

Chinatowns in a Transnational World

Myths and Realities of an
Urban Phenomenon

**Edited by
Vanessa Künnemann and
Ruth Mayer**

D634.31

E20111

华人

华人中心

Chinatowns in a Transnational World

Myths and Realities
of an Urban Phenomenon

Edited by
Vanessa Künnemann
and **Ruth Mayer**



 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
New York London

First published 2011
by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Simultaneously published in the UK
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2011 Taylor & Francis

The right of Vanessa Künnemann and Ruth Mayer to be identified as the authors of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Typeset in Sabon by IBT Global.

Printed and bound in the United States of America on acid-free paper by IBT Global.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark Notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Chinatowns in a transnational world : myths and realities of an urban phenomenon /
edited by Vanessa Künnemann and Ruth Mayer. — 1st ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Ethnic neighborhoods. 2. Chinatowns. 3. National characteristics, Chinese.
4. Culture and globalization. I. Künnemann, Vanessa. II. Mayer, Ruth, 1965–
HT215.C45 2011
307.3'362089951—dc22
2010049789

ISBN13: 978-0-415-89039-7 (hbk)
ISBN13: 978-0-203-81473-4 (ebk)

Chinatowns in a Transnational World

Acknowledgments

*Chinatown*s in a Transnational World owes its existence to the research project “Diasporic Self-fashionings. Exchanges of Chinese-American and American-Chinese Identities,” which took place from 2006 to 2010 and was generously funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

In many respects, this volume aggregates our research efforts of the past years, and it constitutes a point of departure for future studies. Several of the contributors to *Chinatown*s have been involved in our project from its inception and have informed it significantly with their expertise and enthusiasm. The volume was first conceived in the wake of the conference “Chinatown: Myths and Realities of an Urban Phenomenon in the United States and China,” which we organized in September 2008 at the Leibniz University Hannover.

Our special thanks go to Janna Wanagas, our research assistant in the project: her exceptional organizational skills, critical reflection, discrimination, and capacity of eliminating problems before they even occurred, smoothened the bumpy road toward publication and allowed us to focus on our research rather than editorial details or administrative problems. We would also like to thank our research assistant Lena Specht, whose thorough proofreading and editing got the manuscript off its ground in the summer of 2009. Our final thanks go to the two anonymous readers who recommended *Chinatown*s in a Transnational World for publication and to the people at Routledge for their interest, input, and support.

Vanessa Künnemann and Ruth Mayer
Hannover, Germany
December 2010

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
Introduction: A “Bit of Orient Set Down in the Heart of a Western Metropolis”: The Chinatown in the United States and Europe RUTH MAYER	1
1 New York After Chinatown: Canal Street and the “New World Order” JOHN KUO WEI TCHEN	26
2 “Chinese Quarters”: Maritime Labor, Chinese Migration, and Local Imagination in Rotterdam and Hamburg, 1900–1950 LARS AMENDA	45
3 Cosmopolitan Lifestyles and “Yellow Quarters”: Traces of Chinese Life in Germany, 1921–1941 DAGMAR YU-DEMBSKI	62
4 Rehabilitating Chinatown at Mid-Century: Chinese Americans, Race, and US Cultural Diplomacy MARY TING YI LUI	81
5 “Curious Kisses”: The Chinatown Fantasies of Thomas Burke ANNE WITCHARD	101
6 “The Greatest Novelty of the Age”: Fu-Manchu, Chinatown, and the Global City RUTH MAYER	116

vi *Contents*

7	The Donaldina Cameron Myth and the Rescue of America, 1910–2002	135
	KIRSTEN TWELBECK	
8	“Showing what it is to be Chinese”: China/Town Authenticity and Hybridity in Pearl S. Buck’s <i>Kinfolk</i>	163
	VANESSA KÜNNEMANN	
9	“Food Town”: Chinatown and the American Journey of Chinese Food	182
	YONG CHEN	
10	London’s Chinatown and the Changing Shape of Chinese Diaspora	198
	ROSEMARY SALES, WITH PANOS HATZIPROKOPIOU, ALESSIO D’ANGELO, AND XIA LIN	
11	Chinatowns in Transition: Between Ethnic Enclave and Global Emblem	217
	FLEMMING CHRISTIANSEN	
	<i>Contributors</i>	233
	<i>Index</i>	237

