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in Contested Terrains

赵文书 著



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南京大学博士文丛

总 序

溶粉兴

21世纪是一个充满机遇与挑战的时代,随着科学技术的突飞猛进,知识经济初见端倪,综合国力的竞争日趋激烈。从根本上说,21世纪的竞争最重要的是人才的竞争。高等学校承担着培养高层次人才的使命,博士是高层次人才的代表。如何培养大批具有博士学位的高层次人才,使他们在下世纪成为知识创新的主力军,无论是对高校本身还是对国家来说,这都是一件至关重要的事情。

为了展示南京大学青年教师的学术风采,加强学科与学术队伍的建设,促进新生学术力量的成长,经过长期酝酿与充分准备,我校编辑出版了《南京大学博士文丛》。此次编进《博士文丛》中的论著,大多是获得博士学位并在我校任教的青年教师的博士论文,是在广泛动员、严格把关的基础上,根据质量第一、公平公开、规范

此为试读,需要完整PDF请访问: www.ertongbook.com

运作的原则认真遴选出来的,同时坚持基础研究与应用研究并举,特别注重对我国现代化建设和改革开放,对南大学科建设和发展具有重要理论价值与实践意义的最新研究成果。可以说,这套《博士文丛》虽然也可能有这样或那样的不足,但基本上反映了南大青年学者丰富而活跃的学术思想,代表了南大青年学者的学术水平。此次我校组织编辑出版《博士文丛》,就是从人才培养的战略高度,并着眼于下世纪发展的需要,在学术研究与人才培养领域采取的一项重要举措。相信《博士文丛》的出版对于扩大我校的学术影响、培养青年学术骨干、推动学科建设,一定能起到重要的作用。

长期以来,南京大学在人才培养、科学研究、社会服务、国际交 流等各个方面都致力于追求卓越,为国家和社会培养了大批杰出 人才。一届又一届的学生在这一人才摇篮里茁壮成长,一代又一 代的学者在这块科学沃土上勤奋耕耘。近百年的办学实践塑造了 南大师牛热爱祖国、振兴中华的爱国精神,追求真理、实事求是的 科学精神,博采众长、汇融百家的开放精神和兢兢业业、无私无畏 的奉献精神,培育了南京大学严谨、求实、勤奋、创新的学风。 近百 年的历史,尽管世事沧桑,但这样的精神和学风一直在南京大学传 承延续,并不断发扬光大,历久弥新。正是这种优良的传统和学 风,使南京大学深深植根于传统与现代的沃土中,不断从本民族和 世界文化的宝库中吸取新的营养,形成了南大特有的深厚的文化 底蕴与学术氛围,使南大在近百年的进程中始终保持着永不衰竭 的青春活力,使学校的各项事业不断发展壮大,形成了自身的发展 特色,取得了令人瞩目的成就。如今,南京大学已成为学科门类齐 全、师资力量强大、科研实力雄厚并具有一定国际影响的重点综合 性大学。

一流的大学离不开一流的学术大师,一流的学术大师又离不 开一流的学术环境。在迈向建设世界一流大学的进程中,南京大 学将一如既往,继续改善条件,为广大教师创造更好的学术环境。

《南京大学博士文丛》总序

同时我也衷心希望全校教师尤其是广大中青年教师,发扬我校优良传统与学风,在南大优良的学术环境里锐意进取,不断创新,为进一步提高我校的学术水平,繁荣我国科学文化事业作出更大贡献!

1999年5月20日

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To the individuals and institutions acknowledged above and many others who are not named here, my gratitude is beyond my words.

Abstract

This dissertation takes contemporary Chinese American literature as its subject, focusing on three pairs of contradictions in the process of its literary creation of an imagined "Chinese America": cultural nationalism vs. Orientalism, male-centric nationalism vs. feminism, and nativist nationalism vs. Chinese culture. This study is not meant to resolve these conflicts. Rather, it takes the different positions of the contending parties as points of departure to scrutinize the confrontation, complicity and compromise as a result of their differing representational strategies.

The first chapter examines the confrontation of cultural nationalism against Orientalism in American literary tradition. It begins with an overview of Caucasian representation of the Chinese and concludes that such representation generally offers only stereotypes to consolidate the white sense of superiority. Chinese American literature positions itself directly in opposition to such an Orientalist tradition. Taking over the power of representation, Chinese Americans redress the stereotypes in their literature. In the imagined space which used to be called "Orient" or "China," Chinese Americans make an effort to build up a Chi-

nese America that is rooted in their historical experience in America. They choose to foreground Chinese American contribution to the making of the American history to claim their legitimate American rights and highlight their resistance to racial prejudice and oppression to right the servile stereotypes. By so doing, they narrativize a "usable" Chinese American history, rendering it nourishing to Chinese Americans today and sustaining to them tomorrow. Nevertheless, the embeddedness of Chinese America in America compromises the cultural nationalists' effort against Orientalism: their self-representation often ends up dismantling one stereotype but unwittingly reinforcing another. Despite their intentions, their openly confrontational discourse is at times disturbingly resonant with American Orientalism.

