics, and social lives. Swallow is among the group of British intellectuals who embrace cultural difference and are willing to be changed by Chinese culture in this or that regard, as we can tell from the sentence “he ... does accommodate himself to their [the Chinese] games and pastimes.”

Swallow’s cross-cultural background enables him to understand situations of and experiences in Beijing with European conceptual frameworks and key notions such as “cosmopolitanism,” “*flâneur*,” and “public sphere.” These cultural symbols or concepts, in turn, facilitate his readers’ understanding of situations and experiences of the indigenous Beijing. A debate about cosmopolitanism has persisted for the past decade. Scholars in this field have done anthropological, ethnographic, philosophical researches on this concept and extend this to a variety of socio-political issues in contexts of globalization and multiculturalism. Fundamentally, the concept of cosmopolitanism features a paradox: a way of supra-regional political solidarity and cultural differences deriving from particular locations and histories.⁴³ Swallow employs the concept cosmopolitanism to describe Beijing as the center which draws

⁴³ See, Carol A. Breckenridge et al., *Cosmopolitanism*.

together people of different ethnicities and mother tongues. Also, in the context of Beijing, vendors, for Swallow, are the Chinese city explorers, who observe the urban life in Beijing. The vendor is the Chinese *flâneur* in the sense that both are urban explorers and connoisseurs of the street. In other sense, they are different: the *flâneur* is the middle-class stroller wandering aimlessly and cultivating indifference, but the vendor is the seller who works and strives to make a living: he is anything but indifferent to the world he observes. What is more, some modern European lifestyles include coffeehouses, nightclubs, dance halls, and movie theaters for urban residents to gather and share ideas. The coffeehouse, a particular place for individuals to come together and discuss freely, serves as an example of the term “public sphere” coined by German philosopher Jürgen Habermas. The public sphere is an area of social life to form public opinions through the medium of talking. Swallow depicts Chinese counterparts performing similar functions as those of the European lifestyles, such as restaurants, theaters, and licensed brothels.

The first impressive word Swallow offers to make Beijing distinctive among all Chinese cities is “cosmopolitan.” According to his understanding, “in the first place it is the most cosmopolitan city in the Empire, if we restrict the use of the word cosmopolitan to China and her dependencies” (Swallow 2). The dependencies refer to other provinces and neighbouring countries. Individuals with different origins and traditions from the dependencies in the cosmopolitan Beijing form a cohesive and united relationship. Swallow’s interpretation of cosmopolitanism in China, which

indicates that the “cosmos” (the universe) to be found in this “polis” (city) is only “China and her dependencies,” is different from that the same notion in Europe. His idea right echoes with Chinese traditional concepts of the capital and the nation.

Cambuluc, the foundation of Beijing, was the name of the imperial capital in the Yuan Dynasty recorded in Marco Polo’s travel books. Since the Yuan dynasty, Beijing was the capital city, the political and cultural center of the empire, attracting residents from different provinces and surrounding countries impacted by Chinese culture. In the 1920s, it is common to “meet men from the twenty two provinces and hear every dialect and language from Hakka to Mongolian” (2). By observing people’s dressing styles and means of conducts and distinguishing diversity of tongues, Swallow “frequently watches a group of men, who are sitting together, and try to guess what province they come from” (2). Besides domestic diversity, residents with international backgrounds take a certain percentage of local population. There exist some young Chinese who communicate in English because they cannot understand dialects of each other, such as “Cantonese and Fukienese” (2). It is of great possibility that “[the] next door neighbor may have been born in the Strait Settlements and speak Malay better than he speaks Mandarin” (2). This demonstrates that, for Swallow, language, dialect, and cultural diversity are the basis for forming a cosmopolitan community. The diversity enriches the cosmopolitan contexts and facilitates mutual respects based on commonly recognized ideas to counter parochial prejudice. On the other hand, cosmopolitanism in Swallow’s sense, to some extent, is in conversation with the

Chinese traditional idea “All-under-Heaven” (*Tianxia*), which basically means China occupied the center of civilization, and the Central Land (*Zhongguo*), which fundamentally means China, is geographically located in the center of a world map. According to Swallow’s interpretation, Beijing, the capital city of China, attracts its neighbors to identify with it politically and culturally. This identification with the same culture lays the foundation for mutual cultural respect despite speaking different languages and dialects.

Street vendors, walk the alleys selling daily necessities and provide services to local residents. They usually use their cries or other sounds to attract customers or make sounds with an instrument. As Swallow put it, they are the people “who at all hours of the day and night infest the hutongs and byways and seek by means of various cries and noises to attract the attention of the residents” (19). The vendor is essential to portray the pictures of streets of Beijing. Unlike the European *flâneur*, who observes city life from a distance, the vendor participates more in expressing directly what they sell and offer in their cries. Jayeeta Sharma points out the importance of cries to local residents and the suitability of cries for urban layout:

Behind a dense crisscross of alleyways or hutong passages, courtyard houses were partitioned into units separated by walls. ...This [vendor’s cry] was especially significant for households whose women had bound feet. ... [P]eddlers supplied single male immigrants living in crowded quarters with no kitchens, every type of prepared culinary provision. (22)

After hearing the cries, local residents go out to the street to purchase goods or seek services from these vendors. If the *flâneur* in a European context is an observer of urban affluence and industrialized life, a potential consumer who strolls through

shopping arcades, then the street vendor, for Swallow, who portrays and participates in the city, is the emblematic archetype of urban experiences in China.

The goods they sell are diversified and may change according to special seasons. Swallow says, “some of them sell the same goods all the year round, while others, especially the purveyors of fruit and vegetables, can only offer what is in season” (22). In New Year Eve, sellers sell “meat dumplings” (*jiaozi*), with meat and vegetable fillings (22). On the 15th day, the Lantern Festival, the main product is “little white balls [*yuanxiao*] made of sugar and barley flour, with walnut and red fruit jelly in the center” (22). During the Dragon Boat Festival, sweet dumplings (*zongzi*) “made from sugar, glutinous rice,” and jujube “wrapped in reed leaves” (23). During the Middle Autumn Festival, “pancakes” (*yuebing*) are delivered in this special festival each year (23). Usually, beef, smoked fish (*xunyu*), fruit, syrup, persimmon, “steamed bread” (*mantou*), “fried bean curd” (*zha doufu*), “almond tea” (*xingren cha*), “sugared fruits” (*tanghulu*), and “sugared horse flower” (*tang mahua*), “which is made of oil, sugar and flour, and plaited in the same fashion as a horse’s tail on a gala day” are the most commonly sold snacks or daily drinks (24-25). Different varieties of food enrich the mundane and habitual diet and enhance the local citizens’ dietary structure.

For the convenience of the residents, besides food, residents can also purchase daily supplies and find simple services from vendors. Daily supplies, like charcoal, cloth, fans, toy paper-lanterns, nails, boot protectors, and *gaoyao* or medical plaster, cover almost all aspects of everyday necessities. Vendors also include a few

professions who can provide basic but necessary service to residents. Three typical jobs are “porcelain mender,” “knife grinder,” and “barber” (32-33). In addition to selling, vendors also provide services of purchasing things like “precious stones and ornaments,” “pieces of copper and scrap iron,” “furniture and second-hand clothes,” “foreign bottles,” and “broken glass” for their collections (31). Vendors give money for these things, and residents can exchange these waste things for what they need. The varieties of food, daily necessities, and services vary depending on the selling scale. Swallow shows, “there are castes and social distinctions even amongst these food sellers, and they vary from a small retailer carrying a few cakes in a basket or box slung over the shoulder, to the proud possessor of a huge wheeled tray covered with sweetmeats and all kinds of appetising dainties” (22). Vendors do not prepare food themselves, but buy directly from the shop or farmers. The capital used to start a business and the selling skills are determining factors of how big the business is.

The third keyword for Swallow’s Chinese urban experience is Chinese “public sphere”—restaurants, theaters, and brothels. The Chinese feast serves as a method to build personal relations and to dispel misunderstandings. Swallow documents there are “over 6000 restaurants in the city” of Beijing, all of which serve as centers of social interaction and provide a place for congregating, entertaining, and talking in a group (53). “The largest are known as T’ang [*tang*] or Fan chwang [*fanzhuang*]” and “the ordinary restaurants are known as fan kwan [*fanguan*] or lou ” (56). One of the established resorts is the Zhengyang Lou, which is “a recognized meeting place for

literary men, and many a poem has been written there, inspired by the pleasant company and, shall we say, the good food and wine” (57). The *lou* provides an ideal place for literati feast to inspire literary and artistic creations of literary men. The *lou* also performs a role of social interaction and communication for the common residents. “One thing that the foreigner misses is the after-dinner conversation, which is so pleasant a feature of our social life, for it is the custom in China to depart almost immediately the meal is over, though a pretence may be made at drinking tea” (59). The group talks freely about their daily life and the social issues during the meal. After a meal, someone who remains there may start a new round of talk over tea.

Another popular place for meeting is the theatre. For Pekingese, theatre is not merely a place for entertainment but more importantly for conversation. “Sometimes the voice of the players are half drowned by the buzz of conversation that is being carried on in every part of the theatre, and one would think that the play was a matter of little importance” (62). The theatre, a public place for social gathering, has gained popularity as a place of debate and is open to all men from different social statuses, which also makes it associated with equity. The atmosphere makes Swallow easily fit into the discussion that happen at the theatre: “A famous actor or an exciting scene may hold the attention of the audience for a time, but as a rule the voices of the players are half drowned by the buzz of conversation that is being carried on in every part of the theatre, and one would think that the play was a matter of little importance” (61-62). This boisterous and causal way of talk encourages equal and active

attendance. The third place for social interaction is the brothel in “flower streets and willow lanes” (*yanhua liuxiang* 烟花柳巷), the Chinese red light district. In the Ming Dynasty, the name was *goulan yuan* located near *neiwubu jie*. Since the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China, the business was prosperous in *bada hutong*; for Swallow, brothels were moved to this district after the Boxer Rebellion. In regards to the functions of such establishments in China then, Swallow notes,

Certain writers claim that “licensed places” in China are in reality a kind of teahouse, and the great majority of the people who frequent them do so merely in order to seek a little harmless amusement, and that they are innocuous when compared with similar places in Western countries with their drunken orgies and crimes of blackmail and violence. (36-37)

Swallow agrees with the idea that licensed brothels in China perform a function of social interactions to a large extent. A very large percent that frequent the houses come mainly to kill time and be entertained in a conventional sense. The licensed brothels are served with “tea,” “nuts, and cigarettes” so that customers can stay there to indulge in “banter and persiflage” (37). The young ladies in the houses usually first make sure the guests are served with tea and refreshments and entertain the guests in a reserved way by “hanging down her head and answering in monosyllables” with occasional smiles “at some quip or joke” (39). Brothels are categorized by different classes, making it satisfactory to customers from different social classes. Brothels offered a meeting place for politicians, scholars, merchants, and male students. In some lower-class houses, male workers could also find a place to meet. Here, customers of different social backgrounds talk and exchange ideas freely on matters that are concerned with the public. Participants in the discussion unconsciously

express societal problems and show common or opposing ideas from different perspectives. In this sense, they serve as a particular place of public sphere in China at that time, according to Swallow's interpretation.

These places cultivated Beijing residents with the qualities of modern citizens according to Swallow. When talking about Beijing residents' widening circles of political participation, David Strand states, "the preindustrial Chinese city supported a rich variety of public activities, including marketing, theatergoing, worshipping, and teahouse and restaurant socializing" (167). These places perform similar roles of "public sphere" in preindustrial Beijing as a zone between the state and civil society for residents from different social classes, such as scholars, traders, and craftsmen. All these public places, such as restaurants, theaters, and brothels, in the 1930s' Beijing maintained a tradition of discussion in chambers and combined with functions of new organizations, like political clubs and parties. The social communications in 1920's Beijing, for Swallow, promoted an expansion of political participation.

It is quite intriguing that Swallow parallels the Beijing traditional styles with their European modern correspondents. Beijing, for Swallow, is a city experiencing considerable changes of the landscape but still going on its own old way regardless of adaptation of foreign thoughts and civil changes brought by revolutions, civil war, and a Republican form of government. The wastelands may be centers of industry or homes of a teeming population, and the most prosperous avenues may have changed to forgotten ruins, but the city's old ways of living will prevail despite any social

changes. Swallow's interpretation of Beijing agrees with the Chinese scholars I quote that the city's old way of living does not mean it is a pre-modern or pre-industrial city. The city through maintenance of its style develops and participates in concerns of the modern discourse, such as "cosmopolitanism" and "public sphere."

Quennell's Observation of Beijing: A Journey to Antiquity

Another traveler who articulated the culture and history of Beijing is Sir Peter Courtney Quennell. Quennell graduated from Oxford University and wrote extensively on literature and history in his career. During his stay in Tokyo, where he taught at the University of Tokyo, in 1930, he made short trips to China, a place he had been longing to see since his childhood. For Quennell, "Peking is one of those focal points which we set ourselves as a future destination... though the *how* and the *why* of it were unimaginable" (168). He traveled to China twice in spring and summer of 1930. In 1931, he quitted the teaching position in Tokyo and returned to London. In the following year, a travel book titled *A Superficial Journey through Tokyo and Peking* was published. Concerning focus of this book, Quennell described it as neither personal sketches nor a guidebook, but "a kind of travel film, a sequence in which image suggests image" (7). As he further explained, "my business is primarily with things seen" (185). In this case, Quennell located himself in the position of an observer, who intended to record what he saw. His observations and investigations of a foreign land showed a unique view of personal perceptions and memories. More importantly, Quennell's representations of Beijing participated in the Chinese and

British conversation of city and country relationships in the historical period of China's transition from the traditional to the modern.

Quennell initially depicted what he saw in the suburb of Tianjin and its countryside, an area keeping traditional style architectures but developing modern technology. During Quennell's short spring vocation, he firstly took the night train from Tokyo to Kobe, Japan and then from Kobe sailed to Shandong province, China across the Inland Sea and the China Sea. His first impression was "China, the coast of Shantung, pale hills, dry and dead-looking, in many folds" (160). The bare landscape in early spring, the darkness in the shimmering morning, and the misty sea due to the weather made the surrounding scenery lack vibrant features. Along the coastline, they steamed forward toward Dagu of Tianjin. Quennell continued to describe the dilapidated and shabby surrounding. At the river mouth, he saw "muddy and turbid" waves, "rust-streaked" boats, "the discolored soupy water," "mud flats," and "dangerous estuary," all of which showed an open naked landscape (160-61). Setting foot in the land of Dagu, Tianjin, Quennell "catch[es] a first glimpse of fabulous and ancient China—railway station, flour mill, mud-built houses which accompany the windings of the stream and are clustered above ramshackle wooden piers" (161). Tianjin, as an important port of northern China near Beijing, had developed a certain amount of modern technology, such as railways and mills, since the Opium Wars. In contrast with the small proportion of modern technology, for him, traditional-styled houses lived by local residents still proved the poverty and backwardness of this

ancient land. Quennell wrote of, “Mud walls, roof of mud stiffened with thatch—it is the commonest form of architecture in the northern provinces. Each house is a one-storeyed yellowish cube, the colour of unbaked pottery, of the soil” (161). The adobe house with curved rafters had a mud flat roof with scattering straw on it. Usually, its old-fashioned wooden doors and windows creaked when blown by the wind or opened by the house owner. Because of the affordable construction materials and inaccessibility of modern building materials like cement, this was the most typical residential house located in northern rural China at that time. No houses made of modern reinforced concrete structures were found there. The local infrastructure was also less developed, especially the roads. Quennell noted, “No road, which could be called a road, followed the river, but there was a rut, a dusty track, across the plain” (162). On the roads, ponies and occasional bicycles were predominantly means of transportation. The national or local revenue could not afford to build and sustain a well-established transportation system in rural China then.

Streaming up along the river passing the suburb to the city of Tianjin allowed Quennell to have an elaborate and detailed observation of the landscape. “Through the cold grim twilight which was closing down we saw the dark water-front of the modern city: villas, banks and warehouses in dark brick, a crowded quayside and a line of anchored vessels” (165). Tianjin was a relatively modern and cosmopolitan city for Quennell, which had global citizens from different cultural backgrounds, such as White Russian pedestrians, English hotel proprietors, and Japanese servants. From

Tianjin to Beijing, he travelled by train, and, from the comfortable but grimy train, the vast and desolate yellow-brown landform on the North China Plain impresses him greatly. The imageries of “conical graves, pallid soil, and leafless branches” kept on flooding to him, all of which were typical in northern provinces of China (168). Despite the “oppressive and insignificant” gloomy weather and desolated surrounding, Quennell still thought beauty and harmony could be grasped from the landscape. According to Quennell’s description, “If one surrendered one’s imagination to its charm, there was a strange beauty in the very blankness of the prospect; so harmonious were these tawny greys and yellows, so neat the scattering of mud cubes that represented a village or a homestead, so philosophic in their enormous isolation the sedately loitering figures on the bank” (163). Although Quennell depicted mainly the desolate landscape and backward infrastructure, he also expressed, on the other hand, the beauty, harmony, and philosophical thinking that constituted the landscape of northern China.

The architecture in Beijing was another one of Quennell’s concentrations during his sojourn in Beijing, and deterioration of Beijing’s buildings covered most chapters. The two representative palaces, the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace, were destroyed and desolated for historical reasons, but also due to limited funds and neglect. When wandering around the palace, Quennell noticed that pavilions with a dried blood color “have been washed, bleached and weathered by years of neglect and are now a dull lack-lustre coral red” (171-72). Traces of the years had already been

left on the surface, and the wind and rain erosion made the originally bright color fade. Besides neglect of maintenance, the palace had been unoccupied for a few years, and “the courtyard was empty” (172). Beyond the walls, in the countryside of Beijing, at the feet of the Western Hills, there lay the Summer Palace and many other temples. The Summer Palace suffered multiple phases of deterioration and restoration in the late Qing dynasty. The Emperor Qianlong appointed the Jesuits to construct a quarter of the palace with European style. In 1900, the Summer Palace was damaged by the Eight-Power Allied Forces, who also looted the treasures there. “Since then a succession of Chinese generals have used the ruins as a quarry for cut stone” (203). The grand royal garden was perished by “first the eunuchs, then the foreigners, and local ‘war lord’” (205). Lacking reconstruction, the Palace was desolated, which brought a strong sense of melancholy to Quennell.

Quennell’s attitude toward old-seeming Beijing is paradoxical. On the one hand, he seems extremely disappointed with the bare landscape and monotonous street life and expresses his sorrow for the desolation of palaces; on the other hand, he thinks the natural and cultural landscape has strange beauty and harmony. This paradoxical attitude mainly comes from Quennell’s philosophy of writing—an authentic representation, although there is a promising discussion about whether he achieves this goal. For Quennell, “every country expresses its destiny through its landscape” (163). Through focusing on the country’s authentic landscape to represent its destiny, Quennell records what he saw and thought during his two short journeys to China. He

gives a detailed depiction of street life and architecture, including the desolate palaces, the dusty street, hoarse voices of the rickshaws, water-carts, cumbersome wooden barrows, plump or obstreperous passers-by, and winged towers, all of which show, for Quennell, a journey to antiquity. When explaining why he merely focuses on the landscape, he says, “in China, where distances are so huge and the extent of recorded history so imposing, one can see the beginning and the end of the same movement, and too much history becomes no history at all” (163). In his view, historical information serves merely as a supplement to the background, and his observation is of primary importance as the resource for him to represent Beijing. His understanding of the journey serves as a means to its end. Without consideration of the historical background, Quennell’s representation of urban and rural experiences does not follow any pre-existing format but merely focuses on what he saw.