Figures

3.1	Chinese engineering students in Berlin, in the 1930s.	69
3.2	Chinese students in Berlin, ca. 1940.	71
3.3	German-Chinese couples, after World War II.	75
4.1	Such photos demonstrated to <i>Look</i> readers the assimilability of the Chinese American second generation. James Wong Howe Collection, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.	87
4.2	Howe closes his <i>Look</i> article on the wartime social and cultural transformation of San Francisco's Chinatown with a prediction of its future disappearance with the ending of Chinese Exclusion. James Wong Howe Collection, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.	89
4.3	Howe's Chinese American GI properly performs heteronormative desire in this photograph. James Wong Howe Collection, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.	91
7.1	Rescue home, San Francisco, California. Wisconsin Historical Society. Image ID: 78956.	138
7.2	Diagram of house with secret escapes in which two slave girls were kept. Wisconsin Historical Society. Image ID: 78960.	139
7.3	Ah King, rescued May 18, 1910. Wisconsin Historical Society. Image ID: 78954.	140
7.4	Four Graduates and Their Teacher. Photo included in "The Story of Wong So" by Donaldina Cameron, <i>Women and Missions</i> , August 1925, p. 169. Photo reprinted courtesy of Presbyterian Women.	142

7.5	American and Chinese helpers in the mission home.	145
7.6	Lily Lum. Photo included in "Second Generation Orientals" by Donaldina Cameron. <i>Women and Missions</i> , January 1935, p. 340. Photo reprinted courtesy of Presbyterian Women.	147
7.7	Lo Mo. Photo printed courtesy of Donaldina Cameron House and of the California Historical Society.	151
7.8	The door of refuge and some who lived within. Above, Miss Culbertson and Yoke Lon; below, N'Gun Ho and foster baby; Auntie Wing—T'sang T'sun; Yoke Wan, the Chinese Madonna.	152
7.9	Cameron House is in the heart of the Chinese community. Drawing by Clinton Huey, reprinted courtesy of the artist and of Donaldina Cameron House, San Francisco, California.	153
7.10	Untitled (Chinese Slave Girl behind Bars), circa 1905—Unknown Maker—Postcard—Collection of the Oakland Museum of California (detail).	156

Introduction

A "Bit of Orient Set Down in the Heart of a Western Metropolis": The Chinatown in the United States and Europe

Ruth Mayer

Chinatowns are sites of mystery and sites of fascination. At least, this is what the mix of public perception and public ascription around these ethnic quarters both in the United States and in Europe suggests. But of course Chinatowns have always also been sites of everyday life. They are complex urban phenomena shaped by immigration politics, racialized discourses revolving around public health and citizenship, tourism, trade relations, commercial exchanges, missionary ambitions, labor exploitation, and cultural self-fashioning. Both in the United States and in Europe these "urban enclaves" (Wilson and Portes 1980; Zhou 1992; Lin 1998) have come to represent Chineseness and orientalism. And still, to reduce the reality of the Chinatown to its stereotypical representations would be to perpetuate the stylizations of the past and to underestimate the extent of agency and self-determination in the daily lives of Chinese expatriates and migrants—the "internal vitality of Chinatown," as Yong Chen wrote (2000: 47; see also Wong 1995). Especially second- and third-generation Chinese diasporic subjects were socialized in such 'miniature Chinas,' and shaped the general outlook, economic, tourist, and cultural set-up as well as the educational and religious backgrounds of Chinatown communities in many ways.

The Chinatown has always been a transnational phenomenon. While Chinatowns differ markedly depending on their geographical and societal situatedness, due to divergent immigration policies, international relations, colonial histories, and demographic developments, they are also part of a network of real-life diasporic exchanges and informed by what might be called a complex transnational imaginary. Feeding from shared political and cultural frameworks of segregation, marginalization, and exoticization, the image and myth of the Chinatown evolved into a transnational fantasy, based on 'invented traditions' (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1984) such as deliberately implemented architectural styles, holidays, foodways, and practices of consumption. The channels of dissemination of this fantasy were manifold, but literary and filmic narratives acted as particularly powerful means of mediation for Chinatown images and myths across cultures

