

**Integration in Selected Works of Two Diasporic Chinese American Poets:
John Yau and Marilyn Chin**

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Integration with its diverse linguistic and cultural relations between ethnic and dominant groups in relevance to the contemporary diasporic context is the core of this research. The focus of this study is on Chinese immigrants who immigrate to America and live in the diaspora there. The experiences of the Chinese ethnic minority during their transition to the new American society and their diasporic life there are distinguished. Accordingly, members of the Chinese minority tend to acculturate to the American society through identifying their experiences with one of the four outcomes of Berry's bidirectional model of acculturation. Through the lens of diaspora criticism, it analytically focuses on a particular aspect of this model mainly: integration (biculturalism). It employs Berry's integration strategy of acculturation to analyze John Yau's *Ing Grish* and *Paradiso Diaspora* and Marilyn Chin's *Dwarf Bamboo* and *Phoenix Gone, the Terrace Empty*. Subsequently, the aspects of integration (biculturalism) in Yau and Chin's poetry are accomplished through adapting two languages and cultures: Chinese and American.

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In analyzing the diasporic communities, it is found that they are communities who have strong linkage to other nations but in the current case America is their new home (Bhabha 76). In the beginning of their life in America, immigrants of the diasporic communities face a series of sufferings. The first suffering occurs when they experience the pain of being away from their home and from the memories of their homeland. The second suffering is the anguish they feel after leaving everything that is familiar to them in their home country. All those factors affect immigrants' mentality and perspectives of their current situation in the new American land. It is also worth to note that whatever the reasons for immigration be, immigrants do experience a sense of unbelonging, alienation and displacement in the American land. Consequently, they seek to acculturate in the new culture as "they remained on the edge of the adopted culture and treated as other. While remaining on the most cultures, they undergo complex experiences of anxiety, confusion, yearning and aspirations" (Bhabha 77). Yet, immigrants in diaspora often live between two cultures. In spite of this sense of confusion, there is an inclination to home which is considered "a mythical place of desire" in the new diasporic American community (77).

William Safran argues that immigrants in the host society "continue to relate personally or vicariously, to the homeland in a way or another,

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and their ethnic-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship” (Safran 23). He stresses that immigrants still have a sense of awareness in the new society; they are conscious of their culture, traditions, values, ethics and language. In their new life in America, they are on continuous trials to integrate both cultures: homeland and host land. They benefit from such a relationship by producing a new and distinct identity. The diasporic Chinese immigrants do not break their connection with their homeland, however; they look for roots and continuity in the new American land. Moreover, immigrants in America attempt to adapt with the American society. Despite their attempts of adaptation, they are concerned with maintaining the culture and identity of their homeland. As a result of that integration, immigrants develop a bicultural identity as they adopt the culture of the American society while keeping their own inheritance (Safran 23-25).

Those diasporic communities also share a sense of awareness. They are aware of their “decentered attachments, of being simultaneously ‘home away from home’ or ‘here and there’” (Vertovec 8). William Safran is one of the early theorists who examines the concept of diaspora. He discusses acculturation of diasporic communities has challenged the dilemma of diaspora, whether by assimilation or integration. He investigates the main features that should exist in the classification of diasporic people. He

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explains that diaspora as a concept can be applied to:

Expatriate minority communities whose members share several of the following characteristics: 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from, a specific original center to two or more ‘peripheral’, or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland- its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not -perhaps cannot be- fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it (83- 4).

In the negotiation of the nature of American diaspora, it is found that it is a symmetrical relationship of power, race, identity and belonging between white and non-white groups. On one hand, American people believe that minority groups are considered to be marginal. On the other hand, those marginal individuals view the American culture as an excluding culture that is made up of a center where they do not belong. Their different skin colour, gender, accent, clothes and cultural rituals reflect a culture that is not considered part of the culture of the majority. Thus, American culture becomes a unique entity to be identified only with whiteness (Bhatia 13).

Indeed, the notion of diaspora is not a new one. The term’s original meaning is to describe people who are scattered between, through, and across different geographic locations. Yet, for many centuries the main reference of the term is the historical mass dispersions of the Jews, African slaves

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and Chinese overseas (Wei 5). Like Safran, Cohen proposed a typology for diasporas. Accordingly, he uses five different types to categorize other diasporas. The first type is labour diasporas as in the case of Indians. The second type is imperial diasporas for the British people. The third type is that for Chinese and Lebanese that is concerned with trade diaspora. The fourth one is victim diasporas of Africans and Armenians. The last type is a cultural one as of the Caribbean case (Anteby-Yenini 264). For him, the Jewish diaspora is the prototype of diaspora.

The argument of Cohen about diaspora is that “it can emerge from a growing sense of group ethnic consciousness in different countries, a consciousness that is sustained by, amongst other things, a sense of distinctiveness, common theory and belief in common fate” (Smokowski 585). Thus, the identity chosen by diasporas is one of the most important issues that could shape their life in the future. The way that they see themselves in the new community and their ability to balance between two distinct cultures of their host society and that of their homeland affects the construction of their new diasporic identity (596). Hence, Chinese immigrants in the diaspora face greater challenges as a minority group in a dominant host society. In this respect, Yang claims that:

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Those views regarding the identity of diasporic communities especially the Chinese one stemmed from the assumption that Chinese immigrants living as a minority group among non-Chinese people were facing identity problems. Consequently, these problems force them to be more conscious of their Chineseness. They look different, speak differently and are regarded as Chinese by others. Thus, they become naturally aware of what is or is not Chinese (54-5).

