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Dan Huang  
*University of Wollongong*

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# Chinese Culture Cures: Ouyang Yu's Representation and Resolution of the Immigrant Syndrome in *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*

HUANG DAN  
University of Wollongong

ASIAN AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE HAS GROWN PROSPEROUS since Australia opened its door to Asian immigrants, as evidenced by the emergence of Asian Australian writers like Brian Castro, Lilian Ng, Lau Siew Mei, Beth Yahp, Hsu-Ming Teo, and so on. The Chinese diasporic writers from the various parts of Asia tell their hometown stories and share their migrant experience in their host countries. Ouyang Yu, a bilingual writer from mainland China "is perhaps the most indecorous writer currently at work today" (Birns 194). Ouyang Yu came to Australia in 1991 as an international student to do his Ph.D. research on the representation of Chinese people in Australian fictions. Since then, he has been writing in English seriously. He is so prolific that he has produced more than fifty books, both in Chinese and English, and has had hundreds of poems and articles published in newspapers and magazines in Australia and overseas within twenty years.

*The Eastern Slope Chronicle*, his first English novel, is a controversial work in China and overseas. Wang Labao, a professor at Suzhou University in mainland China, states that "Ouyang Yu betrays a dangerous resentment against his homeland. Catering to the mainstream population of the author's adopted culture, the book speaks of China and its people in all the abusive extremities of Orientalism deliberately" (81). *The Eastern Slope Chronicle* receives a negative reception in mainland China partly because Ouyang Yu fails to express a sense of nostalgia to his homeland. However, some Australian scholars attach importance to this novel by virtue of its complicated and genuine representation of Asian Australians. At the end of her article "Flexible Citizenship': Strategic Chinese Identities in Asian Australian Literature," Regina Lee concludes that "*The Eastern Slope Chronicle* tackles head-on the complexities of re-negotiating racial and cultural identity amidst changing environments, sentiments and perceptions," although "it offers no satisfactory resolution to the dilemma of migrants 'trapped in between'" (226).

The fate of a Chinese immigrant amid tangled East-West relations is a long-lasting and obsessive theme in Ouyang Yu's works. For example, at the end of his famous poetry collection *Songs of the Last Chinese Poet*, the narrator shouts out "The West-Will-Win!" which resembles the phrase World-Wide-Web in forms and alliteration, "indicating the irresistible

power of the western cultural hegemony" (Qian 187). Much discussion has been made about the "doubleness" and the "dilemma" of Chinese Australians in Ouyang Yu's works. However, no one has ever shed light on a way to cure the "sick man from asia" (Ouyang, *Songs* 1) as well as his "ambivalent in-between-ness of diasporic identification as violent conflict, internal as well as external" (Ommundsen, "Hello Freedom"). In this paper, I would like to describe this unsettled state of being of the Chinese immigrants as an "immigrant syndrome" that is caused by linguistic alienation, academic exploitation, and cultural displacement in Australia. Focusing on *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*, I would argue Ouyang Yu suggests that Chinese culture will help to cure the disturbing "immigrant syndrome" of Chinese Australians and will also help Australia to solve its own problems and achieve a true multicultural Australia.

The title *The Eastern Slope Chronicle* implies multiple symbolic meanings that run through the whole novel. Structurally, *The Eastern Slope Chronicle* could be defined as a postmodern novel due to its application of postmodern narrative techniques. The main line of the novel is Dao Zhuang's revisit to his hometown, Eastern Slope, which was a place of exile for the famous poet Su Dongpo in the Song Dynasty. From the first-person narration, Dao Zhuang tells his journey in Eastern Slope and recollects his early days when he was a postgraduate student in Shanghai in 1989 and then migrated to Australia. In this sense, the title refers to the journey in Eastern Slope, the life story of a person from Eastern Slope, and the changes that the Eastern Slope city has undergone from ancient times to the modern age.

