BEING EURASIAN Memories Across Racial Divides

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— Britta Erickson, The Art of Xu Bing

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Introduction

Race is something which we utilized to provide clues about who a person is. The fact is made painfully obvious when we encounter someone whom we cannot conveniently racially categorize — someone who is, for example, racially 'mixed' or of an ethnic-racial group with which we are not familiar. Such an encounter becomes a source of discomfort and momentarily a crisis of racial meaning. Without a racial identity, one is in danger of baving no identity.

(Omi, 62)

The term 'Eurasian' could elicit very different responses at different times and in different places in history. Oftentimes, it has the power as Michael Omi suggests, of arousing momentarily a crisis of racial meaning — of suddenly undoing all our fixed and secured conditioned ideas about race. Yet it is precisely this power of Eurasianness, I believe, which could make us re-think and re-examine all those fixed and clearly defined boundaries about races.

Interracial marriages have become quite a common phenomenon in Hong Kong. Looking back half a century ago, a European was often thought to be ideologically liberal and progressive if he or she married a Chinese. Similarly, a Chinese was often associated with a lack of Chinese cultural and racial sensitivity if he or she married a European. But that was something belonging

to the past, interracial marriage in contemporary Hong Kong no longer evokes that sense of ethnic tension and ideological implications it once suggested. Eurasian children can be seen quite often in parks and playgrounds. A visit to any of the international schools in Hong Kong would quickly confirm the large number of Eurasian children growing up in the community. Yet, probably not many of the contemporary offspring of these Hong Kong mixed marriages realize that they are in fact living in a community whose attitudes towards them are very different from what they used to be seventy or eighty years ago.

The term 'Eurasian'¹ has generally been understood to refer to someone of mixed European and Asiatic parentage and/or ancestry since the nineteenth century — a term invented by Marquis of Hastings, the Governor-General of India in the early 1800s, as embracing all the progeny of white fathers and native Indian mothers. In the pre-war generation in Hong Kong, members of this community usually accepted the term 'Eurasian' to describe themselves and they were often distinguished from the Hong Kong Portuguese community or the Hong Kong Portuguese Eurasian community (whose 'mesticos' heritage arose from very different historical circumstances). The Hong Kong Eurasian community, which this book looks into, is the mixed-raced community in Hong Kong whose members are descendants of mainly European and Chinese (sometimes Parsee or Middleeastern) residents. And it is the *memory* of this metis community as expressed in the Eurasian autobiographies that this book is most interested in.

'Eurasian community' when used in this book will mean the community referred to by the Eurasian authors as the community in which they belonged. However, it must be noted that their views and memories of this community do not always agree. One Eurasian author might remember the community as very westernized and often quite *apart* from the Chinese community. Another Eurasian author might remember it as a small community, which was itself *a part of* the Chinese community. There were, of course, Eurasians in different segments and stratum of the Hong Kong community during the periods referred to by the authors. But, as shall be seen, the Eurasian community as recalled by the memoirists is one, which focuses more on the middle and upper-middle class.

Introduction

I must state that this book is *not* a historical study of Hong Kong Eurasians. It is simply a reading of the memoirs written by different Hong Kong Eurasians and their articulation of Eurasianness in their memory. The methodologies adopted by this book in looking at Hong Kong life histories are essentially inter-disciplinary, coalescing literary, historical and cultural studies approaches. And I must apologize for it not being able to fit neatly into the boundaries prescribed by each of these disciplines.

The three memoirists to be introduced are Joyce Symons, Jean Gittins and Irene Cheng. They are all second and third (sometimes fourth) generation Eurasians in Hong Kong via both paternal and maternal sides. They are in fact all related within the network of the Eurasian community (a community where endogamous practices were quite common). Joyce Symons's paternal aunt was married to the cousin of Jean Gittins and Irene Cheng. As for Jean Gittins and Irene Cheng, they are sisters from the large Ho Tung family, which consists of more than ten children. In exploring the memories of the two Ho Tung sisters, I shall also occasionally be looking at the memoir of another younger Ho Tung sister, Florence Yeo, for purposes of seeing how the extended Ho Tung Eurasian family was being remembered. I have not included a separate chapter of Florence Yeo but discussion of her memoir will be found in the section titled 'Weighing Loyalties' of the Irene Cheng chapter where I shall be juxtaposing the different mnemonic inflections and cultural orientations of the three Ho Tung sisters.

In my research of Hong Kong memoirs, I realize that the small corpus of Hong Kong Eurasian memoirs had been written mainly by Eurasian women. Perhaps this phenomenon could be explained by the fact that women had always been vessels of cultural memory. As B. J. Reagon says, women have always been 'carriers of cultural traditions, key to the formation and continuance of culture' (quoted in Friedman, 43).

As shall be seen in the Eurasian memoirs, the desire to add meaning and to make sense of their cultural diversities and heritage remains strong throughout. The consideration of numerous 'versions' of Eurasianness conceptualized by various communities, individuals, as well as Eurasian autobiographers themselves shall be the main foci of this book.

Historically, in the context of western colonial discourse and biological race theories, 'Eurasians' had often been interpreted as a form of degeneration, transgression, adulteration, impurity, regression, and moral laxity.² Within the framework of traditional Chinese race-thinking though, Eurasians were not perceived in such moral and biological terms. They were often seen as a living betrayal of one's racial loyalty — a loyalty that in effect is a crucial extension of one's lineage loyalty as well as national loyalty. Yet co-existing with these attitudes of fear, anxiety and betrayal concerning Eurasianness, there were also beliefs, in both the Eastern and Western worlds, that Eurasians were in fact the ideal hybrid race, the specimen race, bringing together the best of both worlds, amalgamating two great civilizations of the human race.

Set against these widely differed perceptions of Eurasianness, what was it like to be a Eurasian living in a British Colony populated predominantly with Cantonese in the twentieth century during those inter-war years, the Occupation, and the post-war decades before the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration — a defining moment in history where the city of Hong Kong was told that it shall be returned to China?

For those who like the memoirists discussed in this book, who think of themselves as being Eurasians, Eurasianness can be an issue, which consciously or unconsciously shapes a life, defines or problematizes an identity. In the writings of these Eurasian authors, we will see how each of them had chosen to interpret and define Eurasianness in her own way, yet remained highly conscious of how their interracial heritage was being perceived under different contexts. Eurasianness vacillates between being a privilege, an asset at one moment but a social stigma or personal albatross at another. Articulating Eurasianness becomes a lifelong process of selfdefinition and redefinition. These memoirs are both a *record* of their selfdefining process as well as a *continuation* of that process.



The Vanishing Community?

They do not realize that, after all, there is no gulf between a Chan and a Smith amongst us and that underlying superficial differences in names and outlook, the spirit of kinship and brotherhood burns brightly. We Eurasians ... with the blood of Old China mixed with that of Europe in us, we show the world that this fusion, to put it no higher, is not detrimental to good citizenship.

(Eric Ho, 9)

It is true that the Eurasian community was (and still is) only a very minute segment of the Hong Kong society. Yet its presence in this city could hardly be ignored. Numerous attempts by the Hong Kong Census, between 1897 and 1931, reflect a gross under-estimation of the size of the Eurasian community. The figures that appeared in these reports strongly point to the fact that a great number of Eurasians often declared themselves as Chinese and, in some cases, Europeans. As a result of the fluid collective identity of the Hong Kong-Eurasian community, they were often perceived as not being truly and authentically representative of Hong Kong — a city which has always had a dominating majority of Cantonese.