Furthermore, the consciousness and identity of diasporic Chinese immigrants are focused on their attachment to their ethnicity to the extent that they continue to feel emotionally invested in the homeland. Consequently, these “attachments and sentiments are experienced simultaneously with their involvement and participation in the social, economic, cultural, and political allegiances to their home in diaspora” (Angew 6). They do their best to preserve both cultures as they constantly feel torn between here and there, between their country of origin and their country of residence. As a result of this paradoxical nature, Chinese diasporic immigrants’ unique identity is rooted from their double consciousness that is formed from their need for acceptance into the dominant culture and the need for a tie to their Chinese heritage.

Nowadays, the term diaspora has acquired a broad semantic domain. It now encompasses diverse paradigm of groups such as political refugees,

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alien residents, guest workers, immigrants, expellees, ethnic and racial minorities and overseas communities. It is used to describe displaced individuals who feel, maintain, invent or revive a connection with their homeland (Safran 83). According to Sheffer, modern diaspora is applied to “ethnic minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin- their homelands” (3). Thus, all ethnic minorities living in the American society are dispersal.

The major problem for members of the diasporic community is cultural change. In their movement to a new country, they try to adjust with the new culture and society. At the same time, they are not willing to follow the new land’s culture completely. Even when they live in the new land for a long time, they still consider it another country. Consequently, the several changes that they find in the new land, make them feel shocked. Thus, they try to cling to their homeland culture by following it strictly. This dilemma of confusion to where they belong has created this sense of being diasporic. In the light of this, Wieviorka states that:

When a diasporic community is constantly rejected or interiorized while only wanted to be included, either socially or culturally, or when this group or this individual is racially discriminated, and demonized under the argument of a supposed cultural different.

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Then, the individual or the group is embarrassed and this eventually leads to a self-definition and behaviors based on this culture and, eventually, racial, distinction (28).

As a result of this, Chinese immigrants living in diaspora suffer from dual consciousness. Accordingly, they are torn between the feeling of belonging to the new society besides maintaining the homeland heritage. Moreover, in this era of diasporization, it is essential to stop and contemplate the consequences that the diasporic communities have on the individual, community coherence and nation states. It is also worth to think about the type of identity produced by such communities. As they create their own zone by picking some cultural features of their homeland blending them with other cultural features of the host country forming a mix of a unique diasporic identity.

Chinese immigrants who move out of China since 1840s onward not only adapt to new environments but also form new perceptions of others and their own group of belonging. As a result, Chinese diasporic communities often tend to make gradual transitions from being immigrants to becoming integrated members into the host society. This scheme that is attempted by Chinese immigrants is challenged by the American host society. The latter one encourages Chinese immigrants to not be identified as Chinese American because they are relatively a small population.

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Yet, they are identified as Asian Americans, so as to be cooperated with Japanese, Korean and other Asians in their social and cultural participation in mainstream American society. Thus, Chinese immigrants and their descendants in their articulation of their ethnicity use history, traditions and language to assert their distinct identity (Bhattacharya 31).

Consequently, there are many experiences facing Chinese diasporian in America as they are caught mentally and physically between two worlds mainly: the loss of their homeland and their alienation in the host land. These feelings of loss and alienation lead to clashes of those different cultures and affect Chinese immigrants' in their search for identity to relinquish the dilemma of diaspora. They seem to be living between two worlds: native world and the immigrant world as Rudyard Kipling writes, "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet" (Shirley Geok Lin-lim 290). Their facial features proclaim one fact: their different ethnicity but by education, choice, or birth they are American. Also language, culture and history are the three major constituents of diasporic memory as they form an emotional link with the homeland. As a result, diasporas face alienation for two reasons: the first is displacement from the home land and the second is cultural differences that they face in the alien land (Shirley Geok Lin-lim 290-1).

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In the argument of the Chinese diaspora, Benzi Zhang re-conceptualizes the idea of diaspora. It is not perceived, Zhang thinks, as a process of migration where the ethnic group crosses the borders of different countries, instead, it is grasped as a double relationship between two different cultures and homes. He also examines concepts of “identity, nation, home, place and memory” in a cross cultural context (1). He examines how Chinese American poets who live in diaspora represent their cultural difference and explores “the new perspectives for understanding and analyzing the development of Chinese cultural heritage” (2). He states that Chinese diaspora has become a mode of argument as it is not a matter of belonging but also a process of becoming. Thus, the dispersed Chinese minority attempts to stress their national identity along with the American one (5-8).

Fenggang Yang also explores the dilemma of Chinese people who live as a minority among non-Chinese peoples. Yang goes on to further stress that “Being among non-Chinese often forces them to become more conscious of their Chineseness. To look different, speak differently, to be regarded as Chinese others leads naturally to a greater awareness of what is or is not Chinese” (54-5). He argues that, since World War II, many Chinese defines themselves as members of the Chinese diaspora as they are pushed by the host society to assimilate and are pulled by the homeland to integrate (55).