Dao Zhuang's fragmented narration of the immigrant life in Australia is supplemented by two other characters. One is his friend Warne, who was once a poet in China and got permanent residence in Australia after the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989. Warne is a representative of the "Tiananmen Square" generation who gets their residential status and leads a miserable life in Australia. Punning on the Chinese official jargon "Su Dong Bo," "Eastern Slope" in the title also refers to the political "waves that swept the Russian and Eastern European countries and the going of the Soviet Union" (Ouyang, *ESC* 284). Hence, this is a book of the individual fate in the changes of contemporary political climate.

The other important character in the novel is Wu Liao, a character Dao Zhuang creates in his novel, also titled *The Eastern Slope Chronicle* in English translation. Wu's life resembles Dao's in many ways. In this point of view, this novel is a metafiction, which has the distinct feature of self-reference. Holding a Ph.D. with the project "Representing the Other: Chinese in Australian Fiction 1888–1988," Ouyang Yu is very familiar with the western stereotypical representation of Chinese people. In one of his poems, he writes,

slit-eyed almond-eyed slant-eyed and slopes  
that unchanging view of the Western image of the East  
never seems able to absorb the fluidity of other vocabularies  
stunted by their own bloated sense of superiority  
(Ouyang, *Moon* 35)

In Western representation, a pair of slanting eyes is a stereotypical image of Chinese. Here comes the other meaning of the title *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*. Subtly associated with the stereotypes of Chinese people in Australian literature, this is a book about the Eastern world written by a Chinese man. From this point of view, in Wenche Ommundsen's words, *The Eastern Slope Chronicle* "is a chronicle of more than a small provincial town in China. It is a source of rich and nuanced observation about contemporary migration, East–West relations, globalization and cultural negotiation, as well as of human folly and ingenuity—a chronicle, in other words, about the modern world" (Ommundsen, "Sleep" 246).

The fragmented narration about Dao Zhuang, Warne, and Wu constructs a whole and collective image of Chinese male immigrants in Australia. With a historical and postcolonial perspective, Ouyang Yu portrays a whole picture of the material and spiritual life of Chinese Australians in *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*.

Language is a natural barrier between cultures. The issue of language is perhaps the first and most serious problem for a NESB immigrant in Australia. The current national policy of multiculturalism declares that "migrants have the right to maintain their cultural and racial identity and that it is clearly in the best interests of our nation that they should be encouraged and assisted to do so if they wish" (Galbally 104). However, "it is on the point of fully recognizing Other groups, particularly racial minorities, that official multiculturalism often fails" (Khoo 2). In *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*, Ouyang Yu reveals the linguistic alienation of Chinese immigrants under the hegemony of English in multicultural Australia.

There are two kinds of linguistic alienation of Chinese immigrants in *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*. The first kind of linguistic alienation comes from the difficulty of the Chinese immigrants to understand and communicate with people who speak other languages. The border of cultures lies in the subtleties of a language and the untranslatable words from one language to another. When translating Su Dongpo's poems, Dao Zhuang "found that the double-character word formation of 'feng-liu' the most untranslatable. [. . .] The imagery of the words will defy any attempts at meaningful translation" (Ouyang, *ESC* 112). There is always something lost in translation. Corresponding to the untranslatability

of Chinese culture into English, Wu's discovery of the subjunctive mood in English grammar also shows the linguistic and cultural barriers between the East and the West. He realizes "how easily it would be to trick the people in China and migrants, whose English was not good enough to tell such subtle difference between words used in a subjunctive mood and in real situation" (131). English has its own sense of subtleties and difference that is hard for the non-native speakers to detect. This is not a matter of grammar but of culture, the cultural logic. Chinese immigrants are isolated in the society because of their lacking of English proficiency. Wu never "communicated with an Australian or anyone who did not speak his language, Chinese" (91). Such language barriers do not exist just between the Chinese language and the English language. People are divided into several independent parts by their languages. "There were no superpowers. There were only people, of all nationalities, who never went across the invisible boundary that separated them by language and culture except when they traded with each other in cash and in English" (138). The multiculturalism separates them by language instead of uniting the different races and communities together.