Partly because of their ambiguous and often unstable identity, the writings of Hong Kong-Eurasians could be said to suffer from the 'traumata of insignificance', a phrase that Patrick Bellegard-Smith applied to Haitian writers (quoted in Lionnet, 6). This fateful marginality of Hong Kong-Eurasian autobiographers can be explained in several ways. First, memoirs

had never been taken as a very serious genre, and had never been popular in Hong Kong until the memoir boom in the mid-1990s.¹ Second, the vibrant bourgeois community invoked in these autobiographical writings, that had so much influenced Hong Kong, was already something of the past at the time they were written. Since the Second World War, the Eurasian community had joined the diaspora to England, Australia and America. The loss of Hong Kong as their 'home' is poignantly represented in these writings. Even during the pre-war period, the community had never been more than a small-insulated minority, belonging to a small British colony nestling next to a vast Chinese nation. It is the belief of many Eurasians of the pre-war generation that they should not be beguiled into thinking that they could represent anyone other than themselves.

Whether in Hong Kong or other European colonies in the East, Eurasians had often been perceived as the living embodiment of colonial encounters. They belonged to a marginalized and isolated colonial category that straddled racial, ethnic and sometimes national boundaries. Racial crossings can be extremely worrying, 'because it threatened both to destabilize national identity and the Manichean categories of the ruler and the ruled' (Stoler, 1997, 226). In Hong Kong, the isolation of the community was much less obvious and discrimination less consistent than elsewhere in Asia, e.g. India (Gaikward), Indonesia (Wittermans) and Malaya (Crabb).² (One obvious reason for this was undoubtedly the Eurasians' economic and political influence within the colony.) But on a subterranean level, their sense of marginalization and isolation was perhaps much more acute and insidious in its own way, compared to that of Eurasians in other parts of Asia, as they found themselves stranded between two mutually aloof, at times mutually contemptuous, cultural worlds. In Hong Kong, they were often forced to celebrate and enhance their native side at certain moments in order to play the perfect native for the European rulers.

Precisely because of the marginalized and perhaps forgotten status of this now dispersed community, Eurasian autobiographical writings can be seen as the focalizing literature which offers, to borrow Olney's description of the importance of autobiography for African American and women's studies in America, 'a privileged access to an experience ... that no other variety of writing can offer. ... [A]utobiography renders in a peculiarly direct and faithful way the experience and the vision of a people. ...' (1980, 13). It is as the voice of a vanished cultural experience that these texts have their primary value.

Apart from the access they offer to a privileged minority experience, another reason for my interest in these memoirs is the ambiguous ethnic identities expressed in them, which provide a fertile site for an exploration of the shifting boundaries of racial and ethnic identities. The Eurasian authors here, in their respective autobiographical acts, have reconstructed and retranslated their lifelong process of identity formation and reformation and their memoirs are both a record of that process of identity (or identity as process) and a crucial part of the process itself. Their protean and nebulous social and ethnic identities, as I shall show, not only challenge the essentialist assumption of a stable, immutable, unified sense of self and identity, but they also subvert the notion of closed and rigid boundaries between socially constructed categories of race, ethnicity and other divides. The works examined in this book foreground and privilege the intermediary spaces where boundaries are rendered porous and binary modes of division collapse into each other.

The three memoirists, Joyce Symons, Jean Gittins, and Irene Cheng, all belonged to important branches of the Hong Kong Eurasian families. The first to be considered is the memoir of Joyce Symons (1918–2004), a Hong Kong educationalist, who retired to Walton-on Thames, England in 1985. Symons was principal of the Diocesan Girls' School for more than three decades. She prided herself as a member of the Hong Kong Eurasian community and was a committee member of the charitable organization for Eurasians called The Welfare League. Her views on Eurasian identity formulation depend to a large extent on class and economic factors. She sees the China Coast Eurasian communities as intricately bound to compradorism and the history of European traders in China.

The second memoirist to be discussed is Jean Gittins (1908–1995) who left Hong Kong for Australia right after the Second World War. Her notion of Eurasianness is less distinct, less clearly delineated. It is an identity that is often based on undecidability and indeterminacy. 'Ethnic Indeterminacy' of the Gittins chapter deals with her positioning of the subject within the Confucian-Victorian worlds in her family. The second section of the chapter, 'Ethnic Options', is devoted to examining her experience as a Eurasian internee in the infamous Stanley Camp during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong. Comparisons will also be made between Gittins's narrative of life in the camp as a Eurasian and other camp narratives by European internees.

The last of the three Eurasian authors to be considered is Irene Cheng. The older sister of Jean Gittins, she was born in 1904 and left Hong Kong in 1967 for San Diego, USA. As an educationalist, Cheng was a school inspector and later principal of the Confucian Tai Shing School. The notion of Eurasianness is an issue that is more often expressed through silence and precariously handled through passing allusion. One purpose of this chapter is to juxtapose the autobiographical works of these two Ho Tung sisters, their very different representations of the Ho Tung family, and their commonly shared events and experiences. The work of Florence Yeo, the youngest of the Ho Tung girls, will also be referred to in this chapter. Particular attention will be paid to the contrasting cultural identification and political orientation expressed in the respective memoirs and the way these ideological factors produce a radically different modality in the sisters' memoirs, even when they are recalling the same event or people. The omissions and silences in some of the sisters' narratives will be shown to be often particularly eloquent. Certain passages of memory occluded by one sibling are frequently expressed and celebrated by the other. It is sometimes the unsaid, untold and the deafening silences concerning their own Eurasianness that constitute the poignant autobiographical ethos in these memoirs.

Eurasian as an ethnic category or sub-category had never been recognized officially or unofficially by the Chinese or British communities in pre-war or post-war Hong Kong. The sense of Eurasian culture and that of a Eurasian ethnic community have been gradually effaced and forgotten by the process of immigration abroad and assimilation into the dominating Chinese ethnicity. These memoirs have helped to redeem and preserve through language the identity of Eurasians as an ethnic group, a political power and a privileged and exclusive social clan in pre-war Hong Kong. In asserting personal memory, the memoirs serve as resisting voices to the collective amnesia of the post-war, post-colonial and post-compradore capitalist Hong Kong. These memoirs are, to a certain degree, a revenge on history³— a history that threatens to consign them, individually and tribally to imminent oblivion.

These autobiographers wrote not for lofty introspective, philosophical or aesthetic purposes. Their works contrast markedly in terms of aesthetics with canonical autobiographies. But in their own prosaic form, these memoirs are fascinating in their rhetoric and manifest valuable pluralistic modes of thoughts from the cultural margins of Hong Kong.



The Birth of a Eurasian Community

Little Edith Eaton says to berself, 'Why are we what we are? I and my brothers and sisters. Why did God make us to be booted and stared at? Papa is English, mamma is Chinese. Why couldn't we have been either one thing or the other? Why is my mother's race despised? ... I believe that some day a great part of the world will be Eurasian. I cheer myself with the thought that I am but a pioneer. A pioneer should glory in suffering.'

(Sui Sin Far [Edith Eaton] , 'Leaves From the Mental Portfolio of a Eurasian', 222)

The person of mixed blood is one whom fate has condemned to live in two societies and in two, not merely different but antagonistic cultures.

(Park, [1937] 1961, xiii)

Unlike their Portuguese counterparts in Macau, the British colonial attitude towards miscegenation had never embraced the kind of free liberalism promoted by its neighbour. Under the Portuguese colonial ideology, miscegenation was officially hailed as a positive step towards social harmony and a form of the 'benign consummation of Portuguese panracialism' (C. Cheng, 156). As C. Cheng says, extensive miscegenation becomes the distinctive pattern of Portuguese presence in Africa and Asia. Affonso de Albuquerque, who Braga describes as being the greatest of Portuguese empire in Asia, had already in the 1500s advocated his policy of inducing his countrymen to settle down and produce a loyal population through mixed marriages with native women (Braga, 85–88). Intermarriages, as Braga suggests, became one important strategy of successful colonization.