Although Quennell himself denied the necessity of being equipped with knowledge of Chinese history and culture when visiting China, his observation and understanding of Beijing is more illuminated if the historical background in China at that time is considered. The early twentieth century Beijing was always associated with characteristics of the ancient capital. Beijing in early twentieth century was a well-established traditional-styled political, economic, and cultural capital, and Beijing had been the capital of China for more than 750 years, since it was founded in 1045. The revolution of 1911 overthrew the imperial system, and the Republican government chose Nanjing as the new Chinese capital in 1928, which changed the

political and cultural status of Beijing. Beijing was not the political center of China and was experiencing a declining trend as a cultural center. Because of the pressure from a corrupted and violent warlord administration in Beijing, intellectuals in Beijing were discouraged from too much engagement in political and ideological debates, unlike those in Shanghai. In aspects of economics and social infrastructure, Beijing was less affected by the invasion of modern industrialization and technology, which led to its less-developed industrial system and social facilities, including buildings, roads, transportation, power and water supplies, and so forth.

The geopolitical situation in Beijing in the 1930s explains why Quennell regarded the trip to Beijing as one to antiquity. Quennell's conception of a journey to Beijing as one to antiquity leads to an understanding of Beijing as a pre-modern construct, the idea of which is in strong contrast with Chinese intellectuals' thoughts. In Chinese cultural history, the 1934-1935 debate between the Beijing School (*jingpai*) and the Shanghai School (*haipai*) discussed the cultural features of Beijing and Shanghai. Beijing was believed to represent authentic Chinese culture, while Shanghai represented an inclination to European urban culture. However, the difference cannot be simply explained by regarding them as contrasting ones.⁴⁴ For the critic Shu-mei Shih, the dichotomous interpretation of *jingpai* and *haipai* cannot "articulate the complexities and challenges the two groups pose for the cultural historian" (177). She points out, "They could be said to have represented two distinct

⁴⁴ For related studies, it is proper to see Wu Fuhui, "A Comparative Study of the Beijing and Shanghai Schools of Fiction" [*Jingpai haipai xiaoshuo bijiao yanjiu*] and Yang Yi, *Overall Review of the Beijing and Shanghai Schools of Fiction* [*Jingpai haipai Zonglun*].

ways of imagining Chinese modernity, but they were all committed cosmopolitans, even though their approaches to cosmopolitanism were different” (177). In her interpretation, “the local was a spatialized conception of the culture of a given locality that in its particularity equally has claims to the universal” (178). This sense of the cosmopolitanism of Beijing is not the typical European conception, but refers, to a certain extent, back to Swallow’s understanding of Beijing as a regional center for its neighbor provinces and other neighbor countries. In this conception, Beijing’s uniqueness to modernity cannot be simply explained by Quennell’s understanding of Beijing as an antiquity of pre-modern age. Quennell’s point of view about Beijing is in strong contrast of Chinese men of letters’ construction of Beijing as a local way to universal sense of modernity. In this sense, Quennell’s journey to Beijing is definitely a superficial one, as he does not get the cosmopolitanism of Beijing.

Journey to Beijing as an Escape: A Cross-cultural Perspective

Sir Francis Osbert Sitwell, who dedicated his life to art and literature, went to Beijing in 1934 as an escape and dream-fulfilling journey. Philip Ziegler’s work about the life of Osbert Sitwell shows the most important factor leading to his final decision to Beijing was his younger brother Sacheverell Sitwell’s suggestion. Ziegler wrote, “The idea of such a journey had come to him [Sitwell] when visiting Sachie at Weston in November 1933” (205-06). After the talk with Sachie, Osbert Sitwell “decided that this was the one thing he most longed to do” (206). Sitwell departed at the end of 1933, accompanied by David Horner, who is almost invisible in Sitwell’s

book about Beijing. In 1934, Sitwell temporarily settled in Beijing for three months with Harold Acton's help to fully engage in Chinese culture and to observe the city of Beijing, the experience of which was recorded in Sitwell's book *Escape with Me! An Oriental Sketch-book*. Sitwell intended to capture the landscape of Beijing, but despite his growing familiarity with the city, he found it difficult to locate an equivalent city that he had previously experienced. Sitwell spent leisure time in Beijing, roaming around the city to see parks, shops, and temples, strolling in the alleys to know better local lives, and occasionally taking longer expeditions to historical sites, such as the Summer Palace and the Forbidden City. Sitwell paid special attention to the urban planning of Beijing from a historical perspective and showed his comparative view of Chinese and European architectures. Supposing his journey to China as an escape from his current cultural atmosphere, Sitwell concentrated more on the cultural characteristics of local topography in contrast with those of Britain in aspects of urban planning, architecture style, and mentalities of residents shaped by local topography.

The architectures, walls, gates, thoroughfares, and lanes constituted the general layout of Sitwell's impression of Beijing. The layout of Beijing conformed to the traditional Chinese philosophy of the universe. Jeffrey F. Meyer explains how, "According to Chinese tradition, they (the halls, the palaces, gardens, streets, walls, gates, altars, and temples of worship) said that this Beijing was the earthly termination of the axis of the universe, the center of the world, the pivot of the four quarters" (1). The ancient Chinese people had a concentric conception of geography, which placed

China, *Zhongguo*, the Central Kingdom, at the center of the earthly world. Beijing, the capital of China, was thus located at the center of the center. The layout of Beijing was designed to characterize the city as an ancient ideal with the cosmological notion. The city as a cultural and social construct tells of history and lives of present inhabitants, which awaits the interpreter to decipher. In his work “The Cosmology of the Chinese City,” Arthur F. Wright traces the developmental history of Beijing since the age of Khubilai Khan and elaborates the designing ideas of walls, thoroughfares, hills, lakes, palaces, temples, gazebos, pavilions, markets, and altars. Wright points out, “this city was in closer accord with the canonical cosmology ... The palace enclosure occupied approximately the center of the city ... The whole city ... faced south ... the city conformed to the most ancient precedents” (72). For me, Beijing performs as a Chinese capital with the most sophisticated consideration of cosmology and also balances Chinese architectural philosophy and practical functions. Sitwell in his work primarily represents the layout of Beijing in the Yuan dynasty, when Beijing was called the city of Cambaluc (Khanbaliq or Dadu of Yuan), by citing Marco Polo’s work. In Sitwell’s quotation from Marco Polo, Sitwell writes, “There is a suburb outside each of the gates, which are twelve in number; and these suburbs are so great that they contain more people than the city itself ... In those suburbs lodge the foreign merchants and travellers ... thus there are as many good houses outside of the city as inside” (164). The layout demonstrates Beijing was structured with walls and gates to separate different functions of the city, and there existed frequent commercial

activities in certain area of the city. In this sense, besides influenced by canonical cosmology, the design also considered practical functions of the city.

The cultural heritage of Beijing's urban layout prevailed from the Yuan dynasty until the socialist modernization, which, of course, included Sitwell's sojourn in Beijing in the 1930s. At Sitwell's time, the imperial capital of Beijing still maintained the basic layout as that of Marco Polo's age. Beijing is located in a plain, where the city itself and its surrounding countryside extend to the Western Hills. Sitwell's first impression of Beijing came from a nice viewing location—his hotel, which offered him a panoramic view. Behind Sitwell's hotel, there lay the "Legation Quarter, a conglomeration of gardens, old temples, and modern houses" (177). He could also have a bird-eye view of The Tartar City, which consists of red-walled "Forbidden and Imperial Cities" in the center and "a sea of grey roofs" surrounding them (177). The orange-roofed temples, pavilions, gardens, canals, courts, and parks "with bright green vermilion eaves" outshined the neighboring residential houses (177-178).

Besides the general arrangement of the architectures, walls, gates, and streets, for Sitwell, were the essence of Beijing. Sitwell wrote, "Peking is still a walled city—or rather a collection of walled cities, Forbidden City, Imperial City, Tartar City, Legation Quarter, Chinese City, all have their walls" (179). The walls were commonly functionally built for military defense to prevent the outsiders from entering for thievery, attack, or the like. This structure of circles-within-circles kept the Outer City (*waicheng*) enclosing the Inner City (*neicheng*) and the Inner City

enclosing the Imperial City. The Imperial City being in the core of circles guaranteed it highest protections. If walls mean protection, the gates exist to facilitate access to areas outside of cities and serve as conjunction for economic and cultural exchanges. At the time when Sitwell was there, “the gates were made fast every night so as to defeat the schemes of bandits” (179-180). The great broad thoroughfares, originally designed by Kubla Khan and modified by the Emperor Yong Le, made the old capital have its own character—“decorative and metropolitan” (181). Sitwell significantly appreciated the thoroughfares, although they were only open to the Imperial traffic before 1912, the year of the abdication of the Last Emperor in Chinese history. He thought that “such impressive avenues and processional ways” from Marco Polo’s words were more suitable for modern urban planning than London or New York in Sitwell’s time (180-181). Walls, gates, and thoroughfares were basic elements for the well-designed city with an order compared with that of Europe. Sitwell further wrote,

Elsewhere you would discover ... only haphazard and ramshackle collections of houses and churches or temples, sheltering a teeming and contorted life: here, on the contrary, order and design abide, and the human body—man’s natural measure for buildings or landscape—consequently obtains and sets a new proportion to its background. Yet Peking has none of the dreadful impersonal quality of the more recently designed quarter of a European capital; none of the coldness of the new Berlin, or of Haussmann’s Paris; moreover, there is no lack of small streets, which are necessary, too, to the soul of a city. (181)

Beijing’s urban planning, in general, followed the rule of order to arrange the walls, gates, and thoroughfares, while, in other places worldwide, according to Sitwell, without the ruler’s plan before construction, cities were badly organized and arranged. Within this strictly designed pattern, the existences of small streets were lively

decoration to the general ordered city layout of Beijing. Unlike the more recently designed European capitals, such as the new Berlin and Haussmann's Paris, Beijing has more personal quality with small streets, which for Sitwell were essential to "the soul of a city." Berlin and Paris, by contrast, had features of coldness and a "dreadful impersonal quality." These small streets are called *hutong* in Chinese, lanes formed by lines of traditional courtyard houses in northern Chinese cities, especially Beijing. When introducing the role *hutong* plays in the layout of Beijing, David Strand writes that "[t]he hard symmetry of Beijing's monumental plan was softened by the random, mazelike wanderings of alleyways [*hutong*] typical of most neighborhoods" (2).

Hutongs make the rigid symmetrical structure of Beijing's layout more vivid.

This core-periphery structure also exists in the relation of Beijing and its surrounding areas. Besides Beijing's role as an administrative capital, it also performs a function of commercial center. The relative positions of cities and countries in the core-periphery structure in this region and economic centrality of the regional urban-rural relationship determine a city's economic central place. This spatial hierarchy existed in the relation between Beijing and its surrounding areas. Beijing was the biggest commercial center in northern China at Marco Polo's time, where goods from the region and from foreign countries were sold. At Sitwell's time, Beijing played the same role of commercial center which made commercial exchange with its surrounding countryside and neighbouring cities. Sitwell elaborates diversified people he saw on the street, and those people came to the market of

Beijing to sell or to buy. In the morning, peasants from the countryside came together around the gates and waited for official permission to enter Beijing. Following the veils of dust made by peasants, who went to Beijing to sell their home-made products, Sitwell found streets of shops. In the bustling streets, people were talking and bargaining. Cattle carried goods from the nearby countryside and camels stop by for a while and then “engaged on their endless journey” to places far away like Tibet (225). As a commercial center, Beijing was the place for customers with different backgrounds as Sitwell indicates. “European ladies, the wives of diplomats” passed by in rickshaws and went “toward the Legation Quarter” (225). Moreover, Chinese people from different provinces came there: “The pavements are hidden, so thick are the people, mostly Chinese, endlessly diverse in type, for every province, even the most distant, has here its representatives” (225).

Sitwell grasps the symbolic and psychological meanings of the walls in Beijing, especially for local residents. Beyond practical purposes, walls are used to draw differences from the bottom, the city, to national levels in China. Family or clan, the fundamental unit of Chinese society, builds walls to separate a private area from the rest of the society. Ancient Chinese cities constructed walls to distinguish the administrative centers from the surrounding tribes. In Beijing, walls shaped the residents, giving them a sense of hierarchy, and represented a strict social structure of class difference. David Strand points out, “Within the compass of these great walls and a grid-work of imperial thoroughfares lay a mosaic of walled enclosures

containing the mansions of the powerful, the smaller courtyard residences of the monied, propertied, and degree-holding classes, and the courtyard slums of the laboring poor” (1). The walls, as a means to separate people from different social classes and to mark the difference, lead to the residency in a hierarchical order and the cluster of the laboring poor in the courtyard slums. The most memorable experience that would linger in his mind was the cries and sounds made by the vendors. The cries of the vendors played an irreplaceable role to attract people go out across the boundary made by wall.

Besides serving as a symbol of social hierarchy, the walls in Beijing also provide a sense of safety for its residents. The lives and atmosphere inside and outside of Beijing are quite different. When setting foot in the inner city of Beijing on the way back from the Summer Palace, Sitwell discovers that “the sensation of melancholy vanished” and a relaxing feeling of exhilaration prevails, in spite of the revolutions and wars (223). This sense of security comes from the walls, which protect citizens from possible attacks from bandits. He says, “perhaps the gigantic old walls themselves afforded a false, ostrich-like feeling of security” (223). More compelling reasons include the national temperament, the climate, and the way in which the city has been laid out. The Chinese do not have a sense of being imprisoned, because their safety is their primary concern. For most time of the year in Beijing, the weather does not permit picnics, so residents do not have the strong incentive to go outside of the city. Moreover, the city provides enough entertainment for its residents as it is

designed with “fine and airy perspectives, its trees and parks and palaces, and shops” (224). The practical functions and feelings of security provided by walls shape the lifestyle and conduct of Beijing residents at this time.

As a foreign traveler, Sitwell pays a special attention to comparing Chinese and European cultural heritage. Focusing on the architectural styles rather than focusing on the desolated buildings, Sitwell intends to grasp the difference between the European and Chinese conceptions of architecture. He offers a comparative perspective to represent two methods of life and aesthetic and philosophical understandings of cultural difference. “[T]he Chinese is the only fully developed system of polychrome architecture extant: no other (though many have done so in the past, Greek and Gothic among them) now relies upon colour for a full half of its effect. Then European is the art of mass and contrast, Chinese that of harmony and balance” (281). For Sitwell, the Chinese style relies heavily upon color and concentrates on the balanced structure, while the European one inclines to difference of each part of a building. Sitwell believes that the Chinese architecture “can very easily and precisely be repeated, and will seem, on the contrary, never to have been injured” (283). After natural disasters and accidents, it can disappear, but it can be renewed with less effort. In this sense, Chinese architecture is built for eternity, and connoisseurs can only say it is very old but cannot tell the exact age. Chinese architecture is one of the most significant aspects of Beijing life and is a symbol of Chinese culture for those who have never visited China and a means to know the country better.

Most European travelers come to China to appreciate its antiquity, so they show little interest in reconstructed architectures after the original ones were destroyed and imitations of European architectures which in essence were “not at all Chinese” (222). The Summer Palace underwent multiple phases of reconstruction. The old Summer Palace was ordered by the Kangxi Emperor and the present Summer Palace was built by the Empress Dowager, which stood inside the former one. After “the Anglo-French armies burnt it in 1860,” the palace suffered from destruction and neglect (221). When visiting here, Sitwell laments the scene he saw, “nothing remains but a dust-heap, in which the small children of neighbouring farmers play” (221). The taste of the architectural style is a unique product of a certain episode, the foundation style of which is determined by the Kangxi Emperor. The designers, the Jesuit Fathers, made the plan, and then it was carried out by Chinese architects and workmen. This design “was opposite to *chinoiserie*,” but was only “an oriental variation on Western themes” (221). This idea echoes with Quennell’s thought regarding the Summer Palace. For Quennell, “its lake is beautiful; but the pavilions and covered walks, built about the middle of the last century, bear horrid witness to the depravity of Chinese taste” (201-202). Both travelers agree that architectures there are “Western” counterfeits. Because of the desolation and counterfeit style, the palace is seldom visited by Europeans. They “admire the earliest and most primitive works, Stonehenges in bronze and pottery as opposed to Trianons” (222). This journey to antiquity for European travelers is for pursuit of their imagined Chinese culture.

European concern with authenticity is also exemplified in their appreciation of the Chinese gardens. The Chinese garden is “a vehicle for the seasons” and “self-expression humbly offered to nature by man” (295). As a rhythm of nature designed by man, the Chinese garden is commonly seen as a comprehensive art of the pond with goldfish, the winding path, the especially carved but seemingly natural rocks, fragrant and diversified peony terraces, and the stone mounds. Sitwell highly appreciates the art of Chinese garden and their long history of peony cultivation.⁴⁵ He writes, “Those in English gardens bear the same relation in beauty to the Peking peony as an ordinary pheasant bears to a golden or Amherst” (300). In Beijing, the considerable size of the flowers, the dazzling petals, and the adorable blossoms, all of which attract connoisseurs to stop and to appreciate each flower in detail. The art of gardening in fact reflects the Chinese people’s attitude toward the world of beauty and the essence of life. Sitwell also admires authentic Chinese culture and believes it is the Chinese “who possess perhaps the finest taste of all races and who still apply it with the most success to the common objects of everyday life” (274). For Sitwell, the Chinese artists, artisans, and architects continue to keep their taste and ability of creation as appreciators can see in artistic works like porcelains and architecture like pavilions. However, in European countries like England after the Industrial Revolution, European people set foot on the road of “the pursuit of ugliness as beauty” (274). Although Sitwell does not explain this point of view in detail, he shows his

⁴⁵ Acton’s title *The Peonies and Ponies* points to Sitwell’s description. It is because of the long history of peony cultivation in China that Acton uses peony to represent Chinese culture.

special appreciation toward pre-industrial antiquity and oriental aesthetics. The parallel between the two cultural contexts made by Sitwell, on the one hand, facilitates English readers' understanding of the lifestyle of Beijing. On the other hand, it is paradoxical that he seeks freshness and authenticity but at the same time intends to find similarity in two cultures.

During his three months' stay in Beijing, Sitwell gave a general sketch of the character of Beijing residents formed by local topography, historical traces of the ruins of palaces and the abandoned temples, and the general layout of Beijing since the Yuan dynasty. Sitwell's cross-cultural perspective to represent Beijing especially articulates the uniqueness of local urban planning, social structures, residents, and architecture. From his European eyes, he shows strong appreciation toward Chinese cultures and sympathy toward the locals' grassroots struggles for their livelihood.

Conclusion

The three British writers in their distinctive ways expressed their perspectives toward cultural spaces of urban and rural China, which existed in the intersections of Chinese style and European style and the traditional and the modern. Firstly, the images about China from Marco Polo are repeatedly taught in history and are kept in European collective memory. On their journey to China, the three British travelers consciously or unconsciously selected images that appeared in Marco Polo's works to re-represent and to finish their process of imagination. Secondly, the English background led to a projection of English values onto the cultural spaces of China

when depicting Beijing, be that for the better acceptance of English readers or due to their own innate mode of thought. Thirdly, with a superficial sketch of local lives, landscapes, and personal experiences during the journey, British intellectuals showed their nostalgia for antiquity in Beijing, which actually expressed a yearning for pre-modern life. At the same historical period, some Chinese authors might have taken similar literary strategies. Although the British and Chinese depictions shared similarities of showing pastoral aesthetics and nostalgia for antiquity, the underlying logic was far from the same. For Chinese writers, historical relics, natural landscape, and idyllic pastoral homeland indicated the literati's dream for traditional peaceful and harmonious life uncontaminated by mundane and secular life and for an old way untainted by Western thoughts, materialism, and mechanism. In contrast, for British intellectuals, the desolated imperial palaces and residents' old ways of living showed their sorrow and lamentations for the declining old empire and expressed their nostalgia toward pre-industrialized lives.

