

Стивен РЭКМАН

ПЕРЛ С. БАК В ИСТОРИИ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ

Аннотация: Статья посвящена динамике литературной репутации Перл С. Бак и освещению причин недавней переоценки фигуры Бак и признания ее значимости для транснациональной истории литературы. Творчество Бак анализируется как пример изучения в рамках мировой литературы подобных синкретических фигур, которые сложно со всей определенностью отнести к той или иной национальной традиции, поскольку они принадлежат одновременно нескольким (в случае Перл Бак — и китайской, и американской литературной истории). Историко-литературное исследование таких фигур, как Бак, требует рассмотрения в многоязычном и многонациональном контексте и позволяет выявить сложную систему взаимодействий во всемирной литературе. В свете новой картины всемирной литературы и культуры выдвигается тезис, что важное литературное и культурное значение Бак несводимо только к ее текстам, к собственно литературному качеству ее сочинений. Ее творчество требует рассмотрения в историко-литературном и биографическом контексте, прояснения идеологических устремлений (используя выражение Фредерика Джеймисона), присутствующих в ее произведениях. Так, например, транскультурный феминизм в сочинениях Бак возникает благодаря сложному и конфликтному браку писательницы с Лоссингом Баком в 1920–1930-х гг. Статья состоит из трех разделов. В первом применяется макромасштабный подход, прослеживаются взлеты и падения литературной репутации Бак. Во второй части используется микро-оптика, позволяющая сосредоточиться на деталях и стимулирующих конфликтах творческого пути Бак и проследить, как эти конфликты способствовали обретению ей литературной и культурной идентичности; в центре внимания здесь оказываются романы «Земля» и «Все люди братья». Статью завершает краткий анализ романа «Племя дракона», который, как нам кажется, представляет собой сумму транскультурного политического воображаемого Перл Бак.

Ключевые слова: Перл Сайденстрикер Бак, история литературы, Китай, Соединенные Штаты, «Земля», «Все люди братья», «Племя дракона», «Восточный ветер, западный ветер», гендерные роли, Нобелевская премия.

THE WRITER IN LITERARY HISTORY

UDC 82-821.111(73)

DOI 10.22455/2541-7894-2017-2-8-42

Stephen RACHMAN

PEARL S. BUCK IN LITERARY HISTORY

Abstract: This essay addresses the shifts in Pearl S. Buck's literary reputation making the case for renewed consideration to Buck as a relevant figure for a transnational literary history. Her work is analyzed as an example of world literary study based on syncretic figures like Buck who cannot be easily extricated from one or another national tradition — conjoined literary figures, we might say, of Chinese and American literary history. By paying closer attention to figures such as Buck whose literary history forces us to consider her works in multi-lingual, multinational contexts the complex interactions of global literary systems can be made visible. In reworking this picture of global literary culture, this essay argues that Buck's literary/cultural importance was never exclusively textual (based on the intrinsic literary qualities of her works in a critical vacuum). Rather, it demands historicist and biographical contextualization in order to elucidate the ideological horizons, as Frederic Jameson might put it, intrinsic to her work. In particular, the transcultural feminism emergent in her work derives from a creative tension forged by her troubled marriage to Lossing Buck in the 1920s and 30s. What follows then, is an exploration of this in three sections. The first part will take a macroscopic vantage, tracing the rise and fall and re-emergence of Buck's literary reputation. The second part is microscopic, detailing the formative tensions of Buck's creative life and how those tensions fed into the formation of her literary and cultural identities, especially *The Good Earth* and *All Men Are Brothers*. The paper ends with brief discussion of *Dragon Seed*, and what in my view is the endpoint of Buck's transcultural political imaginary.

Keywords: Pearl Sydenstricker Buck, literary history, China, United States, *The Good Earth*, *All Men Are Brothers*, *Dragon Seed*, *East Wind, West Wind*, Gender roles, Nobel Prize.

Headnote

The following essay is part of a project that began in 2013 as a reconsideration of the life and work of Pearl S. Buck (1892–1973), the author best known for her fictions set in China (e.g. *The Good Earth*, *Dragon Seed*) and for being the first American woman to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1938. When I started, I saw this work as a continuation of a study I had done some years ago of a nineteenth-century Cantonese artist known as Lam Qua (Guan Qiaochang) who painted in a Western manner. He forged a friendship with an American medical missionary, Peter Parker in the 1830s and painted a series of portraits of Parker's notable Chinese patients who often had dramatic or shocking conditions. I was interested in Lam Qua, Parker and the paintings as figures of the confluence of East and West and lessons in the limits of orientalism and I turned to Buck as another of these figures who, as the American-born daughter of missionaries, immersed herself in Chinese culture at a depth that was more intense than many others of that era. As the project developed, a growing sense of Buck's feminism and the cultural politics of the 20th century that she was caught up in made me realize that there was a larger story about global literary history of which her life and work is a prime example. My trips to China in the years between 2013 and the present allowed me to witness changes in attitude toward Buck and her work that were not simply a matter of changing literary tastes but a paradigmatic shift, reflecting alterations in Sino-American cultural history. The essay that you have here is then an attempt at placing Buck in a global, transnational literary history.

* * *

Where do we locate Pearl Sydenstricker Buck in American Literary History? Where do we locate her in Chinese Literary History? These two national literary histories are ultimately more entangled than we generally suppose as we employ the categories of nation and ethnicity to define domains of authorship, and in posing these questions, the case of Pearl Buck in its aesthetic and cultural mutability provides a perspective and a set of tools through which we can approach the complexities of world literature and world literary history. Of course, the literary histories of the United States and China, taken in their own terms through other authors, deserve due consideration, but in the figure of Pearl Buck they have been intertwined. Since the literary shockwave set off in the United States by the publication of *The Good Earth* in 1931 reverberated through Chinese literary circles (and ultimately around the globe) China entered into American literary

consciousness in an unprecedented form (a socially realistic filial saga of rural peasantry) and American literature — in the figure of Buck and the command her representations of China seemed to be holding over the Western imagination — became an unavoidable problem for Chinese authors and literary critics. As Buck's literary reputation has waxed and waned in the United States and China during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the connections between the literary histories of the two countries has shifted with other authors entering into and dominating the critical conversation but in Buck, the inherently comparative aspects of this shared history emerge with unprecedented clarity. In many respects, this newfound clarity has been predicated on a shift in Chinese literary history and the changes in Buck's position in China.

This essay will attend to these shifts as it makes the case for renewed consideration of Buck and her work but it is also offered as an example of world literary study based on syncretic figures like Buck who cannot be easily extricated from one or another national tradition-conjoined literary figures, we might say. By paying closer attention to figures whose literary histories force us to consider their works in multi-lingual, multinational contexts the complex interactions of global literary systems can be made visible. Also, in reworking this picture of global literary culture, this essay is burdened with the awareness that Buck's literary/cultural importance was never exclusively textual (based on the intrinsic literary qualities of her works in a critical vacuum). Rather, it demands historicist and biographical contextualization in order to elucidate the ideological horizons, as Frederic Jameson might put it, intrinsic to her work. In particular, the transcultural feminism emergent in her work derives from a creative tension forged by her troubled marriage to Lossing Buck in the 1920s and 30s. What follows then, is an exploration of this in three sections. The first part will take a macroscopic vantage, tracing the rise and fall and re-emergence of Buck's literary reputation. The second part is microscopic, detailing the formative tensions of Buck's creative life and how those tensions fed into the formation of her literary and cultural identities. The paper ends with brief discussion of *Dragon Seed*, and what in my view is the endpoint of Buck's transcultural political imaginary.

I. The Rehabilitation of Pearl Buck

A shift in China's official attitude toward Pearl Buck occurred in May 2012 at Nanjing University during an international symposium on her years in Nanjing. This symposium was convened in conjunction

with the inauguration of the Pearl S. Buck Memorial House on the campus of the university. The house which had long been plastered over in nondescript stucco and existed in a kind of tolerated obscurity from the 1930s until the present, had, at considerable expense, been renovated and restored to the condition when Buck and her first husband, Lossing, their disabled daughter, Carol, and her widower father resided there in the 1920s and 30s. Period furniture had been acquired to supplement the wall text and biographical information on Buck to create a museum dedicated to her life and work. The upstairs room in which she wrote *The Good Earth* had been recreated based on photographic evidence and outfitted with a replica of the typewriter she had used. Once a reminder of the Western missionary presence in China and the residence of a persona non grata (hence stuccoing over the façade), the house has been remade as a monument to the origins of literary achievement. Just outside the entrance to the house, a large bust of Buck was commissioned and unveiled during the ceremonies (Figure 1). Media were in attendance and the events were publicized in the *China Daily News* among other outlets [Wenwei 2012, p. 4].



Figure 1. Commemorative bust of Pearl S. Buck (Sai Zhenzhu 赛珍珠) outside the house on the campus of Nanjing University. Photo courtesy of the author

The conference and ceremonies marked a barometric shift in the climate of Buck's Chinese reputation. Buck's first wave of success in the 1930s, coming as it did during the turmoil of the nationalist era, was always greeted with a certain degree of caution, if not outright opposition, by Chinese literary critics and scholars. While some critics were encouraged by the example of *The Good Earth*, dealing as it did

with Chinese rural life, achieving such popularity in the West (as well as in China, relatively speaking, where it went through multiple translated editions in this era), they were, as Julia Hovell, has observed, skeptical of its literary value in either Chinese or Western terms. Hu Feng questioned the book's representational accuracy, the reasons for its success, and the expertise of its female author. A note of incredulity pervades his commentary. "How has this female writer... observed China?" he wondered. Had *The Good Earth* achieved its "astounding success" for its "artistic quality or for other reasons?" Perhaps most crucially for Buck's fate during the decades that would follow, "What kind of truthful reflection has been given of the peasant's fate and of the conditions that produced that fate?" The answers implied in Hu Feng's dismissive tone, were that he and other influential Chinese critics found Buck's work to be generally lacking.