and continents, as we shall see. The mythification of Chinatown was contingent upon the global networks of migration which spanned the Atlantic and the Pacific, upon the American and European political, economic, and missionary engagements in China, and upon the emerging structures of international mass tourism at the turn of the twentieth century. In all of these processes of travel and takeover, contact invariably cut both ways. Cultural contact zones, as theorists as diverse as Mary Louise Pratt, James Clifford, Arif Dirlik, and Prasenjit Duara, to name only a few prominent voices, remind us, are impossible to contain; hierarchical constellations of military power and state control tend to generate subversion; religious and political missions tend to affect the missionary as much as the target group; and tourist trips can constitute the point of departure for expatriate life stories. For the context of the Chinatown, this means that Chinese immigrants did not sever their ties with China, that political ideas and political movements traveled across the globe, and that the missionary engagement in China hit home in the United States and Europe as well, affecting the Western Chinatowns in the form of 'home missions' (Ma 1990; Dirlik 1998; Chen 2000; Manela 2007; Conrad and Mühlhahn 2007; Sachsenmaier 2007; Künnemann and Mayer 2009).

In this volume, authors from various disciplines explore the many facets of past and present Chinatowns in a comparative and historical perspective. We are interested in disclosing the important European backdrop to a phenomenon commonly associated with North America. It is also our objective to introduce the work of well-established European scholars in the field, some of whom have published important studies in languages other than English, to an English-speaking audience. Most of the contributors to our volume have multidisciplinary and multilingual backgrounds and are familiar with several different instances of the Chinese diasporic experience. As a consequence, many chapters in our volume proceed comparatively, inter-relating different locations or breaching timeframes and thus disclosing the numerous analogies, but also the fascinating differences which characterize the myths and realities of Chinatowns in Europe and the United States. With its triangular approach to the developments between China and the urban Chinese diasporas of North America and Europe, our book discloses connections and interlinkages which have not been addressed before.

One important backdrop for many of our contributors will be San Francisco's Chinatown—the largest and historically most dynamic Chinatown in the United States and the urban constellation which most obviously shaped the self-fashioning and the perception of many other diasporic Chinese communities in the United States and in Europe. San Francisco's Chinatown shaped the very idea of what a Chinatown should look like—even if other Chinatowns underwent markedly different immigration histories and processes of urban development. Orientalist clichés, which played a fundamental role in the architectural, cultural, and political history of San Francisco's Chinatown (Ma 1990; Chen 2000; Lee 2001), left their mark

on the urban diasporic communities in Europe as well. The iconic function of this American Chinatown can be exemplarily traced with regard to the urban planning and public relations work around London's Chinatown in the 1980s. But even earlier, at the beginning of the twentieth century, representations of the Chinese quarters in Europe drew heavily on a vocabulary and imagery which first came into being decades earlier in California, even if (or precisely because) the British, Dutch, and German Chinese communities were tiny by comparison to their equivalents in the United States (see Christiansen 2000; Seed 2006; Gütinger 2004; Amenda 2006; Yu-Dembski 2007; see also the chapters by Ruth Mayer, Anne Witchard, Lars Amenda, and Dagmar Yu-Dembski in this volume). These European communities demonstrate powerfully the variegated workings of established imageries and discourses in the formation of Chinatowns the world over. Yet with this volume we not only aim at showing correspondences and similarities, but also seek to explore the local variations, appropriations, adaptations, and translations—the often almost unnoticeable transformations which practices, traditions, ideas, and images undergo once they travel.

It would have been interesting to widen the scope of this comparative approach to other areas of the world. The rich history of the Chinese diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean comes to mind, Canada suggests itself as a North American counterpoint, Australian Chinatowns present fascinating case studies. In Europe, Paris would have constituted an interesting contrasting sample to London, Rotterdam, and Berlin, to mention just some basic facets of a global mosaic. In addition, a comparative perspective on the fascinating history of Chinatowns in Asia could have been conceivable (see Ma 1990; Anderson 1991; Hu-DeHart 1991; Curtis 1995; Benton and Pieke 1998; Christiansen 2000; McKeown 2001; Ramsay 2003; Lee 2005; Benton 2007; Albiez et al. 2007). Still, given the disciplinary variety (history, sociology, literature, film) and wide historical scope (from the early nineteenth century to the present time) of our approach, we opted for a certain regional restriction in order to ensure that what we see as the most interesting aspect of our topic—its function as a case study on the emergence and dissemination of a transnational urban history and imaginary—would be underscored.