The second kind of linguistic alienation is from the disconnection and imbalance between the new and strange surroundings and the language competency of an immigrant. Language is a system of symbols that we use to describe and understand the world and communicate with others. A sense of estrangement emerges when one enters a new place and finds his language inadequate to describe his surroundings. Warne's life is a very good example.

After so many years in Australia, he still could not name most of the trees and flowers. He found the whitish, powdery flowers covering the fence resembling the ilex, a common sight in urban China, but they were so massive, creeping and spreading that he dare not name them. In his back garden, there was a tree that kept shedding its silvery, softish leaves all the year round, covering the grass within the reach of the canopy, make it difficult for him to mow the lawn. He took mental note of that but never uttered a word about it. He had no word for it. To find one, he would have to either go to a neighbour to ask or search in a book. He did neither. (379)

Linguistically, according to the referential theory, "the relation between a word and a thing it refers to is not direct. It is mediated by concept" (Hu 161). After Warne's arrival in Australia, his semantic triangle of "word–concept–thing" is broken because there is no word in his vocabulary to refer to the trees in front of him as well as the new world he lives in. Lacking English language skills and a whole understanding of Western culture, even though they could survive in the multicultural society, they are silenced in the mainstream society. "The importance of English can never be emphasized enough as I come to realize in this country. Whatever you do, whatever you say, has to be recorded in English. Otherwise, it is not worthy much of our attention" (Ouyang, *Bias* 97). The gap between the experience of place and the language

available to describe it opens a “vacuum” space for the Chinese immigrants in which they live and die invisibly as if they never existed. Chinese immigrants are inevitably othered and marginalized because of the hegemony of English in Australia.

To some extent, language may determine our thinking patterns. “Our language helps mould our way of thinking and, consequently, different languages may probably express our unique ways of understanding the world” (Hu 227). To solve the problem of linguistic alienation, Ouyang Yu suggests in his novel the Chinese immigrants should understand English and the new environment from the perspective of Chinese culture and provide multicultural Australia with a unique and creative view of life. Wu’s life is a good illustration.

Wu interprets and understands the English language in a Chinese pattern of cognition. The Chinese characters belong to a hieroglyphic language, which usually consists of a phonetic element and a pictographic element. From the structure of a Chinese character, we could guess its pronunciation and its meaning. However, the English language is another system of arbitrary vocal symbols. Arbitrariness, one of the most important design features of English, refers to that fact that “the forms of linguistic signs bear no natural relationship to their meaning” (4). In the novel, Wu understands English words in the way he learns the Chinese characters. “As he would do with Chinese characters which, by a process of dismantling, could easily fragment into meaningful denominations, he found he could do the same with English words” (Ouyang, *ESC* 132). In doing this, Ouyang also satirizes the racism that has been prevailing in English-speaking countries for centuries.

Worst of all were the words related to the colors. “Black” was a word that had “lack” in it. Likewise, “yellow” had “low,” whereas “white” would sound like “height” when “w” was removed. No wonder there was such rampant racism throughout the English-speaking world. It was built into their language. The English God must be a racist who did not create the language in a fair manner. (133)

From Wu’s observation, English language is not arbitrary any more. It strongly indicates the ideal of white supremacy. The discrimination of the colored race is deeply rooted in their culture. With the Chinese way of thinking and understanding, Wu dismantles the English words, deconstructs the design features of English language, interprets it in his own Chinese way and even scorns the language.