When in 1932 Professor Jiang Kinghu, a classical scholar and an official connected with the Manchu Ministry of Justice, dismissed *The Good Earth* in *The New York Times* as nothing more than an occidental grotesque, preoccupied with sex, and overly attentive to unflattering aspects of a numerous but nonetheless unrepresentative segment of Chinese society, Buck offered a powerful rebuttal. She called him out on the injustice and bias in his disparaging use of the term "coolie" to describe the likes of the novel's protagonists, O-lan and Wang Lung. "The point that some of China's intellectuals cannot seem to grasp is that they ought to be proud of their common people, that the common people are China's strength and glory" [Kang-hu 1933, p. 14]. The forcefulness of Buck's response, while wholly consistent with Buck's feelings for the Chinese and in keeping with contemporaneous New Deal-era rhetoric about ordinary people, actually evades the central issue for many of her Chinese critics. Even though she was right on point with respect to Kinghu's elitist polemic, it was not merely a question of taking pride in the common people but the modes in which the common people were represented and the explanatory models used to describe their condition, or "the conditions that produced their fate," as Hu Feng put it. In other words, because Buck was a woman and her social critique functioned in different ways, activated different rhetorical registers and resisted both Nationalist and Marxist explanations for the conditions of common people, it relegated her work in Chinese critical circles to a position of perceived superficiality. Zou Zhenhuan summed up a kind of consensus of the 1930s and 40s: "Of course, compared with the works of Lu Xun, Mao Dun, Ba Jin, Shen Congwen, and others that portray rural Chinese society, *The Good Earth* cannot avoid appearing rather superficial" [qtd. in Lovell 2006, p. 89].

There is, what cultural anthropologists call an “emic” cast to these considerations; an abiding sense that only indigenous observers using indigenous language, and indigenous forms would be adequate to the task of literary representation of social reality. A general reluctance to accord an outsider, however assimilated she may have been to Chinese culture, cultural (both literary and social) authority over this subject matter, pervaded the critical attitude. “What [Buck] knows of China,” Lu Xun opined in a letter, “is no more than superficial. The truth is only produced when we set about writing it ourselves” [qtd. in Lovell 2006, p. 92]. Buck’s winning of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1938, only further complicated her literary status in China, and indeed around the globe, as the politics of this decision seemed to confirm the perception that Buck’s significance was largely Western. Her meteoric rise from literary unknown to Nobel laureate in a scant eight years, rather than settling the question of Buck’s literary achievement, called into question the processes and protocols of the Swedish Academy and the literary panels that award the prize. Indeed, Buck herself was surprised and uncertain of her worthiness for such a high literary honor [Buck 1954, p. 76–8]. Many suspected, as Julia Hovell argues, that the escalation of the Second Sino — Japanese War and the Nanking Massacre in 1937–8 influenced the Nobel committee’s choice of Buck, suggesting that political crisis rather than literary merit in the abstract was a prime factor [Lovell 2006, p. 118]. Despite the determination of the Swedish Academy, the prize did little to enhance Buck’s reputation with either the Chinese or the American literary intelligentsia.

But if the Nobel laureate was given to Buck for geopolitical reasons, it was not a politics that had much traction in China in the 1930s. Buck’s unveiled criticisms of Sun-Yat Sen, the Kuomintang, Chiang Kai-shek and his repressive brand of nationalism left her with few allies on that side of the struggle, even though she won the praise of Zhou Enlai and was awarded the Jade Order for her fund-raising efforts during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–41). Given her equally vocal opposition to communism, the rise of Mao Zedong and his various programs of reform, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, it came as no surprise that Buck and her works were actively and routinely denounced as Western imperialist propaganda¹.

¹ During the 1940s, Zhou Enlai also acknowledged Buck’s preeminence as an expert on China, her profound sympathy for the Chinese people, and her tireless efforts to raise funds for arms and medicine during the war with Japan, but seminal communist literary critic Lu Xun’s summary dismissal of Buck had a long-standing negative impact, especially after the consolidation of power under the communists in 1949.

Anchee Min, author of *Red Azalea* and *Pearl of China*, has described her experience as a middle school student in Shanghai in 1971 of being compelled to write one such condemnation (“A Chinese Fan”). In the early 1970s, it was originally U.S. President Richard M. Nixon’s intention to bring the elderly Buck with him as part of the U.S. delegation on his historic visit to China (Buck had lobbied the White House aggressively for this), but the plan was quashed when her visa application was denied. Indeed, it has been reported that Mao’s wife, Jiang Qing, militated against Buck being allowed to share the limelight on such an occasion. Her visa may have been tacitly denied at the highest political levels [Spurling 2010, p. 348] but this was hardly necessary, as Buck had so few allies in China by that time. In a late work, *China Past and Present*, in which Buck attempted to assess her relationship to China, she actually reproduced a copy of the letter denying her visa application. Her account reads like a person attempting to carry on a telephone conversation with no one on the other end of the line. This was generally how matters stood through much of the twentieth century. Buck’s works, especially *The Good Earth* and *Dragon Seed* were increasingly unavailable to Chinese readers in good translations and, with her death in 1973, as her reputation in the West lost its currency, Sai Zhenzhu (賽珍珠) as Buck was known in China, entered into a kind of literary limbo.

However, in the 1990s, when Peter Conn was conducting research for his cultural biography of Buck, his discussions with Liu Haiping of Nanjing University convinced him a shift was occurring in China. A group of young scholars, *De Heng Fan*, began translating Buck’s oeuvre into Chinese for a new generation [Conn 1996, p. xix]. The reaction to these works was much like that of Anchee Min when she finally got to read *The Good Earth* — the shock of recognition. Far from finding imperialist distortions, they found a credible, authentic, and moving series of representations of Chinese life in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The excitement at this discovery coincided with the new policies of economic and cultural expansion that have marked the China of the last twenty years. The arrival of Conn’s biography, the work of Anchee Min, and more recently Hilary Spurling, have all lent support to the work going on in China and to the ethos of East-West cultural (and commercial) exchange that animated the conference in Nanjing. With the commemoration of 2012 and another in Buck’s home city of Zhenjiang in 2013, Chinese governmental bodies and American diplomats have sanctioned the rehabilitation of Buck’s reputation in a way that was scarcely imaginable even a decade ago. All of this has taken place before Western eyes blinking in wonderment and awe and perhaps a little disbelief. In the words of Peter Conn, writing

about the Nanjing conference in *The Atlantic*, “The fate of Pearl Buck and her reputation highlights the Chinese government’s continuing struggle to define its relation to its own people” [Conn 2012]. Even as she instantiated as a legitimate figure in Chinese literary history, Buck’s standing is once again caught up in a geopolitical matrix in which literary, commercial, and governmental politics are in play.

For wholly different reasons, Buck’s literary reputation in the West and in the United States in particular suffered a paradoxically similar fate. Far from being officially discredited, Buck enjoyed an unprecedented critical and popular success from the 1930s onward with her works about China. Her domestic fiction, however, was less well received by the critics, and, as time passed her success came to be seen less as a profound literary cultural phenomenon than as a form of popular women’s fiction. Hilary Spurling’s 2010 biography, *Pearl Buck in China*, works hard to make the case that Buck should be taken seriously as a cultural figure, but the fact that the case needs to be made indicates the vicissitudes of her literary reputation in the last eighty years. In the fall of 1931, Sinclair Lewis in praising developments in modern literature could classify *The Good Earth* with Willa Cather’s *Death Comes for the Archbishop* and Evelyn Waugh’s *Vile Bodies* as exemplary works of modern fiction that “represent reality without any concessions to tradition” [Lewis 1931], and college professors and students would vote her book the best novel of the 1931 [Phelps 1931].

By 1938 when Buck was awarded the Nobel Prize, Norman Holmes Pearson suggested that Cather would have been a much better choice, and one would be hard pressed to find a critic today who would place *The Good Earth* in the same company, even if they still regard it as an important novel. Indeed, Mary McCarthy’s notorious feud with Lillian Hellman began with a casual remark she made on the *Dick Cavett Show* in 1980 that Pearl Buck was over-praised. McCarthy was unwilling to go into details because, in the same breath, she admitted that she had not read Buck. In other words while Hellman was worthy of McCarthy’s spleen, Buck was beneath consideration². Recalling these events in 2014, the host Cavett could still enthusiastically agree, adding that he had heard a story (almost certainly apocryphal) that the announcement at Columbia of Buck’s 1932 Pulitzer Prize was received by the students with extended laughter [Cavett]. By the 1980s, the critical elite in the United States either willfully ignored

² Given the leftist politics underlying the feud between Hellman and McCarthy (which date back to the 1930s) the dismissal of Buck as superficial parallels the political tenor of Chinese considerations of Buck’s social analysis.

Buck's work or actively undermined it through misrepresentations of the past. By the 1990s, Buck's reputation suffered from critiques that, on the one hand situate her work as a form of U.S. Orientalism, that ultimately facilitated a Euro-American representation of China, and on the other hand, as overly-sentimental, unsophisticated "women's fiction." Despite notable endorsements of her work from a range of writers (most prominently Maxine Hong Kingston and Toni Morrison), the Orientalist criticisms of her work, as Richard Jean So has recently observed, continue to be made with an increasingly presumptive quality; and, occasionally she still comes in for criticism as a sentimentalist³.

In this way, serious literary opinion in the United States had a similar effect to the active suppression of her works going on in China during the same period.

Quantitative analysis of digitized books (culturomics) using Google *n-grams* viewer confirms the general trends of Buck's currency in literary history⁴. Graphical analysis of the currency of her name from 1900–2008 (Figure 2) indicates a sharp rise that begins in 1931–2, crests in 1945, and declines over the 1950s settling in at a level of currency approximately half of what it was at its peak. A slight rise in her

³ On questions of Orientalism, Richard Jean So [So 2010, p. 88, 108] points out two studies: Karen Leong, *The China Mystique: Pearl S. Buck, Anna May Wong, Mayling Soong, and the Transformation of American Orientalism* (Berkeley, 2005) and Mari Yoshihara, *Embracing the East: White Women and American Orientalism* (Oxford, 2003).