The British colonial leaders in Hong Kong, on the other hand, had quite an opposite view of marriages or unions with native women. The troubling question of racial mixture in colonial encounters was not only seen as a colonial transgression, but the idea of racial mixture often fed the colonial imagination with phantoms of degeneration, abnormality, as well as moral and intellectual regression. It was government policy to insist on demarcating a safe distance from the indigenous elements in the colony. Their attitudes towards the products of miscegenation could shift from abominations, contemptuousness, suspicion, and avoidance to trust, hope, reliance and dependence.

From the time when Hong Kong was ceded to Britain in 1842 up until the Japanese invasion in 1941, Hong Kong was a society based on segregation. Early colonial anxieties about the intermixing of Europeans and Chinese were reflected in a letter to the Duke of Newcastle in 1861 by Sir John Bowring (Governor, 1859–65), as he fretted over the rapid increase in the Chinese population.

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My constant thought has been how best to prevent a large Chinese population establishing themselves [*sic*] at Kowloon, and as some native population is indispensable, how best to keep them to themselves and preserve the European and American community from the injury and inconvenience of intermixture with them.

(Endacott, 1964, 122)

To ensure a stable distance between the Chinese and European communities, various laws and rules were made to maintain the segregation of the two races. The Peak Reservation Ordinances were passed in 1888 and reaffirmed in 1904 (and was not repealed until 1946). Some hotels such as the Hong Kong Hotel, only allowed Chinese into certain rooms and they were not allowed to stay overnight (Carroll, 120). There was also the Light and Pass Ordinance — a law formalized in 1857 (Sinn, 10) which clearly reflects the European distrust of the Chinese community, and was not abolished until 1895.

There were, of course, the more liberal-minded groups of colonialists who frowned upon such absolute segregation. Sir John Pope Hennessy, Governor from 1877 to 1882, whose wife was of a Eurasian background, was shocked at the rift between the two races. His liberal policy of inviting the Chinese to Government House so shocked the European community that many stopped accepting invitations to Government House (Courtauld, 31).

John Carroll argues that racial discrimination in Hong Kong actually increased in the first part of the twentieth century as local groups become richer and attained more socio-economic power (118). Racial barriers seemed to become more rigid. This phenomenon, Carroll says, can be found in Dutch and British colonies, where spatial segregation becomes more stringent with the rise of a strong native merchant class (118–119).

Professor Lancelot Forster in the late 1920s described the relationship between the two races as being entirely for mutual material gain. 'There is contact but no fusion, no community of thought or feeling ...' (quoted in Sweeting, 342).

Sir Cecil Clementi, Governor from 1925 to 1930, expressed his alarm at the mutual aloofness of the two races:

Although in daily contact with each other, the two communities nevertheless move in different worlds, neither having any real comprehension of the mode of life or ways of thought of the other.

(Spurr, 154)

Until the Second World War, many institutions continued to abide by segregation rules. Clifford Matthews, a Hong Kong-born Eurasian, and an avid cricket player, remembers playing at the Hong Kong Cricket Club, but added that it was not possible for him to be admitted as a member because of his racial identity (Oral History Project, Track 5).¹ These segregation practices persisted even in the midst of the Japanese invasion. As a wounded Volunteer, he recalls how he was turned away from the Matilda Hospital when he described himself as Eurasian on the admission form.

During dangerous times of hostilities, the segregationist desire in some remained acutely strong. Gwen Dew remembers hiding inside the Repulse Bay Hotel with other European ladies. Amid the Japanese sniping and bombardment, a British lady (who had recently came from the Peak Hotel) suddenly looked around her and in a penetrating voice said, 'What are all these Chinese doing in here? What right have they to be here?' (Dew, 83).

But despite such rigid segregation practices, Hong Kong never had any laws against miscegenation. Interracial marriages were very rare and often involved much sacrifice. Any European employee who violated the colonial etiquette by interracial romance was jeopardizing not only his career but was also risking ostracism by the European community. Kenneth Andrew, who came to Hong Kong in 1912 to join the Royal Hong Kong Police, recalls that the first document he had to sign was a promise not to marry a Chinese female (Langford, 1998). Governor Henry May (1912-1919) boasted that under his administration no European police officers or prison officers were married to Chinese or Eurasians (Great Britain Public Record Office, CO 129/392, 14/12/12, 58). Employees in the Public Works Department who married Chinese or Eurasians were not allowed, by regulation, to live in government quarters, nor were prison warders (Carroll, 121). Michael Wright, an architect in the 1930s with the Public Works Department, also had to sign a document to say in no uncertain terms that should he marry a Chinese or take one as a concubine then he would be liable to be dismissed (Gillingham, 11). Sir V. M. Grayburn, the Chief Manager of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, wrote in his letters in 1937 how he looked 'with disfavour on most marriages to non-British women', and so far as the wives of British executive staff were concerned, 'Foreign, native, half-caste are definitely taboo' (King, 1988, 286).

This constant anxiety towards interracial romance and its effect on colonial propriety was not unlike that found in Kipling's India in the late nineteenth century. His narrator in the story 'Kidnapped' says, 'Marriage in India does not concern the individual but the Government he serves' (1987, 135). The only Englishman in Kipling who actually marries an Indian woman is McIntosh in 'To be Filed in Reference'. McIntosh, however, has to forfeit his status and even identity as a member of the governing race.

Traditional Chinese attitudes towards mixed marriage were equally forbidding, if not worse, even though on the surface Chinese attitudes might

appear more tolerant. Vivienne Poy, daughter and biographer of Richard Charles Lee (son of the famous Hysan Lee) says that in 1917 at the age of 12, Richard and Harold Lee were sent to England to study. Before the two brothers left, they were told that if they married non-Chinese while abroad, they would be automatically disinherited (Poy, 6).

In order to understand such an aversion towards mixed unions, it is important to look at the traditional racial thinking in China, and how in the early twentieth century, Chinese racial consciousness became intensified with the rise of racial nationalism.

As Chow Kai-wing has pointed out, prejudice against outsiders in China had always been universal. Records of Chinese contempt of foreigners abound in traditional Chinese historical accounts. However, Chow argues that the most negative and prejudiced remarks about foreigners were impressionistic, fragmentary, ethnocentric contempt. Chow claims these were not based upon any racial hierarchy (1994) such as those found in the eighteenth and nineteenth century European race discourse discussed in Chapter 1.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, Chinese race theory was more rigorously adopted into the Chinese political context as an assertion of Chinese racial pride in face of foreign aggression. Zhang Binglin (1896– 1936), a reformist, promoted a revolutionary Chinese nationalism based on the notion of race in his attempt to expose the racist policy of the Manchus.

Dikötter quotes a Chinese nationalist, writing in 1903, who explains that the notion of *quo* 'country' was no longer merely a geographical expression, but had a distinctly racial connotation (109). Yan Fu, who translated T. H. Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* in 1898, declared that 'the sentiment of patriotism is rooted in racial nature' (Dikötter, 110).

In fact, racial nationalism was one of Sun Yat-sen's 'Three Principles of the People' (*Sanminzhuyi*). Sun's principle of racial nationalism, as Dikötter explains, is based upon the principle of 'racial solidarity' (123). L. Sharman describes how 'Sun Yat-sen made his appeal to an emerging national consciousness, strongest in its racial form of prejudice against foreigners' (quoted in Dikötter, 124). The theme of racial humiliation was intensely articulated in nationalist writings during this period. Students' writings consistently reflected the humiliating treatment and derogation to which the Chinese were subjected by Europeans and Japanese (Dikötter, 124). To counter this sense of humiliating inferiority, Sun claimed that only nationalism could forestall racial destruction (Dikötter, 124). It was in this mood of racial nationalism in the early twentieth century that attitudes towards mixed marriages and Eurasians became acutely negative.