This introduction will map the global Chinatown, exploring how the very concept of Chinatown came into being, how it was realized, and how the realities and imageries of Chinatown were produced, experienced, appropriated, and mobilized in the course of the twentieth century. The American and British components of this global history have been widely discussed before; the German Chinese past, however, is considerably less explored. Partially, this lack is due to the particularities of German history: after all, the Nazi regime in the 1930s and 1940s forcefully terminated Germany's history of Chinese immigration, which had only unfolded slowly to begin with (see Amenda 2006; Gütinger 2004; Yu-Dembski 2007; for more recent developments see Leung 2007). But as Dagmar Yu-Dembski

and Lars Amenda show in their chapters in this volume, while the Chinese quarters in Berlin and Hamburg were too small and too unorganized to merit the designation as ‘Chinatowns’ even before the 1930s, they did invoke the rich cultural imaginary around China and the Chinese in a manner that resonates interestingly with conditions and representations of Chinatowns elsewhere. In what follows, observations on the case of Germany shall function as counterpoints to my approach to the transnational Chinatown, while San Francisco will serve as my central point of departure. These contrapuntal interventions, the interspersed anecdotes and asides on the German situation, may serve to illustrate the ramifications of Chinese diasporic history—into sites as daunting as Imperial Germany and as remote as Pomerania at the turn of the twentieth century, as metropolitan as Berlin in the 1920s, or as provincial as parts of the state of Brandenburg these days. The German examples may also illustrate that the urban history of the Chinese diaspora worldwide cannot be reduced to a history of Chinatowns: in order to address the Chinatown phenomenon one needs to bear in mind that in Europe, but also in many American cities, the community organization for the Chinese diaspora did not necessarily always fit smoothly into the ethnic enclave pattern. Many Chinese diasporic communities lacked the “residential density of the North American Chinatowns” (Benton and Gomez 2008: 25) and many of them were shaped by “more fluid and geographically dispersed immigrant population[s]” than given in the Chinatown (Lui 2009: n. p.). All of them, however, tended to be represented and probably also perceived of themselves at some point or other in terms of the iconology and the imaginary of the Chinatown.

Diasporic strategies of self-fashioning, marketing, and ethnic transformation, which register in the current layout and perception of Chinatowns worldwide, need to be seen in close connection with measures of containment, restriction, supervision, and control as they were enacted by state and regional authorities in the past. The San Francisco Chinatown which was (re)constructed after the earthquake and firestorm of 1906 can be seen as an exemplary case here—Chinese merchant elites and the municipal authorities both cooperated and tried to get the better of each other in the effort to establish a quarter which would both comply with the requirements of the residents, with tourist fantasies, and with the desire of the authorities to maintain control over the area.

The alliances and enmities in such collaborations and conflicts were further complicated by the fact that the ‘Chineseness’ of the Chinatown was and is far from uniform or homogeneous. Chinatowns were and are sites marked by diversity, dissent, and struggle—by rifts that open up not only between people of Chinese descent and other ethnicities, but also between people stemming from different Chinese regions, representing different classes, engaging in different professions or politico-cultural projects, and practicing different religions. These large- and small-scale conflicts are further complicated by gender differences. In addition, they tend to be translated into discourses of

gender (Yung 1995; Shah 2001; Lui 2005)—after all, economic, political, ethnic, and cultural differences as they mark Chinatowns are often couched in the symbolic repertory of gender differences (effemination vs. masculinity, softness vs. hardness, feeling vs. brain, ornament vs. rigor).

TRANSNATIONAL CHINATOWN: SAN FRANCISCO, THE FORMATIVE YEARS

The Chinese constituted the first minority which was excluded from immigration and naturalization in the United States explicitly and formally on the grounds of a racial ideology. In 1882, Congress passed the First Chinese Exclusion Act, which was re-enforced and extended in 1924 in the course of the Immigration Act, aiming more generally at migrants from the Asia-Pacific triangle. It was due to the exclusion policy that the history of Chinese immigration (in fact, Asian immigration in general) to the United States evolved parallel *and* in contrast to other immigration histories, as Sucheng Chan pointed out:

Unlike their European counterparts, [Asian immigrants'] upward climb was impeded not only by a poor knowledge of the English language, a lack of familiarity with the American way of doing things, limited education, and the absence of relevant job skills, but also by laws that severely limited—on racial grounds—the opportunities they could pursue. Like other people of color, they were victims of legally sanctioned color prejudice. (Chan 1991: 61; see also Salyer 1995; Hsu 2000; Lee 2003)