Being the carriers of Chinese culture, the Chinese immigrants would definitely hold an impure English blended with Chinese cultural heritage in both form and content. Similar to Warne, Wu suffered from the linguistic alienation in Australia, too. However, instead of remaining silent, Wu “renamed all his surroundings in Chinese” (140). His bungalow is named as “Ye Shi Ju or Wild Historical Residence, or more aptly, Residence of Wild History, for no reason other than his own interest in the wild side of history” (140). He called his garden as “Wu Wei Yuan or Five Tastes Garden” (140). All the names have a distinct Chinese flavor. In the history of the colonial expansion of British Empire, the colonizers named

the land they arrived and claimed their dominance on the colonies. “One of the first tasks of the culture of resistance was to reclaim, rename and reinhabit the land” (Said 226). Renaming his surroundings with Chinese names, Wu turns this piece of Australian land into his own Chinese colony. By imitating the colonial behavior, Wu’s renaming of his surroundings in Chinese is a way that Ouyang Yu writes back to the colonial history and the colonial rule hidden in multicultural Australia and also Ouyang Yu’s way to scatter the linguistic alienation.

Ouyang Yu says in one of his articles that “crossing cultures [. . .] turning from a pictographic person into a phonetic one, involves as much pleasure as pain, and, in the beginning, more pain than pleasure, to a degree of death felt at heart” (Ouyang, *Bias* 114). Maybe the English skills of most Chinese immigrants would never be as good as that of a native speaker because of the influence of Chinese culture. However, Chinese culture also endows them with a unique perspective on the world and helps them to master English in their own way. At the same time, their interpretation of the English language and life enriches the understanding and connotation of the language and Australian life.

Ouyang Yu observes that “it is so difficult for Chinese intellectuals to live intellectually in Australia” (162). Instead, they are often reduced to menial labor. In *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*, Ouyang Yu tells the academic exploitation of Chinese intellectuals in Australia. The capital–labor relationships between the White scholars and the Chinese intellectuals are represented through four pairs of characters, including Dao Zhuang and John Lawson, Dao Zhuang and Professor McLoughlin, Wu and his supervisor professor Sean Dredge, and Dao Zhuang and Antoinette. In the capital–labor relationship, the white scholars pay money and win fame by the outcome of the research, while the Chinese intellectuals work for them and provide them with the first-hand materials for the research.

John Lawson, who teaches Dao Zhuang Australian literature in Shanghai, helps Dao to come to Australia. Their relationship has kept developing since Dao arrived in Australia, until Dao realizes that “it reached a stage where I was no longer a student but had become an assistant for him in his research work” (Ouyang, *ESC* 25). Besides, Dao is also a “ghost researcher” of Professor McLoughlin, who is compiling an anthology of Chinese literature from its beginning. Dao is “paid to do this sort of thing as a footnoter, one who writes footnotes for people, people whose knowledge strengthens their power with footnotes” (113). This time Dao helps to translate Su Shi’s poems into English. Professor McLoughlin just waits for the raw material from Dao.

Wu, the history student Dao fictionalizes in his novel *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*, is involved in a similar relationship with his supervisor. Wu is so lucky that he is selected to come to Australia to study its history as an exchange student. His supervisor, Professor Sean Dredge, doesn’t know anything about Chinese, but he is doing research on the recent Chinese experience in Australia, because “in a climate where all things Asian were good, the Chinese were quite a commodity to

market” (60). “The only reason he accepted Wu was because he thought Wu was useful to him” for his research (60). Supervision is an intriguing relationship. The white teachers teach and pay for the students, while the students have to follow their teachers or supervisors to do the research. White teachers are “academic businessmen” in essence, while the Chinese students become workers for their teachers in order to survive and complete their study (293).

However, there is not much difference when the relationship is reversed—Chinese teacher and white student. Antoinette, a white girl who purposes to write a Ph.D. thesis about China, comes to Dao to know stories about the Chinese Cultural revolution. Soon, Antoinette seduces Dao and they become lovers. In her Ph.D. synopsis, Antoinette takes full use of what Dao tells her in bed and out of bed. Their relationship ends up with Antoinette’s successful presentation and Dao’s realization that “if a white person approaches you he or she always does that with a purpose, mercenary or otherwise. They never make friends with you for friends’ sake” (366). Again, Dao is exploited by white people as a supplier of raw materials about China.