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As for acculturation, it is considered an evitable consequence for Chinese immigrants living in diaspora. The classical definition of acculturation states that “it is a phenomenon which results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural pattern of either or both groups” (Spielberger 28). This classical way assumes that the ethnic group tends to alter some traits of their homeland culture to become familiar with that of the mainstream. Therefore, they try to modify their original culture. In contrast, the contemporary definition argues that the ethnic group acquires some cultural aspects of the host society to be fitted to the original culture. Consequently, this implies “some relative cultural equality between giving and receiving cultures” (Lesser xxi). Selection of common cultural elements from the host society for example, language, values and traditions become a route to be followed by American minorities in the modern era.

The theory of acculturation has been discussed by many theorists. Acculturation is a process that is developed through time. In early research on the issue of acculturation, the experiences of structural, biological, economic, political and cultural changes have been examined on a group level. It has been recognized that mutual changes take place in both groups: the mainstream and the acculturating immigrants (Taket 118).

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However, most of those changes occur in the acculturating group due to the influences of the host society.

Anthropologists nowadays modify the theory of acculturation. For them, acculturation is examined on an individual level rather than a group level. They consider acculturation at this level to be psychological since it deals with the inner psyche. In this level, some changes occur “in both overt behaviours and covert traits of an individual from a cultural group going through the collective acculturation process” (Taket 118). According to Padilla, this phenomenon indicates that the individual being is an important element in the study of acculturation due to the changes that occurs to him/ her. Those changes are resultants of the contact between different cultures which is considered as a crucial issue (Pak 18).

Acculturation in the early 1900 depends on the ability to acculturate to the mainstream. At this point, acculturation is based on different types and traits of personality. In 1918, Thomas and Znaniecki assume that bohemians and philistines are two types of personality with regard to acculturation. They claim that the first type which is bohemians “would thrive while acculturating since this personality is curious and fearless”. However, the second type which is philistines wouldn’t thrive while acculturating “since the personality traits are fearful and conformist” (Ardila 9). They argue that the curiosity in the personality of the bohemians leads to

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assimilation to the mainstream culture. On the contrary, the conformity in the personality of the philistines let them to be separated from culture of the mainstream. Thus, the two types of personality that are suggested by Thomas and Znaniecki, contradict each other. Each type has its own way towards acculturation ending up to two different outcomes.

Isaac Berkson expresses his views regarding the process of acculturation in the 1920s. His theoretical framework shows acculturation as a democratic and a political process of self-determination and reliance. Berkson also claims that immigrants have the freedom and the right to choose the social and cultural group which they would follow and be acquainted with. Moreover, the community that they would identify themselves with “is composed of different ethnic and cultural groups coexisting in the same geographical space and sharing in community life” (Ardila 10). He portrays the actual life in America which combines many cultural and ethnic groups in one place. As a result, immigrants are confronted with many cultures with their distinct features and following any of them is a matter of choice.

In the 1920s, another theory of acculturation emerges to view acculturation from an anthropological perspective. According to Ardila, it has been thought to be as “dependent upon the political power relation among the groups in cultural contact” (9). In this respect, acculturation

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requires a confrontation between the host culture and the culture of the homeland. This confrontation is examined politically through measuring the strength of the bonds of those two entities. In this confrontation, it is revealed that there is lack of similarities between the host culture and that of the homeland. On the other hand, there will be an influence of one group on the other. This influence is mainly done by the minority group in an adaptation process to the cultural and behavioral norms of the dominant one. However, this adaptation might be against the values and beliefs of the minority group.

Three concepts of acculturation are the focus of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. These concepts are marginality, segregated symbiosis and transition. In defining those concepts, there is a dependence on the geographical as well as the racial features of the minority group. Those features include the different characteristics of immigrants that are contrasted to those of the dominant culture. As a result, proponents conceptualize those types to be moving from complete rebellion to full assimilation (Cablen-Owen 10). Complete rebellion can be identified with the concept of marginality. As immigrants who reject the cultural and linguistic patterns of the host society are considered as marginalized. The concept of transition is identified with full assimilation. In this phase, immigrants abandon the culture of their homeland for the sake of the culture of the host land. Hence, their

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movement from one culture to be assimilated to another is conceptualized as transition. Thus, the concept of segregated symbiosis takes place while moving from the concept of marginality to the concept of transition.

As for Bourhis, he argues that there are five acculturation orientations that can be endorsed by the dominant host majority toward the minority groups. They are assimilation, exclusionism, integration, segregation and individualism. The assimilation orientation is adopted by the minority group. It goes along with the classical concept of acculturation which demands a full absorption of the minority group to the culture of host majority. This obviously relinquishes the cultural identity of the minority group. Exclusionism orientation is adopted by the host majority who object the maintenance of the minority group to their cultural heritage and at the same time refuse the adoption of immigrants to their culture. The exclusionists believe that “immigrants can never be incorporated culturally or socially as rightful members of the host society” (Bereza 20). In this orientation, the ejection of immigrants to their home country is preferred as a convenient solution for exclusionists.

Furthermore, in the integration orientation, immigrants adopt many features of the majority group besides maintaining their original heritage, values and beliefs. In the segregation orientation, immigrants keep a distance between their culture and the culture of the majority. They

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preserve their culture of origin without mixing it with the host culture. In this orientation, the dominant group “prefer immigrants to stay together in separate community region and are unsure regarding the status of immigrants as rightful members of the majority host society” (Bereza 20). Consequently, in this stage individuals of the minority group are segregated as inferiors who do not have the right to be equal to the majority group. The last orientation is individualism in which the majority members treat the minority group individually rather than categorizing them to be belonging to a certain sect or group. For individualists, personal characteristics and qualities of individuals take the main attention of the majority members. Bourhis also adds that the most convenient orientations to be followed are integration and individualism as they play salient role in giving a chance to individuals of the minority to be part of the host community (21).