Han Suyin, in her first autobiography *The Crippled Tree* (1965) recalls her conversations with her Chinese uncle, who described to her the emotional upheaval, the intense bitter sorrow and havoc within the gentryofficial Chou family when their son Chou Yen-tung (Han Suyin's father) wrote home in 1913 to request permission to marry Marguerite Denis, a middle-class girl from Brussels (Han, 207).

Han also recalls her own experience in Chengtu in 1940. Her husband Pao, a highly race-conscious military officer, aide-de-camp to Generalissimo Chiang, would not let the warlord Hu Tsungnan to meet his wife Suyin. Han writes:

Pao was afraid that Hu Tsungnan might not approve of me; might look at my face and deduce some 'foreign' blood; and Hu Tsungnan's xenophobia was notorious. This might spoil the good impression Pao had made; he wrote to Hu that I was 'so shy' that I refused to see anyone; I lived in the bosom of my family from which I could not be extricated ...

(130)

The negative Chinese perception of an interracial person can be more or less tested through the terms used to describe such person. Eurasians were (and occasionally still are) often referred to in derogatory Chinese terms like *tsap chung* (half-caste), *da luen chung*, *tsap ba lang* (mixed/messed up breed). Other Chinese terms like *boon tong fan* and *wun hyut yîh* are less derogatory but still suggest a kind of genealogical abnormality.

Amid all this feeling against interracial unions and their offspring, there were a few isolated voices that held very positive views on racial hybridity.

Tang Caichang (1867–1900), a well-known Chinese reformer, advocated the amalgamation of the white and yellow races, for it was only through 'racial communication' that China would flourish again. He put forward ten arguments in support of intermarriage. In his seventh argument,

he says, 'In Hong Kong, Singapore and the Pacific islands, intermarriage between Chinese and foreigners had produced offspring of unparalleled intelligence and strength' (Dikötter, 87).

The Hong Kong barrister and Chinese diplomat Wu Tingfang (1842– 1922) also speaks in favour of mixed unions: 'There is no doubt that mixed marriages of the white with the yellow races will be productive of good to both sides' (Dikötter, 87).

But these isolated voices in favour of interracial mixture, like their European counterparts discussed in the last chapter, were inevitably drowned by popular prejudice against interracial people. The Hong Kong Chinese community, in its close proximity to the vast Chinese nation, was very much under the influence of its cultural and political climate. Interracial unions between Europeans and Chinese in Hong Kong were, therefore, not only warily avoided by the European community but very much frowned upon by the Chinese community. Yet amid all the unspoken condemnation and the quiet aversions, interracial alliances were in fact quite common in Hong Kong.

For reasons of career and climate, the majority of foreign traders, sailors, soldiers, missionaries who came to the colony were usually young bachelors. The "fishing fleets" of husband-hunting English girls which set out hopefully for British India, did not appear to have come as far as Hong Kong; little wonder, then,' writes Courtauld, 'that a Eurasian community began to emerge' (27).

Affairs between Europeans and Chinese women were conducted in a highly discreet manner. The corseted European wives found svelte young Chinese women a sexual threat to their marriages, says one Hong Kong historian, and they sometimes reacted violently against including Chinese among their family acquaintances (Lethbridge, 1968, 128).

Carl Smith claims that most European men and Chinese women² in the early days had their long-sustained affairs without living together. Most of the time, their affairs were conducted under what he refers to as the 'protected women' arrangement.³ European fathers of early Eurasians of this period were usually merchants who remained in the colony for a limited time. Having made their fortune, they usually returned to England or Europe. Provisions were customarily made by the putative husband for the Chinese women and their offspring in form of an annuity, a trust or gift of real estate (Smith, 1969, 13–17).

In describing these protected women, E. J. Eitel, also recorded in his Minutes of 1 November 1879 that these women were:

as a rule, rather raised in their own esteem by the connection, of the immorality of which they have no idea; they are also, as a rule, better off than the concubines of Chinese well-to-do merchants; they are generally provided for by the foreigners who kept them, when the connection is severed, and at any rate these women are as a rule thrifty, and always manage to save money which they invest in Bank deposits, also in house property, but principally in buying female infants whom they rear for sale to or concubinage with foreigners, by which they generally gain a competency in about 10 years.

(Sweeting, 235)

This practice of concubinage, whether or not it was really a widespread practice, had seriously affected the perceived moral standing of these kept women and, consequently, on how the early Eurasians were looked upon by both the European and Chinese communities.

The Hong Kong colonial government was not unaware of the emergence of a growing number of Hong Kong Eurasians. As early as the 1850s, Sir John Bowring, Governor from 1854 to 1859, had already observed that 'a large population of children of native mothers by foreigners of all classes is beginning to ripen into a dangerous element out of the dunghill of neglect. They seem wholly uncared for' (Endacott, 1964, 94–95).

The issue of coping with the rising number of Eurasians in Hong Kong was addressed in a letter by the Hon. Sir John Smale, Chief Justice, to the Colonial Secretary on 20 October 1879:

No-one can walk through some of the bye streets in this Colony without seeing well-dressed Chinese girls in great numbers whose occupations are self-proclaimed, or pass those streets, or go into this Colony, without counting beautiful children by the hundred whose Eurasian origin is self-declared. If the Government would enquire into the present condition of these classes, and still more, into what become of these women and their children of the past, I believe that it will be found in the great majority of cases the women have sunk in misery, and that of the children the girls that have survived have been sold to the profession of their mothers, and that if boys they have been lost sight of or have sunk into the condition of the mean whites of the late slave holding states of America ...

(Sweeting, 235)

In 1880 Eitel responded with a more positive view of the conditions of Hong Kong's Eurasian children in the *Hong Kong Government Gazette:*

The children of these women are invariably sent to school. In fact, these women understand the value of education and prize it far more than respectable Chinese women do. The boys are invariably sent to the Government Central School where they generally distinguish themselves, and as a *rule* these boys obtain good situations in Hongkong, in the open ports and abroad. The girls crowd into the schools kept by the Missionary Societies. These children are generally provided with a small patrimony by their putative fathers. They dress almost invariably in Chinese costume and adopt Chinese customs, unless they are taken up by ill-advised agents of foreign charity. I am quite positive, as far as my experience and the information I have received from many gentlemen in the best position to judge goes, that they do not in any way resemble the mean whites in the Southern States of America.

(Sweeting, 236)

The fact that some early Eurasian girls got accepted into missionary schools in the nineteenth century does not automatically guarantee their immunity from concubinage. In Eitel's letter to the Colonial Secretary in 1889, he says:

The Diocesan Female Training School⁴ in 1862 found itself compelled in 1865 to close the School on the ground that almost every one of the girls, taught English, became on leaving school, the kept mistress of foreigners.

(CO 129/342; quoted in Sweeting, 248)

This sad fate of many Eurasian females is well represented in historical texts and memoirs.

More than half a century after Eitel's letter, the image of Eurasian females was still associated, borrowing Han Suyin's description of Eurasian women, with the notion of 'moral laxity' (1952, 198).⁵ In his camp narrative, Wenzell Brown describes how he met Lucy Reynolds in the Stanley camp:

Lucy was Hong Kong's leading madame. The fame of her brothel had spread over the world. British civil servants in Delhi speak reminiscently of Lucy's Eurasian girls. In Wapping or Limehouse, in Shanghai or Cairo or Caracas, Lucy Reynold's name brings a twinkle into the eyes of the knowing. 21

(128)

What Eitel said concerning the success of some Eurasian boys was undoubtedly true. But as an indication of official ambivalence it can be added that it had been a tradition for the government to place Eurasians to man the lighthouses, until lighthouses were automated in the 1980s (Waters, 142). These jobs were well paid, had good benefits and security and, perhaps most importantly, they were away from the city, out of sight, unseen. In these posts, Eurasians became officially marginal area. Positions for the senior civil service had traditionally been reserved for expatriate British officers. According to historian Frank Welsh, 'it was not until 1942 that the Colonial Office dropped its demand that all candidates should be "of pure European descent" (381).

