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Feminine Writing Within the Hybrid Cultural Context — A Comparative Study of Overseas Chinese Women Writings

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interpretation of texts (liujing zhuwo)", and "the attitude of no belief without proof (wuzheng buxin)". The writer holds that there are plentiful hermeneutic conceptions hidden in Confucian canons that require further exploration and arrangement.

Keywords: Confucian canons; cultural spirit; poetic spirit; poetic discourse; poetic hermeneutics

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Xiao Wei

The overseas Chinese is of the unique in the global migration. With the cultural tradition of their own, the overseas Chinese enter the areas of other cultures. The diversified cultural environment for the overseas Chinese, with ages passing by, has consisted of homeland, families, communities and the mainstream society. The surface similarity and difference in the deep structure make their life conspicuously colorful and provide them with different experience and perception. Their writing is carried out within such a unique hybrid cultural context, containing the history, race, culture and economy and interwoven with the double identities, languages, cultural

complex, adjustment and continuing expression of the Chinese culture. This is a textual reflection of what their life continues in alien areas. Such writings for life in the hybrid cultural context, together with the writing in mainland China have formed texts of Chinese literature in different space and time, and the Chinese literature in broad sense and the phenomenon of Culture China. In fact, the overseas Chinese writing has turned out to be one of the greatest bilingual literatures. It is the extension of Chinese literature the world over.

Women writers among the overseas Chinese are active. Directed against the convention, their writings with different standpoint and angles, new perspectives and textual strategies could reflect the very experience and perception differed from that of the men. They could connote the cultural implication within the sexual difference impacted by the society. The theoretical significance lies in the possibility for feminine discourse within the male dominance. The overseas Chinese women writers not only differ from the men, like the women writers in the mainland, in biological and social difference imposed by the history, but also in cultural difference owing to the alien areas. As minority female in the alien mainstream, their double marginal identity in particular makes their writings derive from such differences. What is more, such writings are under the multi-cultural context and their living status and gender consciousness become prominent with cultural confrontation. Therefore the double identities with their gender and culture make their comprehension, perception and expression more unique under the hybrid context. This has become the new perspectives for the study of Chinese literature. Gender, race and cultural identity, the three major issues

within the contemporary literary and cultural studies, are fully embodied in the overseas Chinese women writings. Their writing could help rethink and redefine the significance as well as complexity of human life. It also helps explore the way for extended literary creation based on the Chinese experience in the new context.

Because of the great impact of the Chinese American writing, this dissertation deals with the overseas Chinese women writings headed by the United States. In thorough perspectives, the study is carried out from the specific textual analysis aiming at the very features of the overseas Chinese women writings, so as to avoid the general introduction and shallow discussion. The emphasis does not lie in the theoretical structure of the writings but, based on the first-hand data and textual criticism, elaborates the formation and the development of the writing so as to bring about the theory implied. Although overseas Chinese writings and some writers have been introduced, such a special systematic study focusing on women writings has remained silent. Therefore, this dissertation hopefully is of significance for the extended way for Chinese literature and localization of the theories of literary and cultural studies. It is also hoped to fill in the gap in the field of overseas Chinese women writing study.

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first one deals with the general development of overseas Chinese literature, focusing on the definition of overseas Chinese literature, women writings, their history, characteristics and theoretical significance. The general overseas Chinese literature and regional Chinese literature are involved. The emphasis is the Chinese American literature. Because of the great impact of Chinese American women

writers, this chapter is to expound the unique literary phenomenon of the women writings from resistance to feminine writing based on the introduction of the Chinese American women writings.

The second chapter is the demonstration of the development of overseas Chinese women writings, the influence from the hybrid cultural context and the writers' active involvement. The emphasis falls on the double identities, marginal writings, racial and self-images and gender consciousness. Some early Chinese women writers who have rarely been introduced in the mainland, like Edith Eaton, Jade Snow Wong and Diana Chang and so on, are discussed as to how their writings have helped form the tradition of Chinese American women writings and pave the way for the successors. With the changing tradition expounded, the gender factors in Maxine Hone Kingston's works are elaborated in order to explain the creation of the contemporary Chinese women writings. The interactive relationship among the hybrid culture, double identities and bilingual person and sense of gender are the focus of this chapter.

Following the second chapter, the third one as a case study is to analyze the representative novels by four women writers Nie Hualing, Yan Geling, Amy Tan and Maxine Hong Kingston, whose typical cultural background and language in use are representative. Their novels, relatively in Chinese and English, *Two Women of China: Mulberry and Peach*, *Fusang*, *The Joy Luck Club* and *The Woman Warrior*, are analyzed with multi-textual criticism and interpretation for their narrative features and strategies so that their uniqueness and significance are to be brought about. And there is also a comparative study of Amy Tan and Maxine Hone Kingston who have influenced the western mainstream already.

Based on the previous chapters, the fourth one is to deal with the theory concerned and the theoretical significance and problems in overseas Chinese women writings. The stress lies in the analysis of the theoretical features and relationship between gender and feminine writings, the discourse of the other and cultural narrative strategy within the overseas Chinese women writings. From the angle of sub-disciplinary, this chapter discusses the possibilities for the field of comparative literature brought about by such a study. Owing to the fact that the women writers are continuing their creation and exploration, two interviews of both Amy Tan and Maxine Hong Kingston are translated. Nie Hualing is interviewed through correspondence and Yan Geling's interview is also cited as appendix for the thesis so that their new books and thought can be read as well.

Most of the English sources involved in this dissertation are introduced for the first time in the mainland so as to provide the reader with certain value. Certain bibliography involved is also provided as appendix for reference. In my discussion I do not attempt to come to an arbitrary conclusion but rather an open structure with demonstration of this field for the sake to go further.

Key Words: Overseas Chinese; Feminine Writing; Hybrid Cultural Context; Comparative Study