The three writers' works show the significance of space—including related concepts of place, landscape, environment, and city—in understanding cross-culturally social and historical differences. This agrees with Soja's "triple dialectic" of sociality, historicity, and spatiality—a profound change in interpretations of European and Chinese concepts of city and country and performs as a theoretical method in elucidating the society and history of Beijing from foreigners' perspectives. The three writers explore the feasibility of an-Other pattern—a

combination of European and Chinese ways of thought—in explaining the spaces of Beijing, but they may fail to some extent. Swallow tried to represent local life in Beijing objectively and created scientific lists of things with illustrations—an enlightenment project for his English readers. This is a successful attempt at introducing life in Beijing in a European mode, but nothing more. Quennell embarked on his way to antiquity without knowledge preparation and observed the architecture personally and superficially, but he failed to recognize Chinese local attempts at modernization. Sitwell seems more human, making a more genuine attempt to feel the ways of life there. He illustrates the life in Beijing from a comparative perspective of the Chinese and the European ways of thought but not from a combination of both.

Chapter Four. Transportation and Topography: Chinese Spaces and Domestic Turmoil/the Sino-Japanese War

Travel journalists who did not have emotional connections with or cultural appreciations of China sometimes embarked on trips there, because they worked for their publishers in the genres of journalism and war reporting. Among this group of travelers, Peter Fleming was a special correspondent of *The Times* in the Far East. He travelled via Turksib Railway and Trans-Siberian Railway to China in 1933. His travelogue *One's Company: A Journey to China* was published the next year in 1934. The poet W.H. Auden and the novelist Christopher Isherwood visited China from February to June 1938, traveling by sea. In 1939, their travel book *Journey to a War* with a series of poems by Auden and a travel-diary by Isherwood came out a year after their journey. These writers all shared the similarity that their journeys to China were supported by their publishers.

Fleming's trip to China was initially supported by an editor of his company *The Times*, the co-worker whose "first thought was for his colleagues" (Fleming, *One's Company* 23). Thus, Fleming's work as a correspondent gave him an excuse for going to China. Financially, he was paid by some publishers when he wrote travel reports for them. Fleming notes, "I was duly commissioned to write a series of articles on China, each one more portentous and comprehensive than the last; they would be paid

for at a generous rate. The *Spectator* advanced me £50. My publisher, a curiously gullible man, made good the necessary rest” (23). With adequate financial patronage, Fleming could make a living by writing articles concerning China on his trip to the country. For this reason, some articles in his book also appeared in *The Times*, *The Spectator*, and *Life and Letters*. A similar story of publisher’s patronage happened to Auden and Isherwood. According to Auden and Isherwood’s reflection,

Early in the summer of 1937, we were commissioned by Messrs. Faber and Faber of London and by Random House of New York to write a travel book about the East. The choice of itinerary was left to our own discretion. The outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in August decided us to go to China. We left England in January 1938, returning at the end of July. (6)

The patronage lent them an opportunity to see the East, and the Sino-Japanese War determined China as their destination. For the critic Hugh Haughton, “‘a travel book about the East’ is a kind of Orientalist blank cheque ... It was the outbreak of the war ... ‘decided’ them to go to China. ‘The East’ was replaced by ‘A War’” (149).

Profound and complex changes taking place in the world asked for a reshaping of their itinerary. Auden and Isherwood’s journey explains how a different international context of war affects their travel map. The latest information about regional relations between East Asian countries as changed by the Sino-Japanese War rather than general knowledge about the East drew the attention of the journalists. Thus, China became their travel destination. Paul French points out the importance of foreign journalists and correspondents as witnesses of modern Chinese history: “The foreign press corps of China, from its very small beginnings to its heyday, experienced China’s history and development; its convulsions and upheavals; revolutions, reforms

and wars” (2). Fleming, Auden, and Isherwood are among the foreign journalists who introduced the social and political situation of China to the outside world. Fleming was a professional journalist and travel writer, and China was one of his destinations alongside such places as Brazil, India, and Russia. In Auden and Isherwood’s case, they were “amateur” journalists in the sense that they had less experience with reportage. *Journey to a War* is the only news-related travel book which they worked collaboratively on. In contrast with Isherwood who was dedicated to novels, autobiography, and plays, Auden was more engaged in combining reportage and art particularly in the 1930s. Witnessing the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) affected him in a profound way, leading him to pay more attention to political realities and inspiring him to write on war-related issues with his attempt at the combination of reportage and art. Compared with the war in Spain that was reported on by many European and American writers and journalists, the war in China had been paid less attention to. Thus, as Isherwood recorded Auden’s words, “We’ll have a war all of our every own” (*Christopher and his Kind* 289).

After they had secured financial support, their goal of producing solid travel journalism required consideration of a few factors, including cultural encounters, market orientation, and the distinction of their roles as entertainment and as information providers. Auden and Isherwood were very careful about the information they provided to their readers. They worried about “the accuracy of many statements in this book” (Auden and Isherwood 6), because they “spoke no Chinese, and

possessed no special knowledge of Far Eastern affairs” (6). The situation of the market and the acceptability to the readers are also among their major considerations. In the foreword, Auden states, “We can only record, for the benefit of the reader who has never been to China, some impression of what he would be likely to see, and what kind of stories he would likely to hear” (6). It is also the same for Isherwood, “it is one thing to bore your readers, another to mislead them; I did not like to run the risk of doing both” (11). He hoped the readers could justify the superficiality, as the book merely “describes in some detail what I saw and what I did” (11). To make the book more informative and instructive for the readers, Isherwood also provided the politico-military situations of China as background information.

In addition to their journalistic similarities, it is reasonable to put Fleming and Auden and Isherwood in one chapter because they accompanied each other during part of their journey in China. The first time they met was on April 21, 1938, at a tea-party in Hankou, in which many leading Chinese intellectuals were present. At the party, Peter Fleming, his wife (the actress Celia Johnson), Auden, and Isherwood were invited. On their way to report the front line of the war, Auden and Isherwood met Fleming again. After a few days travel with Fleming, Auden and Isherwood’s initial defensive attitude towards him, because of “anti-Etonianism and professional jealousy” (204), changed to a strong admiration for his travel expertise and his passion for harsh environments. Isherwood hoped he and Auden could have an imaginary travel-book named “With Fleming to the Front,” in which he might write

“Laughing and perspiring we scrambled uphill; the Fleming Legend accompanying us like a distorted shadow” (204). Isherwood confesses he is willing to learn the ways to overcome difficulties in harsh natural environments and professional writing techniques as a correspondent from Fleming. According to some critics, Auden and Isherwood’s job as war-journalists is far from excellent when compared with Fleming. Douglas Kerr notes, Fleming “is a gentleman-adventurer, modest, but resourceful and well-informed, and full of the travellers’ *savoir-faire* that Isherwood so lacks” (61). As a special correspondent of *The Times*, Fleming “had travelled longer and further in China” (61). For Kerr, Fleming was equipped with professional skills to interview many prominent figures in China, including the Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975) and the Emperor Pu Yi (1906-1967), when he visited China the first time, and he sought a permit for visiting the Kuomintang’s (the Chinese Nationalist Party) anti-communist front as the first foreign journalist (Kerr 61). It is quite justified to say that Fleming had a more thorough trip in China. He also recorded his journeys and wrote the history of British community in Beijing around 1900 in his other books, such as *News from Tartary* (1936) and *The Siege at Peking* (1959). We could push back against this characterization by pointing out that Auden and Isherwood also interviewed Song May-ling (1898-2003), wife of the Kuomintang leader, and Zhou Enlai (1898-1976), leader of the Chinese Communist Party, and documented major events such as the Japanese bombing of Hankou, the defense of Shanghai, and the massacre in Nanjing, all of which are notable events in China’s anti-Japanese war as

recorded in *Journey to a War*. All three travel journalists are historical figures who analyze and express their ideas regarding Chinese national issues based on political situations in the 1930s.⁴⁶

The main question explored in this chapter is from the perspective of how locomotion and topography affect and are represented in these travelogues. Even though for travel journalists they had a superficial understanding of local cultures and fragmentary encounters with local social situations, their modes of locomotion and their representation of local topography and sites illustrated their unique perspectives on the complicated relationships between Chinese spaces and domestic turmoil/the Sino-Japanese War. Also, considering the “ease of locomotion” is the foundation for travel journalism, this chapter will talk about how transportation and space worked during the journalists’ travels. In this chapter, I will analyze mainly Fleming’s *One’s Company: A Journey to China in 1933* and Auden and Isherwood’s *Journey to a War* with a focus on how the interactions of transportation, topography, and the major cities of militarily strategic importance are represented in their works in a time of politico-military turmoil in China. Firstly, I will briefly explain how the development of modern transportation made their long journey to China possible, as Fleming went to China by railway while Auden and Isherwood came by ship. Secondly, the main body of this chapter will concentrate on how various modes of transportation

⁴⁶ Fleming’s *One’s Company* and Auden and Isherwood’s *Journey to a War* have appeared together in related studies as historical materials to discuss “East-West” interactions and the reactions of China to foreign powers in certain historical period. See David Scott, *China and the International System*; Tom Buchanan, *East Wind*; Paul French, *Through the Looking Glass*. However, Fleming’s and Auden and Isherwood’s descriptions of Chinese landscape and their perceptions about spaces in China are seldom researched by previous scholarship.

facilitated or disturbed their travels in China, how diversified topographies in China determined multiple means of transportation and impacted the situation of Chinese domestic wars and the Sino-Chinese War, and how they described major Chinese cities which have strategic significance according to their understandings. This chapter will focus on how different means of transportation and the wars changed the perceptions of the travelers and influenced their travel maps and how they imagined a new geography of China as they traveled.

This chapter will articulate the importance of the “lost,” which is unobserved or undocumented by Europe. In Fleming’s and Auden and Isherwood’s cases, the travelers’ consistent physical movement across the country by different means of transportation made the Chinese spaces open to their observation and documentation, while their mobility, which also meant instability and contingency, increased their difficulties in finishing the process. Their failed and frustrating moments of reaching destinations explain an-Other possibility of journalism and an-Other alternative of spatial practices and representations of space—approaching unreachable destinations and documenting the process of exploration.

Transportation and International Travel

Improvements in transport, especially the development of railway trains and propeller-driven iron steamships, had already promoted the prosperity of transcontinental journeys in the nineteenth century. Since that time, advances in transportation are always associated with imperial expansion, international trade, and

expatriates' migration. In this historical context, British travel writing emerges to record adventurers' expeditions to alien lands. When Fleming traveled in 1933 and Auden and Isherwood took their first steps on the journey in 1938, the theme and content of travel writing had slightly changed, since they were in the declining period of the heyday of the British Empire. Rather than viewing travel as an imperial adventure, the critic Paul Fussell claims that "Post war London itself could be seen as a powerful stimulus to movement abroad" (18). British travel writers regarded travel as an escape from London in the inter-war period, he argues, because of depression brought by the war, and "puritanical weather," "revolting food," and a "terrible awkwardness of body" became sufficient reasons for the escape (22).⁴⁷ Helen Carr notes that "some travellers still went in hope" and they "longed for a truer, simpler, more intense way of being," which further points out attraction of the far-off destinations (83). Rather than merely exploring their aims for any adventures or for the acquisition of historical facts and social situations within China, I hope to show how some British travelers to China, such as Fleming, Auden, and Isherwood, articulated the challenge they met during their trip as they chose different means of transportation and how the obstacles thrown up by the war brought about failed moments of their attempted observation.

⁴⁷ See, Fussell, *Abroad*. Many British authors were in the "British Literary Diaspora." "[T]he great flight of writers from England in the 20's and 30's which deposited Gerald Brenan in Spain and Robert Graves in Majorca; Norman Douglas in Capri, Naples, and Florence, and Lawrence Durrell in Corfu; Aldous Huxley in California, Christopher Isherwood in Berlin and California, and W.H. Auden, finally, in New York; Bertrand Russell in China and Russia; Somerset Maugham and Katherine Mansfield on the Riviera; V.S. Pritchett in Paris; John Lehmann and Stephen Spender in Vienna; Basil Bunting on Tenerife as well as in Paris, Rapallo, Berlin, the United States, Persia, and Afghanistan; Osbert Sitwell in Italy, and Edith, from 1932 to 1939, in Paris; and the Far Easterners—Edmund Blunden in Tokyo, Harold Acton and I. A. Richards in Peking, Julian Bell in Wuhan University, William Empson in Tokyo and Peking" (Fussell 11). It also includes D. H. Lawrence in Sardinia (10-11).

Different means of transportation affected the experiences of Fleming's and Auden and Isherwood's journeys. The comfort of modern ways of transportation, such as railways and steamships, enabled travelers to pay more attention to the passing scene. These two modes of transportation could guarantee faster and more exciting journeys, and, at the same time, bring unique traveling experiences. When travelers started to shift their focus from how long it still would take to arrive at their destinations to how the alien scenery refreshed their minds and enabled them to reflect on individual and social issues, they were enjoying the great benefit brought by modern transportation.

Fleming's place of departure in the European continent was Holland. From Holland into Russia, Fleming took the train as his means of transportation. "The train pulls out and runs through the evening sunlight across a flat country partitioned with a symmetry so emphatic as to be rather charming" (Fleming 24). Although the train travel offered him a sense of comfort to worry less about the fatigue in a long journey, "the flatness" of the landscape excluded "privacy and surprise," which made Holland "rather dull" to Fleming (24). Fleming had a sojourn in Moscow, his impression of which was "fragmentary and superficial" (41). From Moscow to Northeast China, the whole trip by Trans-Siberian Express took eight days, which carried him from the West into the East, a different world. The train provided a better view of scenery: "those spectacular but unrevealing leaps and bounds" cannot be reached by airplane (44). Besides the train allowing travelers to experience diversified natural and cultural

landscapes, for Fleming, “the dignity, or at least the glamour of the train has lately been enhanced” (44). Different lines of trains or expresses “have successfully exploited its potentialities as a setting for adventure and romance” (44). Fleming’s experience indicates that the train itself, which provided travelers fresh experiences, was an adventure and romance. Exciting, dangerous, or romantic stories might happen during the train travel. The train-life also offered travelers an unreal rhythm of life: the cast in the compartment maintained their still and stable status while the scenery outside changed from cities and suburbs to countryside and forests as the train progressed. Besides, this modern means of transportation enabled travelers to have a stimulation of anticipation and discovery so that they could escape from the current monotonous situation and update their knowledge in an alien land.

On the other hand, Fleming states the disadvantages of train-travel by comparing it with travels on ship. The interminable moving-on and monotonous repetitions of routine life for eight days made the traveler tedious. In contrast, a wider varieties of activities could be conducted on the ship: enjoying “sunny decks” and “swimming baths,” writing brilliant short stories inspired by the fresh surrounding, playing “deck-tennis” with a stranger’s invitation, and experiencing somewhere new as “Columbus bitterly remarked on sighting America” (48). However, on the Trans-Siberian Railway, Fleming had a feeling of being “a prisoner, narrowly confined” (49). The tiresome and monotonous trip restricted his inspiration for writing, because for him “all this peace and leisure has been sterile without being enjoyable”

(49). The only way to stretch his body was to pace the platform during the “three stops of twenty minutes every day” if there were and to go to “the dining-car” for food (50-51). For the rest of day, Fleming merely “read and read and read,” as he was traveling alone and had nobody to speak to (50). Traveling alone by train made the trip, according to Fleming, more uninteresting and tedious.

Fleming’s first place to disembark on China was Manzhouli, an important port as the conjunction of the Trans-Siberian and the Chinese Eastern Railways. Its ownership then was in dispute between the Soviet Union and the Japanese-controlled puppet government of Manchukuo (1932-1945). When Fleming arrived at the station building, he saw the flag of Manchukuo, a “yellow [flag] with an agglomeration of stripes in one corner” (67). The international travelers were issued with the new Manchukuo visas, which were “recognized by only two other countries—Japan and Salvador” (67). The special political and geographical situations in Northeast China were the start for Fleming’s introduction to the complicated situation in China.

In contrast to Fleming’s train journey, Auden and Isherwood made their voyage to China by sea. Their experiences and feelings at sea are not recorded in the travel-diary of prose narrative by Isherwood in *Journey to a War* but are artistically expressed in Auden’s poems at the beginning of the book as well as in a magazine article “Escales” on which the two authors collaborated. The article was republished in Isherwood’s prose collection *Exhumations*. The narrative section of *Journey to a War* starts with their journey from Hong Kong to Guangdong on February 28, 1938.

However, they had started the habit of writing a diary more than a month earlier when they departed from Marseille, France. The article “Escales” echoes Auden’s poems and provides more background information for understanding those poems.

Auden’s “A Voyage,” a sequence of poems consisting of six sections, was entitled “London to Hongkong” formerly. This sequence of poems includes the introductory poem “Whither?” and five other sonnets, “The Ship,” “The Sphinx,” “Hong Kong,” “Macao,” and “A Major Port,” recording the sights they saw during their journey. The poems describe sketches drawn from his trip from Europe to China and inspirations gotten from contrasting the two contrasting worlds. In Auden’s poetic lines, his journey is more general and abstract in comparison with Fleming’s particular and concrete depiction. Selected episodes from the sonnets including “Whither?” “The Ship,” and “Hong Kong” allow us to illustrate how the steamship influenced his thoughts from his departure to his destination.

Countering Fleming’s thought that the ship provides a variety of activities for leisure and anticipations for discovery, the introductory poem “Whither?” by Auden indicates the narrator’s suspicion about the meaning and aim of voyage on the interminable sea. For Auden’s narrator, the voyage by ship brings extreme tiredness and severe illness because of its long duration (“His journey is false, his unreal excitement really an illness”) (Auden and Isherwood 11). In this poem, the image “Good Place” that Auden borrows from Henry James’ short story “The Great Good Place” exists as a rest resort away from one’s overloaded real life and as a worldly

comfortable place for a recharging break from boring daily activities. The monotonous journey makes the narrator lose faith in the possibility of finding something unknown, so the narrator is struggling with whether his journey is false and pointless and whether there exists “the Good Place” to reach. The long and tedious voyage leads to his fatigue and an unhealthy physical condition, which shows the negative side of a modernist journey. However, there are simultaneously some moments that he recalls his past happy memory and anticipates a cure at the end of the journey when he sees “real dolphins with leap and panache/Cajole for recognition, or, far away, a real island” (11). When recalling this voyage and voyagers, Isherwood notes, “This voyage is our illness. As the long days pass, we grow peevish, apathetic, sullen; we no longer expect, or even wish, to recover” (144). Isherwood’s narration adds a footnote to Auden’s poem as it agrees with the narrator’s idea that the voyage is illness and further explains the “peevish, apathetic, sullen” feelings because of the long days and dreary journey are the origins of their illness. Isherwood and Auden’s indifferent and depressed feelings persist, which are difficult to recover from with days passing by. The leaping dolphins or a real island, which add variation to the monotonous horizon every day, are the only comfort. In this sense, Auden’s narrator and Isherwood do agree with Fleming that the passing scenery and enjoyable weather on the deck like waves, dolphins, and islands are benefits brought by the ship voyage.