Eurasians, says Lethbridge, were perceived as a threat to the Europeans principally because of their anomalous and ambivalent social position. 'Eurasians were both European and Chinese, and as such difficult to apprehend as social beings.' Hence, Eurasians as a group could not be 'allocated with ease to their proper niche in the colonial social structure' (Lethbridge, 1978, 176).

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By the 1920s, the Eurasian community had not only gained in terms of size but in their socio-economic status within the Colony. Yet, their nebulous and ambiguous identity continued to worry some people, particularly when there were legislations that applied only to one of the two principal races.⁶ Fixing the Eurasians in either one or the other race would greatly facilitate colonial administration. The Hon. C. G. Alabaster, OBE, member of the Hong Kong Legislative Council and later Attorney-General, in his 1920 article 'Some Observations on Race Mixture in Hong Kong', urged the colonial government to deal with the problem of race mixture in Hong Kong by 'declaring marriage between certain races invalid or a punishable offence, or at least certain decisions as to the degree of blood making a particular person a member of one race or of another' (248).

Racial mixing for Alabaster is less an offence under God or the law than a major inconvenience to the bureaucracy. Alabaster says that prior to 1911, there had been no such need for legislation since 'the Eurasian problem did not exist; or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that before that year classification could be effected easily without too close an inquiry into a person's pedigree'.

Alabaster divides the Hong Kong Eurasians before 1911 into three distinct groups. The first group is the Portuguese. With their strong Roman Catholic ties and Portuguese names, the Portuguese Eurasian 'would never be regarded as Chinese, even if Oriental in feature and with only a fraction of European blood in his veins'. What seems to worry Alabaster is the ambiguous status of the 'Chinese Eurasians' (the Eurasians that oriented towards the Chinese culture) rather than the 'British Eurasians' (the westernized Eurasians). Regarding the Chinese Eurasians, Alabaster says,

One would have no difficulty in giving a Chinese classification to a half-caste, even though his father were English, who wore Chinese clothes and a queue, who passed under the name of Wong or Chang, who had married according to Chinese customs a 'Kit Fat' (wife) and had three concubines, and who after some years' business training in the compradore department of a foreign firm was trading on his own account under a Chinese 'hong' name, besides being a member of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

Whether deliberately or not, the Chinese Eurasian that Alabaster has depicted resembles in almost every way Ho Tung, the Eurasian doyen to be discussed in the next chapter. As for the British Eurasians, Alabaster says, he would have

an English surname who dressed as a European and lived as such, both in business and in his home life, would not be regarded legally as a Chinese, although his parentage might affect him socially.

(248)

These racial markers in terms of names, clothing and lifestyle, as set out by Alabaster, were no longer distinguishably reliable anymore after 1911.⁷ After the emergence of the Republic, there was a widespread westernization in habits and customs of the better class Chinese, and with them those of the Chinese Eurasian. The first effect was the cutting of the queue and the adopting of European dress (a cultural transformation that Ho Tung also addressed in his article to be discussed in Chapter 3). Given this lack of racial markers, it became quite easy for some Chinese Eurasians to cross the

racial divide whenever they thought fit. Alabaster mentions how some Chinese Eurasians became Europeans in order to capture their share of war profits (248). With the liquidation of German firms after the First World War, many new firms owned by Eurasians were quick to capture the trade by discarding their Chinese names for English ones — an ethnic change which gave them a commercial advantage, and an early example of the kind of strategic ethnicity we will encounter later.

Alabaster is not unaware that these Chinese Eurasians were also treated with some suspicion by the Chinese community as there was an 'awakening in the pure Chinese of a spirit of nationality which is resulting gradually in forming in their minds the idea that the Eurasian Chinese should no longer be classed as Chinese, or at any rate as the leaders of the Chinese community and the exponents to the British of Chinese thought and sentiment' (248).

The legislation Alabaster recommended was never enacted, but the proposal reflects a deep-seated uneasiness about the shifting identities of the Eurasians on the part of the European communities, as well as a potential distrust of the Eurasians by the Chinese communities, an ethnic distrust instilled by a rising Chinese racial nationalism. The issue of perception and trust in the triangular relationship between the Eurasians, the Europeans and the Chinese in Hong Kong has much preoccupied the Eurasian consciousness — it is a theme, which keeps resurfacing in the memoirs examined in this book.

Eurasians were liable to a double distrust, for having a different identity in the first place, but also for not really having an identity at all, being neither one thing nor the other, and consequently sneaky and opportunistic. Whatever people like Alabaster felt about the chameleon identities of the Eurasians, the rise of the Eurasians in the colonial power structure became evident. Eurasian leaders such as Ho Fook [half-brother of Ho Tung], Chan Kai Ming [George Bartou Tyson], Robert Kotewall, and Lo Man Kam [Ho Tung's eldest son-in-law], had been appointed to either one or both of the Legislative and Executive Councils.

Norman Miners explains this phenomenon as a result of the fact that governors did not find it easy to locate suitable Chinese to fill the seats customarily reserved for them. The appointed Chinese member had to be fluent in English so as to be able to take a full part in the business of the Council. He had to be a man of standing and influence within the Chinese community. He had to be a British subject and loyal to the British Crown. But Chinese possessing all these qualifications were rare. Given the difficulty in finding acceptable Chinese, Eurasians were sought to fill the places reserved for Chinese. Governor Stubbs, however, acknowledges that the Eurasians were looked down by pure-bred Chinese who habitually referred to them as 'the Bastards' (CO 129/462; quoted in Miners, 1987, 128).

W. K. Chan has also pointed out that the Eurasians gained seats in the Legislative and Executive Councils not because they were racially closer to the Europeans but because of their mastery of the colonial language and their colonial loyalty (116). The Eurasians might be acting as Chinese for the British administration and taking the seats reserved for the Chinese, but Ming Chan, in a 1995 article, insists rather vigorously that Eurasians like Ho Tung and Kotewall were never seen by other Chinese, either in Hong Kong or on the mainland, as Chinese (257–58).

Whatever the Chinese community thought of them, they became, in the eyes of the British administration, ideal members of the colonial elite as envisaged one hundred years before in Macaulay's Minute — the desiderated cultural hybrid naturalized in a body.

The Eurasians were welcomed into the colonial elite because they could perform or mimic the part of the public Englishman. They also represented — or performed — the Chinese for the English. Poignantly, then, in this capacity, they assumed a double identity, whereas in other contexts they seemed to others to be neither one thing nor the other and to have none. But their very capacity to play the part often led to suspicion about their sincerity and loyalty.

Their role in maintaining stability during various colonial crises in the early twentieth century remained crucial to the administration but was not without a concomitant suspicion. In a despatch to the Colonial Office on 16 September 1922 in anticipation of a boycott and general strike, Stubbs writes rather apprehensively:

That is the beginning of the end. I told you the other day that I believed we should hold Hong Kong for another fifty years. I put it now at twenty at the most They [the Chinese] will tend more and more to associate themselves with China rather than with England (the tendency exists already) We can rely on nobody except the half-castes and even they will throw in their lot with the Chinese if they think they will be on the winning side.