Another more vociferous strain derives from Frank Chin's work. In his witty novel *Donald Duk*, a chef, angry at the film version of *The Good Earth*, rails "I wish Pearl Buck was alive and walk into my restaurant so I can cut out her heart and liver. That is how much I hate that movie" [Chin 1991a, p. 136]. For Chin holding a similar opinion, see his 1991 letter to the editor of *The Los Angeles Times* regarding an interview by Corlyn See with David Wong Louie in which he charges her with promulgating "the noise of the same old Pearl Buck, Fu Manchu, Charlie Chan" [Chin 1991b]. On Buck's sentimentalism see Jonathan Spence's review of Hilary Spurling's biography of Buck quoted below. In fact, Spence while avoiding terms like Orientalism, raises similar concerns.

⁴ For an understanding of the basic techniques involved in an n-gram search and its potential applications, see (Michel *et al*). An n-gram is a unit of search terms within the corpus of digitized books in the Google books library which contains over 500 billion words, 361 billion in English, 13 Billion in Chinese, and many more in other languages; a 1-gram would, therefore search one term, a 2-gram would search for two terms and so on. The n-gram viewer represents the frequency of a given search term computationally by dividing the number of instances of that term in a given year by the total number of words in the corpus in that year.



Figure 2. Graphical analysis of the currency of Pearl Buck's name from 1900–2008

currency occurs in the mid–1990s but other than that, a general leveling is present. Quantitative analysis of Buck's Chinese name over the same period examining Chinese-language sources (Figure 3) indicates a similar pattern through the 1970s but a noticeable rise beginning in the 1980s and accelerating in the 1990s and 2000s confirms that after



Figure 3. Graphical analysis of Buck's Chinese name over the period from 1900–2008 examining Chinese-language sources

a period of suppression or condemnation of her works, interest began to grow. This offers supplementary evidence to the perception that, in the words of Stuart Christie, “there is more energy within Pearl Buck studies emanating from China today, both at the level of popular and academic interest, than in the West” [Christie 2010, p. 1098–9].

The reasons for the convergence of these two comparative arcs have to do with Buck's changing geopolitical relationship to her core material (China) and her literary style and its attendant popular audience. Peter Conn suggests that *The Good Earth* “was a pioneering exercise” in an “authentic multiculturalism” from a Western point of view [Conn 1996, p. 131]. Conn indicates that the novel's close observation of the fabric of Chinese life in general and rural life in particular, a mode of observation scrupulously devoid of stereotypical orientalist motifs conventional to Western depictions of China in this period (despite the orientalist dismissals of Chinese critics), resonated with American and global readers. Furthermore, the quasi-biblical tonality with which the novel was perceived to be inflected (e.g. “And so he bade the laborers build a little room and an earthen stove in it and he

bought a good cauldron. And Cuckoo was pleased because he said, “You shall cook what you please in it” [Conn 1996, p. 178]) conferred, for many readers and critics, a kind of “universal” dignity on its humble characters and the privations they endured — that is to say universal within an English-language tradition acculturated by the cadences and tonal distance of the King James version of the Bible. In a 1932 interview, Buck pointed to this source for her style. “The greatest influence, I should say, was the King James version of the Bible, which my father often used to read to us when I was young. Then there are the older Chinese writings, which, strange to say, are couched in the same majestic phrases” [Woolfe 1932]. By “Chinese writings,” Buck referred in particular to the vernacular Chinese novel, the most famous of which, *Shui Hu Zhuan*, she was completing a translation of at the time of the interview. Carl Van Doren and a range of other English-speaking critics in the ‘30s and ‘40s praised Buck’s style precisely for the way this language created a stoicism and emotional restraint or detachment, but they neglected the Chinese roots of this style⁵. These early supporters were preoccupied with the aesthetic creation of universality within culturally specific contexts (especially a culture that had been perceived as alien and demonic) and Buck’s achievement was seen as particularly compelling, but with time this aesthetic lost much of its currency. So much so that in the early 1990s Chinese historian Jonathan D. Spence remarked that the “oddly archaic language” of *The Good Earth* seemed “to root contemporary China’s experience in a timeless zone that has been the center of so many Western views of China — including Montesquieu’s and Hegel’s” [Spence 1992, p. 88]. Even though Buck’s seminal work was engaged with Chinese modernity in a fairly large and timely way (the floods, famines, and revolts described in the book all became topical given that book’s publication coincided with devastating Yangtze Valley floods of 1931), because that modernity was taken up through the lens of the peasantry beginning in the late-*Qing* era, what appeared to be a stylistic virtue, a trans-linguistic correlative, came to be seen as a mark of Western dehistoricization, the mark not of the work of a uniquely informed Chinese observer of Western ancestry deploying the literary structures of the indigenous Chinese novel, but a typical outsider⁶. Even though

⁵ While Buck vacillated between characterizing the tone of *The Good Earth* as a brand of English that correlated to Chinese diction and one that combined Chinese diction with the King James Version of the Bible, she always insisted on the homology between the two literary forms. For a discussion of the English elements see [Doyle 1965, p. 33–5].

⁶ The 1931 floods in China received worldwide attention, with such celebrities

Buck drew from Chinese sources and experience — she claimed that she mentally composed in Chinese and translated into English — the temporal slippages within in Buck’s portraiture of Chinese life and its engagements with Chinese modernity or modernization came to be seen as elements of Western bias. Rather than viewing Buck as an early prose practitioner of what might best be thought of as a transcultural “vernacular modernism” — what I would argue best describes her strongest work — the Western trend has been to de-authorize her work, much as it was done in China, *as Western*⁷.

Buck became and has remained a problem for world literature precisely because in the 1930s, she entered into world literature by having the fictional world of *The Good Earth* (rural peasantry of China) uncoupled from the Chinese world from which it emerged and also the American world into which it was received. Conn also notes that Buck’s work came at a time when there was a great appetite for serious social fiction about rural life in the United States. He links her work to a series of iconic novels from the 1930s that represent rural family sagas and dramatic reversals of fortune: Erskine Caldwell’s *Tobacco Road*, Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone With The Wind*, and John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath*. For Conn, the power of Buck’s novel might best be understood in terms of its timing and commercial appeal to a Depression-era American readership hungry for such narratives. But whereas those other classics all dealt with iconic American types claimed by the regions of their undeniably American authors (Caldwell’s poor white Georgia, Margaret Mitchell’s Old South plan-

as Charles Lindburgh touring via airplane the devastation. Buck’s husband made an appeal for help, as well [Pleads 1931].

⁷ By “vernacular modernism,” I am importing a term from film studies first used by Miriam Bratu Hansen [Hansen 1999, p. 55], as a reconceptualization of the conventions and motifs of classical cinema of the 1920s–1950s. Hansen writes, “I take the study of modernist aesthetics to encompass cultural practices that both articulated and mediated the experience of modernity, such as the mass-produced and mass-consumed phenomena of fashion, design, advertising, architecture and urban environment, of photography, radio, and cinema. I am referring to this kind of modernism as “vernacular” (and avoiding the ideologically overdetermined term “popular”) because the term vernacular combines the dimension of the quotidian, of everyday usage, with connotations of discourse, idiom, and dialect, with circulation, promiscuity, and translatability. In the latter sense, finally, this essay will also address the vexed issue of Americanism, the question of why and how an aesthetic idiom developed in one country could achieve transnational and global currency, and how this account might add to and modify our understanding of classical cinema” [Hansen 1999, p. 59].

tation, and Steinbeck's Okies and California migrants), Buck's bestseller was the only one to deal with a culture and terrain largely unknown to American readers; rather than conferring upon Buck a kind of American iconicity, her book raised questions of cultural representation. (Wang Lung and O-lan maybe indelible characters but no one refers to Anhui province as "Pearl Buck country," or, aside from a few ardent biographers and literary critics, makes literary pilgrimages as such). Indeed, when Buck first learned she had won the Pulitzer Prize in 1932, she did not think the book was even eligible for the award because it did not deal with American subject matter [Mrs. Buck 1932]. With respect to her ownership of the material, Buck's work has come to have more in common with the films of Robert Flaherty (*Nanook of the North* (1922) and *Man of Aran* (1934)), celebrated in its day as path-breaking but now trapped in tension between ethnographic authority and artistic vision. While in the 1930s Buck came to be seen as an American authority on China, the deeper level of cultural authority conferred upon native authors who represented their own people and experiences was never accorded her. Whereas a Faulkner, for example, could claim both an authority over the culture of old South, the fictional landscape of Yoknapatawpha County and the actual Lafayette County, Mississippi that was its inspiration, Buck, by contrast, was considered, at best, a well-informed outsider, always judged by standards of authenticity in which the fictional becomes more of literary liability than an asset. If one considers the arc of Buck's reputation from the 1930s to the present, a crisis of ethnographic authority comes to haunt its core representational strategies. Buck's departure from China in 1934 created the conditions for the rupture in authority that would come to dog her work.