In the four pairs of characters mentioned above, the Chinese intellectuals are treated as suppliers of raw material about China, while the white scholars make use of them, make academic achievement and earn cultural capital in the literary field. Chinese intellectuals are reduced to cultural labors in the academic system of Australia.

However, “never was it the case that the imperial encounter pitted an active Western intruder against a supine or inter? non-Western native; there was always some form of active resistance, and in the overwhelming majority of cases the resistance won out” (Said xii). In this novel, the Chinese intellectuals also resist academic exploitation. Ouyang Yu arranges individual resistance to the exploitation from the white scholars in two ways.

Wu’s resistance to Professor Sean Dredge is an indirect and implicit way of destroying the labor–capital relationship between him and Professor Sean Dredge. At first, Professor Sean Dredge thinks that this “short, thin, black-haired Chinese” would be “affable” and “malleable” enough for him to use (Ouyang, ESC 60). However, it is not the case at all. Wu is “quite a stubborn student, for he insisted on researching in his own way despite the warnings against relying too much on empirical evidence” (62). He simply ignores Professor Sean Dredge’s concern about his academic progress, retains his own empirical and untheoretical approach to do this research, which is typically a Chinese traditional way to do research. This passive behavior is an effective way for the periphery class to resist dominant authority (Liao 221). The labor–capital relationship hidden in the supervision ends up with Professor Sean Dredge’s failure to take advantage of Wu in his research.

Dao’s resistance is more direct. In his autobiographical writing, one of his characters refuses to go for the interview from WA University. In the letter he writes to turn down the interview, which is “designed to fail genius and to include people who can’t do anything else but be slavish academics

in a hostile environment to the development of intellect,” he makes no attempt to conceal the hypocritical and ridiculous system in Australian universities (Ouyang, ESC 349). “Let me tell you this that the fact that all of you sit here today, white and Australian, judging someone like me from a colored background, is what exactly post-colonialism means” (350).

Instead of being subjected to the colonial judge, Dao Zhuang refuses outright in his letter, saying “White Australia University! [. . .] Here then is to you, the bloody capitalist bait of an application to a colored genius who defies you and your system” (350). After that, he refused to be judged by the colonial system of Australia. Moreover, he turns out to be a freelancing tutor in Chinese language and literature himself. Successful or not, the behavior of diffusing his Chinese culture to the white Australians is a way of counter-colonization and counter-exploitation. In a way, this could also be understood as the behavior of colonizing white Australia, just like the colonizers from the British Empire did to the native people in their colonies, asking them to learn English and establish a discipline of English Studies to tame their people.

*The Eastern Slope Chronicle* is a novel about exile that “reveals the sordid side of transnational existence” (Ommundsen, “Sleep” 245). In general, it belongs to the emerging motif in Asian Australian writing termed as “Australia as dystopia” (Ommundsen, “Birds” 96). There is nothing glorious and heroic to fulfill an Australian dream. Instead, Dao Zhuang’s experience in *Eastern Slope*, supplemented by Dao Zhuang’s memory and Wu’s story constructs a whole portrait of “an imposter in China and a failure in Australia” (Ouyang, ESC 233).

It is when Dao arrives at his hometown that he realizes his true state of being as an ultimate Other. “Once, there was a home for it and it was called China. Now I returned home, curiously, it was no longer there” (289). “It is in your birth place where you feel least at home and most alienated” (195). A sense of belonging is destroyed by the process of migration. The sense of displacement and his unhappy talk with his friends and students keep reminding him of the unpleasant and unsuccessful “rat-like life” in Australia (30).