Auden’s “The Ship” represents their journey from London to Hong Kong, from the metropolis of the empire to its periphery of the Far East. As recorded in “Escales,”

Auden and Isherwood also traveled to places like Cairo, Djibouti, and Colombo on their way to Hong Kong when occasionally the ship harbored at some ports. These places enrich their experience of alien lands, allowing them to get to know local people and culture, which are also benefits of a sea voyage. Their experience in Africa is captured in Auden's sonnet "Sphinx." The prose narrative in "Escales" indicates the detailed experience on the trip, which makes the readers feel there is a buffering area for the cultural encounter between Britain and China. However, Auden's poem "The Ship" presents the cultural contrast more directly. In "The Ship," the slow locomotion brought by ship ("Slowly our Western culture in full pomp progresses") means not only the travelers' physical displacement but also the European civilization's gradual encounter with the Far East (Auden and Isherwood 12). The ship takes the narrator away from the center of the 'civilized' Empire ("All streets are brightly lit; our city is kept clean") and heads towards the Far East ("Over the barren plains of a sea; somewhere ahead/ A septic East, odd fowl and flowers, odder dresses") (12). There, wars and unknowns wait for the travelers. Isherwood expressed his feeling about the journey to China: The whole voyage "from the January London to tropical February Hong Kong" was "dream-like, unreal"—a complex feeling of being "now boring, now extraordinary and beautiful" (18). Their first destination was Hong Kong, the colonial land of the British Empire at that time, which was in proximity culturally to Britain but geographically to Mainland China. Their first impression of Hong Kong, recorded in "Escales," was that the port had "junks with patched, dragon-wing sails"

in a chilly and drizzling fog and “here, surely, is the ugliest city ever built upon the earth” (Isherwood, “Escales” 149). The European architecture, foods, and activities made the city familiar, but the weather and terrible environment gave them an uncomfortable feeling. Auden, in this sequence of poems, records his impression of the city in his poem “Hong Kong.” Hong Kong is a highly developed and cultured trade and port city with a European style of living habits and social institutions. The cultural sophistication of Hong Kong is represented by specific details of how they dress (“suits well-tailored”) and how they behave (“they wear them well”) and of how the society is constructed (“our bankers have erected/ A worthy temple to the Comic Muse”) (Auden and Isherwood 13). On the other hand, the geographical proximity to Mainland China makes the narrator feel that he has heard the horn of the war and that the flames of the war will burn here (“A bugle on this Late Victorian hill/ Puts out the soldier’s light; off-stage, a war/ Thuds like the slamming of a distant door”) (13). For Auden and Isherwood, their short sojourn here was in a perpetual hurry, struggling for dinner parties, appointments, and “meetings with grotesquely famous newspaper-characters—the British Ambassador, the Governor, Sir Victor Sassoo” (18). Their short stay in Hong Kong still immersed them in European culture and their later entrance to Guangdong was the start of their real experience of China.

Determination on Choices of Transportation in China

The train and the ship brought fresh experiences to more people, and stoked public appetites for transcontinental travel. The selection between the two options was

mainly determined by the traveller's personal preference. By contrast, their choice of modes of transportation in China was significantly associated with the local natural and social environments. Depending on the social convenience and local topographical conditions, diversified means of transportation, from horses, rickshaws, and sampans to high-speed automobiles, trains, and airplanes were employed to benefit their particular needs during Fleming, Auden, and Isherwood's trips in China. Diversity of transportation enriched Fleming's experience to view the local landscape from different dimensions. Similarly, Auden and Isherwood's train travel was affected by and impacted their perspectives on the progress of the Sino-Japanese War in China. Primarily, the war accelerated the mobility of the Chinese people. Because the Japanese invaders occupied important cities in the north and along the coastline, many people, materials, and industrial equipment were moved inland. The railway became an important form of Chinese long-distance migration at that time. International travelers also traveled along railway lines because railways connected important cities. This was convenient for journalists who wished to interview Chinese celebrities and to become familiar with local conditions. On the other hand, the railway became a target of attack in the war, giving rise to inconvenience for international travel as well as for Chinese internal migration.

The train was not always an option for Fleming, but his choice of transportation was significantly determined by local topography. The mountainous areas around Shenyang and the under-development railway system between prominent cities meant

that Fleming, for part of his journey, had to take the airplane. Because the Japanese army occupied Northeast China and controlled the Chinese puppet government, military fortifications and the transportation system were under the Japanese army's control. In the company of a prominent Japanese official, Mr. H., Fleming started southwards from the Shengyang airfield to Jinzhou. They took a military airplane in "the stuffy cabin with two Japanese officers" (93). The view from the flight provided a new perspective on the patterns of landscape—rivers, mountains, farmlands, and cities. Fleming describes his feelings when taking the airplane:

The country below us was patterned intricately and with affection, like a patchwork quilt.... Symmetry and economy of space ruled in that meticulously quartered land. The different greens of the different crops were partitioned by paths and dykes which might have been drawn with a ruler.... For three hours we flew south, and presently came in sight of a big, dark-grey, sprawling city. This was Chinchow [Jinzhou], and here we landed. The different greens of the different crops were partitioned by paths and dykes which might have been drawn with a ruler. (93)

According to Fleming, the crop pattern in north China has been large, regular, and well-organized since long ago with different Chinese generations' accumulation. He describes this human-designed landscape with the beauty of symmetry and the economy of usage as "the land dignity," which is deserving of people's respect for the wisdom of the Chinese (93). Fleming thinks that the garrison town Jinzhou is not very beautiful, since "The streets are tortuous, narrow, irregular, and dirty" (96). The traditional typical fine houses in the north with courtyards and gateways are concealed behind walls. The streets are "roofed over" with mat awnings named *pengs* partially in summer, and the shop fronts are decorated "with long vertical banners and the

lacquer signs of the tradesmen” to make the interior of shops dim (96). This explains to certain extent why Fleming’s describes Jinzhou from the airplane as “a big, dark-grey, sprawling city” (93). From Jinzhou to Rehe, Fleming also took the plane westwards. Below the plane mountains and in-between gullies were open to observe. “The plane, which before had, lorded it unchallenged in the void, now seemed a puny, vulgar intruder, a little quivering minnow among immobile Tritons” (102-103). The turbulence caused by the topography affected the stability of the flight when the height was “almost at 3000 feet” (103). When the flight approaching the City of Rehe, Fleming saw below them temples in the encircling foothills. Finally, the plane landed in a river bed, under a black cliff.

Horse was the most convenient means of transportation to see the countryside, especially in the mountainous areas. In some less-developed areas, modern transportation was far from developed, so horses could make travel more comfortable on badly maintained roads. In the mountains east of Shengyang was the worst bandit country in Northeast China. On Fleming’s trip to investigate situations of banditry, he used horses in mountainous areas, along with the Japanese army. Fleming had a sufficient knowledge about the socio-political situations in Northeast China, especially the complicated relation between the invasion of the Japanese army and the rise of the bandits. It was possible that for the purpose of guaranteeing his own safety he traveled mostly in Northeast China with the Japanese army. Fleming introduced how efficient the wagon driven by horse was. For Fleming, although the “mixed

teams of two ponies and a mule, or two mules and a pony” followed with “little stocky wagons with two enormous iron-studded wheels” looked “clumsy,” they seemed to have the capacity to carry everything, including his very heavy belongings (149). Fleming was very satisfied with the “white pony, a very pretty, wise, and completely tireless animal” that carried him (139). The horses relieved the travelers from fatigue in the long march in the labyrinthine hills, when Fleming and the group of Japanese soldiers, a long-disjointed file of men, animals, and carts, forded rivers and moved along the valley and up into the mountains. Traveling by horse allowed Fleming more opportunities to enjoy the scenery and contact with local people. Fleming appreciated the brilliant moon, which “over-romanticized the huge and shaggy hills” (154). The group passed through scattered villages with tall chimneys and cooking fires and with indigenous poor villagers. On the other hand, the relatively slow pace of traveling by horse made it a long trip, so in the mountains they had no place to have a good rest and meal. They had to camp in spacious places around some villages and have simple prepared food like “boiled rice, pickled mushrooms, and tinned fish, washed down with a local tea-substitute made of kiaoliang [gaoliang]” (142). Fleming shows the process of his taking efforts to seek news and to report it effectively, but the fatigue and lack of food and rest increased the difficulty to reach his goal, which I will further explain in the next section.

Down the south, Fleming changed multiple types of other transportation, such as train, boat, automobile, and sampan. Automobiles allowed travelers to choose a

flexible route and to stop anytime and anywhere to explore appealing sites. The riverboats, particularly sampans in the southeast part of China, were major modes of transportation, which allowed him to experience a life of leisure on water. On his way from Hangzhou to Nanjing, he paid special attention to the buses on the road. For Fleming, in the most unexpected parts of China, bus services, partially run by “the provincial government” and partially by “the private enterprise,” were the basis for national transportation and served as a significant compensation for a lack of railway (200). Fleming further illustrates his understanding of how the development of a bus system benefits the local people and the society: “much smaller capital outlay,” “more scope for individualism,” “less vulnerable” than railway “in the event of political upheavals,” and the promotion of frequent citizen exchanges between towns and villages and to build new contacts to break down “the barriers of distance and of dialect,” two obstacles to Chinese unity (200).

Fleming attempted almost every means of transportation in China with a combination of both traditional and modern modes. Those means of transportation, including the airplane, horse, bus, and sampan, opened the landscape of China to his observation. When commenting on the transportation in China, he says, “Travel in any form of public conveyance in China is almost always instructive, amusing, and uncomfortable” (172). Diversity of transportation allowed him to encounter China from different views, which was “instructive” and “amusing” (172). On the other hand, Fleming points out the unbearable aspects to him: “Noise and delay are two of

the chief drawbacks to travel in China” (231). Noise and delay brought Fleming as a foreign traveler an uncomfortable feeling, but he did not explain clearly in what specific ways he was annoyed by noise and delay when taking different forms of transportation. His comments concerning the transportation network then in China were very comprehensive and insightful, which greatly enhanced people’s understanding of the transportation at that time. His reference to delays are a kind of hint at the enormous amounts of time and number of experiences that go absent because they do not fit into the genre of travel writing, which is about moving, seeing, and getting there. The undocumented experiences may have made up the majority of his experiences, and they occupy a strange position: they are there and not-there, they are travel but not-moving, they are an-Other experience that we can only glimpse in the pages of his narrative. An-Other experience is possibly caused by barriers of approaching a hardly reached destination.

Unlike Fleming’s focus on key events in the Japanese army’s anti-banditry campaign and the Kuomintang’s anti-communism military action, which he experienced in China in a general sense, Isherwood records the detailed date, specific matters, as well as the transportation means that he and Auden took during their journey. Since Auden and Isherwood’s travel destinations were all dominant cities in China, the railway, which connects cities, was their primary choice, especially during war time. On the other hand, as the war moved inland, not merely railway lines but also major cities were under Japanese attack, which increased the difficulty of

travelling around. The Japanese launched air-raids in main cities in China, which threatened their safety as war correspondents and also greatly increased their difficulty in traveling by train.

Most of the time on their journey, Auden and Isherwood took trains, except when the railway was especially impacted by the war. There were two alternative ways from Hong Kong to Guangdong province: the river-line or the Jiulong-Guangzhou Railway. They left Hong Kong to Guangdong in a riverboat named “Tai-Shan” on February 28, 1938. They chose the river-line because the Japanese planes were bombing the railway almost everyday, but the “river-boats, which were British-owned, had never been bombed” (Auden and Isherwood 17). The main railway to connect north and south China is Beijing-Guangzhou line. Since the war did not move inland to the central part of China during Auden and Isherwood’s sojourn in China, their travels by train to Hankou, Zhengzhou, and Xi’an were seldom influenced. On March 4, they planned to leave Guangdong to Hankou by train along the Beijing-Guangzhou line, but the Japanese had bombed the rail line the day before. Luckily, the line was soon repaired by maintenance staff. Auden and Isherwood’s trip, which merely took them two days and three nights, was not impacted, and they did not suffer from any moments of stopping in an obscure provincial village. On March 17, they left Hankou for Zhengzhou by train. This line was part of Beijing-Guangzhou line, but at that time, it went no further north than Zhengzhou to Beijing, for “the railway bridge over the Yellow River had been blown up to check the Japanese

advance” (63). According to Isherwood’s narrative, Zhengzhou “stands at the junction of China’s two main railway lines: the Pin-Han [Ping-Han Railway],⁴⁸ running north and south; the Lung-Hai [Longhai Railway], running east and west” (66). Thus, the city Zhengzhou is strategically important due to its location in China’s railway system. Cutting the railway from Zhengzhou to Beijing, although bringing inconvenience to their travel, effectively stopped the campaign of the Japanese invaders.

From Zhengzhou, after they stayed in Shangqiu for a few days, they arrived at Xuzhou on March 24. Although Shangqiu railway station was occasionally bombed, their trip through Shangqiu to Xuzhou was not difficult for the railway to Xuzhou was unbroken. Xuzhou was the front at that time where the Nationalist soldiers tried to stop the meeting of Japanese armies coming down from the direction of Beijing and up from Shanghai. “Sü-chow, it appears, is in no immediate danger of falling. But the enemy are not more than thirty miles to the north, and they are advancing from the south-east as well” (90). They met General Li Zongren (1891-1969) and wanted to ask for “passes to visit the front” (88). Very near to the front, in Xuzhou in the morning of March 26, they experienced a big air raid on the station and the center of the town. In order to approach the Xuzhou front, Auden and Isherwood originally planned to go to the front by train and to return the same day, spending a few hours in the trenches. Since the railway was used to move troops, which increased uncertainty and danger to their travel, Auden and Isherwood finally decided to hire rickshaws and

⁴⁸ Pin-Han is the railway from Peking to Wuhan. At that time, Peking (Beijing) is also called Beiping 北平. Pin-Han railway is part of Jing-Guang Railway.

to travel independently by road. Travelling by rickshaw took them a whole day to approach the front. They had more freedom to look around the situations caused by the war: an occasional army lorry and groups of refugee peasants. On their trip to the front, they inspected the second line. Because the day was getting dark and they were persuaded by the Chinese general many times about how dangerous the front was, they gave up on getting to the first line. They thought, “it is nearly impossible for casual foreigners like ourselves to assess Chinese military morale” (106). The geographical and social situations caused by the war became the blockage for the journalists to reach their destinations and to fulfill the aims of their observation.

Their last stop in the journey was Shanghai. Their direct trip through Hankou to Wenzhou and then to Shanghai was far from easy. At that time, they needed to penetrate the southeast front—“The Japanese forces were working their way inland from Shanghai, thrusting forward like the spokes of an irregularly-shaped fan” (154). The fan covered north to Nanjing, west approaching Wuhu, and south to Hangzhou. “Although Wenchow [Wenzhou] itself was still in Chinese hands the mouth of its river was guarded by the Japanese, and only vessels of friendly nationality were allowed to pass in and out unmolested” (224). Since Japan had not declared war with American and European countries, with other nations’ flags, steamers could penetrate their lines through the river-ports of Ningbo or Wenzhou to reach the International Settlement in Shanghai. The book title “Journey to a War” suggests their self-awareness that what they experienced was trying to get to a war. However, their

journey to a war seemed perpetually interfered with by that war. Simultaneously, they were always seeking for opportunities to have a more sufficient understanding of that war—a hardly reached goal because of that war.

Topography of China and Domestic Upheavals/ the Sino-Japanese War

The historical events are more stimulating when put within a broader context of very down-to-earth factors: the natural and social topography. In both works by Fleming and by Auden and Isherwood, a strong relationship between the role played by topography of China and movements of the armies is particularly discussed. The topography in China not merely affected their travel plan and their choices of transportation. What's more, the principal mountains and lowlands and the location of cities are all topographical reasons influencing the military operations. According to Fleming's interpretation, the physical features of the mountainous landscape in Northeast China and Jiangxi Province contribute to the complicated situations of banditry and the rise of Communism when he visited China. In Auden and Isherwood's writing, the plains in the east part of China and the strategic importance (caused by their location) of some cities, like Hankou, Xuzhou, and Shanghai, determine the process of the Sino-Japanese War in China.

The physical features of the landscape in China had a military and political impact upon the military operations in the 1930s. For Fleming, "the pacification of the country [the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo]—which covers an area greater than that of Germany and France combined, and it mostly mountainous, thickly wooded,

and inadequately served by communications—is far from complete” (129). The vast region, the primeval environment, and inadequate communications caused by a less-developed economy and transportation system were all factors leading to the rise of banditry. Banditry is a “by-product of civil wars, famines, floods, and plague” (129). The Japanese occupation of Northeast China made the problem worse. Fleming believes that the Japanese propaganda since 1931 had blinded the world to know one fact: Northeast China under the rule of Zhang Daolin “was a region not only naturally richer, but actually better administered and no more over-militarized than any area of corresponding size south of the Wall” (129). After Japanese invasion towards Northeast China after 1931, bandits increased in number because large bodies of soldiers did not have leaders and pay. Some of the broken armies attempted to resist and increased the complexity of the bandit problem. The mountainous forms of the land added to the complexion of banditry. The mountains here were densely forested, and rivers and wetlands were complex networks, which provided hiding places for bandits.⁴⁹ No railways dared to run at night except the main line of the South Manchurian Railway. “The worst bandit country in Manchuria was in the mountains east of Mukden [Shenyang]” (134). Fleming along with the Japanese army marched on the road to the mountains east of Shenyang in order to report on the anti-bandit front. For the bandits, due to the terrain in Northeast China, they could be effective

⁴⁹ The loosely-aligned armies were caused by lack of efficient military management and sufficient/timely payment. A large percent of them became bandits for making a living. There were stories about the bandits who robbed the rich and assisted the poor. Some of them participated in anti-Japanese campaigns and contributed to the victory of the Sino-Japanese War. This was especially the case in Northeast China, but the situation of banditry in *Peking Picnic* was different. The bandits that Laura’s group met are stragglers of the warlord armies who were defeated. They run away aimlessly, and rob/harass the local residents.

guerrilla against the regular and organized force. Considering the topography in the mountain, according to Fleming, the plan of the Japanese campaign included taking up positions of the passes on the far side of the valley and delivering a frontal attack on the bandits' headquarters by separate routes. However, the process was far from easy: "in the heat of noon," the Japanese army with whom Fleming went to report on banditry needed to climb very high and steep passes and then dropped down into valleys repeatedly to trace the bandits, which made some of the Japanese soldiers fall "out with heat-stroke" (151). These labyrinthine hills helped the bandits to hide their trail and guaranteed their relative safety against the campaign of the Japanese army. Fleming did not finish the process of his observation of the combat between the Japanese army and the bandits. Finally, at the town of Xinbin, Fleming saw two bandits tied up, waiting to be shot that night. Fleming did not explain whether he believed they were real bandits or civilians, as the bandits were seemingly "inanimate" and "poorly dressed in peasants' clothes" in his description (169). His tough journey and other possible undocumented reasons stopped him from reporting banditry, but Fleming's subsequent journey shows his persist interest in the relationship between topography and political campaigns.