The second chapter deals with the gender conflict in Chinese American literature. Chinese American cultural nationalism was clearly male-centric in its inceptive stage. In the 1970s, Chinese American male writers represented women as the representative of victimizing force and (mis) took violence against women as a symbol of Chinese American liberation, symbolically displacing nationalism with male chauvinism. In critical scholarship, such androcentric nationalism is duly criticized while feminism in Chinese American literature is seldom questioned. From the entanglements of feminism with racism and Orientalism, some critically acclaimed and popularly well-received Chinese American feminist novels are read to reveal that such texts evade animosity towards the mainstream society by shifting their representational sites to China. It is therefore possible for feminists to focus their critical gaze on China and construct sexism as a "Chinese" prob-

lem in a culturally acceptable way in American gender politics. In effect, such feminism becomes feminist Orientalism, actively consolidating American "positional superiority" in its diachronic contrast between a past China and the modern America.

The third chapter explores the relationship between Chinese American literature and Chinese culture. The Chineseness of this ethnic American literature is generally assumed to be an unquestionable premise, but Chinese American writers are in fact ambivalent toward Chinese culture. This chapter begins with an examination of the Chinese American desire to sever their cultural connection with China through a thematic reading of the fatherson relationship and native-FOB relationship in Chinese American texts of the 1970s. It moves on to investigate the Chinese American recourse to traditional Chinese culture after the 1980s. partly in response to the rising multiculturalism and partly in reaction to an intrinsic need in Chinese American literature to further develop itself. To understand the relationship between Chinese American literature and Chinese culture, this chapter then analyses the Chinese elements in Chinese American texts and concludes that the kind of culture in Chinese American literature, like Chop Suey, is an indigenous American product with a Chinese-sounding name invented to survive America and therefore should be properly called (Chinese) American culture. Chinese elements are employed instrumentally as empowering ethnic markers to fortify the American cultural values that are at the core of this new culture. This expedient strategy could be effective, but it might also create problems: the multicultural conflation of an ethnic American culture with Chinese culture betrays

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America's inability to recognize Chinese America as an integral part of America.

To reveal the interrelations between the conflicting issues, this study concludes with a diachronic sum-up of the three pairs of contradictions discussed in parallel. Though the conflicts are still present, a tendency toward compromise generally manifests itself after the 1980s. With the concerted efforts of Chinese American writers, a discursive space called Chinese America is now an indelible presence. Their project to build up Chinese America, however, is not yet finished. Chinese Americans still need to assert themselves to firmly embed Chinese America into America.

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Introduction

Though Chinese American literature¹ could be traced back to at least one hundred years ago with such precursors as Sui Sin Fah who wrote at the end of the 19th century, it is not unfair to say that Chinese American literature as a visible force in American literary history was born in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s when Chinese Americans, together with other Americans of Asian descent lumped together as the Asian Americans, began what was later labeled as Asian American Movement which was marked by emerging ethnic consciousness. Such a movement reached for not only social, economic and political empowerment for American ethnic minorities of Asian ancestry but also an autonomous literary voice.

In the early 1970s, a sprouting period for Chinese American literature, a sizable number of Chinese American writers appeared in Asian American anthologies published², but few of them had substantial production. Most of the budding writers had only one or two published stories or poems to their credit. Frank Chin, with several short stories, critical essays, two plays and one anthology under his name, cut a brilliant figure in these

circumstances so that David Hsin-Fu Wand would characterize the Chinese American literary scene as "a galaxy of poets and a lone playwright" in 1976.

However, this lone star was soon to be eclipsed by the presence of Maxine Hong Kingston in 1976 with her debut autobiographical novel The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts, a book which would forever change the literary scene of Chinese America. 3 This book was an overnight success, acclaimed by the general readership as well as academia. It received the 1976 National Book Critics Circle Award for nonfiction right in the year of its publication. Reviews, both journalistic and academic, flooded in, and soon the book found its way into a variety of college courses, entered literary histories and became the subject of hundreds (by now thousands) of journal articles and conference papers and dozens of scholarly books. In 1979, it was rated one of the ten best nonfiction works of the decade. By 1989, as recorded by Marilyn Chin, Kingston was able to boast in an interview that "two teachers back east on my tour told me that I was the living author whose books are most taught in colleges. Somebody just told me they did an informal survey, walking around the UC Berkeley bookstores and found it in twelve courses in one university. And the MLA is coming out with a book on how to teach my work" ("Writing the Other" 97). This book was Approaches to Teaching Kingston's "The Woman Warrior" published in 1991 in MLA's approaches to teaching world literature series, putting her into the canon of literary works taught in American universities.

However, the reception of this canonized book is rather con-

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