Her parents' lives as missionaries complicated matters further, reinforcing by association that Buck was in a long line of foreign observers who misrepresented China through ideological lenses of evangelism and Western superiority. Despite Buck's searching biographies of her parents *Fighting Angel* and *The Exile*, despite her frequent and outspoken attacks on Christian missionaries, within China her status as a missionary daughter and wife conferred upon her a perpetual liability. Most reviews never failed to point out this connection, marking her status as outsider. Thus, in the 1930s Buck became an international literary figure without the stable currency of a literary authenticity connected by way of ethnicity or nationality (or, as time passed, direct experience) to her most central subject matter. Furthermore, her rise to international prominence coincided with the historical accident that she was never to return to China; and as such was relegated to being a China-watcher from afar. When William Faulkner privately disparaged

her in a letter as “Mrs. Chinahand Buck,” this was the thrust of his jibe — Buck, far from being a literary luminary, had merely a nonce diplomatic expertise [Conn 1996, p. 210–11, 418]. Cut off from the literary terrain over which she staked the greatest claim to authority, ill at ease with the literary national culture in the United States that propelled her into the non-space of celebrity. In 1930 when Buck was forging her Chinese-American identity, she enjoyed a cultural hybridity that would fade after relocating to the United States; near the end of her life, Buck reported that in 1943 Zhou Enlai invited her to return to China but she declined. “Americans need me more now,” she retrospectively defended her decision, “than the Chinese do” [Buck 1972, p. 169]. Perhaps, more candidly it could be said that she had embraced her American identity (and the wealthy-pundit-activist profile that went with it) and ceded the literary in-between-ness that was the fragile source of her authority. Despite her fame and massive popular readership, in cultural terms, she came to be a literary celebrity without a country.

But, as post-Tiananmen China entered into an era of openness and economic growth, attitudes toward Buck — both East and West have shifted. The upward trend on the n-grams graphs are small indicators of a larger reconsideration of her work has been ongoing. It was in a general sense, a change in attitude that the conference and the restoration of her residence signaled, but what the change means is an open question. The re-inscription of Buck into the official landscape of Nanjing University was one aspect of the shift but the symposium was not all celebration; discussion during the papers was often contested, especially amongst the older scholars who had labored during the period of Buck’s denunciation, but it was also evident among the younger generations attempting to come to terms with questions of Orientalism and identity. Witnessing the at times heated debates among the Chinese scholars indicated that Buck’s shifting reputation was an opportunity to consider anew matters beyond the reputation of one writer (however important), but rather the relations between Chinese and American literature. Was Buck an American writer or a Chinese writer? Should she be considered as part of American or Chinese literature, or some kind of syncretic, trans-Pacific figure?

The answer that I propose in this essay is aligned with the latter suggestion: Buck is indeed a figure of syncretic proportions, one that fuses literary traditions rather than subsumes them. I agree with Richard Jean So that Buck found in family structures and traditions of rural China a form of “natural democracy” that she viewed as distinct from but homologous to American-style democracy; and her analysis of Chinese democratic traditions amounted a genuine “attempt to recon-

struct Western democracy in a trans-Pacific context through a synthesis of U.S. and Chinese cultural concepts” [So 2010, p. 87–88]. But where Jean So locates this conceptual development in Buck’s immersion in ancient Chinese literature, in particular the vernacular Yuan/Ming-era novel, *Shui Hu Zhuan* (in Buck’s translation *All Men Are Brothers* but more commonly rendered as *The Water Margin*), I intend to supplement this new account of Buck by locating her growing convictions about “political equality and human identity in both American and Chinese literary traditions” [So 2010, p. 88] in gender relations and the ways in which her troubled marriage during her years in Nanjing sensitized her to them and altered her literary, political, and cultural sensibilities.

II. Troubled Marriages and Transcultural Figurations

We can extend this line of inquiry to some general considerations of how Buck’s literary formation shaped her transcultural sensibility and contributed to some of the vagaries that have marked her position in literary history. It is notable that the rehabilitation of Buck’s reputation in the West, such as it is, has taken place not through a textual analysis-driven critical practice but through the medium of the critical biography, Peter Conn’s and Hilary Spurling’s being the most sizable efforts and Donn Rogosin’s 1993 PBS documentary for the American Masters Series, *East Wind, West Wind*. Again, we see the problem of Buck running counter to critical proscriptions against “biographism” or biographical approaches in general as a mechanism of instantiating literary capital. The aesthetic difficulties her works present, her insistence on the audience judging the living quality of a work all in Buck’s case literary biography would inevitably be the medium of choice because, first, she led a genuinely extraordinary and important life as an activist, advocate, cultural authority, feminist, and cultural ambassador; secondly, because her career as a writer of imaginative fiction aggressively embraced social realities and a literature of social reality. Indeed, she wrote with a deep commitment to the idea that the novel could be the great vehicle of social representation, consciousness-raising, and attitudinal adjustment. One element implied by Conn’s unusual subtitle, “A Cultural Biography,” was Buck’s commitment to writing a kind of literature that possessed stylistics — whatever their merits or defects — directed toward cultural and ethnographic observation.

While I would not suggest that biographical approaches should be applied to all literary figures, the *a priori* literary critical avoidance of such materials is problematic for certain kinds of authors and an inevitable component of world literature, especially when the ethnicity of the author is readily different from the cultural and linguistic materials in which they deal. In keeping with this axis running from the biographical to the cultural, a prominent feature in Buck's earliest Chinese writings, was a critique of marriage, and the documentation abundantly demonstrates that during her time in Nanjing (1919–34), Buck was unhappily married to John Lossing Buck, caring for her developmentally disabled daughter, Carol, teaching at Nanjing University, and forging the literary career that would make her famous. In her fiction and personal writing from the period she also began to describe a series of marriages from that famously of Wang Lung and O-lan in *The Good Earth* to the many marriages that populate her short fiction during this era to her portraits of her parents. Upon returning to the United States in 1935 Buck's first task was to establish residence in Reno, Nevada so that she could obtain a divorce and marry her publisher John Walsh. Much of her early fiction, materials that would make their way into *East Wind, West Wind* and her story collection, *The First Wife and Other Stories* deal directly and indirectly with cross-cultural questions of marital disaffection and dissatisfaction, sometimes using the plight of Chinese woman as projections of her own concerns, at others finding analogues between Eastern and Western situations. At once deeply personal and fundamentally cultural, questions of inter-personal equality within marriage became Buck's prime engine of social critique. The pressure of her failing marriage shaped Buck's vision of China and has come to shape our vision of Buck and the China she represented.

If all unhappy families are unhappy in their own way, then the filial difficulties of the Bucks of Nanjing consisted of, as the biographical record has shown, emotional isolation, sexual incompatibility, and intellectual competition, under the social and psychological pressure of caring for her overbearing, recently widowed father (who was openly contemptuous of his son-in-law) and a mentally handicapped child whose condition was slow to be realized and even more difficult to understand and cope with⁸. Her early letters to her friends and in-laws

⁸ Buck generally maintained a jaundiced reticence on the subject of her first marriage. In *My Several Worlds*, Buck tersely refers to Lossing Buck as “the man” or most directly as “a Young American,” stating that she has “no interest now in the personal aspects of that marriage, which continued for seventeen years in its dogged fashion” [Buck 1954, p. 129]. On the details of Buck's troubled marriage see [Conn 1996, p. 55–78]; [Spurling 2010, p. 103–256].

indicated a genuine enthusiasm for her marriage and husband but within a few years, things began to turn sour [Spurling 2010, p. 103, 115]. Because much of what we know of the Buck's marriage is generally slanted from Pearl's perspective and told long after it had been dissolved, it is difficult to assess the accuracy of her largely retrospective comments. In some representations, Pearl may have initiated the divorce, or if Nancy Thomson Waller's Nanking memoir is to be believed, Lossing rejected Pearl and it was he "who first asked for a divorce, so as to marry a Chinese woman" [Spurling 2010, p. 86]. The record shows that upon returning to the United States in 1935 Buck's first task was to establish residence in Reno, Nevada so that she could obtain a divorce from Lossing Buck and marry her editor, Richard Walsh. The reason stipulated in court was the generic term "incompatibility" [Conn 1996, p. 62]. In 1941, Lossing married a Chinese woman, Lomay Chang of Shanghai (Obituary Lomay Chang Buck).

Bearing all of this in mind, the record is clear that Pearl's literary ambitions took shape in the crucible of marital discontent⁹. Roughly five years into her marriage she began to write for publication about China and she began to define herself as a writer over and against her increasingly stagnating roles as missionary wife, mother, and assistant to and translator for her agricultural economist husband¹⁰. Though she came in retrospect to regret her choice of a husband, Pearl seems to have married because she was interested in starting a family and starting a new chapter of her life; in the estimation of her mercenary last companion and biographer, Theodore Harris, Pearl had reached the "biological age for marriage" [Harris 1969, 1971, vol 1, p. 112]¹¹. She

⁹ In *My Several Worlds*, Buck asserts that she had decided to be a novelist before the age of ten [Buck 1954, p. 76], and while her literary interests were always in evidence, a case can be made that her literary ambitions properly begin with the death of her mother in 1921 and the memoir she produced (and eventually published as *The Exile* in 1934). Her fictional ambitions derive from roughly 1924 when she began to write and publish stories; see [Conn, 1996, p. 62], and [Spurling, 2010, p. 153–7].

¹⁰ Conn records that Pearl created a makeshift study by "erecting a wooden screen in a corner of the living room" of the Nanking house [Conn 1996, p. 77]. Spurling details the way Pearl's budding imaginative life tended to reinforce the sense of isolation she was experiencing in her marriage [Spurling, 2010, p. 151].

¹¹ In this assessment, Harris is being slightly more suggestive about the sexual aspect of Pearl's marital desire than the author herself who remarked in *My Several Worlds*, "The time had come for marriage as it comes in the life of every man and woman" [Buck 1954, p. 129].

needed to find a way out of the stifling role of dutiful daughter to her formidable parents, and Lossing was one of the few eligible non-ordained men in her missionary circle at the time [Conn 1996, p. 59–60].

Hilary Spurling details with abundant testimony the extent to which Pearl and Lossing were mismatched, how he wasn't her type at all and hadn't a literary bone in his body [Spurling 2010, p. 153–4]. Most sources agree that Buck became a writer despite her husband's indifference, though with some variance of opinion on this matter. Peter Conn suggests that Lossing gave Pearl no encouragement with her writing [Conn 1996, p. 62]; Spurling suggest that Lossing's enthusiasm for her work "was genuine but limited" [Spurling 2010, p. 152]. Whichever the case, Buck sensed that writing could be a field of her own, even before she had a room of her own, properly speaking, in which to write. It is also clear, given that she left Lossing for her editor, Richard Walsh that Pearl sought in her second husband the literariness the first had lacked.