(Sweeting, 1986, 8)

The Eurasian community in pre-war Hong Kong is in many ways similar to the Creole communities in the Americas as described by Benedict Anderson. They constituted simultaneously a colonial community and a privileged class. With their local rootedness, they were essential to the stability of an empire. In describing the Creole communities, Anderson sees a certain parallelism between the position of the Creole magnates and of feudal barons, crucial to the sovereign's power, but also a menace to it (59). In Chapter 3, we see in Ho Tung's article, how he is able to dispel that potential menace by striking a satisfying balance between his colonial loyalties and his local Chinese national and cultural rootedness.

Epilogue

fter reading the lives of these Eurasian memoirists, what emerged is a wavering continuum of their varying self-definitions of their Hong Kong Eurasian heritage. At one end of the continuum, we see Joyce Symons representing her interpretation of her Hong Kong Eurasianness as more British, less Chinese, colonial, isolated and tied to mercantile/treatyport history. Moving away from Symons and edging towards the middle, there is Jean Gittins, whose notion of her Eurasianness is based on an indeterminacy and undecidability, though at most times it tends to lean more towards Symons's direction of being British. Occasionally, the pull from her Chinese side can be felt as she wavers in her choice of identity. Overall, Jean Gittins seems adamant about not making any strong ultimate identity decision as if this undecidability were itself constitutive and definitive. She insists on a Eurasianness that cannot be calculated or divided, a metissage that will always be in the intermediate space, having strong ties to both sides. Finally, at the opposite end of the continuum, we have Irene Cheng whose self-definition of Eurasianness is concessionary and contingent, a biological accident in her Ho Tung Chineseness. Her expression of Hong Kong Eurasianness is, most of the times, synomonous with Chinese. The two words 'Chinese' and 'Eurasians' are interchangeable in her writings. Her choice of identity is based on her intense cultural identification with her Chinese heritage. And yet she occasionally acknowledges, and more often betrays, some of the psychological stress imposed upon her by this strong interpretation of her ethnicity, with its elements of partial denial.

Lastly, another issue that needs to be addressed is the explanation of the drastic difference in the two sisters' conception of Eurasianness. One can, of course, rely on the explanation based on the power dynamics and sibling order within the extended family. Irene is apparently the trusted older daughter whose ethnic and ideological configuration would tend to be closer to her parents. But how could we explain the other older siblings such as Eddie or Eva whose ideological and ethnic sentiments clearly do not resemble that of Irene or their parents? According to Irene Cheng's memoir, Eddie, the eldest son of the family, to the utter dismay of the three elderly parents, had secretly married an Irish lady he had fallen in love with while in England (1997, 120). Eva was a successful medical practitioner and had remained single and independent, a powerful sisterly figure in Cheng's memory who does not seem to share Irene's enthusiasm towards Chinese Confucian sensibilities. The explanations of sibling order and family power therefore do have their weaknesses. I would argue that perhaps, the role of one's individual existential choice could not be underestimated. No matter how hard stalwart defenders of social determinism have tried to prove the illusory nature of free individual choice, this difference between the sisters' conception of their Eurasianness and ethnic identity has pointed to the fact that within the forces of social determinism, human beings can, to some degree and at certain moments, fashion themselves at their own willful choice.

Of all the memoirists, Jean Gittins is perhaps the only one who acknowledges that her own identity process could be highly strategic, contingent and perhaps nebulous at times. Standing at the two extreme ends, we have Symons and Cheng, who tend to find themselves constantly defending and negotiating their personal notions of Eurasianness against the prescriptive definitions and casual prejudice of others, often enough in circumstances of personal anguish.

Most of us do assume the role of storytellers of our own lives at one stage or another. But being a Eurasian from the early twentieth century Hong Kong, the task becomes less simple, as the question of 'who am I?' always seems to intrude into one's life narrative. Am I more European than Chinese? More patriotic than colonial? More colonial than indigenous? It is the constant jostling of choices which marks the storytelling of these Eurasian authors much more demanding, much more poignant.

In many ways, these life narratives not only coincide temporally with those very turbulent phases of Hong Kong, as the city itself underwent a series of identity changes, but the city, too, like these Eurasian authors, had to cope with its own set of jostling choices in its quest for its historical identity.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

- 'Eurasian' is originally a term for a person of mixed European and Indian blood, first used in the mid-1800s. It was adopted as being more euphemistic than 'halfcaste' and more precise than 'East-Indian' (*Hobson-Jobson: The Anglo-Indian Dictionary*, 344)
- 2. These early colonial fears and worries are reflected in the works of race theorists such as Edward Long, Louis Agassis, and Count Gobineau. Edward Long wrote Candid Reflections Upon the Judgement Lately Awarded by the Court of King's Bench, in Westminster-Hall, on What Is Commonly Called the Negro Cause, by a Planter (London: Lowndes, 1772). Long describes interracial mixing as a 'venomous and dangerous ulcer'. Agassis sees race mixing as a 'sin against nature' and 'an incest in a civilized community'. Gobineau in his Essay on the Inequality of Race argues race mixture as a phenomenon that mingles growth with decay, life with death, desire with repulsion. As discussed in Young's Colonial Desire, Gobineau explains racial mixing as both a regeneration as well as degeneration (130).

- 1. Memoirs had never been a very popular mode of writing in Hong Kong for political and cultural reasons. The popularity of memoirs only gathered pace in the 1990s, when Hong Kong experienced a kind of 'memoir boom' that resulted in a proliferation of memoirs in bookstores.
- V. R. Gaikwad, The Anglo-Indians: A Study in the Problems and Processes Involved in Emotional and Cultural Integration (London: Asia Publishing House, 1967); Elizabeth P. Wittermans, 'The Eurasians of Indonesia,' The Blending of Races: Marginality and Identity in World Perspective, ed. N. P. Gist and A. G. Dworkin (New York & London:

John Wiley & Sons, 1972); C. H. Crabb, Malaya's Eurasians — An Opinion (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press Ltd. 1960).

3. Gusdorf, 36.

- The Oral History Project on Reminiscences of the War Experience in Hong Kong (Phase 2) was conducted by the Hong Kong Museum of History. The project collected personal accounts of war experience in Hong Kong during the Second World War.
- 2. E. J. Eitel, in the late 1890s, claims that the 'half-caste population in Hong Kong' were from the earliest days of the settlement almost exclusively the offspring of liaisons between European men and women of outcaste ethnic groups such as Tanka (Europe in China, 169). Lethbridge refutes the theory saying it was based on a 'myth' propagated by xenophobic Cantonese to account for the establishment of the Hong Kong Eurasian community. Carl Smith's study in late 1960s on the protected women seems, to some degree, support Eitel's theory. Smith says that the Tankas experienced certain restrictions within the traditional Chinese social structure. Custom precluded their intermarriage with the Cantonese and Hakka-speaking populations. The Tanka women did not have bound feet. Their opportunities for settlement on shore were limited. They were hence not as closely tied to Confucian ethics as other Chinese ethnic groups. Being a group marginal to the traditional Chinese society of the Puntis (Cantonese), they did not have the same social pressure in dealing with Europeans (C. T. Smith, Chung Chi Bulletin, 27). 'Living under the protection of a foreigner,' says Smith, 'could be a ladder to financial security, if not respectability, for some of the Tanka boat girls' (13).
- Evidence from the Jardine's records shows that such 'irregularities' as cohabitating with these protected women or mistresses were indeed the norm. A notebook of Donald Matheson contains records of payments to mistresses of Jardine's employees and friends (W. K. Chan, 34).
- The Diocesan Female Training School was the first school in Hong Kong to offer English education to Chinese and Eurasian girls (Sweeting, 248).
- 5. Eitel mentioned in 1889 how an important change had taken place among Eurasian girls, the offspring of illicit connections: instead of becoming concubines, they were commonly brought up respectably and married to Chinese husbands who themselves had received an English education in the local boys' schools (Sweeting, 248).
- 6. There were regulations that specifically applied to Chinese only, e.g. the Regulation of Chinese Ordinance 1856, the Regulation of Persons Ordinance 1916, etc.