The theory of acculturation evolved again during the second half of the 20th century. In 1957, Ronald Taft focuses in his discussion on social acculturation. He offers a definition of acculturation by mentioning that “acculturation is dependent on the migrant’s internal state, knowledge, attitudes, identity and values” (Cablen-Owen 11). He examines all the details that migrants faced during the process of acculturation. Also, Nash and Shaw in 1963 expands the acculturation theory of Taft and add the migrants’ senses and emotions to it. They attach an emotional level to the

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levels of acculturation that contribute in the changing of the acculturating individuals. They argue that migrants show an emotional attachment to their culture of origin. Consequently, this attachment may facilitate or not individuals' interaction with their home and host cultures (12).

The acculturation process is examined through the experiences of immigrants who live in the American society. Since immigrants who move from their home countries to America are considered to be diasporic individuals. Hence, the notions of acculturation and diaspora are connected to one another. As there are many important implications concerning acculturation appear in relation to diasporic cultures, immigrants in diaspora are anxious about their heritage and ethnicity so as to show different moods of assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization. Those diasporic immigrants pass into experiences that have led to the construction of hyphenated or in-between identities. Similarly, the analysis of acculturation process and its four outcomes: assimilation, separation, marginalization and integration offer a systematic comparison of diasporic immigrants from the same territory in two destination countries (Bhatia 31-35).

As for Berry; he is among the first proponents who consider the theory of acculturation as a bi-directional process. he negotiates that "acculturation is the dual process of cultural and psychological change

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that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members. At the group level, it involves changes in social structures and institutions and in cultural practices [as well]. At the individual, it involves changes in a person's behavioural" (Berry 698). Thus, acculturation occurs when two cultures come in contact with one another where both the minority and majority groups exchange cultural patterns from one another. He examines the process of acculturation to provide a framework based on two dimensions: cultural maintenance and contact participation. The cultural maintenance dimension measures the individual's degree of maintenance to the home cultural identity. However, the contact participation measures the degree of contact and participation between the host and the home cultures. Based on these dimensions, four strategies are deduced.

Berry's classification of the acculturation includes 'assimilation', 'integration', 'separation' and 'marginalization'. The assimilation strategy is defined as "a commitment to fitting in with the larger society at the expense of one's heritage culture" (Chan 5). Hence, it takes place when the individual decides to abandon the culture of origin for the sake of the culture of the dominant group. This acquisition occurs due to daily interaction and contact of the minority group with the dominant group. Berry argues that "when individuals chose assimilation freely, the

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culture became a “melting pot,” but when assimilation was forced by the host culture, the culture became a “pressure cooker” (Berry 234). He differentiates between two types of assimilation: normal assimilation and forced assimilation. The first type leads to fusion of the culture of origin for the sake of the dominant culture; however, the second type forces the original culture to be totally squeezed and evaporated.

For Berry, the strategy of separation occurs when the individuals of minority group “place a value on holding on to their original culture” and avoid any contact with the culture of the dominant group (Berry 297). Accordingly, they do not show any desire in the host culture and maintain only their original culture. He also claims that “if such cultural separation was imposed by the host society and the acculturating group was kept at a distance, then it became a situation of segregation”. (Berry 240). When individuals express an interest to have strong ties of the dominant culture with their culture of origin, then those individuals pursue an integration strategy. This strategy “refers to a high level of involvement in both maintaining the culture of origin and adopting the new culture” (Chan 5). It incorporates integration and adaptation of new values and traditions from the dominant culture besides retention of cultural traits of their culture of heritage. The last strategy is the marginalization strategy that is characterized by getting lost between the original and dominant

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cultures resulting in leaving both of them. Berry adds that the feeling of marginalization occurs when “Individuals felt marginalized as a result of actions by the host society, through forced cultural loss and forced exclusion” (251). Consequently, immigrants feel that they are culturally alienated and isolated. As a result of this frustration, a disturbance in their cultural identity takes place leading to ignorance of both cultures (Chan 6).

Those strategies of acculturation show the responses of individuals of minority groups toward their contact with new cultural contexts. Berry explains that in the theory of acculturation, assimilation and integration may allow migrants to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their new environment while separation and marginalization are more likely to perpetuate the perception of discrimination, alienation or disfranchisement. In light of this, assimilation and integration strategies are considered among the positive consequences of acculturation; however, separation and marginalization are among the negative consequences of the acculturation process.

The most effective strategies of Berry’s four modes of acculturation on the long term are assimilation as well as integration. Both techniques lead to different involvement with the mainstream society and clarify the relationship with one’s own ethnic group. In the preference of immigrants to integration, there is a compromise between mainstream society and

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the ethnic group. However, if assimilation is chosen immigrants have to assimilate to the mainstream on the one hand and have to give up the ties of their own ethnic culture on the other hand (Adler 240-1). According to Berry, integration as an acculturation strategy is more effective than assimilation with regard to immigrants' psychological and sociocultural adaptation.