The mountains in Jiangxi province, on the other hand, contributed to the rise of Communism and added to the difficulty of the Nationalist army's anti-communist campaign. Fleming illustrates, "The Nationalist generals in Kiangsi [Jiangxi] are facing a problem of great difficulty. Topographically it is much the same problem

which confronts the Japanese bandit-suppression forces in most parts of Manchukuo” (188). Fleming took account of the Communist situation in South China, the situation of which was known to few foreigners then in China outside of official quarters in Beijing and Shanghai. According to Fleming’s knowledge, “no previous journey had been made to the anti-Communist front by a foreigner” (181). At the time of Fleming’s trip to China in 1933, a Chinese Soviet Republic had proclaimed itself and controlled a nucleus area of central and southern Jiangxi and western Fujian and at one time or another expanded to parts of Hunan, Guangdong, and Hubei. For Fleming, Nanchang, the capital of Jiangxi province, was the base for Chiang Kai-shek’s “preparing for his anti-Communist campaign” (205). The city of Nanchang was thoroughly protected by a massive city wall and “a wide circle of high barbed wire entanglements” outside the wall (230). From Nanchang down the eastern road, a small town called Nanfeng, held by the Nationalist troops, was Fleming’s destination. To reach the front and reveal what he conceived of as the truth about Communism in China to the whole English-speaking world was the task for him as *The Times* correspondent.

Journalists had to ask the permission of military headquarters and apply for a pass to the front. According to Fleming’s report, there was no real “front” of the Nationalist Government troops’ anti-communist campaign. This was more like a defense rather than an attack for every officer that Fleming spoke to: “fortifications were erected around villages and towns” and “no outposts and few patrols” were built

outside of these fortifications (188). Unlike the Japanese's campaign against the bandits in Northeast China, no airplanes were used against the Red Army by the Nationalist Government because of the mountainous and densely wooded landscape in southern Jiangxi province. For Fleming, "the mountains are the Communists' strength" (237). Nanfeng is a "picturesque town" with "ancient walls of great thickness" (262). Firing broke out along the road and a possible Communist attack to Nanfeng might cut the road at any time. Back to Nanchang, Fleming took an alternative road to a village called Ji'an "the furthest stronghold of the [Nationalist] government troops," but no proper transportation could be provided to reach Ji'an (269). His plan to gain access to the inner Red Area finally failed mainly because of the mountainous area and lack of proper road and transportation. All these factors constituted the barriers for his completion of both journey and observation. He was always approaching his destination, but he never reached.

Like Fleming, Auden and Isherwood also believed that the topography of China significantly impacted the campaign of the Sino-Japanese War. The war lasted eight years and consisted of many small battles. The Battle of Songhu (August-November, 1937) began on August 13, 1937. After the Lugou Bridge Incident (July 7, 1937), the Japanese army invaded North China. For facilitating long-term combat, Chiang Kai-shek took the initiative to counterattack the Japanese army in Shanghai in order to change the direction of the Japanese invasion from north-south to east-west. The Japanese invaders' military plan was illustrated by Isherwood when he describes their

visit to the south-eastern front. “The Japanese forces were working their way inland from Shanghai, thrusting forward like the spokes of an irregularly-shaped fan. To the north-west the fan covered Nanjing; to the west it approached Wuhu... to the south-west it touched Hang-chow” (Auden and Isherwood 154). In December 1937, after the Japanese army invaded and occupied Nanjing, the Japanese base camp intended to open up the Tianjin-Pukou Railway to unite its northern and southern battlefields. For the implementation of the north-south advance, the first step was to occupy Xuzhou,⁵⁰ the strategic location of East China. Under this historical situation, during Auden and Isherwood’s trip, the Battle of Xuzhou (January-May, 1938) was going on. Railways connected important political and economic centers in China. The Japanese strategy was to occupy the prominent cities, so they could control surrounding areas and eventually the whole nation. However, Isherwood points out, “Since the Japanese army strikes only along easy lines of communication—a highroad, a railway, or a river—it should be possible for the ‘guerrilla’ units to operate around and even behind the enemy’s positions” (241) after his talks with Mr. Rewi Alley, a factory inspector and official of the Public Works Department in Shanghai. This viewpoint echoes with the Communists’ policies of “guerrilla warfare” and “encircling the cities from the rural areas” during China’s anti-Japanese war. These policies were put forward to develop armed struggle in rural areas where the forces of

⁵⁰ Xuzhou is located in the southeast of the North China Plain and northwest of Jiangsu Province. The city is the intersection of water and land communications in both the north-south and east-west directions in the eastern China. The Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal runs through it, and the Longhai Railway and the Beijing-Shanghai Railway intersect here. It is known as “thoroughfare of five provinces.” If the Japanese army occupied Xuzhou, then they could take Zhengzhou along the Longhai Railway (Lanzhou-Lianyungang Railway) to the West, and further take Wuhan along the Ping-Han Railway (Beijing-Hankou Railway) in the West.

the Japanese army were weak as a way to seize the country's political power. Despite Isherwood's knowledge about China being limited, his insightful ideas just spoke directly to the Communists' policies, which were proved to lead a way for China's victory in the war. His eyes were opened to a different perspective: the victory in a war might depend on the rural areas—the less industrialized region. Besides the benefit for the operation of “guerrilla warfare,” the vast rural areas in China around major cities were significantly important to relocate the Chinese industry, as the Japanese army occupied large cities and towns. This was added to his knowledge: the rural areas, which are seen as less developed ones in the modern age, also plays a role in determining history.

Departing from Hong Kong to inland China, Hankou⁵¹ was Auden and Isherwood's most interesting destination. Hankou used to be a treaty port with five foreign concessions. At the time of Auden and Isherwood's visit, only the French Concession still officially existed. Along the northern shore of Yangtze River which passes Hankou, the European facades, including British and American drug-stores, cinemas, churches, clubs, and the Navy bars, told the history of the city as an old treaty port with foreign countries. Besides the significance of Hankou's location and history, Hankou performed the role of a political and cultural center at wartime China. For Auden and Isherwood, Hankou was “the real capital of war-time China” at the time that they visited China (40). All celebrities in Hankou at that time proved the city

⁵¹ Hankou is a part of Wuhan. Wuhan (Wuchang, Hankou, and Hanyang) was the provisional capital (1937.12-1938.10) of War-time China. After the Battle of Wuhan (1938.6-10), Hankou was captured by the Japanese invaders. At that time, Auden and Isherwood had left China. Wuhan is known as “Nine Provinces' Thoroughfare,” which proves its strategic importance of location in map of China.

as an interim political and cultural center in wartime China. According to Isherwood, “All kinds of people—Chiang kai-shek, and Agnes Smedley, Chou En-lai [Zhou Enlai]; generals, journalists, foreign naval officers, soldiers of fortune, airmen, missionaries, spies. Hidden here are all the clues which would enable an expert, if he could only find them, to predict the events of the next fifty years” (40). On their first visit to Hankou on March 14, 1938, they interviewed “Madame Chiang Kai-shek [Song Meiling]” to talk about the national policy of “The New Life Movement” (1934-1949) and the relationship between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party (54-60). On their second visit, they also interviewed Du Yuesheng (1888-1951) about “the Red Cross’s work in China” (160-161). Arranged by Hang Liwu (1903-1991), Auden and Isherwood met Chinese intellectuals present in Hankou as well. In the small party, Tian Han (1898-1968) showed the poem he wrote in honor of Auden and Isherwood. The original poem was written in Chinese, and the English version translated by Hong Shen (1894-1955) appears in Isherwood’s narration part.

Really, the ends of the world are neighbours:
Blood-tide, flower-petals, Hankow spring,
Shoulder to shoulder for civilization fight.
Across the sea, long journey, how many Byrons? (144)

Auden replied with a sonnet that he wrote the day before on the theme of a dead Chinese soldier. This party was the Chinese-British intellectuals’ cultural communication in which both of them expressed their mutual concerns about the war in China. For Tian, Auden and Isherwood are Byronic heroes—neighbors and comrades of Chinese people prepared to fight with them shoulder to shoulder and to

give the international support.⁵² Tian's poem represented attitudes of Chinese intellectuals toward Auden and Isherwood: the two writers and their works would help Chinese people gain international attention and assistance to win the war.

Because of the political and cultural status of Hankou, the city was frequently bombed by the Japanese army even though the city was not at the frontline during Auden and Isherwood's sojourn. There were frequently sirens blaring because of the Japanese army's air raids. On March 15, they experienced an air raid. Instead of hiding somewhere, Auden and Isherwood always found a favorable view to record the raid. After hearing the scream of the air-raid siren, they "climbed to the roof of one of Hankow's [Hankou's] highest buildings, the American bank" (60). The bank had a good location and was near to the British Consulate where they lived. From the roof, they had a bird's eye view of Hankou. Isherwood describes, "The brilliant moon lit up the Yangtze and the whole of the darkened city. The streets lay empty and dead, except when a lorry, carrying soldiers or ambulance-workers" (60). The natural moonlight brightened the river, which brought them a pleasant feeling. However, the war destroyed the civilian life: all lights were switched off and no citizens, except the soldiers, dared to be present on the street. Bombs fell like pouring rain, and the searchlight criss-crossed like dividers across the sky. "Guns smashed out," and "tracer-bullets bounced up" (61). The violent, bloody, and shocking war scene made them catch their breath, and they failed to use conventional words to describe their

⁵² George Gordon Byron (1788-1824) famously died in the Greek War of Independence. For memory of his contribution, Greeks revere him as a national hero.

exact feelings after the air-raid. When they visited Hankou the second time, in order to view the real scene of the war, Auden and Isherwood came to the front of the bombing. They then went to the banks of the Han River, on the opposite side of which were “the Hanyang Arsenal” and “the slum-suburbs” (163). The Japanese dropped many bombs there. They “heard later that five hundred civilian had been killed in the raid and thirty planes were destroyed—nine Chinese and twenty-one Japanese” (165). According to Isherwood’s record, “that night Hankow [Hankou] celebrated its greatest aerial victory” (165). Three months after Auden and Isherwood left Hankou, the Battle of Hankou (June-October, 1938) started, and in October the Japanese invaders occupied the city.

Shanghai is another city which had particular strategic importance for China, according to the two correspondents. Auden and Isherwood stayed in Shanghai from May 25 to June 12, 1938. During their sojourn in Shanghai, Auden and Isherwood lived “at the British Ambassador’s private villa in the French Concession” (228). Because of the Japanese occupation of the outer city, the international town, in spite of being crowded with Chinese refugees, was the safest shelter for all people in Shanghai. In Japanese occupied Shanghai, Auden and Isherwood had a feeling of diversity with many irreconcilable factors—the old life and the new, the rich and the poor, the modern and the backwardness, and different social powers. Isherwood wrote, “In this city the gulf between society’s two halves is too grossly wide for any bridge” (242). Here was no well-developed infrastructure, but the city was materially

sufficient to gratify people's desires. Here were semi-skyscrapers of the Bund,⁵³ but behind them was "a sordid and shabby mob of smaller buildings" (227). The two sides of Shanghai could not mingle but coexisted in the same city.

Isherwood also analyzed the strategic importance of Shanghai to the victory of China in the Sino-Japanese War. Auden and Isherwood interviewed Mr. Alley to talk about Shanghai's economics and its relation to the whole nation from a general point of view. According to Alley in Auden and Isherwood's work, "The Japanese have destroyed seventy per cent of China's industry. Some of the luckier concerns have been able to crowd into the International Settlement" (235). Alley's idea right explains what happened to China's industry before and after Japanese invasion. In the thirty years before the Japanese invasion into Shanghai, industries in different parts of China had a problem of unbalanced development: most of the industries were concentrated in the coastal areas and the big river ports, which were threatened or occupied by Japanese then. Thus, the Japanese invasion from the coastal areas "destroyed seventy per cent of China's industry." Isherwood further conveys Alley's words in his prose. The industry in occupied districts of Shanghai and even that in the settlement could "only strengthen the Shanghai area as an economic base for the Japanese war-machine" (240). The only efficient measure for China to win the war, for Alley, was to develop "an industrial co-operative movement in the interior of the country" (239) to move all important industry in Shanghai to the inner provinces to

⁵³ The Bund, or Waitan, is a waterfront area in central Shanghai. This area was conceded to foreign powers from the 1860s to 1930s as the rich and powerful center of International Settlements in Shanghai. The Bund is also a main scene that J.G. Ballard's story takes place.

avoid the industry falling into the enemy's hands. These forward-looking and insightful views of Alley, which was known to the public through Auden and Isherwood's book, proved to be just the measures taken by the Chinese government at that time. The inland relocation of factories and daily/military supplies played a major role in China's persistence in the long-term resistance to the Japanese. Finally departing from Shanghai, Auden and Isherwood left Mainland China.

Conclusion

As special correspondents, Fleming, Auden, and Isherwood embarked on the road to China when the country was suffering from domestic turmoil or anti-invasion wars. Their preferred means of transportation from Britain to China allowed them to record their views on both the advantages and disadvantages of diversified international travels in their time, especially by train and ship. Their works recorded not only important events that happened in China then but also their insightful understanding of interactions between transportation/topography and local social and political conditions. The choice of transportation was determined by local topography, infrastructure, the aims of travel, and even campaign of military turmoil. At the same time, they depicted a general and comprehensive transportation network of China then. Furthermore, the topography of China and the location of predominant cities had strategic importance to determine the domestic turmoil and the process of the Sino-Japanese War. More importantly, barriers brought by their different means of transportation and by the war or political turmoil they reported on made them fail to

complete their journey and observation as journalists when Fleming planned to investigate the situations of bandits in Northeast China and of the anti-Communist company around Nanchang and Auden and Isherwood intended to go to the front, they had to give up. The spatial perspective supplements the conventional social and historical viewpoints: the difficulty in completing their journeys due to the their relationship with local spaces left them dangling. Local transportation, topography, and cities brought them different, unforeseen experiences when they collected and wrote news stories. Their understandings of China were enhanced in unexpected ways as they encountered unique local historical and social situations.

Chapter Five. Shanghai and Adolescent Shanghailanders: Landscape Exploration and the Reconstruction of Order

Previous chapters prominently concentrate on intellectuals' experiences in China based on their travel or long-term stay, and for most of them the first time they encountered China was in their adulthood. This chapter addresses British children of settler communities in Shanghai, who spent opulent lives there with their families when they were little. They were born in Shanghai, but their memories here ended in their adolescent years when they left China. Denton Welch and J. G. Ballard are the clearest examples of authors who recollect memories of their younger years. They recover their childhood or adolescence and speak through their young protagonists where they combine their own ability to express feelings in retrospect and their protagonists' curiosity.

Welch⁵⁴ was born at the Victoria Nursing House in Shanghai. Inspired by reading J. R. Ackerley's *Hindoo Holiday*, Welch published his first book—an autobiographical novel entitled *Maiden Voyage*—in 1943 when he was 28. The last half of the book is about his holiday in China at the age of sixteen in 1931. *Maiden*

⁵⁴ Welch has a short but successful literary career. His most famous novels, including *Maiden Voyage*, *In Youth is Pleasure*, and *A Voice Through a Cloud*, are all based on his real experience. Current researches regarding him and his works focus on his life, especially his passion for material culture and his sexual preference. See Michael De-la-Noy, *The Making of a Writer*; James Methuen-Campbell, *Denton Welch, Writer and Artist*; Emily Stockard, "The Journals of Denton Welch: Material Culture and Trauma"; Matthew Clarke, "Beyond Gay: Denton Welch's in Youth is Pleasure."

Voyage is based on a collection of materials from his childhood and adolescence—the beauty of the Chinese landscape, the colorful life of Shanghai, and his trips beyond the scope of the Europeanized area of Shanghai. Ballard is another writer taking into account the lives of British settlers in Shanghai. Ballard⁵⁵ was born at Shanghai General Hospital in the International Settlement and became best known for his semi-autobiographical novel *Empire of the Sun*. The novel, published in 1984, draws on Ballard's personal childhood experience in Shanghai during the Japanese occupation and his internment in Lunghua Civilian Assembly Center during World War II. In early 1943, Ballard, his parents, and his younger sister were interned in the Lunghua camp. His family lived in the G Block, a small area with forty small rooms. His experiences there form the basis of *Empire of the Sun*. The first part of the story mainly depicts the British boy's life in the International Settlement before the war. Since Japan had not yet declared war on Britain then, the British living in the International Settlement still enjoyed a comfortable and happy life. After Pearl Harbor, however, the international residents were driven to the international concentration camp. For artistic creation, Ballard removes his family from the bulk of the novel and pays particular attention to his imprisonment in the Japanese internment camp. Coincidentally, when the war ends and the protagonist Jim returns to his parents, he is also sixteen years old, the same age as Denton in *Maiden Voyage*.

⁵⁵ Ballard has a high reputation as a science fiction writer, so established scholarship has categorized him as a genre writer and done considerable studies on his experimentalism and surrealism. See Roger Luckhurst, *The Angle between Two Walls: The Fiction of J.G. Ballard*; Michel Delville, *J.G. Ballard*; Gregory Stephenson, *Out of the Night and into the Dream: A Thematic Study of the Fiction of J.G. Ballard*. The three critics demonstrate Ballard's literary contribution to challenging the conventional social and aesthetic representation.

The two writers have much in common. Their childhood or adolescence experiences in China, especially Shanghai, had life-long influence on them, so that in their later years their memories of Shanghai were depicted in their writings. Both writers were faced with the dilemma of regarding Shanghai as their home at the early stage of their lives and of having to force themselves to be involved in society back in England, a world they needed to be more familiar with. Both of their works are apparently autobiographical fictions, which are constructed based on real people that they knew and their life experiences, even though it is difficult to some extent to distinguish how real or fictional autobiographical works are in detail. All these aspects form the foundation for how the two writers express their ideas concerning the same subject of Shanghai and explain each other's work from a perspective of childhood or adolescence.

This chapter focuses on analysis of Welch's *Maiden Voyage* and Ballard's *Empire of the Sun* with a focus on their lives in Shanghai. What does Shanghai mean for foreign settlers, especially for children? How do they, from the perspective of child or adolescent, represent Chinese landscapes and cityscapes? In order to approach these research questions, this chapter will employ the cognitive maps in the protagonists' minds as analytical tools to see how they explore spaces of Shanghai. The cognitive map is a combination of spatial practices and imagined spaces. Out of curiosity or adventurous exploration, both protagonists Denton and Jim launch explorations around Shanghai—Denton walking to places nearby his father's house

and Jim roaming with his family Buick or on his long bicycle rides. The cognitive map is constructed based on their movements throughout Shanghai, and it in turn guides their strolling, cycling, and other meaning of moving. The chapter intends to argue that Welch relies on exploration of Shanghai as a force to contemplate hetero-patriarchal values and structures, whereas Ballard's exploration of Shanghai and his desperate grasp of knowledge from the outside world serve as a means to reorganize his collapsed world order.

Structurally, this chapter will initially contextualize the family backgrounds of Welch and Ballard in modern history of Shanghai and see how the two families witnessed the social and political changes to the landscape of Shanghai. The next section researches how the teenage boy Denton, through performance of sexuality and adulthood in Shanghai, challenges and parodies these social codes and further questions the underlying hetero-patriarchal social structure of prevailing discourse in Britain. The last section addresses how Jim acquires geographical knowledge and reshapes his own world order by means of interacting with the landscape of Shanghai.

Background of Shanghailanders in the International Settlement

The family stories of Welch and Ballard tell the history of foreign communities in Shanghai since 1842. The improved transportation, communication, and medical systems allowed English men to bring their children and wives overseas to duplicate British life. The self-sufficient social system of the British settler community and the social hierarchy re-defined by wealth and personal efforts in Shanghai allowed them

to escape the class-based stratified society in Britain. In this section, I will contextualize the family background of Welch and Ballard and looks at how Welch, Ballard, and their older generations witnessed and were engaged in the history of Shanghai and of the expansion of imperialism. Bickers gives a definition of “Shanghailanders” who constitutes this British settler community in Shanghai: “There were the small treaty port people, whose fortunes were inextricably tied up with the existence of the British concessions and extraterritorial privileges in China” (“Shanghailanders” 161). Shanghailanders, to whom the Welch and Ballard families belonged, relied heavily on the existence of Shanghai International Settlement, as they worked for the treaty port services or companies or ran their own businesses.