 Wordie, too, points out that clothing worn by Eurasians had been 'an indicator' which helped to delineate the Eurasian's conscious choice of being 'one' and not 'the other' (Wordie, SCMP, 6 August 1998).

CHAPTER 3

- 1. In Clavell's *Taipan* (1966), the story behind the character Gordon Chen, a Eurasian interpreter and comparadore, has similarities with the origins of Ho Tung; in Elegant's *Dynasty* (1977), the origins of the head of the Shekloong Eurasian clan also bears resemblances to early life of Ho Tung.
- 2. According to Peter Hall, when Ho Tung was born in Hong Kong in 1862, there was a Charles Henri Maurice Bosman in Hong Kong (1992, 181). But there was not any factual confirmation that Bosman was Ho Tung's father. None of the memoirs of his daughters make any reference to their European grandfather. However, Ho Tung did name his first-born son (who died in infancy) Henry.
- 3. Ho Tung had a very close relationship with his teacher. When Stewart died in 1889, he erected a tomb in memory of Stewart in the Colonial Cemetery, where he himself was also buried half a century later in a site not far away.
- 4. As Hui Po-keung says, many early Hong Kong merchants obtained their 'first tank of gold' (7) from the coolie trade shipping their fellow countrymen as contracted labour to North America and Australia.
- The first Chinese name that appears in the list of Directors of Jardine Matheson & Co. is 'G. Ho' in 1981 (Keswick, 265).

- The desire for a Eurasian settlement is well represented in the works of Singaporean Eurasian writer Rex Shelley. One of his Eurasian characters, Gus, in Japanese occupied Malaysia, says, 'I also want a country of our own ... We will grow. Mixtures like us from all over Asia can come and live with us' (Shelley, 208).
- 2. Stoler's essay, 'Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontier' (1977) looks into the experience of Eurasians in Vietnam.
- 3. The one-dollar commemorative stamp issued in 1946 was designed by the Director of Postage, Wynne Jones, while he was interned in Stanley.
- 4. The TAC was one of those committees the government created that included members of the general public. It provided a forum where the 'consumers' could raise their complaints and suggestions (Miners, 1995, 107).
- Elsie Elliot was headmistress of a school for the underprivileged in Kowloon City (Tu, 173). Morris, writing in the late 1980s, describes Elliot as having been for 30

years the voice of Hong Kong's liberal conscience, fearlessly championing the poor, defying authorities and exposing corruption (Morris, 1988, 100).

- 6. These were elected by members of two political parties, the Reform Club and Civic Association (Endacott, 309).
- The Ward office was instituted in 1965. The urban area was divided into wards each with a ward office where Councillors would be available at fixed times to hear complaints and to give advice (Miners, 1995, 163).
- 8. It was not until 1985, after the Joint Declaration, that the government incorporated into the Legislative Council for the first time, members elected by newly established functional constituencies as well as members indirectly elected through District Board electoral colleges.
- 9. Umelco stands for 'Unofficial Members of Executive and Legislative Council'.
- 10. It is true that some civil servants, e.g. European police officers, were trained in Cantonese. But their Cantonese was often spoken with an accent. As a child, Symons spoke Cantonese before she learned to speak English. Hence, her Cantonese was equally fluent as that of any local Cantonese speaker.
- The Executive Council in the 1970s consisted of four ex-officio members (the Chief Secretary, the Commander of the British Forces, the Financial Secretary and the Attorney-General) and eight Unofficials, many like Symons, still serving on the Legislative Council (1996, 83).

- 1. Eakin describes Ernest Hemingway's Nick Adams in *In Our Time* (1925) as one who collides with history head-on.
- 2. For the purpose of easy reference, *Eastern Windows Western Skies* shall be referred to as *Eastern Windows*.
- 3. Ozick in *The Shawl* (1980) writes about how Rosa sees her life after the Holocaust experience (58).
- 4. The number of Ho Tung siblings was at variance between Gittins's text and her sister Irene Cheng's text.
- 5. Sheila Rowbotham, as explained by Friedman, argues that women consciousness was split in two: the self as culturally defined and the self as different from cultural prescriptions. From this division, came a sense of dislocation and alienation (Rowbotham, *Woman's Consciousness*, 31; quoted in Friedman, 39).
- 6. The narrator explains this apparent inconsistency in her father's decision about ethnic identity and choice of residence as solely attributable to her mother's domestic desire. 'Someone had suggested to Mother that there was nothing to compare with

the health-giving value of the Peak air for growing children, and this being the case, she would not rest until she had us settled there' (1969, 12).

- Another larger house next to this cluster called The Falls was later acquired in the 1920s.
- Bolton argues that the Leland's 'comic' account of the Pidgin-English sing-song (1876) had 'contributed to the formation of a cultural imaginary of Chinese people at a time of growing anti-Chinese racism in United States and Britain' (Bolton, 2000, 35).
- 9. The Grose family is another Hong Kong Eurasian family related to the Halls/Sins and the Choas/Belilios. The Chinese family name of Grose is 'Ko' (Hall, 179).
- J. S. Lockhart was the Colonial Secretary and Registrar General of Hong Kong at the turn of the century (Endacott, 1958, 262).
- 11. During the first four decades of the twentieth century, when modern education was developing rapidly in Hong Kong as well as in China, the number of *si-shu* continued to be quite popular (Luk, 119).
- 12. Han Suyin was in a similar situation as Jean Gittins in 1930 in Beijing. Though she was a speaker of colloquial Chinese, Han needed knowledge of classical Chinese to get into Yenching University. Being a Eurasian girl educated in the modern western school system, Han, like Gittins, subjected herself to the 'large dose of gothic verbiage' in what she calls the 'equivalent of Chaucerian English' (Han, 1966, 160) to a twentieth century English reader.
- Apart from Grouser, the other two Chinese that have been given some narrative space are Master Chiu and Chan Bun, the houseboy they inherited from Mr C. W. Richard, former owner of The Chalet.
- 14. The Hong Kong News was the only English language newspaper during the Japanese occupation. The editor was Japanese and the staff members were mainly Chinese and Portuguese who had worked for the South China Morning Post. It became the mouthpiece of Japanese propaganda (Emerson, 4).
- 15. The Vice Chancellor gave permission for Gittins to stay on condition that two students would be permitted to stay with her (1969, 130). Two Russian students from Manchuria were selected: Sergei Hohlov (who later married Jean after the war) and Victor Zaitzev.
- 16. For the purpose of easy reference, *Stanley: Behind Barbed Wire* (1982) shall be referred to as '*Barbed Wire*'.
- 17. The last three sentences of this paragraph were slightly revised when they appeared in *Eastern Windows* as she remembers that initial 'life after' stage. In their revised form, they no longer had that psychological immediacy and rawness as they were first written in her short memoir in 1946 where they appeared in the beginning of her chapter of emotional and spiritual challenge.