Moreover, psychological adaptation is associated with general satisfaction of immigrants with the life in the host land. In contrast, sociocultural adaptation is associated with culture, learning language, knowing traditions and achieving successful participation in the host society. It has been argued that psychological and sociocultural adaptations are linked to one another. Berry stresses that the longer immigrants reside in the host society, the easier for them to understand and deal with the new culture and its challenges in a fruitful way for both cultures: ethnic and host (Ouarasse 71- 84).

Immigrant groups are not always free to pursue the acculturation strategy they prefer. Therefore, the acculturation expectations held by members of the host society affect the acculturation strategy adopted by immigrants. Accordingly, Berry explains:

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When the dominant group enforces certain forms of acculturation, or constrains the choices of non-dominant groups or individuals, then other terms need to be used. Most clearly, people may sometimes choose the separation option, but when it is required of them by the dominant society, the situation is one of segregation. Similarly, when people choose to assimilate, the notion of the Melting Pot may be appropriate; but when forced to do so, it becomes more like a Pressure Cooker. In case of marginalization, people rarely choose such an option; rather they usually become marginalized as a result of attempts at forced assimilation (Pressure Cooker) combined with forced exclusion (Segregation); thus no other term seems to be required beyond the single notion of marginalization (10).

Berry points out that acculturation strategies influence every aspect of immigrants' life since their preferences is different from what one is actually able to put into action. For him, since Chinese culture is distinct from the American, it is expected that Chinese immigrants to America are unavoidably experiencing acculturation in different domains of life. These domains include cultural identity, social relationships, language maintenance, family relations, cultural customs, cultural values and participation in cultural practices. Consequently, immigrants usually

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have a strong desire to adopt the integration strategy in the American multicultural society (Lu 23).

Concerning integration, it is regarded as a two-way process occurring between an ethnic group and the host society. In this phase, the ethnic group retains some of its distinctive aspects to move from the assimilation phase into integration. This phase of integration encounters two cultures, and two perspectives through the lens of double consciousness. Those senses of duality and being on the border between two cultures and two societies lead to only an inevitable solution which is to integrate the original identity with that of the host society. The process of integration, as applied to the poetry of John Yau and Marilyn Chin, requires accommodation for both parts of the ethnic minorities and the host land. Yau's and Chin's approaches to integration differ from one another. Therefore, they incorporate this dual identity in their poetry. They also attempt to reconstruct the common history and experience of their Chinese identity to redefine them against the complex parameters of the new culture. Thus, the two phases of acculturation: assimilation and integration are analyzed in accordance with the diasporic life of the Chinese ethnic minority. Consequently, the examination of acculturation underlines the diasporic communities' need for integration to include the possibility of having more than one culture.

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Bilingualism is a concept to be examined in investigating the integration of Chinese American citizens. Bilingualism arises from the bound contact which takes place between people of different language groups. Such a contact is not only shortened for contact between indigenous groups, but it is also widened to encompass the contact of the indigenous people and minority members. Bilingual individuals usually express their diasporic experiences as immigrants who live with two languages and cultures as well. Yau and Chin utilize other languages besides the English language in their poetry. They introduce names of other languages in which some of them are related to Chinese language by a way or another. Accordingly, they motivate their readers to explore these languages and grasp more about the Chinese culture and history.

Consequently, this is applied in Yau's poem "Ing Grish", Yau writes "I never learned Singlish/ I cannot speak Taglish, but I have registered the tonal shifts of Dumglish, Bumglish, and Scumglish" (Yau 62). Yau's representation of many languages that some of them exist in reality and others are imaginary is perplexing. As for 'Singlish' it is a language in Singapore that is a mixture of English and Chinese. Similarly, 'Taglish' is a blend between two languages mainly English and Filipino. The representation of languages that are referential to Asian countries like Singapore and Filipino is an attempt to prove that immigrants can preserve

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their ethnic language along with the English one. Yau manipulates English language by inserting illusionary words such as ‘Dumglish’, ‘Bumglish’ and ‘Scumglish’ to maintain the same rhythm and tonality of the poem so as to avoid monotony and amuse the reader. The weaving of two worlds together and mingling reality with imagination enables the readers to go beyond the meaning of those words and acquire extra knowledge about those languages.

On the other hand, Chin investigates the points of intersection between English and Chinese languages based on her experiences as a Chinese American immigrant. Chin’s poem “A Portrait of the Self as Nation 1990-1991” unravels her consciousness of both languages as “she mixed an ancestral Chinese past with an American present” (Oakes 80). Chin continually negotiates the role of language in different cultural contexts-Chinese, American and Chinese American. Such negotiation stems from her acquisition of bicultural aspects as a Chinese immigrant in the American diaspora. For Chin, the English language is a tool to “reflect personal, familial and cultural histories” of her homeland. Chin starts this poem stating:

Fit in dominata servitus
In servitute dominatus
In mastery there is bondage
In bondage there is mastery

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(Latin proverb)

The stranger and the enemy

We have seen him in the mirror

(George Seferis)

You were a conquering barbarian

Helmeted, halberded,

Beneath the gauntleted moon,

Whispering Hunnish or English-

So-long Oolong went the racist song (Chin 93).