These sorts of gaps in marital communication, immediately surface in Buck's early work — not merely by transference to Chinese protagonists — but transmogrified by Occidentalism, the disruptive embrace of Western culture by influential segments of Chinese culture that predominated the discourse of the Nationalist era¹². When the eponymous "first wife" in Buck's early short story realizes her ten-year marriage to her husband, Yuan, is in trouble she scarcely has any means of addressing the problem, much less redressing it. His seven-year hiatus from his marriage being educated in Western military techniques has altered him, Occidentalized him, and ruptured his relations with the hide-bound traditions of his wife and parents. The story amounts to a confrontation by means of virtual non-confrontation. By exploiting the gender codes of traditional Confucian culture, the Westernized Chinese husband's means of avoiding the matter are virtually absolute (chiefly by carousing until all hours of the night with his schoolmates and quickly removing himself to the capital, and communicating with his father in writing, precluding his illiterate wife's having any direct knowledge of his feelings).

The first wife, destined for replacement, as the stories title tells us, is reduced (though hardly reduced because she has always lived this way) to determining her marital estrangement symptomatically. This subject position of the dutiful Chinese wife, daughter-in-law to a provincial Confucius-reading tea merchant and his devoted, temple-going wife, provides Buck with the engine of her trans-cultural narra-

¹² In this context Occidentalism is intended as an ironic reversal of Said's Orientalism, for within China this phenomenon was readily apparent.

tive critique, an ethnography of the Chinese family as it experiences the impact of Westernization from within. The symptoms she perceives are sartorial (the husband has traded his Chinese gown for sober-colored presumably English twill); chirographic (he has lost his dexterity with the Chinese calligraphic brush and prefers the western stylus); dietary (he has taken to drinking tea in the afternoon in the English manner instead of the morning); gendered (he forbids his daughters feet from being bound); and educational (he insists that his son be schooled in Western works and ignore the Four Books which his father prizes as the foundation of wisdom).

These last two symptoms inflict the most pain and sorrow on the household and are perhaps the most deeply ironized for the Western reader: footbinding, which was habitually associated by Western observers — especially missionaries — with barbaric ritualized female suffering for beauty and a form of bondage both practically and symbolically, is presented from the other end of the telescope, as it were. The first wife weeps for the unbound foot of her daughter, consigning her, she presumes, to spinsterhood and destitution. Yuan's preference for Western educational models and dismissal of Confucian literature as nothing more than antiquated curiosities genuinely shocks his father, especially because he cannot fathom that his son would not want to replicate the very traditions in which he was educated.

Here, Buck's ethnography deepens into more broadly cultural and trans-cultural patterns. In Buck's view, Confucian precepts fostered delicate manners, a reverence for education among males, and a generally non-militaristic society.

Westernization precipitated a coarsening of manners, a rejection of traditional learning, and a tendency toward militarism. For Buck, marital discord could be symptoms of all of this cultural foment, and the first wife subject for replacement because she is obsolete (she cannot fulfill the role of Yuan's wife in an Occidentalized Chinese power couple).

When "A Chinese Woman Speaks" in the opening of *East Wind, West Wind*, Buck's first novel, Kwei-lan, like the first wife, speaks of her troubled marriage. The problem might be described as the quintessential predicament/complaint of the 1920s — East or West — alienation, and more particularly an alienation born of Western modernity. As the title "A Chinese Woman Speaks" suggests the woman is meant to be representative, as if she were the "middle kingdom" itself replicating its encounters with the West. Like the first wife, Buck's Chinese woman meticulously describes a life of cloistered insularity, steeped in Confucian precepts she is not permitted to read for herself and a gauntlet of strict models of sanctioned female behavior — codes

of conduct and beauty rigorously designed to reinforce that sense of female isolation — only to confront the insoluble problem of her newly Occidentalized husband, who has been studying Western medicine.

As with “The First Wife” similar coarsening of interaction between the sexes is registered symptomatically. The native Chinese idiom of romantic love of the moon on Lotus Lake through which a Chinese woman might express with delicate diffidence her sexual interest retains no alchemy and is rebuffed with gruff indifference. Her alienation could not be more literal: “Can it be,” she wonders, “that I am married to a foreigner?” And Buck adds another even more radical layer to the depth of alienation not explicitly present in “The First Wife” (perhaps because Western medical perception is rooted in a fundamentally different conception of the body). Kwei-lan’s husband’s aesthetic perception has been re-oriented, reprogrammed. “I am married a bare month,” Kwei-lan concludes in desperation, “and I am not beautiful in his eyes” [Buck 1933, p. 6].

In these early Chinese fictions, a fundamental pattern of storytelling emerges in which a process of masculine-driven Occidentalism touches the inner feminine core of the Chinese family. From Buck’s point of view, this was a central impact of the “cultural” revolution that transformed China as the *Q’ing* dynasty crumbled and collapsed and the nationalist era fitfully emerged. The figure of Sun-Yat Sen and his program of modernization embodied this movement for Buck. For many of Buck’s formative years, but especially while residing in Nanjing, she observed generations transformed by Occidentalism. In *My Several Worlds*, she summarizes this process.

Meanwhile young Chinese, many of them the husbands of my friends or even my own students, were trying their best to create the new China. Unfortunately, instead of beginning with reality, and this was to know and understand what they had in their own people upon which to build, they tried to apply Western ideas cold. For example, they began to believe in the necessity of militarism... Others felt that the strength of the West lay in its standards of law [Buck 1954, p. 124].

Part of this critique flows from Buck’s conviction that Chinese social value — its most fundamental virtues — rest with the common people, the agricultural and mercantile base, expressed in their clan and family structures, and that those structures were in many respects democratic (though not American-style democracy) in nature and more or less self-governing. For Buck, the virtues of China flowed neither from the Imperial court, nor from the classically schooled intelligentsia but from the good earth itself, from the ordinary people. We learn from Buck that the adage that “the government that governs best, governs least,” is not only attributable to American revolutionaries like

Tom Paine or the civil disobedience of Henry David Thoreau, but is also indigenous to China. Toward this end, Buck educes a Chinese folk song (à la Alan Lomax), which she renders:

*When the sun rises I work; When the sun sets I rest.
I dig the well to drink; I plow the field to eat.
What has the emperor to do with me.* [Buck 1954, p. 122].

It followed, in Buck's analysis, that Sun Yat-Sen and the Nationalists that followed him (chiefly Chang Kai-shek) ignored this sociological/ethnographic given at their peril and sought impose superstructural republican forms of government while turning away from or undermining the family/clan structures that she viewed as more fundamental. They imitated Western models. This no doubt was the animus behind Buck's remark about Sun Yat-Sen's funeral noting the multitudes that did not attend. (The communists in her estimation were even more virulent as they sought to destroy the filial institutions of China.) Indeed, Buck tended to see the literary output of China as suffering from the same Nationalist/modernizing malaise — it suffered from slavish imitation of Western models or open hostility to the ordinary people. The deepest irony in Buck's critique is that in criticizing Westernization she located an analog to American democratic culture.

Indeed, Buck tended to see the literary output of China as suffering from the same Nationalist/modernizing malaise — it suffered from slavish imitation of Western models or open hostility to the ordinary people. As Yao Junwei has noted, Buck's analysis of the development of the Chinese novel hinged upon its origins in popular storytelling outside the circles of the scholarly elite or the intelligentsia [Yao 2012, p. 4]. "It [The vernacular Chinese novel] grew as it liked," Buck explained in her 1938 Nobel acceptance speech, "out of its own soil, the common people, nurtured by that heartiest of sunshine, popular approval, and untouched by the cold and frosty winds of scholar's art" [qtd. in Lovell 2006, p. 92]. Such a defense of the Chinese novel is simultaneously an argument for a kind of popular, even populist literature and a signal of the nature of Buck's own literary practice and ambition. In this sense Buck's literary politics are another example of the ways in which Buck found exemplars of Chinese culture that were indigenous artifacts that could serve her literary purposes in occidental contexts. Buck's investment in China is both an act of cultural-historical investigation and recuperation and an expression of her own cultural needs. She is not merely projecting her emotional needs on to Chinese culture but actually exploring the Chinese novel and presenting it to a Western audience, but at the same time she is presenting it

through her own political and emotional lens. It is an act of translation, much like her translation of the classic Chinese novel *Shui Hu Zhuan* (*The Water Margin*), which she rendered *All Men are Brothers*. The themes of outlawry, tension between the populace and the imperial court, and universal brotherhood are undoubtedly part of the cultural history that the novel presents, the emphasis part of Buck's particular political and cultural perspective.

In this way, Buck's troubled marriage and her perceived dual culturally mixed identity as a Chinese-American sensitized her to these cultural potentials.

It was her literary gift to imagine and give voice to the most insulated element of the Chinese family structure — the unlettered, traditionally silent, foot-bound wife and mother in the act of coming to terms with the alienating revolutionary forces of occidentalization and modernization. A posthumously published (1975) short story, "Until Tomorrow: China — 1930s" affords the most intimate fictionalized glimpse of Buck in the moment of her own marital disintegration.