Dao’s memory reflects that Chinese immigrants meet racial and cultural rejection in Australia. Dao cannot get a job in Australia because of his skin color. When Dao went to an interview held in the Army Service, the white officer “gazed” at him “as if he was an enemy” and “emphasized on the necessity of clearance” (48). The white officer’s attitude towards Dao reflects the stereotypical images of Chinese in the white imagination. What needs to be cleansed is not only the color of the skin, but also “the culture that accompanies it” (48). The white-dominated Australia does not want the inassimilable immigrants. This is the hypocrisy of the current multiculturalism. “If they [the Australian government] don’t want you to stay in Australia, they will invent a perfect China and talk you into going back to it” (32).

It is Antoinette’s Ph.D. synopsis presentation that reveals the truth of the status of Chinese immigrant in Australia and lays bare the lies of multiculturalism. She points out that the Chinese intellectuals in Australia are “victimized by the white colonial rule or postcolonial rule” (365). Moreover, they

could not even complain or criticize the multiculturalism. It is their own problems and business that lead to the consequence of becoming an intellectual waste. In this case, the multiculturalism is the white multiculturalism. It is set up by the whites and for the whites. The white mainstream society establishes the whole system to choose who they want and exclude who they dislike. "Pain" is the only thing Chinese immigrants have got in the world (372). Exile is a doomed life for immigrants with a third-world background, no matter how multicultural the host country is.

In his double-rejected journey, Dao Zhuang gradually identifies himself with Eastern Slope Su, the famous poet of the Song Dynasty. "My research into Su's life had got tangled up with my own life. It was as if mine came in where his life details could not be found. [ . . . ] I found myself [ . . . ] even imagined that I was him, living in a time when China had no contact with the Western world and was happy with its own people and state of affairs" (290–91). In Wenche Ommundsen's interpretation, "Dao longs for the cultural certainty of Su's life, so different from his own sense of exile in a foreign land" (Ommundsen, "Sleep" 246). This is Dao's realization and understanding of his exile in the other land. When Dao returns to Australia again, his identification with the ancient poet Su Shi reaches another level.

Su Shi was exiled in Huang Zhou during the Song Dynasty. It was in Huang Zhou that he wrote his most famous poems. Su Shi, a convict in his time, held a positive attitude towards his exile and used his talent to tame his place of exile. Hundreds of years later, Huang Zhou, which was humble and shabby before Su's coming, is now famous for and proud of its exiled poet Su Shi. This "licentious man [ . . . ] rebelled against injustice and was living in exile" and became the "most treasured national poet" (Ouyang, ESC 336). Su Shi is a hybrid of conviction and honor who glorifies the place of his exile.

In the author's notes, Dao becomes the "reincarnation" of Su Shi. "The more I read about Su, [ . . . ] the more I grew to like the old man, perhaps more for the way he lived," that "he simply enjoyed his freedom in poverty or his poverty in freedom," although "he did not know how long his exile would last" (383–84). The cultural displacement becomes a source of his "decentered and exilic energies, energies whose incarnation today is the migrant, and whose consciousness if that of the artist and intellectual figure in exile" (Said 403). The author finally becomes a modern Eastern Slope Su in the modern age, living in another continent.

Here comes the multiple and significant meaning of the last chapter of the novel. The last chapter written in Chinese is the most powerful and subversive part in the novel and is of political and historical significance. The last chapter is a verdict that ends up Dao Zhuang's journey in Eastern Slope. This time, Dao Zhuang's return to Australia is not simply a beginning of another circle of exile. He becomes a convict expelled to Australia in exile. Hundreds of years ago, Eastern Slope Su was exiled to Huang Zhou like this. Hundreds of years ago, criminals in Britain were exiled to Australia like this. Australia was a country of migration, a country of exile, and a country

of conviction. Dao's exile in Australia, again with his verdict in China, is a claim of being an Australian, on equal terms with the white people in the country. The Chinese language in the last chapter subverts the hegemonic status of English as well as white privilege in Australia. In multicultural society, languages and cultures other than English and Anglo-Celtic culture should also be the language of Australia, including Chinese. The reincarnation of Eastern Slope Su is exiled to the "silent Australia," which is "inhuman, dead, uncanny, uniquely Western, meaningless, insidious, destructive, and malicious" (Ouyang, ESC 98). Like Su Shi, who endows the place of his exile with brilliant culture with his poetry and talent, the author suggests in the last chapter that one day Australia would be proud of its Asian immigrants for their culture, their talent, and their contribution to enrich this vast land. Ouyang says confidently in the end of his essay "Absence Asia," "We'll create a minor-stream, which may grow into a mainstream one day, I am sure" (Ouyang, *Bias* 24).