Chin opens this poem with a Latin proverb and she mixes both languages together: Latin and English seeing that “I feel that I’m as a conduit for many voices, historical voices, ancient voices, contemporary [...] voices” (Zhou 66). Those Latin words ‘dominata’ and ‘dominatus’ stand for the English word domination. However, the Latin words ‘servitus’ and ‘servitude’ are synonyms to the English word slavery. The words of the proverb in the Latin language ‘dominata’, ‘servitus’, ‘servitude’ and ‘dominatus’ are used paradoxically and repeatedly to represent the relationship of the dominant society and the minority group. Therefore, Chin relies on allusion as she quoted George Seferis words –a Greek poet who won a Nobel prize for literature- in her poem. Chin’s allusion of this proverb is a salient sign of her integration as she invites readers who belong to the Chinese minority group to ‘fit’ in the dominant American society. In the English version

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of this proverb, she mentions the word ‘bondage’ which gives a sense of connection between the two cultural groups: American and Chinese. This connection stems from the continuous contact of American mainstream and Chinese minority; thereby an integration process is needed to be part of the American society as a Chinese American member with a distinctive identity.

In the fifth line of the poem, the word ‘stranger’ symbolizes Chinese immigrants and the word ‘enemy’ represents the American society. In the sixth line, Chin combines those two different entities into one integrated self through using the second personal pronoun ‘we’ to show that adaptation is the most convenient intersecting point for both parties. Then, Chin presents her bilingualism by “challenging the notions of identity, culture, and nation as coherent and unified entities that exhibit a linear historical development” (Kharbe 443). This is successfully implied in the tenth line as she introduces two different languages mainly: Hunnish and English. Chin’s awareness of her bicultural position has pushed her to explore historical events about China and present them to her Chinese, American and Chinese American readers. As for Chinese immigrants in particular, Chin’s employment of historical events acts as a reminder of their Chinese history and culture. However, for American people, it is considered as a chance to acknowledge them with the Chinese cultural heritage in context.

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Lastly, for Chinese Americans, Chin motivates them to be proud with their new integrated identity. Chin proves such an integration through using the past simple tense ‘went’ with ‘racist song’ to show that they are no longer marginalized in the American society; however, they are regarded as integrated acting members.

There is a distinction between ability of speaking a language and the use of this language. Thus, immigrants of an ethnic group are able to speak two languages; however, they tend to speak only one language in practice. Chinese immigrants’ proficiency in having two languages “may be separated from their use of two languages” because one language tends to be stronger and more developed than the other (Baker 6). Through time, the acquired language takes over the original one. Consequently, bilinguals find themselves on diverse linguistic modes. Those modes vary from being on monolingual or bilingual continuum. At one end of the continuum, bilingual immigrants are totally in a monolingual language mode that they are interacting only with the acquired language. This is applied in Yau’s poem “Debatable Cornucopia”:

My father told me that I was byproduct of an unnatural union that he had not been privy to. Thus, we got off on the wrong foot, and it took many etched bottles to finally find a path that was mutually agreeable to the both of us (66).

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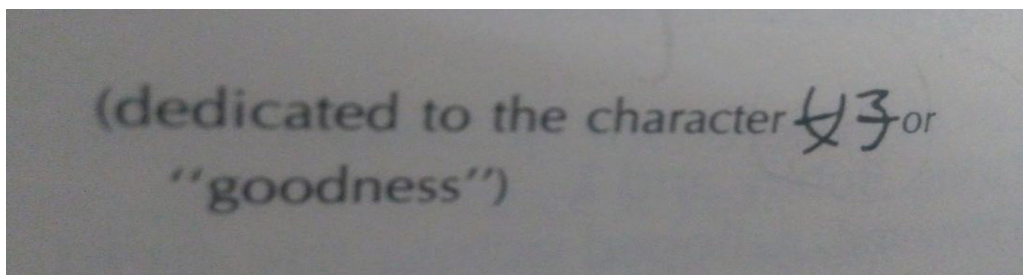
The title of this poem consists of two words the first word ‘debatable’ means negotiable or argumentative. The second word ‘Cornucopia’ refers to an ornamental container shaped like a goat’s horn (Oxford Dictionary). In this poem, Yau tries to investigate the ways in which language constructs one’s identity. In the previous lines, one language is activated which is the dominant language (English) and the other is deactivated that is the homeland language (Chinese). Thus, Yau relies in his poetic diction on writing with his second language as a tool of asserting his bicultural identity. Yau’s stylistic experimentation has led to many of his verse to be categorized as prose poems; therefore, he eschews traditional poetic forms by blending the lines of the poem between poetry and prose. Consequently, Yau’s employment of prose poetry signifies two issues: his diasporic self and his integrated identity. According to him, the ‘mutually agreeable’ ‘path’ in which Chinese immigrants find is to identify themselves with the American society. Hence, Yau considers himself as a ‘byproduct’ of the ‘union’ between both identities (Chinese and American) leading to the construction of a new identity (Chinese American).