One particularly salient result of the policy of exclusion for American Chinatowns was the formation of the nineteenth-century 'bachelor society' due to immigration and naturalization restrictions—American Chinatowns became predominantly male sites in their initial stage. In addition, the American laws triggered a huge industry of identification and registration and processes of migration restriction and border control all over the world (Gyori 1998; Caplan and Torpey 2001). Most of today's common techniques of managing the flow of transnational travel and surveying the processes of (im)migration can be traced back to the formats and devices which evolved in the early times of Chinese exclusion (Mayer 2009a). And finally, exclusion policies brought about intricate diasporic networks of community organization and management based on kinship (Hsu 2000; McKeown 2001; Lee 2003). Eventually, the Pacific world relied upon complicatedly interlinked national and diasporic, official and informal structures of transnational commerce and communication, as I have argued elsewhere (Künemann and Mayer 2009).

The formation of the American Chinatown took place against the backdrop of such legal and political measures and Chinese American counter-strategies,

and against the backdrop of the anti-Chinese movement and the 'driving out' which forced Chinese laborers to leave mining towns and jobs in agriculture or railway construction and to move to the urban centers in acts of self-protection. Although it is important to keep in mind that it is "Chinatown's vitality, rather than hostile outside forces, that created [San Francisco's] Chinatown" (Chen 2000: 55), the anti-Chinese movement's impact on the urban history of San Francisco—and, in fact, the formation of Chinatowns all over the United States, and by extension, in Great Britain—needs to be acknowledged. In San Francisco, Chinatown's population grew from little more than 8 percent of the overall population in the 1860s to almost 30 percent in the 1870s, not counting the high number of undocumented Chinese residents at the time (Chen 2000: 55), and this fast growth was certainly not only or primarily due to the attractions of city life. At this stage of its development, Chinatown was established as a sphere of protection and withdrawal, and it was its fortified structure that should appeal most to its residents:

[By the 1870s] Chinatown had become [...] almost impregnable. [...] Chinatown had become a fortress. [...] The ghetto [...] was armed. While outside San Francisco's Chinatown the Chinese seldom attempted to protect themselves by force, on their own ground they would doubtless have done so. An attack on this citadel was hardly an inviting prospect. (Saxton 1995: 148–9; for references to many other Californian settings and Chinatowns see Pfaelzer 2007)

In the following decades, this sense of being under siege receded, even though hostilities and apprehensions vis-à-vis San Francisco's Chinese diaspora did by no means disappear. To deal with the policies of exclusion and an overall atmosphere in which Chinatown was, at best, exoticized, yet generally subjected to racist and xenophobic vilification, the Chinese community in San Francisco turned to measures of active self-promotion. After the earthquake of 1906, San Francisco's Chinatown was rebuilt as a tourist destination (see on this development Chen 2000: 186–217; Lee 2001: 148–99; Yeh 2004). And still, it is important to bear in mind the conditions of its beginning. The mutual mistrust and the sense that Chinatown, like its inhabitants, may be "with us, but not of us," to cite the assessment of the early Chinese American publicist and writer Edith Maud Eaton (quoted in Ferens 2002: 50), persisted: Chinatown remained to be seen as a city in the city, a world of its own (on the implications of this logic for the formation of diasporic communities see Mayer 2005: 123–67).

IMAGE MAGIC

The history of San Francisco's Chinatown needed to be delineated in this detail because it is exceptional—but also exemplary. The Chinese exclusion policy was developed and particularly geared to the situation in the

United States, yet in the wake of this policy's implementation, similar measures of immigration restriction and border control were established the world over (Zolberg 1997, see also Lars Amenda's chapter in this volume). In turn, the rhetoric of the 'yellow peril,' of 'cheap' Chinese labor, their moral laxity and incapability to assimilate proved popular in Europe as well as the United States. The discourses of eugenics, social hygiene, national surveillance, and border protection were omnipresent in the western world of the early twentieth century (Gollwitzer 1962; Parker 1998; Mehnert 1995; Shah 2001; Stern 2005; Conrad and Sachsenmaier 2007; Auerbach 2009).