Ouyang Yu is so confident in the power of Chinese culture that he suggests at the end of the novel that Chinese culture is a therapy of Western or white problems. In Warne's dream, Australians are migrating to "the places furthest from their origins," because "the Australians are suffering from a disease" called "lock-heart syndrome" (Ouyang, ESC 386). On this occasion, "China is the only country in the world that is willing to take a few millions of such heart-locked people" (386). There are two possible ways to cure the Australian disease. One might be the Chinese traditional medicine such as acupuncture and herbs, which implies that the traditional and ancient Chinese civilization will unlock the heart of Australians. The second way is that "they could simply swap the whole of China with Australia, settling their billions in Australia" (386). This idea indicates the importance of Chinese immigrants in Australia. The only solution of "the white problem" seems "a yellow one," a Chinese one in particular (386). Warne's dream and fantasy deliver and emphasize Ouyang Yu's cultural ideal: the traditional Chinese culture will help to cure the illness of the Western world, especially white Australia. To some extent, the "locked-heart syndrome" of Australians and the therapy of Chinese culture echo my previous discussion of the "immigrant syndrome" and the solution of Chinese culture. In fact, the linguistic alienation, the academic exploitation, and the cultural displacement of Chinese immigrants are generated by the Australian mainstream hostility and cultural rejection of its Asian immigrants.

Within a perspective of the postcolonial theory, Ouyang Yu describes the linguistic alienation, academic exploitation, and cultural displacement of Chinese immigrants in Australia. He points out boldly that the national policy of multiculturalism fails to change the colonial essence of Australian society, which still marginalizes Chinese immigrants as a complete Other. What's more, the unity of national identity cannot be achieved in the way that the mainstream assimilates or eliminates the minor streams. What needs to be changed or improved is not only the attitude of Chinese immigrants towards their cultural identity but also the remainder of the

ideal of a white Australia, which is historically produced. The immigrant syndrome of Chinese Australians in colonial or postcolonial society could only be cured by Chinese culture.

There is also a paradox in Ouyang Yu's solution of the in-between dilemma of Chinese immigrants. Ouyang Yu does not want to subvert everything of his host country. Instead, he wants to integrate into it, to become a true citizen of it both politically and culturally, and to contribute his talent to it. However, as an Australian intellectual with a third-world background, he could not contribute his talent unless he makes the best use of Chinese culture to enrich Australian culture with creative and refreshing works. At the same time, Australia should be more tolerant and open its heart to its Asian talents. To achieve a true multicultural society, it needs the joint effort of mainstream Australian society and the Chinese immigrants whose culture would one day glorify, enrich, and integrate into Australia. Here is the greatness of the book *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*. It reflects and reveals the cultural conflicts and provides a solution and enlightens a possibility of cultural harmony at the same time. In the complicated era of globalization, the unbalanced relation between the East and the West cannot be changed over the short term. However, the spiritual scars of Chinese immigrants will be healed up when they find a way to turn Chinese culture to good and unique account. Maybe Ouyang has already given a more detailed solution to the immigrant syndrome in the subtitle of his new book *On the Smell of an Oily Rag: Speaking English, Thinking Chinese and Living Australian*. □

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HUANG DAN obtained a BA in English and completed a MA in English and American Literature at Wuhan University in 2008. She is now a Ph.D. candidate in Australian literature at the University of Wollongong, Australia.

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