On the other end of the continuum, bilinguals find themselves in a bilingual language mode communicating with two languages simultaneously where language mingling may occur through codeswitching and borrowing. In this case, both languages are active since immigrants use them

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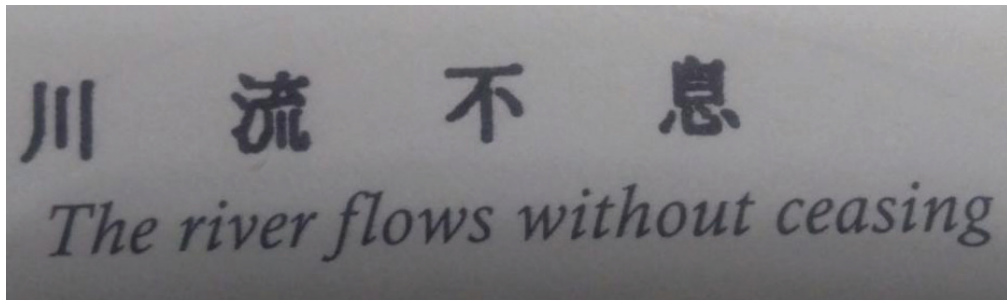
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interchangeably to interact with members of majority and minority groups (Bhatia 54). Henceforth, when someone speaks as a “Chinese-American” citizen though “who is exactly speaking? If we dwell in the hyphen who represents the hyphen: the [Chinese] or the American, or can the hyphen speak for itself without creating an imbalance between [Chinese] and American components?... True, both components have status., but which has the power and the potential to read and interpret the other on its terms?” (Radhakrishnan 71). Accordingly, Chin decides to switch on both languages and drop off the barrier of the hyphen which combines both words Chinese and American together forming a compound noun. Chin removes this hyphen seeking to engage herself in the process of integration without any obstacles. Thereupon, Chin employs code switching in her poems “First Lessons” and “The Phoenix Gone, the Terrace Empty”:



(“First lessons”, *Dwarf Bamboo*, 36)

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(“The Phoenix Gone, the Terrace Empty”, *The Phoenix Gone, the Terrace Empty*, 46).

Chin artfully manipulates both languages: Chinese and English in a distinct way. The poet relies on codeswitching as a tool of revealing her bilingual identity. In the first extract, Chin uses intrasentential codeswitching through writing a Chinese word and its synonym within the English sentence. However, in the last extract, intersentential codeswitching is employed when the poet shifts from one language to another. Chin begins the poem with a Chinese sentence moving to an English one. Chin’s word play between English and Chinese languages aims at letting her readers explore both languages. She experiments different styles and tones within her poems, highlighting the juxtaposition of two different languages in two different cultural worlds (Wong 3). Thus, Chin decides to interact comfortably in both languages instead of feeling separated from either her own culture or the dominant culture (Hiller 90).

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Cultural integration is a form of cultural exchange in which one group assumes the beliefs, practices and rituals of another group without sacrificing the characteristics of its own culture (Hoyt 408). Zhang argues that diasporic poets are conscious of two cultures; yet, cultural integration is generally looked upon as positive because nothing is lost (96). Subsequently, Chinese American poets' exploration of diasporic subjects "develop a paradoxical relationship to home: on the one hand, they are haunted by their origins, while at the same time they strive to establish that they belong else-where—they are haunted by the old home while hunting a new one" (Georgiou 19). As a result of this paradoxical transposition between two cultural frames, Chinese diasporic poets tend to review their historical experiences and cultural inheritances within the American context.

Additionally, Yau's free verse poem "Sotto Voce" takes the readers in a journey around the world exploring different cultures. He alludes many words in this poem as he believes that "writing as an attempt to hear the Other, the Others, and as a form of attention and responsibility" (Zhou 196). Yau states "it is raining in New York. Raining and raining/ ... I don't know which of my internal climates/ I should explore in order to find you and meet you" (Yau 80). In these lines, Yau expresses his eagerness to integrate through exploring the culture of the American mainstream which

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he refers to using the second personal pronoun ‘you’. He needs to find and meet ‘you’ in order to adapt and get intersection with the new culture that he is living in now. He mentions the name of an American city ‘New York’ which is the target of destination. Throughout the poem, Yau mentions the names of Chinese as well as American cities such as “Shanghai”, “New York”, “Burlington” ...etc. Henceforth, he concerns not only the movement across the borders of a country, but also the experiences of traversing the boundaries of space, culture, language and history.

Furthermore, Yau employs names of well-known characters from different cultures such as “Junius Brutus Booth” (an English stage actor) and his sons “John Wilkes Booth” and “Edwin” who are American actors. Then, he moves to mention the name of the Russian artist “Kandinsky” and the cities he has visited like “Munich”, “Switzerland” and “Russia” in an attempt to experiment various cultural patterns and locations. The poem also explores other cities from eastern and western countries such as “Manhattan” (American city), “Zagora” (Moroccan city), “Borneo” (Italian island), “Tibet” (historical Chinese region), “Venice” (Italian city), Baghdad (Iraqi city) and “Manchuria” (a region in the northeast of China). This mixture of eastern and western cities is an evident of the richness of Yau’s cultural knowledge as eastern cities stand for his eastern heritage as a Chinese poet and western cities stands for his American identity. Through

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this journey between east and west, Yau affirms his bicultural identity as a Chinese American poet.

Moreover, Yau encounters other famous names like: “Wittgenstein”, an Austrian born British philosopher who has some views about literature and especially poetry. “Hart Crane” is one of the characters mentioned in this poem who is considered as one of the most influential American poets. Crane is known for his modernist poetry that is characterized by its difficult, highly stylized diction. Yau also writes about the American architect and writer “Frank Lloyd Wright” and his wife “Olga Ivanovna Hinzenburg” as well as “the famous explorer F.A. Mitchell-Hedges” the English adventurer. He also mentions the well-known Italian artist “Leonardo Da Vinci” and his drawing “Deluge” that is about a dramatic flood. Yau incorporates all those names as he believes that in the poetry world, he is part of the community that cares about experimental writing. According to Mullan, this complexity or perplexity of both Yau’s own identity and the relations with others remains an urgent challenge only partially addressed by a well-intentioned “multiculturalism” whose emphasis is on telling “other” stories in recognizable forms (109). Thus, Yau’s cross culture representations in this poem is part of his innovative poetic style to affirm his integration and cultural involvement in the American mainstream. Such an involvement is resulted from living in the

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American society which includes many ethnic groups with respectively distinct cultural features.