- 18. As shall be discussed in Irene Cheng's chapter, Cheng's first part-autobiographical text, Clara Ho Tung: A Hong Kong Lady Her Family and Her Times (1976) also includes a brief history of Hong Kong, but it served more as a factual background and lacks the kind of connectedness and sense of historical continuity in relation to the personal narrative of the author, which is distinctly felt in Gittins's 1982 text.
- According to Mabel Gittins's son, Peter Hall, they were interned because of their right of residence in Britain. George Hall, Mabel's husband, had lived in Britain for many years (Hall, 56).
- 20. As shall be discussed in a later chapter, unlike her other sisters' memoirs, Jean Gittins did not mention that the rest was needed as a result of the excitement from the celebrations of his Diamond Wedding Anniversary with Lady Margaret, Sir Robert's first wife, on 2 December 1941, six days before the invasion.
- 21. One possible reason that Jean had not joined the Idlewild crowd is that Idlewild was headed by Lady Margaret, the matriarch whom she has not acknowledged in any of her memoirs.
- 22. Norwegians were originally allowed to remain outside on condition that they did not escape when on parole. But after two escape attempts all Norwegians were interned in February 1943 (Endacott, 1978, 161; Lindsay, 1981, 36).
- 23. According to Brown, it was not until the professor's sense of humour came to his help that he burst into laughter. The businessman joined in. They shook hands and apologized. The shoe was carefully divided. This is an incident where it ended happily, but there were numerous other cases, where internees turned violently against each other in their daily scrounging and other routines.
- 24. *Death of Nelson* is based on the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 between England and France. The hero, the British Vice Admiral Nelson, is shot at the height of the battle.
- 25. According to Lindsay, at the risk of annoying the Japanese, sometimes a group of internees would sing songs like 'There'll Always Be an England' and their voices would hearten the wretched prisoners inside the prison walls (Lindsay, 141).
- 26. Jean Gittins described how most internees felt that they had been let down during the fighting. Recriminations and bitterness towards the colonial government were common within the camp.
- 27. The Formosan guards were brought over by the Japanese. They were generally remembered as mean and gruff figures.
- 28. Jean Gittins was again one of those selected few who were called in to fill the administrative vacuum. On 3 September, with about twenty government servants, she left the camp to start working as a secretary in the newly revived colonial administration.

29. Jean Gittins is not the only Ho Tung who had this experience of Australia's anxiety in the 1940s towards non-European ethnicity. Florence Yeo, the youngest daughter, also had her share of the Australian paranoia. Florence and her sister Grace were both travelling to Australia during 1946; Grace to visit Jean, and Florence with her husband K. C. Yeo on recuperative leave. Florence recalls how after they reached Sydney Harbour, they queued up for permission to land: 'Grace was ahead of me. She was greeted politely and was welcomed into Australia. Then, I was next, with a Chinese husband. "Do you realise that you are allowed to stay in Australia for only six months? You must also report to the authorities if you stay any longer," he warned gruffly' (Yeo, 111). Grace apparently had been perceived as white and had no problem. Florence, with a Chinese husband, was perceived as Chinese. Unlike Jean Gittins, she was not given the benefit of a choice. The presence of a Chinese husband quickly eliminated her Europeanness.

- 1. For purpose of easy reference, Irene Cheng's 1976 text shall be referred to as Clara.
- 2. For purpose of easy reference, Irene Cheng's 1997 text shall be referred to as *Reminiscences*.
- 3. By this time Cheng's youngest sister, Florence Yeo, had published her own memoir entitled My *Memories* (1990).
- 4. Lionnet describes Hurton's autobiography as a form of 'autoethnography', 95).
- Irene Cheng does not acknowledge any conflicts or address the existence of conflicts between the more Westernized Eurasians and the more Chinese Eurasians — an issue which both Symons and Gittins are painfully aware of.
- 6. Many feminist critics such as Joy Hotton argue that 'The presentation of the self as related rather than single and isolate is ... the most distinctive and consistent difference between male and female life-writing' (quoted in Eakin, 48). Eakin, however, sees that relational identity applies not only to women but to men's life writing as well. Relational identity, for Eakin, crosses the gender divide.
- Her father was 'sworn brothers' with several others well-known Hong Kong Eurasians (1976, 26) such as Sin Tak Fan (alias Stephen Hall, great-grandfather of Peter Hall), and Chan Kai Ming (alias George Bartou Tyson, maternal grand-uncle of Joyce Symons) (Symons, 1966a, v).
- Though Florence Yeo is willing to reveal that Ho Tung's father was of Dutch descent, she never identifies his name, which is commonly believed to be 'Bosman' (Hall, 181).
- 9. Though by 1990, Cheng had Florence Yeo's book to refer to, there is a possibility that she might not agree with Yeo's version of their European ancestor's identities.

- Cheng's preoccupation with the notion of 'pure' Chinese is recalled by her youngest sister Florence Yeo in My Memories, which shall be discussed in the second part of this chapter, 'Weighing Loyalties'.
- Miss Katie, Ho Tung's nurse, a lady of mixed descent, had a son by Ho Tung, which none of the sisters had included in their count of the Ho Tung children (Courtauld & Holdsworth, 33; Hall, 181; *Next Magazine* No. 506, 19 November 1999, 109). Cheng does not mention the relationship between Miss Katie and her father.
- 12. This incident does not appear in the narrative.
- 13. Diana was the daughter of Cheng's adopted brother Ho Wing (nephew of Ho Tung) and Kitty Anderson, the younger sister of Charles Anderson. This is the same Diana who was to ask Symons not to reveal their relationship, as Symons was 'British' and she herself was 'Chinese'.
- 14. Sweeting attributes the eventual change of this policy to a response by the colonial university 'to the increased feminism in China and Hong Kong stimulated especially amongst educated classes during the "May Fourth" period' (1990, 348).
- 15. Eva was one year older than Irene Cheng. And all three of the Ho Tung autobiographers unanimously agree on her brilliant academic achievement. She became a medical doctor and remained single. During the Second World War, she worked for the Red Cross in China.
- 16. Lai Po-Chuen was probably from the Mainland, since Cheng calls herself the first local girl to join the University.
- Lingnan was first established in 1893 with Rev. B. C. Henry of the Canton Presbyterian Mission as its president. It was he who had presented the idea of the college to the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions in America in 1885 (Corbett, 21). Cheng joined Lingnan during the administration of its first Chinese president W. K. Chung (1927–1937).
- 18. When the open seizure of Manchuria began in 1931, Chiang Kai Shek ordered the Young Marshal Zhang Xueliang, the warlord of Manchuria, to withdraw without serious resistance. To many Chinese at that time, the Nanjing government represents a combination of 'nonresistance, noncompromise and nondirect negotiation' (Hsu, 550). The regional victory of Ma Chan Shan helped to inspire much hope and patriotism amid the prevailing sense of indignation.
- 19. Irene Cheng has admitted that although she worshipped Eva as a hero when they were young, they had grown apart and while she was staying at Eva's flat in London, they occasionally got on each other's nerves (1997, 197, 207).
- 20. When Shanghai finally fell in November, the Japanese turned to Nanjing, with the goal of retribution. Nanjing was to be made an example to prove Japan's dominance (Fogel, 17). The result was an unprovoked and unconscionable attempt to exterminate the Chinese spirit (Eykholt, 11). Over 300,000 civilians and prisoners

of war were killed in late 1937 and early 1938. The Nanjing Massacre became a metonym for Japanese behavior in China (Fogel, 17). Ian Buruma has suggested that the Nanjing Massacre has become profoundly entwined with and even emblematic of contemporary Chinese identity (Buruma, 7; Fogel, 2, 9).

- 21. The narrator says that many years later after the war, she found this Japanese again in Japan. 'He brought his wife and daughter to see me. I was glad when he told me that he had resigned from military life and was making a living by establishing a factory that made chalk to be used for chalk boards ... I am sorry I have again lost touch with this Japanese friend' (1997, 267).
- 22. Both Sir Robert (who was to die in 1956) and Lady Margaret were buried in the Colonial Cemetery, a two-minute walk from Hector Maclean's grave.
- 23. After the Nationalist Party established the new central government in Nanjing, it required all overseas Chinese schools to register in China and to follow certain guidelines of the Nanjing government, if they wanted their credentials to be recognized and their students to be eligible for university admission in China (Luk, 2000, 47)
- 24. On this occasion of meeting Queen Mary in 1932, the narrator only seems able to recall the long sweeping sequined gown and the pear-shaped diamond earrings she herself wore on that day.

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