The Welch family was tied up with the history of Shanghai, which developed from a small and walled city to a prosperous trading center of the East. The First Opium War (1840-1842) indicated a start of territorial invasion of imperialism to China. In the decades following the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing, British people established a network of concessions and settlements in the treaty ports along the southeast coast of China. The settlers were usually British businessmen who worked for large China or international companies, British Protestant missionaries, and officials in diplomatic and commercial institutions for Sino-British relations as we can see in the introduction. The English settlement in Shanghai was initiated in 1843, and a smaller American concession was established in 1854, the two of which amalgamated to form the International Settlement in 1863. In 1894, the Chinese

government at Shanghai ceded extraterritoriality to France for establishing the French Concession, which lay south of the British settlement and north of the Chinese city.⁵⁶ The foreign residents were permitted to rent lands along the Huangpu River, which were located outside of the walled city of Shanghai at that time. It was not a formal and official colony but important to its host city. It had independent municipal, police, and military systems.⁵⁷ American and European residents in China officially enjoyed extraterritorial protections due to unequal treaties.⁵⁸ In concessions and settlements in treaty ports, British settlers owned self-determining and self-sufficient political, commercial, and cultural systems, which allowed them ample opportunities to keep their habitual daily practices and maintain British cultural identity in spite of living in China. In addition to their British and imperial identities, Shanghailanders—the British community in Shanghai—also had a local identity. As Robert Bickers points out, “Shanghaider identity was always British and imperial, but Shanghailanders’ local ‘imagined’ identity, so easily and readily dismissed by contemporaries and by historians, was of crucial importance to them, and to the Sino-British imbroglio” (“Shanghailanders” 164). The social institutions and infrastructure offered them a highly independent and self-supportive administrative and judicial system, which formed the basis of their local identity. Also, the existence of the International

⁵⁶ More information about the process of the establishment of the International Settlement and the French Concession, see Bickers, “Shanghailanders,” page 165.

⁵⁷ The system includes Shanghai Municipal Council (SMC) in 1854, Shanghai Municipal Police Force (SMP) in 1854, and Shanghai Volunteer Corps (SVC) in 1853. *Ibid.*, page 166.

⁵⁸ The British residents enjoyed imperial protection to keep them safe, despite the fact that the settlement was not a colony of the empire, like Hong Kong. More than the flags, the armed forces were restored to protect the British interests during the Opium Wars and the Boxer Rebellion. The whole international town, including the International Settlement and the French Concession was guarded by a mixed foreign force, and the defense sector was allotted to the British Seaforth Highlanders. Also, British citizens here were exempted from the legal restrictions of Chinese law.

Settlement and their extraterritorial rights allowed Englishmen such as the Welch family to trade and to retain an English way of life. With Shanghai's location as an ideal port and the local unlimited supply of cheap labor, Shanghai developed into an international center of commerce.

The Welch family's wealth accumulation was connected with the International Settlement. Denton's grandfather, Joseph Welch, went to Shanghai in 1866, initially working as an apprentice in the tea trade and establishing his own business, Welch & Co., after some years' effort. Denton's father, Arthur Welch, was born in 1880 in Shanghai. The Boxer Uprising (1899-1900) made Joseph decide to retire and return to England. Arthur, a partner of a rubber exporting company, "Wattie & Co.," continued to work in Shanghai, which guaranteed the Welches an opulent life (De-la-Noy 1-2; Methuen-Campbell 1). Denton Welch's story about Shanghai ends in 1931 when Ballard was one year old. The Ballard family resided in Shanghai since 1929, the year J. G. Ballard's father, James Ballard (1902-1967), was sent out to Shanghai to run the operation of his company's subsidiary overseas. James Ballard worked as chairman and managing director of a textile firm in Shanghai, the China Printing and Finishing Company, a subsidiary of a Manchester-based firm, "the Calico Printers' Association" (Ballard, *Miracles of Life* 42). Ballard's mother, Edna Ballard (1905-1999), "sailed to Shanghai in 1929" accompanying his father (46).

The life of the Ballards was seldom disturbed as the family moved to a comparatively safe rented house in the French Concession in 1937, the year Japan

launched full-scale invasion to China. Ballard reflects, “I could hear the bombing and gunfire all around Shanghai, and see the vast pall of smoke that lay over the city” (23), but the international town remained fine. When the Japanese army occupied Shanghai, the United States, Britain, and other European countries adopted a neutral position. Therefore, the International Settlement and the French Concession located in south of the Suzhou Creek were temporarily exempted from the occupation by the Japanese army. This area was called “Isolated Island” (*gudao*), an oasis surrounded by the Japanese-controlled area, the former Chinese city. In the “Isolated Island Era” (1937-1941), the international town (the International Settlement and French Concession) was surrounded but not occupied by the Japanese army, which provided a shelter for Chinese refugees. Economically, flooding clusters of refugees offered sufficient labor force and consumers for the market, which contributed to prosperity in the international town. Although the industry there might support the Japanese war-machine to some extent, the international town, as the only “non-war zone” along the southeast coast of China and the only legal channel for the import of industrial raw materials and equipment, provided industrial production materials and daily necessities for people inland. Under this circumstance, the international town kept up the prosperity of its economy and the stability of its political environment under the checks and balances of multiple political powers.

The political and economic situations in the international town further guaranteed the Ballard family a stable and prosperous life. According to Ballard’s

reflection, “Once the Chinese armies had withdrawn, life in Shanghai resumed as if little had changed” (24). The businesses, such as bars and nightclubs, were as busy as before, but the only change was that all activities were “under the bayonets of the Japanese soldiers who guarded the perimeter checkpoints around the Settlement” (25). Disinterested in the advantages of the international town brought by the war, such as refugees providing more labor and the international town’s special location leading to an economic boost, Ballard is more concerned with the escalating violence brought by the collision between the Japanese soldiers/the British-run police force and the refugees when the former were repelling the latter. Also, he was appalled by the cruel world he saw when he cycled down the Nanjing Road due to floods of refugees—increasing numbers of “beggars,” “gangsters,” “pickpockets,” “hawkers,” and “crooks” (26). All these were unsafe factors in Shanghai.

The lives of all residents in the British community, including the Ballard family, were completely changed when the Japanese army seized the International Settlement. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese attacked the United States Navy Base at Pearl Harbor, and then officially declared war on Britain and the United States. On the same day, the Japanese army occupied the International Settlement⁵⁹ and the entire city of Shanghai thus had been fully occupied. All the entertainment business and

⁵⁹ For the later history of the International Settlement, it was diplomatically and legally returned to China in 1943. According to the historian Bickers, “The Sino-British treaty of February 1943 abolished extraordinary and the remaining concessions: the foundations of the settler world were destroyed” (*Britain in China* 116). This treaty indicated the end of the concession and the extraterritorial privileges in China. However, at that time, the International Settlement was actually in the hand of the Japanese army. In response to the Sino-British treaty, the International Settlement and the French Concession were handed over by the Japanese army to the Japanese puppet Wang Jingwei Regime. After victory in the Anti-Japanese War, the Nationalist Government took over the entire city of Shanghai and the Shanghai concession area truly returned to China.

social life of British terminated. The department stores, the parties, film premieres, and the Country Clubs came to an end; even their cars were confiscated. Ballard's father's company "The Chinese Printing and Finishing Company," "as a useful source of revenue" for the Japanese, could still operate but with two Japanese supervisors (49). In early 1943, the European and American citizens, including the Ballards, were moved to the Lunghua Camp located in the Shanghai suburb. The Ballard family left Lunghua in September 1945 and returned to their house in the International Settlement. By the end of 1945, Ballard, his mother, and his sister Margaret sailed back to England. Ballard's father continued to work in Shanghai when the Chinese Communist Party seized power in 1949 but he had to return to England in 1950 when the head office of his company "refused to remit further funds" (43).

The considerably comfortable life in Shanghai exempted the two families from political and economic upheavals in Britain. When Denton Welch was a four-year-old boy in 1919, it was his first time visiting England and the Welches resided in a house in Essex. The First World War had little influence on the family as they lived in Shanghai. When Ballard mentioned why his parents and others were willing to stay in China during the war, he said, "Shanghai was now their home, where they had made successful lives for themselves away from the Depression-ridden England of the 1930s" (*A User's Guide* 288). Although the two families, as members of Shanghailanders, did not culturally identify with Shanghai, they physically found a sense of belonging in Shanghai.

Denton Welch and His Performance of Sexuality and Adulthood

The holiday in Shanghai frees Welch from institutional powers of public-school education—hierarchy norms and hegemonic masculinity. Welch did not learn how to read and write until he was nearly nine years old because of the unsystematic education in his early childhood and journeys back and forth between Shanghai and England. Back in England, he was reluctant to attend a boarding school (Murtaugh 5-6). Welch draws on real life for materials. The first half of the novel *Maiden Voyage* covers Denton's escape from Repton School in Derbyshire as a very young boy. He spends a few days travelling aimlessly at Salisbury, and later seeing family acquaintances in Budleigh Salterton. After he returns, the school life makes him feel strange since he cannot get used to it and his peers treat him differently. Knowing his unhappy situation then, his father writes a letter to ask him if he wants to come to Shanghai with his brother Paul who will join his company soon. The news empowers him so much that he jumps with joy, and he thinks, "I felt like a person full of power and skill. I was no longer a part of the dead old system. I could bear anything now till the end of the term" (Welch 60). Getting away from the old system is the theme of Denton's story and a start of the novel's second half to China, particularly Shanghai.

Most importantly, for the autobiographical figure Denton, Shanghai is a place to relieve his pain of the repetition of masculine and heterosexual norms defined by gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality. After Denton runs away from school on a train to Salisbury, he locks himself in the lavatory. He expresses his

ecstasy when imagining himself camouflage as a woman and temporarily gets relief from masculinity and heterosexuality:

I suddenly felt terribly glad. I looked at my face in the glass. I was so anxious and happy that I thought I looked mad. I pulled my hat this way and that, wondering how to disguise myself. I thought I might dress up as a woman if I could get any clothes. I knocked the dent out of my hat, making it look like a girl's riding-hat. (Welch 8)

However, the camouflage only exists in his imagination because of the existence of the social and cultural normative oppression. His trip to China is the solution to escape the homophobia of Europe. D. E. Mungello summarizes the key features of Western queers who traveled to China in the early twentieth century: "prior to the mid-1990s most men who felt same-sex attraction lived in closeted fear of disclosure. For those men, sexuality had to remain a private matter, and this led them to express their sexual feelings in more subliminal ways" (1). Along with this trend, the narrator, Denton, embarked on his trip to China as an escape. Mungello continues to explain, "In this repressive atmosphere, China emerged as a land of exotic escape. This escape was limited to a fairly select group. It included men of adventurous enough to travel to China and live there for a time, but it also included men with the ability to immerse themselves in the Chinese language and culture while never setting foot in China" (1). The house of Welch's father located in Shanghai offers Welch more access to Chinese spaces, and Welch was adventurous despite the fact that he was a teenager at that time.

Escape from hetero-patriarchal norms is Denton's aim, which he is trying to reach in his constant movements from the center to the periphery. Denton's cognitive

map is shaped when he is continuously running away and acting the boy adventurer, from the center of the British Empire in London to its periphery concession in Shanghai in the Far East; from his father's house to its surroundings in the International Settlement; from the European area of the International Settlement to the countryside and other inland cities in China. Denton constructs his cognitive map gradually, as he expands his scope of movement. Daniel Murtaugh uses the word "collecting" to describe what Welch captures from the landscapes of Shanghai and other inland cities. "I speak of 'collecting,' as he [Welch] was an inveterate collector of minutiae and curiosities (both of physical objects d'art and of detailed mental notations)" (Murtaugh 10). Emily Stockard agrees with Murtaugh in terms of Welch's interest in material culture and further points out Welch pays attention to people's interactions with their surrounding environment: "Welch sets out a connection that he will repeatedly invoke—a larger-scale version of the one between people and the objects that they create, own, and care for. That is, the interwoven relation between people and the places they have built" (32). During his stay in China in 1931, Welch collected his experiences and observations from his practices, which were foundations for the novel *Maiden Voyage*. Collecting mental notations and exploring his relation to material objects are also a process of constructing his cognitive map of the scope of safety and the spatial notion of center/periphery.

Welch and his narrator Denton "collect" their feelings and experiences when taking adventurous explorations of Shanghai. The environment seems always

dangerous but tempting and exhilarating to Denton. He wants “to drink everything in” (Welch 117). Mungello explains the attraction of China to gay men: “China was a siren’s call to the gay sensibility. Whether in the aesthetics of its calligraphy, the wonder of its scenic landscapes, the exotic quality of its philosophy and theater, or the lithe and dark-haired beauty of its men, China exerted a powerful attraction on who felt same-sex desire” (1-2). The natural and cultural landscape of Shanghai offer him sensual and exotic pleasures to grasp. The protagonist Denton’s father’s flat located in the International Settlement not far away from Chinese villages. The flat resembles houses in Oxford with a porch with “baroque, barley-sugar columns” (Welch 117). The European style residential area gives him a sense of home, but the country and the commercial area of the city are intriguing and seductive to the teenage boy Denton due to their exotic and queer attractions. The physical encounter with the city inspires Denton to think about who he is and his relationship with the city. His understanding of himself and the land is emergent in his bodily engagement within it. That is to say, his ability to understand the city depends on his body-practices, as he performs the role of explorer. Both in the country and the city, he performs activities tie to walking—wanderings in countryside and distracted flaneuring in the city.

The autobiographical figure Denton also has a critical eye as an artist to extract beauty and collect it from the surroundings, and at the same time he expands his scope to the countryside. In the morning, after his father and brother go to work, Denton brings his picnic lunch and “set(s) off down the wide, new road which lost

itself in the fields” (179). The fields are covered with graves and golden and silver paper money for sacrifices. He is willing to sit at the foot of a grave mound to have his meals. For “the love of horror,” Denton mentions that he once saw a dead man appear when a corner of the dead man’s coffin just happened to raise (179). One Sunday, he goes for a long walk in the country. The scenery is strange and awesome: trees of “feathery and sickly green,” “harsh dry bamboos” around “the curling grey-black roofs of the villages,” the seemingly old and ill “yellow dogs,” and the awful smelling “human manure” used as natural fertilizer (123). The seemingly horrifying atmosphere leaves an anxious impression on him, but also going into the country gives him a renewed sense of what an alternative life can be like. In addition to these disturbing adventures, Welch sometimes sets out to the nearby Chinese village for painting. Sitting “under some willows” and “beside a green pond,” he starts to work (203). His painting includes the “silvery-blue” stone steps to the pond, the pond covered with “duckweed,” and “puffy clouds” in the blue sky, all of which give him a feeling of contentment (203). These strong emotions of horror and contentment, which originate from Denton’s physical encounter with the local spaces, constitute his sensual collections of Shanghai.

Denton further strolls the streets of Shanghai and gazes into shops, possibly prompted by boredom or spirit of inquiry. Rather than riding, he prefers to walk when being alone, for he can stop anywhere intriguing to him. He walks along the “Pekin Road,” “a whole street of second-hand shops,” engaging in a quintessential activity of

a *flâneur*—window shopping (82). He is a connoisseur of the artistic world in Shanghai and has a strong interest in art collection—never tiring of exploring it. He then frequently goes into the shops and searches more thoroughly—“from shop to shop, trying to look into every corner” (182). Denton is faced with more complicated road situations. “Trams clanged by and people spat all over the dusty pavements. Terrible beggars waited at the temple doors, and the food in the food-shops looked too fantastic and nightmarish for anyone but a demon to eat” (181). Instead of feeling relieved, the teenage boy Denton “enjoyed the squalor half-fearfully” (181). He performs as a detective searching the second-hand shops for his artistic collection.

After exploring the surrounding countryside and streets, Denton has a map of what the Settlement looks like. His cognitive map serves as a means to guiding him counter patriarchal, masculine, and heterosexual rules within a scope of safety. As a teenage boy, Denton performs like a queer adult during his adventures, embarking on trips to see artistic collections as a means to avoid temporary custody, dressing like a woman to stroll around at midnight, asking strangers to his home to drink and smoke, and so forth. His performances of these identities invite us to consider Denton from the theoretical perspective of performativity.

In what follows, I use theories of performativity to understand how Denton’s practices interact with displacements—city strolling and short trips in which Denton’s identity and thoughts are imbedded. Performance is the process of acting, a process with a goal in which one uses his or her body as a research tool. Judith Butler’s

concept of performativity is put forward to explore the relationships between existing social structures/norms and individual agency. Butler points out,

In the first instance, then, performativity of gender revolves around this metalepsis, the way in which the anticipation of a gendered essence produces that which it posits as outside itself. Secondly, preformativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration. (xiv-xv)

For Butler, gender and sexual identities are not fixed but performances of sedimented social practices that are formed by reiterations of previous doings. Recognizing that gender, sex, or sexuality comes into being via performativity rather than through “natural” fixed identities invites the possibility of challenging the naturalized social norms. By engaging in “self-aware” practices, performativity can liberate people from traditional restraints of social norms so that people’s bodies and minds can be transformed and reconstructed. Although Butler’s theories focus especially on the performance of gender and sexuality, the emphasis on the physical enactment of norms facilitates thinking about the performance of other embodied social differences. Theorist Nigel Thrift also works on performativity but extends this concept towards understanding the micro-geography of habitual practices. Thrift’s “nonrepresentational theory” encourages performative body-practices to interact with the world and to become a part of the landscape. The theoretical background of performativity in the category of cultural geography can be traced to the language of performance and dance, which overflow beyond the discipline of dance and theater studies, and to feminist works about the body, especially Judith Butler’s theories on

the performannivity of sexuality and gender. A comprehensive negotiation and cross-disciplinary theorization of performance art, like dance and theatre studies, as well as feminist and queer theories all contribute to the discipline's framework. Nigel Thrift's "nonrepresentational theory" working on performativity and bodily practices is a theoretical example to illustrate performative body-practices and geography. Nonrepresentational theory is not "a project concerned with representation and meaning, but with the performative 'representation', 'showings' and 'manifestations' of everyday life" (Thrift 126-7). In this sense, Thrift is more concerned with habitual daily practices rather than representation, especially texts, which lack direct and instant sensations captured from body-practices. Thrift's special emphasis on ordinary lives makes the theory of a great appeal to geographers, but an almost impossible employment in literary studies since it does not recognize visual and textual forms of representations as practices themselves. The radical revolution of this theory, which allows no room for representation, is criticized by theorists like Catherine Nash. Nash points out, "For performativity is not just a singular act but a reiteration of a norm or sets of norms that have assumed this status through their repetition, and that become known in myriad ways, including their representation" (662). Nash's criticism of Thrift's theory provides the prospect to include representational texts into this framework. This part will explore how Denton's identity is brought into being through the interaction of reiterated body-practices and landscape—walking, dressing, field exploration, and art collection—in the process of his bodily displacements.