And it was by way of visual images—press and art photographs, caricatures, illustrations, graphs, sketches, filmic documentations and narratives—that the ideological work of such discourses was most effectively conducted. Visual images seem to convey cultural knowledge immediately and unmistakably, where verbal expression appears circuitous and cumbersome. Images have been ascribed with the power to infiltrate, to manipulate, to trigger unconscious fears and to mobilize atavistic impulses. Kaiser Wilhelm II, who prided himself (wrongly) on having introduced the term "Gelbe Gefahr" [yellow peril] into international political discourse by way of a note of warning to Czar Nicholas II in 1895, characteristically makes reference to a picture when enthusing over the slogan's popularity and omnipresence in the early twentieth century. It all began, the Kaiser claimed, with a sketch drawn by himself which inspired the painting *Völker Europas. Wahrt eure heiligsten Güter* [*Peoples of Europe, Protect Your Most Sacred Possessions*] by Hermann Knackfuß. Neither Kaiser nor painter used the term 'yellow peril' at the time of the painting's conception; nevertheless, the imperial reasoning is not all flawed: the painting did become famous as *Die Gelbe Gefahr*, and it certainly contributed its share to the infusion and circulation of anti-Asian sentiments in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century. It constituted, in the words of Ute Mehnert, "the beginning of an unprecedented propagandistic experiment" directed against Asia (1995: 111; see also Gollwitzer 1962: 42–3).

But the history of Chinatowns in the United States and in Europe exemplifies that propaganda efforts did not go unchallenged. And again, visual constellations played a major role. Images—and by extension, myths—are "dialectical," as W. J. T. Mitchell points out with reference to the terminology of the Frankfurt school:

[D]ialectical images [are] "social hieroglyphs," ambiguous syntheses whose "authentic" and "inauthentic" aspects cannot be disentangled by a question-begging invocation of the "real social process" or our essential nature. The essence of the dialectical image is its polyvalence—as object in the world, as representation, as analytic tool, as rhetorical device, as figure—most of all as a Janus-faced emblem of our predicament, a mirror of history, and a window beyond it. (Mitchell 1987: 205)

Mitchell did not write about Chinatowns, but the visual history of the Chinatown constitutes an excellent case in point for his observation. The architectural, photographic, theatrical, and filmic icons of Chineseness, which first might have come into being in an effort from the side of mainstream societies to mark the alterity of the Chinese and to keep them at bay, are Janus-faced; indeed, they can be infused with highly diverse interests and open up to all sorts of readings. This, too, is part of the ideological power or—to put it more positively—‘image magic’ emanating from pictures. Pictures which were produced for blatantly ‘orientalist’ purposes thus may be seen as “bearing traces of different kinds of agency, even though, or indeed because, we have so few early images by the San Francisco Chinese themselves,” as Anthony Lee concludes in his excellent study of pictorial representations of San Francisco’s Chinatown (2001: 8). The traces which these pictures carry may very well be called ‘ghostly’—they enter the text of the image unbidden and on the sly, and they are hard to etch out, even if the producer tries to do so, as we will see.

A CHINESE GHOST IN GERMANY, AROUND 1880

In 1880, at the time when in the United States the anti-Chinese movement held sway over the debates around Chinese immigration and at around the time that Kaiser Wilhelm first formulated his concerns of an impending Asiatic invasion of Europe, “a total of 63 persons of Chinese descent were registered [in imperial Germany]” (Gütinger 2004: 111). The census data might not have been comprehensive, but still, figures like these are hardly alarming, even to the most paranoid nativists. Of the sixty-three persons recorded, twenty-one lived in Berlin, seventeen in Hamburg, the rest of the group was dispersed mostly over the northern part of Germany and resided almost exclusively in urban settings. There was no Chinatown to speak of, in any sense of the term. Two Chinese, Erich Gütinger notes, lived in Pomerania in 1880, and one might wonder whether any of the two inspired the arguably most influential manifestation of a Chinese in the German literature of the day. In 1895, Theodor Fontane published his popular novel, *Effi Briest*, the story of a young girl who is transplanted early in the 1880s from the metropolitan province of Brandenburg, close to the capital of Berlin, to the fictional town of Kessin, at the northeastern outskirts of the German empire, in Pomerania. She dreads this dislocation to what she considers the end of the world, and when her husband, Baron von Innstetten, mentions the cosmopolitan background of the Kessin population, she eagerly grabs on to this piece of information:

“But that’s delightful, Geert. You’re always talking about it being a dreary hole and now I see that unless you’ve been exaggerating there’s a whole new world to discover. All sorts of exotic people. That’s right, isn’t it? You meant something like that?”