The story describes a love triangle in which Anne Page, a married "white woman" whose stolid, uncomprehending, husband Henry is away, is asked by her lover, Rodney, to leave her husband. Anne's amah, however, interrupts Rodney's appeal, giving Anne time to reflect and postponing the marital crisis, "until tomorrow" [Buck 1975, p. 3–23]. The "white woman" and her "brown" Chinese servant engage in a discussion of the marital position of women. "It is the same with you as with me" the Amah opines. "Are we women not all alike?" [Buck 1975, p. 22]. While the Chinese woman goes on to detail the differences (the beatings, the cursing, the sexual humiliations that Chinese wives routinely endured), she asserts a fundamental sameness with respect to men (a position of servitude and service) that Western and Chinese women share. As such, "Until Tomorrow" forged a claim to a comparative history of women upon which Buck shaped her transcultural literary critique and it would also form the basis of the activism that came to dominate her American career. Buck's sense of isolation in her marriage seems to permeate her fictive worlds and the sexual segregation found in traditional Chinese families found many analogues in Buck's missionary upbringing and Western education. In *The Time is Noon*, Buck's most scathing assessment of her family and marriage, the thinly-veiled surrogate for Pearl has taken all the honors at school (as did Pearl Sydensicker at Randolph-Macon College and Cornell University) and there is talk of her being famous, to which one naysayer replies, "Shucks, somebody'll marry her long before that! She'll have babies instead, and a sight better, too" [Buck 1966, p. 34]. Indeed, in *East Wind: West Wind*, Buck positions the now voluble

Chinese Woman as speaking to an indigenous-alien figure she addresses repeatedly as “my sister.” The cumulative effect of the phrase is Grimke-esque, as if to say with the nineteenth-century American feminist, “Thine in the bonds of womanhood”.

In sedimentary form, the underlying social vision found in Buck’s early writing manifests itself in *The Good Earth*, a novel that contains a durable but nonetheless troubled and faithless marriage between Wang Lung and O-lan. Rather than training that vision on occidental incursions of the kind found in *East Wind, West Wind*, the focus is directed toward questions of gender difference under the pressures of social mobility, modernization, generational discontent, famine and political unrest. Despite the shift in focus, an abiding preoccupation with marital alienation with a particular emphasis on forms of humiliation propels the narrative and its mechanisms of social critique, and because that project was for Buck fundamentally comparative (East/West), personal and transpersonal, the language and emplotment of the novel retains those elements. Through the lens of marriage, *The Good Earth* imagines compatibility between the indigenous populism of Buck’s Chinese peasantry and its American analogue, and furthermore, the record indicates that this vision was fashioned out of symbiotic competition with her husband over the culture, meaning, power and fate of rural China. Despite the growing gulf in their marital relationship there was always a curious connection between Lossing Buck’s work and Pearl’s fictional Chinese world. Indeed, the inspiration *The Good Earth*, derived in part from her experience with Lossing Buck on his survey of Chinese farmers living in the rural, central Yangzi province of Anhui, though most scholars think of them as separate entities. “It is an irony (and misfortune) that John Lossing Buck and Pearl did not take more time to read each other’s researches,” Spence has remarked. “For Lossing Buck’s vast compendia of rural data, assembled from countless Nanjing University research student field trips, could have served as a kind of emotional circuit-breaker for Pearl’s outpourings, and Pearl’s emotions could have brought the healing force of passion to John Lossing Buck’s cautious academic prose” (Question).

In fact, there is evidence that on her part Pearl scrutinized Lossing Buck’s landmark study *Chinese Farm Economy* (1930) for it not only acknowledges Pearl’s literary talents (“For editing I am greatly indebted to my wife”, he writes.) it contains whole sections on customs and mores of Chinese farm culture [Buck John 1930, p. viii]. *Chinese Farm Economy*’s explanations for greater prevalence of males in these rural communities take it into the complexities of Chinese family structures and mores touching on issues of suicide, female infanticide,

and foster daughter-in-laws. In one revealing passage, the draining of the countryside of young women is attributed to “the demand for girls in big cities as slave girls, concubines, prostitutes, and sing-song girls” [Buck John 1930, p. 346], hinting at the salient social conditions that would animate a central sub-plot of *The Good Earth*, in which Wang Lung, after acquiring wealth and land, takes a prostitute from the city of Suzhou with whom he is sexually obsessed, Lotus, as a concubine into his household. Where *Chinese Farm Economy* provides an account of a broad spectrum of social phenomena, *The Good Earth* transforms these materials into a psycho-social criticism. Wang Lung’s sexual preoccupation leads to the kind of marital crisis one finds in the earlier texts, instead of wearing western garb, he cuts off his queue and begins to wash regularly with exotic soaps. “You have cut off your life!” O-lan protests at the barbering [Buck 1931, p. 159]. In the face of all his bathing, she warns: “You will die with all this washing!”

As George Bernard Shaw’s *Pygmalion* deploys Eliza Doolittle’s objections to bathing as a means to expose hygienic difference along class lines [Shaw 2003, p. 35–6], Buck stages Wang Lung’s sexual forays as a problem of urban modernity, as disruptive force within the rural Chinese family across homologously constructed hygienic lines. Changes in Wang Lung’s hygiene signal a fundamental shift in mentality away from traditional filial-pietistic mores toward the urban and the modern.

Chinese Farm Economy begins with a striking epigraph from the *Xiao Jing*, which is rendered in Lossing Buck’s study as the “*Book of Filial Piety*” (probably translated by Pearl):

Work according to the seasons, Suit crops to soils for profit, Guard behavior, spend wisely, Nurture Parents with honor.

[Buck John 1930, p. vi].

While the content of the agricultural study is firmly rooted in Lossing Buck’s statistical economic perspective, this quotation, which refers to Confucian directives for the common people, suggests that Lossing Buck was not blind to the cultural mores and beliefs undergirding the entire system. As a gesture, it establishes a connection between Chinese agricultural practices and Chinese family values, indicating that the farm economies rigorously tabulated in chart after chart in his study are rooted in and expressions of filial-pietistic Confucian precepts — precisely the kind of ethnographic insight that animates Pearl Buck’s Chinese fictions¹³.

¹³ Lossing’s acknowledgment of Pearl’s deceased brother Edgar Sydenstricker in his other major study, *Land Utilization in China* (1937), is also an indication of Pearl’s family’s ongoing involvement in Lossing’s project even after the marriage

Thus in the opening of *The Good Earth*, when Wang Lung makes the case to his skeptical father for the relative hygienic extravagance on his wedding day of a warm and rather thorough bath (by rural Chinese standards), Pearl Buck presents the scene as an expression of generational tension within a farm economy (the allocation of precious resources, such as firewood, away from the elder's needs (treating a regular cough) for the purposes of intimate hygiene as prelude to marriage and mating). While compellingly realized within the fictional idiom of *The Good Earth*, it is the kind of dilemma implicit in the research found in *Chinese Farm Economy*.

Perhaps *The Good Earth*'s connections to *Chinese Farm Economy* would be more obvious were it not for Buck's authorial tone, but it is rather the redirection of its attention to marriage and its emotionally charged filial tensions, and the dynamic roles that men and women played within rural Chinese farm economies and Chinese society in general that activate the novel's transcultural vision. For Spence, the question of Pearl Buck comes down to whether or not her writings had "really contributed to helping or understanding China? Or had her critics been at least partly right all along, and had Pearl — like so many others — been using the idea of China for her own purposes" (Question)? This question is premised on a set of oppositions of emotion vs. fact, imagination vs. reality, and American bestsellerdom vs. Chinese history, in which Spence cautiously finds Buck wanting: more imaginative emotional projection and unwarranted emotionality associated with commercial fiction than authentic record, more squalor and sentiment à la Dickens (whom Buck re-read every year) than the complex skein of memories à la Proust (from whom Buck takes the epigraph to *The Good Earth*)¹⁴. I want to suggest that Spence's either/or conception of Buck should be thought of as and/both. The emotional projections that readers encounter in her work were inflected with a cogent understanding of Chinese social reality and her social vision was fused with her imaginative projections. Furthermore, the literary template for *The Good Earth* points more directly toward *Shui Hu Zhuan* than *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

had ended. Buck was generally supportive of Lossing's work. In a letter to her close friend Emma Edmunds White from the early 1930s, Stirling records Pearl's enthusiasm for Lossing's work amid the furor over *The Good Earth* [Stirling 1983, p. 108].

¹⁴ Buck's epigraph alludes to the power of the fictive Vinteuil's Sonata in *Swann's Way*. As such, it functions obliquely as a statement of artistic integrity presented in the face of received inspiration; effectively it serves as a statement of her relationship to her source material.

The fictional surrogacy that can be found throughout Buck's oeuvre existed in her own isolation. Pearl and Lossing were not so much married as collaborating on similar projects. It is hardly an accident that troubled wives and mothers-in-law proliferate in Buck's fiction. Buck observed how through the filial structures of the Chinese family a host of surrogates emerge. Amah's forge intimacies with children often beyond the scope of parental affection, wives are so wholly absorbed into their husband's households intensifying (for good or for ill) mother-in-law/daughter relations. Buck's fictional universe proliferates extended families. When she resettled in the United States, she devoted a good portion of her energies to building and raising her own extended family through Welcome House and Pearl S. Buck International often by flying in the face of the conventions of American societal norms [Yoder 2008].

Perhaps, the clearest distillation of what troubled Buck about her own marriages and those she saw in her China days can be glimpsed in the People's Book Club edition of *Portrait of a Marriage* (1941), one of Buck's non-Chinese romances with a socially inflected premise in which an urbane sophisticated painter makes a successful marriage to an attractive but simple country girl, offers the following epigraph:

What makes a happy marriage? It is a question which all men and women ask one another. Men and women try to find the answer, for their own marriages. They try and they fail: they try and they succeed. Sometimes the most apparently mismatched couples achieve the most happy marriages. The answer is to be found, I think, in the mutual discovery, by two who marry, of the deepest need of the other's personality, and the satisfaction of that need. The satisfaction must of course be mutual. A happy marriage cannot be built upon sacrifice. Not even upon willingness. It must be built upon joy. [Buck 1941 n.p.]

Written by Buck in 1940–1, five years beyond her divorce from Lossing Buck, five years into her somewhat happier marriage to Richard Walsh, this novelistic thesis propounded by Buck might reasonably be construed as an expression of a way in which her fictions arrive at a transcultural social vision that runs throughout her work: the insistence that marriage cannot be based upon sacrifice. Some readers of a *Portrait of Marriage* may wonder at the idea that the marriage depicted does not involve sacrifice — given that the suave artist allows his career to molder but even that seems to be in the direction of his desire. Such aporia underscore the ways in which Buck's marital critique was directed at female sacrifice.