Denton expresses a queer identity and sexuality in this text, by dressing and acting as a woman. As he is familiar with the environment, Denton is easier to perform like a woman and strolls in the street in that way. On the night he stays with the Fieldings, a family he knows well in Shanghai, he is to sleep in their daughter Vesta's room as "Vesta and her husband went to Pekin [Beijing] in September" (Welch 227). The girlish clothing and abundant variety of makeup, clothes, and jewelry tempts him to dress up like a girl. He initially takes a bath in a feminine way, putting handfuls of "sweet-coloured bath-salts" into the bath, and reveals in the "pine-needle" smell (228). After drying himself, he performs in a ladylike way, choosing treasures to wear in a girlish room decorated with "grass-green satin" covering on the armchairs and with "pink and yellow" cushions (228). Having played with lipsticks, rouges, nail-polishes, and jewelry as well as dresses and high-heeled shoes, he begins his experiment. Finally, his outfit includes "a thin woolen dress with a wide scarlet leather belt," "a pair of snub-nosed, high-heeled shoes," and "a tight little felt hat" (229). He makes up himself as though he were "redecorating a room," with "blue eye-shadow," "arched thin black eyebrows," "brick-dust rouge," and "scarlet lipstick" (229-30). Having no breasts and short hair are his only worries. Even though he does not have the body features conventionally attributed to a woman, he performs the conventional feminine characteristics of dressing: wearing dresses and make-up. He cannot wait to perform publicly as a woman. Welch notes, "I felt an urgent need to go out in my new disguise" (230).

Acting out his feminine identity is far from easy: the high-heels make it difficult to walk and the superficial parody of feminine appearance and voice is recognizable even in the darkness of night. The first person Denton comes across is a French policeman who is quite uninterested in him. The policeman's indifference gives him more confidence to "look like exactly a woman" (230). The second man Denton encounters is a person in a rickshaw with a strong Scottish accent. He stops before Denton and thrusts his face close to Denton's when striking up a conversation with Denton with an ambiguous attitude of flirting. Denton then is aware that he has forgotten to obey the social behaviors of woman: no good ladies would dress up that way and walk alone on the street at night. The clumsy gender parody makes him resemble a prostitute. Feeling frightened, he takes off the high-heels and just runs on with bare feet until exhausted. After returning and sitting in front of the mirror, Welch sees himself, "All my make-up had slipped and sagged, because I had sweated so much ... even my teeth were pink" (232). Although the first attempt of gender parody puts him in an extremely awkward position, he does manage to take up the position of an "unmanly" figure through his practices by performing acts the socially expected of women—displaying elegance in behavior and dresses. This was not the first time he dreamed of acting as a woman, but it was the first time he had the means at hand to dress up before then. In the lavatory of the Salisbury train, he had had a flash of twisting his trilby hat to "disguise myself as a woman, to escape being caught and sent back to school" (229). The exotic atmosphere in Shanghai allows him the

material asset and a permissive environment for his experimental performance of gender and sexuality. His attempt to destabilize the sociocultural constructions of gender and sexuality is realized in these scenes.

Young Denton continues to perform his sexuality and combines it with the idea of acting like an adult. Matthew Clarke discusses the relation between his progression toward homosexual identification and the mode of his development to maturity:

[T]hey [Welch's novels] describe the emergence in adolescence of a relation to bodily pleasure that remains queerly undefined and unassimilable. If the *bidungsroman* structure is a foundation of his writing it is not because it is always fulfilled, but rather, because it offers a trajectory of self-realisation and understanding that can be queerly rerouted and reimagined. (2024)

Welch's realization of sexuality goes hand in hand with his growing process. In *Maiden Voyage*, Denton's collections of objects and sensations and interactions with the surrounding environment are his means of adolescent development, during which he knows the possibility of reimagining his sexuality. Besides, his cognitive map of Shanghai, which is created during his collections and interactions, allows him to find people that he intends to know, to ask them home, and to lead them the way back.

After strolling around the military quarter in one part of the public park, Denton invites a British soldier to his father's flat in Shanghai for tea and for some vaguely sexual purpose. He chooses the afternoon to arrange the invitation since his father and brother Paul are not at home. He asks the servant boy to prepare plenty of food, such as cakes, chocolate biscuits, sandwiches, and some toast, and puts cigarettes within convenient reach, for this is the first guest of his own. In this way, he attempts to

perform as a real adult host for guests, preparing everything well. When the solidier is not accustomed to Chinese tea, he offers whisky-and-soda, whisky from his father's decanter and soda-water from the ice-box, in order to be "as hospitable as possible" (Welch 191). Learning from the solidier how to smoke is also Denton's attempt to take up the practices of an adult. Breathing in and breathing out, he fills his lung with the smoke but is choked by it. Regarding the whisky, Denton thinks, "I drank some of my grandfather's once and it made me feel very sick, so I hate it now" (191). The sudden turning of the door-handle interrupts his performance of adulthood: "the next moment my brother stood gazing at us in astonishment" (193). The sudden appearance of his brother Paul brings Denton back to reality. The invitation of a stranger, the full decanter, and the smell of smoke are emblems of adulthood, something Denton was attempting but is now made unreachable for him. Denton is afraid of leaving any traces of what has happened for his father to find, so he quickly shows the solidier out and goes upstairs to fill the decanter.

His performance of sexuality reaches its climax when he visits a gay bar offering drinks before he leaves Shanghai. His intention is specified in his words, "I wanted to do something abandoned, to horrify my father" (273). Although the narrator Denton does not specify, he knows the locations of specific places in his mind. He finds a gay bar, which may not be easily identified, without any difficulty. Practicing the act of being an adult, he orders sherry and tries to accost a "short, broad-shouldered man," who may be a Dutchman judging from the accent (274). They develop a vague

intimacy when the Dutchman spills his whisky all down the front of Denton's trousers. The Dutchman "fell on his knees and began to rub my (Denton's) trousers vigorously with his lovely silk scarf" (274). Denton's vaguely homosexual desire for men is also reflected in his observations of others. Two soldiers sitting next to him seem to be showing affection to each other. "They had their arms round each other's necks. Suddenly I saw one lift his hand and smack the other playfully and viciously on the face" (273). Across these examples, Denton attempts to negate his assigned identity like adulthood as natural bodily features and to perform them as practices. His transformation from adolescence to adulthood is characterized by physical and intellectual changes as well as changes in social roles and relationships. In this way, Denton attempts to perform as a sexually mature, intellectually advanced, and sociable adult, which serves as a way to subvert the patriarchal authority.

The International Settlement in Shanghai serves as an in-between space for Denton offering possibility of both keeping away from the hetero-patriarchal norms of the English Empire and being exempt from the unsympathetic legislation about homosexuality in China then. Denton's experience of China is not confined to the International Settlement, but extends to inland cities. Denton expands his scope for more travel adventures. His bodily practices while traveling in the inland landscape are rather different from those of the Shanghai episodes. He is excited as he escapes from his father's custody, but he is worried as he has no map of those cities in his mind. He embarks on a trip to Kaifeng to buy antiques under the custody of his

father's friend, Mr. Butler. Beyond the scope of the International Settlement, Denton is engaged with the authentic Chinese landscape. On the way to Kaifeng, their first destination is Nanjing. His first impression of Nanjing is that this is a less developed city: "The streets were crowded and there were no tall buildings. There was nothing grand about the city except the crawling grey wall" (131). At the top of the city, Denton sees everything is grey: the wall made of huge blue-grey bricks, the grey roofs of houses, and the shallow grey hills surrounding the city. Accompanied by Mr. Butler, Denton visits the tomb of one of the Ming Emperors and has meals with Mr. Butler's friends and The Consul. His only other option is to stay in the residence to kill time. On the train from Nanjing to Kaifeng, he is impressed with the mundane and grey landscape outside of the train window, which is in strong contrast with the plantation of "pink, white, mauve, crimson and deep, dried-blood purple" poppies: "I sat looking out of the window at the eternal hills and plains and cities of dried mud. Everything was the same, tawny, earth-brown. ... Fields of poppies raged against the universal mud-colour" (137). Opium was legally forbidden but still traded due to big profit at that time. The attraction of the Chinese landscape is like opium to Denton, dangerous but tempting.

Because of occasional attacks on Europeans by Chinese nationalists, it may be dangerous for Denton to go out alone, which makes him feel depressed. He states, "My heart sank. I hated to be dependent on other people. They would never want to do what I wanted to do. I began to feel imprisoned" (143). It is difficult for him to

stand any longer, so he walks along the sandy lane leading to the country. The country has a feeling of “dreamlike stillness”—the only sound comes from “the stunted bushes” when the wind blows (143). However, the still and silent atmosphere is disturbed when he sees a dead human head covered with “loathsome flies,” rotten but with the facial features apparent (143). He wants to avert his eyes, but the horror is fatally attractive to him. He cannot help staring at it “until waves of sickness spread over” him (144). The tranquility of the whole plain suddenly changes to a horror, so he only wants to return to the house he lives in. A few days later once again he is swallowed by “the sense of confinement” leading him to wander along the squalid streets alone (172). He goes to an antique dealer’s house along again and performs as an expert, appreciating “a gilt bronze Buddhist god, half monster and half man” (173). Feeling a little bit disappointed with the fantastic and yet seemingly ordinary outlook, Denton tries to think of an excuse to leave without purchasing anything. Mr. Butler is annoyed when Denton returns and says, “When you go out alone you might at least tell someone where you’re going” (173). The dangerous and exotic landscape in inland Chinese cities arouses his curiosity, and adventuring to them just satisfies his strong desire to escape from any custody whether it be from his father or from temporary guardians. His unfamiliarity with the local social norms in these cities makes him avoid performance of sexuality.

The motivations of autobiographical figure Denton are parallel to the writer Welch’s thoughts. The early death of his mother and the loose supervision of his

father gave him a relative independence of practices: Welch's autobiographer Michael De-La-Noy notes that "Even while in the throes of adolescent homosexuality it is normally obligatory for boys at least to pretend to an interest in girls, but such was Denton's individualism that he seems, at an early age, to have shut his mind to the possibility of heterosexual experimentation" (43). At Welch's time, biographical work as a discipline was masculine, so homosexual autobiography remained hidden. He had a strong determination to express his real sexual preference and was brilliant enough to use the strategy of expressing his growing sexual awareness. This cultural hierarchy was released in the category of travel writing. For intellectuals who are interested in non-heteronormative ideas and practices, travel offers a territory for queer writing at the beginning of the twentieth century. In her work on the topic of travel writing and sexuality, Churnjeet Mahn shows how queer writers employ travel writing as a genre to express their ideas chronologically. The sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld (1868-1935) was a scholar "whose travel informed their personal and intellectual commitment to homosexuality" (Mahn 49). Hirschfeld "cured a world of sexual variety and difference in his travel writing" and "undertook a world lecturing tour to avoid discrimination" (49). Modernism also "offered a fertile territory for queer writing and politics in fiction" (49). Prestigious writers like H.D., Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, and E.M. Forster all conducted sexual experimentation in their travel writings. Welch was born and started his literary career almost the same time as those famous writers. Travel, which includes, I would argue, any forms of bodily

displacement, also facilitates Welch's avoidance of the gaze of family and friends and enhances his experience of strangeness and estrangement. When Welch moves away from the central surveillance, it becomes possible for him to explore his queer identity. By experimenting with queer performance during these bodily displacements, Welch rejects homosexuality and heterosexuality as fixed categories, and recognizes them as a mode of self-making.

J. G. Ballard and His Reshaped World Order

In *Empire of the Sun*, the protagonist Jim gains sufficient experience of his surrounding area by strolling or cycling around Shanghai and the Lunghua Camp after his internment. In this section, I will trace the spatial practices and representations of space during his Shanghai cycling and camp exploring, in an effort to bring to light how maps of the city and the camp are made in his mind and how his cognitive maps of city/camp performs as tools not only for orientation but sometimes also for survival.

Ballard's autobiography *Miracles of Life* recording his childhood and teenage years in Shanghai offers a useful background for understanding how the semi-autobiographical protagonist Jim has the ability to draw a map in his mind. From the age of eight or nine, Ballard cycled around Shanghai with an excuse of visiting friends. Ballard recalls, "I liked to cycle down the Nanking [Nanjing] Road, lined with Shanghai's biggest department stores" (*Miracles of Life* 25). His cycling enabled him to maintain an intimacy with and simultaneously a distance from the

lives of the city: a cruel and lurid world with “beggars,” “gangsters,” “pickpockets,” “Chinese dragon ladies,” “hawkers,” “starving peasant families,” “quarter-tone music,” and radios with “the speeches of Generalissimo Chiang’s, interrupted by commercials for a Japanese beer” (26). Out of a child’s enthusiasm, little Ballard was thrilled with everything he encountered in the city: people, sound, and activities. He says, “I took all this in at a glance, the polluted and exciting air I breathed” (29). In a road mingled with trams, cars, rickshaws, and pedestrians, young Ballard as a cyclist was bombarded with rich information from the outside world—a complicated transportation system, different varieties of people, and mixed sound and air. His cycling exempted him from enjoying a leisurely stroll or taking a speeding motor vehicle. In this way, little Ballard had a unique urban experience with his bicycle and “explored almost every corner of the International Settlement” (30).

Young Ballard’s eagerness for looking around the environment continued after the Ballard family was interned in the concentration camp. The day they arrived, he began to explore the Lunghua Camp. In his next two and a half years, he “set about exploring every corner of the camp” (60). Combining his exploration with talent in geography, he had a clear pattern of how things were located in the camp: half-ruined buildings divided into different dwelling blocks, “a guardhouse by the gates,” “a shower block,” “a small ‘hospital’,” “drinking-water stations,” “the assembly ground where football matches were played,” and a garden area for vegetables in uncultivated ground, all of which were surrounded by brand-new barbed-wire fencing (58-61). D

and G Blocks were occupied by “families with children,” and “single internees and married couples without children” resided in E and F Blocks (60). In one of the derelict buildings outside of the camp, approved by the camp commandant, “a former diplomat named Hyashi,” a camp school was built so that each day children could go to and fro, out of the gates, enjoying moments beyond the scope of the camp (61).

Young Ballard’s roaming around the city or the camp is his way to get to know the outside world and to further construct his personality. Ballard mentions the importance of the outside world on his personality in his autobiography *Miracles of Life*, “Any shocks that shaped my character came not from my family but from the outside world—the sudden scene-shifting I witnessed in 1937 and 1941. ... I felt fairly skeptical about the adult world and the notions of good sense and decisive thought promoted by my parents and teachers” (74). His preexisting world order, built by teachings from family and school was at a risk of collapsing when he found those rules did not conform to the prevailing situations surrounding him. He started his gradual estrangement from his parents at Lunghua and cultivated a mental status as a war orphan. When talking about the semi-autobiographical figure Jim, Ballard notes, “I felt that it was closer to the psychological and emotional truth of events to make ‘Jim’ effectively a war orphan” (75). Thus, he removed Jim’s parents and sisters when interned in the camp from his novel. In this sense, he determined to keep Jim physically and mentally alone, and his strong keenness for exploration offers one possible and essential solution for rebuilding his world order.

In the biographical novel *Empire of the Sun*, Jim's knowledge of Shanghai mainly comes from his bike or car rides, which allow him to create a cognitive map of the city. For the purpose of convenience and safety, Jim is usually chauffeured by the driver Yang in the family Buick to parties and school. Occasionally, he takes long bike rides around the city without letting his parents know: "His mother worried constantly about the danger and violence in the streets of Shanghai and knew nothing of his long cycle rides around the city" (Ballard, *Empire of the Sun* 42). His experience as a bicyclist allows him the most significant engagement with the wider spatial and cultural environment—dealing with factors like architecture, people, activities, businesses and so forth. A cyclist is more physically exposed to the surrounding area compared with a car and more culturally engaged with the local environment, which is lost from the windscreen of a motorized vehicle. Unlike a *flâneur*, who is part of the crowd he is observing, cycling enables a cyclist to outpace the observations of the other pedestrians. It is a desirable mode of transportation since it covers a further distance than walking on foot. The flexibility of bicycles and the extensive coverage of car rides allow Jim to expand his scope of living and to create his own map of the city: locations of different streets and buildings, as well as the different activities of people on the streets.

Following the views of Jim, a geographical and cultural map of Shanghai can be drawn. By car with his parents, "they set off for Hungjao, a country district five miles to the west of Shanghai" to attend Dr. Lockwood's Christmas party (11). The Ballard

house is located at 31 Amherst Avenue, along which there are beggars, refugees from the towns and villages around Shanghai, sitting outside the gates of these houses. On their way to Hungjao, they need to pass the Great Western Road, the exit from the International Settlement. The Japanese forces patrol around the international area and set a checkpoint to search the interior of each car passing through the exit. Dr.

Lockwood's isolated house is located at a disused airfield in Hungjao, from which Jim begins to explore the countryside. In the southwest corner of Dr. Lockwood's real estate is "a section of the wooden fence," outside of which is a neglected field with a "wild sugar-cane at its center," surrounded with "burial tumulus" (17). Passing the burial mound, he climbs "a wooden stile" to a "dried-out rice paddy" and runs further along the paddy to "an iron building" (18). This open ground has "the remains of a concrete road" and "a ruined gatehouse" but the rest is covered by nettles, wild sugarcane, and grass (18). This place used to be the aerodrome of Hongqiao, which was once the military airfield of the battleground of 1937. Here the Chinese armies attacked the Japanese infantry to stop them from advancing on Shanghai. There remain the "ruined trenches," "a collapsed earth palisade," "a disused canal," and "a group of burial mounds" (19). Jim's exploration is suddenly halted by a fully armed Japanese soldier. After seeing this, Jim is so nervous that he cannot tell what he is supposed to do. At this moment, Jim's father goes out from the Christmas party and finds Jim. Jim tries not to unsettle the Japanese man as his father advises him, and finally Jim and his father safely return to the house.

In addition to the countryside, Jim is always longing for the evening drives during which he passes the urban center of Shanghai, which is portrayed as being more exhilarating and extravagant than any other city in the world:

He always looked forward to the evening drives through the center of Shanghai, this electric and lurid city more exiting than any other in the world. As they reached the Bubbling Well Road, he pressed his face to the windshield and gazed at the pavements lined with nightclubs and gambling dens, crowded with bar girls and gangsters and rich beggars with their bodyguards. (23)

Local and international citizens seek pleasures from plentiful forms such as gambling dens, casinos, cinema, and nightclubs. For Jim, the spectacle on the sidewalks is more intriguing: “crowds of gamblers” trying to get into “the jai lai stadiums,” “an armed police van” clearing the sidewalk, a group of young Chinese women tripping “over a child’s coffin,” “hundreds of Eurasian bar-girls ... outside of the Park Hotel” whistling at the residents and trying to sell their jewelry, “a party of young European Jews” fighting with “a gang of older German boys,” and “a crowd of Chinese shopgirls and typists, beggars and pickpockets” rushing into the street from “the entrance of the Cathay Theater” (23). In his family Buick, they keep a physical distance from the city and its citizens, and Shanghai and its residents are objects for him to observe.

At one point the family moves to a suite of his father’s company at the Palace Hotel, located in the Bund, which allows Jim to get a bird-eye of view to see the Shanghai waterfront and to witness/participate in the start of the Japanese attack. Along the Bund, “thousands of sampans and ferry-boats,” the floating hovels of the city, are moored, and the American, British and Japanese gunboats are at anchor (25).

Corpses are floating on the river, as the poor Chinese inhabitants cannot afford to bury their relatives. The corpses, the paper flowers, the rubbish, and oiled wood fill up on the river to form a horrible floating water garden. Pressing himself against the window, Jim observes how the Japanese marines do their daily operations, the young British officers on the bridge have an exchange, and the American military officers are absent. When Jim tries to use the semaphore he has learned in the Cubs, he sees the Japanese officer in the launch signals back with a lamp to the Japanese gunboat. At that moment, the Japanese gunboats open fires and two Japanese fighter aircrafts fly along the Bund to initiate an air raid, which is the corresponding military operation in Shanghai of the attack on Pearl Harbor. While running away from the attack, Jim becomes separated from his parents in the flooding crowd. Over the weeks that follow, finding himself alone, Jim starts to roam the streets of Shanghai on his bike, hoping to find traces of his parents or simply pass the time.