Continually, Zhang asserts that the diasporic subjects of Chinese American poets try not only to preserve a connection to their origins, but also to yield a sense of belonging through a fragmented memory of the original home (93). Zhang argues that “the use of memory in [Chinese] diaspora poetry urges us to rethink what this heritage consists of, since these poets evoke in their writings collective memories which do not necessarily coincide with what the mainstream culture codifies and preserves as memorial heritage” (95). In “Chinaman’s Chance”, Chin suggests that the historical, social and cultural heritage of Chinese immigrants have made the Chinese cultural identity distinctly distinguished and special. The poem moves from being a critique on whether Chinese or American cultures; to be an affirmation of Chinese Americans’ cultural identity despite the dislocation and experience of racial discrimination that faced Chinese immigrants. As a Chinese American poet, Chin is “committed to expressing the sorrows and passions of both. She believes that her mission as a poet to tell more stories on many levels” (Kort 51). Accordingly, the title of this poem signifies the American racist laws that aim at excluding Chinese working-class immigrants from America which stands as an obstacle in front of Chinese immigrants to have a chance to reach their American dream. In

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contrast, the poem explores the possibilities of reinventing the Chinese American cultural identity in the American society (Zhou 82-3).

If you were a Chinese born in America, who would you believe
Plato who said what Socrates said
Or Confucius⁵ in his bawdy way:
“So a male child is born to you
I am happy, very very happy.” (Chin 29).

In the opening lines of this poem, Chin raises “questions about the soul and the body in an ironic tone through allusions to Greek and Chinese philosophers. Plato’s elevation of the soul over the body and Confucius’s privileging of male over female becomes especially ironic when juxtaposed with the historical conditions of Chinese Americans” (Zhou 82). Chin mentions the beliefs of the ancient Greek philosophers “Plato” and “Socrates” in contrast to the Chinese philosopher “Confucius”, which enhances the tension between spiritual and material pursuits for Chinese immigrants in confirming their Chinese American bicultural identity. The employment of irony in this poem evokes multiple pressures and contradictions in the formation of Chinese American subjectivities. Chin’s juxtaposition of Greek philosophers who value the soul over the Chinese philosopher who value the body reinforces her attempt to connect eastern and western cultures in one collective and integrated identity.

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How can we remake ourselves in his image?
Your father worked his knuckles black,
So you might have pink cheeks. Your father Burped you on the
back; why
must you water his face?
[...]
Your body is growing, changing, running
Away from your soul. Look,
Not a sun but a gold coin at the horizon,
Chase after it, my friend, after it (Chin 29).

In the previous lines, Chin identifies herself as a Chinese American citizen through using the second personal pronoun “we”. Then, she switches from “we” to “you” to distance herself from other Chinese Americans who chase after the “gold coin at the horizon”. Chin’s sarcastic remarks in using “you” asserts her criticism of the social oppression addressed to Chinese immigrants and also reveals her compelling sense of responsibility for those Chinese Americans. Consequently, this distance that Chin has created between her persona and other Chinese Americans enables her to capture the complexity of Chinese American cultural patterns trying to integrate them together to form a homogenous collective identity incorporating both cultures. In the second half of the poem, Chin writes:

Why does the earth move backwards
As we walk ahead. Why does mother’s
Blood stain this hand-me-down shirt?

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This brown of old tea, the yellow ring
Around the same porcelain cup. They stayed
[...]
We have come small and wooden, tanned brown
As oak pillars, eyes peering straight
Through vinyl baggage and uprooted shoes (Chin 30).

Chin switches again from “you” to “we” to show that the suffering and oppression of Chinese immigrants in the American society is replaced by cultural images. Chin employs Chinese images to affirm “the endurance and survival of Chinese Americans’ ethnic cultural heritage in the New World to indicate that this heritage is to be fractured and reinvented” in order to form a new bicultural identity (Zhou 84). Chin states that “we shall shatter this ancient marble, veined and glorious . . . /... Night: black starred canopy, piece/ Of Chinese silk, dank with must and cedar, / Pulled down from the source, a cardboard bolt” (Chin 30). Being dislocated in diaspora, Chin asks Chinese Americans to remake an integrated identity and become a new ‘other’ with this new bicultural identity rather than having a model minority American identity. In the closing lines of the poem, Chin foregrounds her Chinese American identity through her resistance to assimilation by the dominant culture of the American society. Such resistance is an integral part of her poetic utterance and shows her responsibility for Chinese immigrants in the diasporic American society (Zhou 84-5).

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Both Yau and Chin show their tendency to integrate because they have a sense of double consciousness which enables them to overcome their diasporic status. They become proud of their Chinese ethnicity as well as American identity. They succeed to incorporate various elements of integration in their poetry. Consequently, their new integrated identity appears in a unique poetic diction through language and culture. Being able to identify themselves with two languages and cultures is the salvation for them and for all Chinese immigrants who seek for adaptation and belonging in the American society. As a result, complete integration is the final solution to the dilemma of dispersal Chinese minority group.

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