Returning to *The Good Earth*, through these lenses we can read it as a sustained triangulation of concerns and thematics derived from

agrarian economics, marital drama, and the amalgamation of Western popular forms with the vernacular Chinese novel. In the opening scene from *The Good Earth*, the reader enters into traditional Chinese culture in a moment of incipient modernization (Wang Lung's family history will be traced through the trilogy as it parallels the history of China's modernization), and we enter it through the lens of hygiene. Wang Lung's generational ambition is revealed in a moment of *weisheng* ("the guarding of life") or a mixture of traditional hygiene and what seems to be a personal accommodation with modern cleanliness¹⁵. By insisting on a bath when none was called for in the traditional rituals of the Chinese groom — Buck offers in Wang Lung a figure of traditional chastity and modern (perhaps slightly westernized) personal cleanliness, and, as indicated above, this discourse shapes the decline of the marriage as Wang Lung becomes more entangled with Lotus and engrossed with sex¹⁶.

Furthermore, what preoccupies Wang Lung, as he prepares his body to be seen by a woman, is the way in which his prospective wife even before we learn her name (O-lan) will relieve him of all the filial-pietistic duties that have been his burden in the service of his father. Marriage for Wang Lung will be an escape from these responsibilities, the power of a husband to transfer his duties as an only son to a new daughter-in-law. In Wang Lung, we see Buck expressing both a very real social reality for Chinese husbands and wives while simultaneously expressing in a veiled way what must have been one of her own mo-

¹⁵ In an oblique way, Buck's forays into the discourse of Chinese hygiene or *weisheng* exemplify what historian Ruth Rogaski has rendered as the "hygienic modernity" [Rogaski 2004, p. 1–3] that China underwent from the late *Q'ing* period through the twentieth century. Rogaski explores the complex shifting concept as it is co-opted by various state apparatuses as they attempted to modernize China in the late 19th and 20th centuries.

¹⁶ As much as Wang Lung might have been based on actual Chinese farmers that Buck encountered it is equally important to bear in mind that he also is a projection of Buck's own marital concerns on to Chinese culture. Buck was well aware of the differences in bathing habits and other hygienic matters that existed between Americans and Chinese. Buck's Chinese nurse growing up who shares Wang Lung's name, Amah Wang, had frequently imparted different hygienic and cultural perspectives to young Pearl. For example, in a gleefully gruesome discussion of the differences between Chinese and white bodies, she told the young Pearl that white flesh smelled and tasted different from Chinese flesh because "you wash yourselves so much" [Harris 1969, 1971, vol. 1, p. 36]. He also shares the name of M.H. Lung, the man who assisted Buck in translating *Shui Hu Zhuan* and *Lung Jigan*, the name of a minor warlord who led a massacre in Anhui Province in 1918, which Buck witnessed [Conn 1996, p. 66–7].

tives for marriage, one common to rural American social life as well: to alter her own filial responsibilities. Thus, with a kind of powerful sociological projection that would mark her literary imagination, a simple scene of bathing becomes a space in which Buck was able to project her own marital concerns on to both Wang Lung and O-lan.

Part of the unprecedented success of *The Good Earth* derived from the compatibility between the indigenous agrarian populism of Buck's Chinese peasantry and its American analogue. One could argue, indeed critics have argued, that American orientalism had something to do with the tidal wave of enthusiasm engendered by *The Good Earth*. It is plausible that the American public could accept the naturalism of Buck's Anhui peasants because theirs was a fundamentally alien poverty for which the readership felt little dehumanization. Knowing next to nothing about Chinese life besides the crudest stereotypes the novel appeared to provide quite the opposite — a powerfully, urgently humane portraiture. But part of the power of that reaction might be attributable to the fact that American readers were not particularly sensitive to the societal and literary tensions that would precipitate the negative or lukewarm reception of the novel in China in the 1930s.

Buck originated a viable literary example of comparative democracy. It is indeed paradoxical that *The Good Earth* simultaneously opened American eyes to Chinese culture and paved the way for a populist American discourse on rural plight that would lead to the social realist/documentary classics of Depression-era America: Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*; Pere Lorentz's *The Plow that Broke the Plains* and *The River*; Dorothea Lange's W.P.A. photography (most famously *Migrant Mother*); and James Agee's and Walker Evans's *Let us Now Praise Famous Men*. As William Stott has observed, there was "documentary motive" that dominated much of the social literature of the 1930s and Buck's *The Good Earth* was an unacknowledged harbinger of this movement, not in that it reflected a leftist doctrine of much of this proletarian literature but in that it proffered a populist vision of China that struck American readers as an authentic human document of Chinese agrarian experience [Stott 1986, p. 67–73].

As aware as Buck was of the impulse toward modernization in China (with all of its emphasis on newness) she was equally aware of the modernization going on in the West, especially in the United States. When she wrote *The Good Earth* she was not fully cognizant of the ways in which her *Q'ing* farmers would resonate with an American public that had been shedding its rural past and urbanizing with an unprecedented intensity. By the mid-1930s, however, writing in America, Buck was beginning to make this comparison more explicit having

arrived at her intuition in China. In this connection it is worth pointing out that *A House Divided*, the third installment in the trilogy saga of Wang Lung and O-lan's family, carrying the story forward into the Nationalist era, takes its title from then congressman Abraham Lincoln's famous speech about the forces that would drive the American republic toward civil war. By the end of the trilogy she was willing to more freely analogize between the crisis that led to the American Civil War and the post-*Q'ing* nationalist era. Furthermore, a house divided might more aptly be considered a household divided in the ways that Buck had been articulating since she ventured upon a career in fiction, the divisions between men and women; the old road and the new road; Confucianism and Occidentalism.

The September, 1944 foreword to the Modern Library edition of *The Good Earth* retroactively inserts these concerns into the novel's scene of composition. Buck describes the Nanjing study where, in 1930, she wrote the book as a "peaceful attic room" whose low windows looked out "to Sun Yat-sen's marble tomb, gleaming white upon the purple flanks of a mountain"; the people "of whom I wrote" were driven by famine from their native Anhui province to the wealthy Southern city where Buck had lived. She then points out that — in the present of World War II — the room is under Japanese occupation, and with the Nanking massacre much on her mind, she conjures up the privations she had detailed in *Dragon Seed*. "Who knows," she wonders with a sense of shared personal — even sexual — violation, "what alien acts that attic room has seen!" One senses Buck in the United States observing the events in China with an expatriate anguish, seeking to triangulate her old relationships to her life and the materials out of which she produced the novel. She constructs a triangle between the farmers of Anhui, the tomb of Sun Yat-sen and her writing desk, the imaginative structure upon which her work was founded. "Of only one thing I am sure — that the people of *The Good Earth* live on... as faithful as ever to the land they love... If these years of war have been of any use to mankind," she concluded with a transcultural flourish of populist patriotism, it would be to demonstrate "the splendid and heroic qualities of the plain Chinese people" [Buck 1944, Foreword].

III. Paul Revere in China

The 1944 Foreword to *The Good Earth* positions the novel in a transcultural space of world literature caught up in global conflagration and redeployed in that capacity. It is analogous to the space Buck carved for *All Men are Brothers* when her preface to her 1933 transla-

tion. “Today the newest and most extreme party in China, the Communist,” Buck wrote, “has taken the ‘Shui Hu Chuan’ and issued an edition with a preface by a leading Communist [Mao Zedong], who calls it the first Communist literature of China, as suitable to this day as to the day it was written” [Buck 1937b, p.xix]. For Buck, the revolutionary potential of world literature was bound up in such literary-cultural intersections — *All Men are Brothers* was intended revolutionize the West as much as the East¹⁷. Like *The Good Earth*, her translation has been praised and come in for criticism for its literal style as being “archaic” [Irwin 1953, p. 97]. If the West has come to see Buck’s interventions as part of the past, it may be for the Chinese to take up the revolutionary and transcultural aspects of her work, especially as economic development in China makes the agrarian world of *The Good Earth* appear recessional. If the charges of pandering to the popular taste and indulging in melodrama has been leveled at Buck (she appears to be a figure not unlike Harriet Beecher Stowe, in this respect), it appears to be that in those aesthetically challenging moments that we can paradoxically glimpse her transcultural power. While one might not automatically endorse questionable aesthetics with transformative politics, in Buck’s case tensions in her work often point precisely in that direction.

A case in point: Most of the contemporary critical reception of *Dragon Seed* (1942), a novel about the Nanking Massacre and the Sino-Japanese war of the 1930s, found the book aesthetically as compelling as *The Good Earth* until the character of Mayli is introduced. Ralph Thompson in the *New York Times* praised the fidelity and skill of Buck’s representation until “Mrs. Buck unaccountably discovers and exotic and complicated lady named Mayli, and ... well what happens the reader will see for himself” [Thompson 1942, p. 15]. This view of the book has become something of a critical piety reprised in the literature. But the interlude with Mayli (who is modeled on Soong Mei-ling, the influential wife of Chiang Kai-Shek) hinges on much more than mere revolutionary romance or even Buck’s desire to influence the Roosevelt administration’s policy toward the Chinese nationalist¹⁸. It deals with questions of transcultural Sino-American literary

¹⁷ Buck’s commitment to the project of *Shui Hu Zhuan* sympathized with the attempt of the Communist’s to elevate the novel to the category of important literature, a position that she held throughout her life, despite her conflicts with them. See, for example, her remarks on the novel in her 1972 recollections in *China Past and Present* [Buck 1972, p. 80].