Cycling around Shanghai enables Jim to have an intimacy with the changing local landscape after the attack. After being separated from his parents since the Pearl Harbor attack, Jim stays alone in his own department and one day decides to visit homes of his closest friends, Patrick Macted and the Raymond twins. He cycles to the Raymonds' house at the German end of Columbia Road and to the Macted's house in the French Concession. The atmosphere and even odors of Shanghai are new to him. There is "a platoon of Chinese puppet soldiers marching down Columbia Road" (48). On his way to the Macted's house, he passes the checkpoint on the Avenue Foch set

by the Japanese guards. “Usually the European pedestrians would have gone to the head of the queue, but now they took their turn among the rickshaw coolies and peasants pushing handcarts” (49). Jim, gripping his cycle, is surrounded by the crowd of coolies and peasants, “in a stench of sweat and fatigue, cheap fat and rice wine,” waiting to go through the checkpoint (49). By contrast, cars with Germans have priority to accelerate past. On the opposite side of the Avenue Joffre, facing the Maxteds’ house, is the Shell Company’s compound, once resided in by British employees. However, the British are not present and now it is occupied by the Japanese sentries. As Japan initiated war with America and most European countries and cooperated with Germany and Italy to form the Axis powers, the extraterritorial rights and superiority of these European citizens in China were eliminated.

The history of Shanghai and Jim’s understanding of the outside world are projected onto the changes of local landscape. Right after the Pearl Harbor attack, it seems that the whole city comes out into the streets: peasants, pedicabs, rickshaws, gangsters, bar girls, and the armed Japanese infantry in trucks move along the streets and a coolie army of the Wang Jingwei puppet regime run past Jim. A few days later, Jim finds Shanghai changed when he rides along the Avenue Foch. The Japanese military conquest changes all aspects of the urban landscape: “thousands of Japanese soldiers” patrolling, “[s]andbagged sentry posts” being set by the Japanese army, trucks going through, Chinese lowering heads in the Nanjing Road, “[b]odies of Chinese” laying everywhere, a Chinese gangster beaten by two Japanese soldiers, and

the closed “gambling parlors and opium houses” (55). The desolation unsettles him, especially when he recalls the prosperity in the past. “The roads felt harder than he remembered from his previous jaunts around the city, and already he was tired. His hands felt colder than the handlebars” (55). Everything has changed to be bloody, bleak, and violent, which shocks him into numbness. Jim continues to cycle down to the Bund. The Japanese “cruiser *Idzumo*” moors, and “the U.S.S *Wake*” now belongs to Japan with its flags (56). In front of the Shanghai Club is an elaborate christening ceremony. The parade is consisted of Japanese sailors and officers, two tanks, several artillery pieces, a cordon of marines with “senior Japanese civilians in frock coats” and “Germans and Italians in extravagant Fascist uniforms” as audiences (56). Jim’s several months of roving the streets of Shanghai by bicycle show how the war has changed the landscape of Shanghai. He witnesses the invasion of Japanese troops in Shanghai and the commercial activities desolated due to the war.

Jim’s interaction with the local landscape forms the basis for his acquisition of knowledge and guidance, which allow him to explore the world. More practically, the geographical knowledge allows him to create his cognitive map of Shanghai, which serves as a means for his survival. The first time his cognitive map works for orientation is when he is chased by a young Chinese man, probably a pedicab or a gangster intending to get his blazer, leather shoes, or aviator’s watch. After Jim leaves the hospital, where he has been accommodated since being separated from his parents, and tries to go home, the youth with a knife runs behind him, sidestepping the crowd.

Jim runs to the Avenue Joffre, in the center of which, he knows, is the police checkpoint to the western perimeter of the French Concession. Safely passing the checkpoint, Jim finds the pursuer has vanished. With physical and mental fatigue, Jim finally reaches Amherst Avenue. This is the first time Jim's sufficient geographical knowledge saves him from danger. The second time is that Jim points the way for the Japanese soldiers who are responsible for taking the prisoner group under guard to Wusong, the location of Lunghua Camp. He saves himself from the transitory detention center to the camp and the international prisoner group from hunger, thirst, and fatigue in a long expedition. The group is lost in cityspace with little changes and no obvious landmark: "The endless streets of Chapei ran past, an area of tenements and derelict cotton mills, police barracks and shantytowns built on the banks of black canals" (96). The ruins and relics in Zhabei are evidence of the violent battlefield during the Sino-Japanese War of 1937. Then the smell of human fertilizer indicates the group is approaching the countryside, an area of untilled fields and abandoned rice paddies. The wildness without any apparent symbols makes the group think that they are lost. At the moment when the group is tired and thirsty and has an idea of returning to the detention center, Jim finds the Shanghai-Wusong railway hidden by the nettles on the far side of the paddy field. Because Jim has been to the country club in Wusong before, he knows the place is in the suburb of northern Shanghai. By observing the sun's angle, he can tell their direction: "Watching the sun's angle, as he had done for hours in the detention centre, Jim made certain that they were moving

north” (97). After locating their position, the truck with the group runs along the highway past the military airfields, industrial canal, artificial lake, and the burned-out shell of the country club and after a few days finally reaches the desolate camp. Being allowed to sit in the cabin of the truck and hold the big water jar, Jim feels he is “the real leader of this troupe of travelling prisoners” (116). His interactions with places and acuity with mental maps have not only saved him but have shaped his sense of the world—a world built on past experiences and knowledge he learned from education and parents.

By means of car and cycle rides, from vertical and horizontal views, straddling both the city and countryside, the adolescent Jim has a panorama of the landscape of Shanghai. This helps him to construct a cognitive map in his mind, which not only has pragmatic function for orientation but also shows the two sides of Shanghai. This allows Jim to draw a cultural map of Shanghai. What is seemingly opposite is united coherently in Shanghai: prosperity and poverty, the Chinese style houses and the introduced European style architectures. The collisions of difference attract him to take adventures, to acquire knowledge, and to enhance understanding toward the world. Shanghai is depicted as “the Paris of the Orient and the ‘wickedest city in the world,’” according to J.G. Ballard (*Miracles of Life* 4). On the opposite side of its prosperity, for the autobiographical figure Jim, Shanghai is dirty, scary, and violent, a place full of chaos and corpses as well. Danger and expressionless Chinese locals also exist in the streets of Shanghai. There are still thousands of refugees and homeless

people sleeping on the streets. The European citizens, especially children, are at risk of being robbed and kidnapped here. Before the Pearl Harbor attack, despite the fact that there are unsafe factors for him, his parents provide him a secure life. After the Japanese invasion to Shanghai, the Japanese army replaces Europeans and Americans in taking in charge of the Shanghai International Settlement. Then due to the Japanese air raid, Jim is separated from his fleeing parents. The teenage boy has to face the foreign world full of chaos and dangers independently. His past sense of safety, acquired from his parents and the powerful and undefeated British Empire has vanished. His collapsed world order asks for the reshaping of a new one.

Translation of his previous world order into the discourse of Lunghua Camp does not work. His understanding of self and his relation with the world gradually changes as he interacts with the people and environment there. The Lunghua Camp, which occupies the place of a teacher-training college bombed during the fighting in 1937, is now a “prison of nearly two thousand British and American civilians” (130). The civilians here suffer from a harsh living situation, shortage of food supply, and infectious diseases. Ballard describes, “The shabby barrack huts, the cement dormitory blocks, the worn parade ground and the guardhouse with its leaning watchtower lay together under the June sun, a rendezvous for every fly and mosquito in the Yangtze basin” (*Empire of the Sun* 130). Jim lives in G Block, a former training college. “On either side of the corridor was a series of small rooms, each furnished with four wooden bunks” (135). Although they do not have sufficient coal to heat, the

temperature in the rooms remains above freezing point due to the cement walls. The crowded small rooms allow no place for privacy. Jim shares the “room with a young English couple, Mr and Mrs Vincent, and their six-year-old son” (135). Ballard thinks the harsh environment was not such a big issue for boys based on his own experience: “Prison, which so confines the adults, offers unlimited scope to the imagination of the teenage boy” (*Miracles of Life* 104). It is the same with the protagonist, Jim. Although living in this severe environment and suffering from malnutrition, Jim cannot stop his curiosity toward the outside world. After ceaseless journeys around the camp, he always has new ideas in his mind, so Dr. Ransome calls him “free spirit” (Ballard, *Empire of the Sun* 128). His experience in the camp helps him to develop his own logic of thought.

Initially, Jim’s outlook on life changes gradually with the war’s progression, and his exposure to the atrocities of the war leads him to the philosophy of pragmatism. Then, the intensification of the war pushes Jim to strongly doubt the patriotism taught by his parents. Jim starts to experience the difficulty of identifying with British national identity when separated from his parents and the identification crisis strengthens with his internment in Lunghua Camp. After the difficult times in the camp, Jim forgets the appearance of his parents, only relying on cutting a picture of a middle-aged couple from the newspaper as a symbol of his parents, and he is not willing to talk about his parents with other people. David Ian Paddy points out, “If the war’s disruption unsettled Ballard’s familial and personal life, it also disturbed the

mental template forged by English education and colonial reading” (16). After making the acquaintance of an American seaman Basie and learning the law of the jungle to survive, Jim starts to realize that “kindness counted for nothing” (Ballard, *Empire of the Sun* 62). In the camp, he learns how to strive for more food, to find suitable shoes for himself, and to deal with people with different backgrounds. “Jim vaguely disapproved but agreed that it was probably sensible to do anything to survive. After three years in the camp, the notion of patriotism meant nothing. The bravest prisoners ... were those who bought their way into the favor of the Japanese and thereby helped their fellows with small supplies of food and bandages” (132). Camp life teaches him the law of survival, and at the same time unconsciously leads him to forget his original weak connection with the British Empire.

Jim starts to grow suspicious of the colonial and imperial spatial logic, too. Before the war, his means of knowing the British Empire mainly came through the English education from his parents and schools and through his colonial readings. The writer Ballard recalls, “I read children’s versions of *Gulliver’s Travels* and *Robinson Crusoe*” (*Miracles of Life* 18). Ballard’s idea is further explained by Paddy: “the realities of Japanese invasion and internment camp experience destroyed the narratives of English imperial authority as he knew it from the adults around them and the adventure talks of ‘derring-do’” (18). Jim disagrees with his fellow Britons’ behaviors, which seem typical for the British way of doing things. The British prisoners erect a little England in the camp, which may form a connection with

ingrained intentions to establish colonies in the places they occupied overseas. A hospital is built by two British doctors, Dr. Ransome and Dr. Bowen. Jim is assigned the work of surveying “the rows of tomatoes, beans and melons in the kitchen garden” and the “modest crop was meant to supplement the patients’ meagre diet” (Ballard, *Empire of the Sun* 159). They cultivate wasteland, grow plants, and establish a new civilization like Robinson Crusoe. The plants also have research benefits for the botany class. Dr. Ransome cuts the “plant stems and roots into slices,” makes specimens “under Dr. Bowen’s microscope,” and then assigns Jim to draw the pictures (159). Employing limited resources, they create their own botany encyclopedias in the camp. The main pathways in the camp are named typical British locations names—“Piccadilly,” “Petticoat Lane,” and “Knightsbridge,” all of which were never seen by the Shanghai-born British prisoners who have only read about them but have not seen them in person (130). The road names remind Jim of a poem line “a foreign field that is forever England” (131). Jim thinks the imaginary London may keep the British prisoners blind from the reality in the camp and that British people waste too much of their time on nostalgia.

The disappearance of the British Empire’s authority and the change of world order for Jim—symbolized by the repetition of the drained swimming pool—asks for a new order in Jim’s world. With the traumatic loss of authority—parents and the British Empire—Jim regards Britain as a remote and strange country. In contrast, Jim tries to seek for connection with the Japanese and Americans and to distance himself

from the British in the camp. For Jim, the camp operated by the Japanese means a reliable source of food, but the outside world means danger and insecurity. “The landscape around Lunghua was so hostile, roamed by bandits, starving villagers, and deserters from the puppet armies, that the camp and its Japanese guards offered the only security” (137). The camp is located in the desolate countryside, far away from the center of Shanghai. For Jim, the bandits, villagers and puppet armies all may attack the prisoners if they try to escape. Despite merely being provided limited rations of food, the prisoners can rely on the food for survival. Jim surrenders to and relies on Japanese imperial powers inwardly. Jim’s worship for the Japanese army reaches its peak where he does not hope the war was over. “At the detention center, and in Lunghua, he had done all he could to stay alive, but now a part of him wanted to die. It was the one way in which he could end the war” (209). His life in the detention center and Lunghua makes him believe Japan is a strong power through which he can reshape his innate order—power is right. However, when the war ends, he has to face the problem of how he can pursue a new world order. In this sense, Jim has to part with his partiality for the Japanese empire and suffers from the crisis of constructing order again.

If we could say Jim worships the Japanese Empire blindly, his attitude toward another superpower, the United States, can be summarized as “the best company” (169). Jim agrees with the Americans in every way, especially coping with reality and having a sense of good humor. “The Britons in E Block lived in open dormitories, but

each of the American seamen had constructed a small cubicle from whatever materials he could scavenge—threadbare sheets, wooden planks, straw mats and woven bamboo” (168). Each American seamen has his own makeshift cubicle. Sometimes they play a game of softball; sometimes they entice “adolescent girls, single British women and even a few wives” to spend time with them on the bunks (169). For Jim, the sexual activities lead to a new exchange system with endless supply of novel items “circulated like a second currency”: comic books, pens, lipsticks, powder compacts, tiepins, cigarette lighters, belts, cuff links, buckles (169). Basie’s cubicle is “in the northeast corner, with two big windows that [give] him a clear view of the entire camp” (169-70). Through the windows, he can clearly see the entire camp, which allows him to keep an eye on the activities of Japanese soldiers outside the guardhouse. The Americans, for Jim, have the talent to occupy beneficial resources and build their own social system based on the currency no matter what kind of circumstances they face. Jim significantly appreciates American’s philosophy of pragmatism. Also, at the end of the novel, it is the flights of Mustang, the nickname for U.S. Navy airplanes, circle Lunghua to end the war.

After the war, Jim comes back to Amherst Avenue. Both of his parents and Jim try to recover slowly from years of imprisonment in the camp, yet his parents were imprisoned in the camp at Suzhou. The whole city comes out to the Bund to celebrate the end of the war. Shanghai begins to move forward under the American political and cultural influences, with “the U.S. Navy” planes hovering and “Hollywood

movies” on show (275-76). Before Jim embarks to the gangway, he has a glance of Chinese around him, the clerks, coolies, and peasant women. He has a thought that “One day China would punish the rest of the world and take a frightening revenge” (279). Regardless of the hatred Jim expresses toward the Chinese, Jim indicates that China will be an emerging power in the global stage. With the decline of the British Empire and the Japan Empire, the U.S. takes the priority in the world after the war due to its strong military force and cultural influence, and China may become prominent to affect the world. To some extent, Jim’s attempt to reshape his innate world order is in parallel with his understanding of the post WWII world order. Although having complex feelings toward Shanghai, Jim will set on the departure for England, a small and strange country for him, which is nominally “home.” Part of his mind will remain in Shanghai forever.

Conclusion

Shanghai is Welch’s and Ballard’s home, offering them extraterritorial rights in China. The two writers have similarities and differences. Shanghai means Welch’s carefree childhood and adolescence and Ballard’s opulent childhood before WWII and painful self-growth after the war. Both suffering from the worry of being kidnapped, they seem never to have worried about the inhumanity and violence that are undeniably part of the reality of Shanghai. Welch expands his travel scope for a map of adventures and rebels against authorities, while Ballard uses his cognitive map acquired from his consistent bicycling around the city as a confined scope for safety.

The cognitive map is a mixture of their spatial movements and their imagination of Shanghai. Different means of movements, such as flaneuring, cycling, and driving, facilitate a construction a map in mind, while the constructed cognitive map plays a predominant role in defining the scope of safety. As for their autobiographical protagonists, Denton and Jim both explore ways to break or reshape a kind of order by means of their interactions with the landscape of Shanghai. Denton, through performance of gender, sexuality, and adulthood in his physical displacements at Shanghai, challenges the prevailing hetero-patriarchal social order, while Jim, by acquisition of knowledge in the procession of his exploration of Shanghai, reconstructs his innate world order.

Conclusion

This project demystifies the heterogeneous identities of the British community in China and challenges conventional unidirectional representations of Chinese spaces. British intellectuals' representations of Chinese spaces and their spatial practices in China are characterized by their social, economic, and cultural identities. I have shown how the influencing factors of their identities, such as residency, gender, marital status, cultural preference, occupation, age, sexuality, and educational background, determine their cultural choices and geographical narratives and practices. While Chinese spaces are generally seen as targets to be observed and depicted in current travel writing criticism, I have shown how they are not *just* objects to be represented and gazed at. There also exists an-Other space which European travelers were attempting to approach but could not reach. Moreover, identities of individual British intellectuals were shaped by Chinese spaces. Some expatriates got accustomed to the Chinese weather and ways of life in traditional mansions in Beijing, and some settlers re-established their places in a new social hierarchy built more on personal efforts in the International Settlement of Shanghai and reflected the social norms and their innate world order during their interactions with Chinese spaces. Chinese spaces also become an essential means for them to better understand and express themselves, especially their cultural preference/reorientation, rebellion against

hetero-patriarchal norms, escape from monotonous and restricted life, and growth toward maturity. In this project, Chinese spaces play a role in helping individual British intellectuals reflect the identity crisis of the British after the First World War.

Edward Soja's theory of Thirdspace helps us to understand British intellectuals' encounters with Chinese spaces. Each intellectual composes the conceptual ideas of Thirdspace in the transnational and cross-cultural context with an approximation in his or her own way. Employing spatiality as a critical method to explore British intellectuals' travel, sojourn, and settlement in China from the early to the mid twentieth century is an epistemological and theoretical supplement to social and historical perspectives. Their spatial practices and representations of space demonstrate a terrain of Thirdspace—an-other space beyond dualisms of the public and the private, the center and the periphery, and the real and the imagined. The specific physical and conceptual forms of an-Other space that I have elaborated on in this project included the interior spaces of living room and garden, the public sphere, women's new place in a transnational context, spatial representations of Beijing that allow for creative combinations of British and Chinese ways of thought, the Legation Quarter in Beijing, the International Settlement in Shanghai, unreachable destinations, and cognitive maps, all of which transcend binary logic: here, binary choices are creatively reconstructed and form new alternatives.

I have positioned this dissertation as a critical work to address possible alternative answers to conventional framework of spatial binaries of the public and

the private, the center and the periphery, and the real and the imagined and further re-think power structures of Orientalism and cultural imperialism implied in representations of space and spatial practices. This project suggests the existence of Other forms of space in the transnational context as an alternative to conventional framework of spatial binaries. Rather than countering that Chinese space exists as objects to be observed and occupied by British intellectuals, this project presents another possibility—there also exists an-Other alternative of space, position, and moment which shows Chinese spaces to shape individual British intellectuals' ideas and influence their understandings toward themselves and the world. Works of this group of intellectuals, including writers, poets, journalists, scholars, travelers, and suffragists, together create a new means to look at Chinese spaces and Chinese and British interactions.

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