¹⁸ The fullest treatment of Buck’s attempts to influence FDR and the U.S. Congress and her evolving critical attitude to Chiang Kai-Shek and Soong Mei-

relations in a time of war and revolution that preoccupied Buck and concern us here. In a pivotal exchange, Mayli questions the curriculum of a school that has the students read Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's chestnut of recitation days, "Paul Revere's Ride."

"Why have they had such a stupid assignment?" Mayli demanded. "In these days, in these times, in a war infinitely greater than any that has ever been fought for freedom, here in her own country, why should a Chinese girl learn by heart 'Paul Revere's Ride'?" [Buck 1942, p. 322]

Why indeed? In this scene, Buck poses via Mayli a question fundamental to world literary study and the fate of her own work: at what moments do literary works lose or take on a transcultural urgency? Like Burkean "equipment for living," Buck is "naming the situation" in which this kind of American literature might be challenged in its social or sociological relevance.

If the *Times* reviewer Thompson thought it improbable that a sophisticated and worldly figure like Mayli might take up with a humble peasant, then we need to recognize the transcultural gambit underlying Buck's imaginative provocation. The Mayli episode is staged not merely to bring the Mme. Chiang Kai-shek figure closer to the peasantry but to do it in a way that also raises questions of the role of American literature within a nationalized Chinese culture at war. It is also an allegory of the relationship of Buck's own literary fate. As Mayli contemplates the illiterate farmboy revolutionary she ultimately unites with, she wonders, with a rueful irony just what the role of world literary education is in a time of revolution. "Perhaps Paul Revere was an ignorant man too," she thought" [Buck 1942, p. 318].

If the vector of transculturation in *Dragon Seed* runs in the direction from the United States toward China, it is important to recall that Buck with her translation of *Shui Hu Chuan* had already imagined and created the medium of exchange running in the other direction, from China to the United States. In the mark of this fusion she signed the preface to her translation "Nanking — New York, 1933" [Buck 1937b, p. xix]. It is in that global space between Nanking and New York, that new social paths might emerge, however extravagant or improbable, Buck imagined that literature might be the engine of new marriages between the agrarian vernacular and the cultivated revolutionary.

ling, who famously addressed a joint session of Congress in February 1943, see [Conn 269–76].

REFERENCES

- [Buck John 1930] — Buck, John Lossing. *Chinese Farm Economy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930.
- [Buck 1937a] — Buck, Pearl S. *A House Divided*. New York: John Day & Co., 1937.
- [Buck 1941] — Buck, Pearl S. *A Portrait of a Marriage*. Chicago: People's Book Club, 1941.
- [Buck 1937b] — Buck, Pearl S. *All Men Are Brothers*. New York: John Day & Co., 1937.
- [Buck 1972] — Buck, Pearl S. *China Past and Present*. New York: John Day & Co., 1972.
- [Buck 1939] — Buck, Pearl S. *The Chinese Novel*. New York: John Day & Co., 1939.
- [Buck 1942] — Buck, Pearl S. *The Dragon Seed*. New York: John Day & Co., 1942.
- [Buck 1975] — Buck, Pearl S. *East and West*. New York: John Day, 1975.
- [Buck 1930] — Buck, Pearl S. *East Wind, West Wind*. New York: John Day & Co., 1930.
- [Buck 1933] — Buck, Pearl S. *The First Wife and Other Stories*. New York: John Day & Co., 1933.
- [Buck 1931] — Buck, Pearl S. *The Good Earth*. New York: John Day & Co., 1931.
- [Buck 1944] — Buck, Pearl S. *The Good Earth*. New York: The Modern Library, 1944.
- [Buck 1938] — Buck, Pearl S. *The Mother*. New York: John Day & Co., 1938.
- [Buck 1954] — Buck, Pearl S. *My Several Worlds*. New York: John Day & Co., 1954.
- [Buck 1966] — Buck, Pearl S. *The Time is Noon*. New York: John Day & Co., 1966.
- [Cavett] — Cavett, Dick. *Theater Talk: Hellman vs. McCarthy*. Online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5OfKEjABGGY> Accessed 03/05/14).
- [Chin 1991a] — Chin, Frank. *Donald Duk: A Novel*. Minneapolis: Coffee House; 1991.
- [Chin 1991b] — Chin, Frank. "Ornamental Orientals." *Los Angeles Times* (15 Dec. 1991, OpEd sec.). Web. 21 Aug. 2014. Online at <http://articles.latimes.com/1991-12-15/books/bk-598_1_chinese-morality-frank-chin-art-seidenbaum-award>.
- [Christie 2010] — Christie, Stuart. "The Anachronistic Novel: Reading Pearl Buck Alongside Franco Moretti." *Literature Compass*. 7.12 (2010): 1089–1100.
- [Conn 1996] — Conn, Peter. *Pearl S. Buck: A Cultural Biography*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- [Conn 2012] — Conn, Peter. "What the Remarkable Legacy of Pearl Buck Still Means for China." *The Atlantic*. Aug. 9, 2012. Online at <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/08/what-the-remarkable-legacy-of-pearl-buck-still-means-for-china/260918/>
- [Doyle 1965] — Doyle, Paul A. *Pearl S. Buck*. Revised/Expanded ed. New York: Twayne, 1965.

[Gao, 2000] — Gao, Xiongya. *Pearl S. Buck's Chinese Women Characters*. Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 2000.

[Harris 1969, 1971] — Harris, Theodore S. *Pearl S. Buck: A Biography*. 2 Vols. New York: John Day & Co., 1969, 1971.

[Haiping 1994] — Haiping, Liu. "Pearl S. Buck's Reception in China Reconsidered," in Elizabeth Lipscomb et al., eds. *The Several Worlds of Pearl S. Buck*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1994: 55–67.

[Hansen 1999] — Hansen, Miriam Bratu. "The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism." *Modernism/Modernity* 6.2 (1999): 59–77.

[Hayot 2011] — Hayot, Eric. "On Literary Worlds." *Modern Language Quarterly* 72:2 (2011): 129–161.

[Irwin 1953] — Irwin, Richard Gregg. *The Evolution of a Chinese Novel: Shui Hu Chuan*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953.

[Kang-hu 1933] — Kang-hu, Kiang. "A Chinese Scholar's View of Mrs. Buck's Novels". *New York Times* (January 15, 1933):14.

[Lovell 2006] — Lovell, Julia. *The Politics of Cultural Capital: China's Quest for a Nobel Prize in Literature*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.

[Michel et al. 2011] — Michel, Jean-Baptiste*, Yuan Kui Shen, Aviva Presser Aiden, Adrian Veres, Matthew K. Gray, William Brockman, The Google Books Team, Joseph P. Pickett, Dale Hoiberg, Dan Clancy, Peter Norvig, Jon Orwant, Steven Pinker, Martin A. Nowak, and Erez Lieberman Aiden*. Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books. *Science*. 14 January 2011 (331): 176–82.

[Mrs. Buck 1932] — N.a. "Mrs. Buck Tells of Astonishment at Being Awarded Pulitzer Prize for Literature". *The China Press*. (July 7, 1932): A13.

[A Chinese Fan of Pearl S. Buck 2010] — N.a. "A Chinese Fan of Pearl Buck Returns the Favor" NPR: *All Things Considered* (7 April 2010). Online at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=125682489>

[Lewis 1931] — N.a. "Lewis Takes a Fling at Authors of the '90s." *New York Times* (October 29, 1931): 21.

[Obituary 2012] — N.a. "Obituary: Lomay Chang Buck" *Poughkeepsie Journal* (March 7, 2012).

[Phelps 1931] — N.a. "Phelps of Yale Lists 10 Books as 'of the Best of the Year'" *New York Times* (27 Jan. 1932, News sec.): 19.

[Pleads 1931] — N.a. "PLEADS FOR FLOOD VICTIMS.: J.L. Buck, Husband of Writer, Calls Situation in China Ghastly." *New York Times* (12 Nov. 1931, News sec.): 8.

[Rogaski 2004] — Rogaski, Ruth. *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

[Shaw 2003] — Shaw, George Bernard. *Pygmalion*. New York: Penguin USA, 2003.

[So 2010] — So, Richard Jean. "Fictions of Natural Democracy: Pearl Buck, *The Good Earth*, and the Asian American Subject." *Representations* 112:1 (Fall 2010): 87–111.

[Spence 1992] — Spence, Jonathan D. *Chinese Roundabout: Essays in History and Culture*. No ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 1992.

[Spence 2010] — Spence Jonathan. "The Question of Pearl Buck." *New York*

Review of Books (14 October 2010). Online at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/oct/14/question-pearl-buck/#fnr2-362453522>

[Spurling 2010] — Spurling, Hilary. *Burying the Bones: Pearl Buck in China*. London: Profile Books Ltd., 2010.

[Stirling 1983] — Stirling Nora B. *Pearl S. Buck: A Woman in Conflict*. New York: New Century Publishers, 1983.

[Stott 1986] — Stott, William. *Documentary Expression in Thirties America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

[Thompson 1942] — Thompson, Ralph. “Books of the Times.” *The New York Times* (22 Jan. 1942): 15.

[Waller 2010] — Waller, Nancy Thomson. *My Nanking Home, 1918–1937: A Very Personal Memoir*. Cherry Valley, NY & Boston: Willow Hill Publications, 2010.

[Wenwei 2012] — Wenwei, Song and Cang Wei. “American Writer Loved China.” *China Daily News* (21 May 2012). Online at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/201205/21/content_15341608.htm

[Woolfe 1932] — Woolf, S.J. “Pearl Buck Talks of Her Life in China.” *The New York Times* (14 Aug. 1932, Sunday Magazine sec.): 7.

[Yao 2012] — Yao, Junwei. “Notes on Pearl Buck’s Studies of the Chinese Novel.” Paper delivered at Pearl S. Buck and Her Nanking Years. Nanjing University, Nanjing, China. May 18–20, 2012. Unpublished.

[Yoder 2008] — Yoder, Dale. *Pearl Buck’s Living Legacy: The Welcome House Story*. Morgantown, PA: Masthof, 2008.