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# 离散批评视角下的黄哲伦戏剧《家庭奉献》

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**An Analysis of David Henry Hwang's  
*Family Devotions* from the Perspective  
of Diaspora Criticism**

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## 摘要

黄哲伦的《家庭奉献》是其“华裔三部曲”的收官之作。与前两部剧作相比,学术界对于这部作品的研究相对缺乏。评论家普遍认为这部作品在质量上逊于前作。从表面来看,这部作品是以基督教为批判对象,然而从主题来看,这部作品与前两部作品的主题一脉相承,都是表现了对于中国血脉的认同。从作品的技巧来看,这部作品并没有像前两部作品一样刻意突出京剧等中国元素,而是通过生活中常见的道具来深化中国身份认同的主题,可以说是作者创作技巧的一次突破。从作品的人物来看,《家庭奉献》不仅在人物数量上达到新高,而且人物分为三代,不仅三代人之间在观念上存在明显差异,且每一代之间的细微差别也得到了清晰刻画。可以说,《家庭奉献》为“华裔三部曲”画上了一个圆满的句号。

尽管离散一词历史渊源颇深,然而离散理论直到二十世纪九十年代才得以逐步确立。经过斯图亚特·霍尔和加布利尔·谢弗等人的努力,离散理论的定义、离散族群在身份问题上的主要策略等理论框架已逐步完善,为离散理论在文学上的应用打下了坚实的基础。通过应用这些理论,我们可以把握文学作品中人物的性质,并通过不同人物对于身份问题的不同态度对人物的思想和价值观进行探究。

本文以离散理论作为研究视角,以《家庭奉献》作为研究对象。通过对于作品中象征意象的分析可以看出,基督教并不是作者的批判对象,而是对于美国文化的一种象征。此外,本文结合离散理论中离散族群对于身份问题的不同策略,对作品中三代华裔移民不同的身份认同观进行分析,勾勒出了美国华裔群体三个历史时期对于身份观的思想变化,并对其未来的发展趋势进行了预测。

**关键词:** 离散批评 《家庭奉献》 身份认同

## Abstract

*Family Devotions* is the last work of David Henry Hwang's Trilogy of Chinese America. However, Critics' works on the study of this play are less than those on the previous two works, and it is widely agreed that this work is not as of good quality as the other two plays of this trilogy. *Family Devotions* appears to regard Christianity as its target. However, this work inherits the same theme from other works in the trilogy, representing the identification of Chinese ancestors. Secondly, as for the technique of the play, *Family Devotions* does not feature such Chinese elements as the Chinese Opera. Instead, it just uses common stage properties to emphasize the theme of Chinese identity, and this is also a technical breakthrough of Hwang's writing. Thirdly, as far as characters are concerned, not only does the number of characters reach the climax, but also these characters are classified into three generations. On the one hand, there are clear differences among three generations on their ideas. On the other hand, the subtle differences among members of the same generation are also elaborated delicately. In a word, *Family Devotions* provides a perfect ending with this trilogy.

Though the term "Diaspora" has a long history, diaspora theory was not fully established until 1990s. With the effort of such scholars as Stuart Hall and Gabriel Sheffer, the framework of diasporism, including the definition of diaspora and the main strategy of diasporas on the issue of identity, has been enriched, paving the way for the application of this theory on literary study. By applying diasporism on literary works, we can grasp the characteristics of the characters, and make an exploration on their ideas and values according to their different attitudes toward the issue of identity.

From the perspective of diaspora criticism, *Family Devotions* is set as the object in this essay. From the analysis of the symbolism in it, we can see that Christianity is not the real target, but it is a symbol for American culture. In addition, with the help of different strategies and tactics that diasporas adopt on the issue of identity, this essay provides a map on the changing values of identification in three eras, and offers a prediction on the future of this issue, which will pave the way for both the development of diaspora theory itself and the application of this theory on literary study.

**Key words:** Diaspora Theory, *Family Devotions*, Identification

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

The term Diaspora has a long history, the origin of which can be found in Old Testament. Diaspora was first referred to as Jews, who vagabondize abroad. The definition of this term did not make radical change until at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1990s, the meaning of Diaspora began to extend to various immigrant communities, and the term also began to formally appear in literary studies, and soon became an important approach to literary criticism. Such an approach has increasingly won scholars' attention and interest afterwards.

As a new approach to literary study, Diaspora criticism appeared in the last 10 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, thus a new member both in literary theory and criticism. In diaspora criticism, the issue of identity has always been essential, and this issue has undoubtedly been the central theme in Chinese American literature as well. As far as the theme of identification is concerned, especially among the Chinese American community, the last several decades witnessed a changing process of their attitude toward their identity from "neither this nor that" to "both this and that".

David Henry Hwang's *Family Devotions* (1981) describes the conflicting attitudes among three generations of Chinese immigrants living in the suburban area of Los Angeles. Moreover, the author puts that issue into the two broad backgrounds: the east-west cultural conflict, and the issue of identity. This work is typically of diasporan features, in which three generations have different attitude toward identity respectively. The first generation consists of two woman characters. They deliberately suppress and even deny their Chinese cultural brands in order to assimilate into American mainstream society. As one representative figure of the second generation, Robert undergoes a change of attitude both toward American society and toward Chinese American community. Therefore, his values on identity inevitably conflict with those of the first generation, and that is why he stresses that where he lives is in a new America. However, it is just in this new America that he goes astray and loses himself, holding such a view that being an American mean nothing but fulfilling his desire. So the second generation does not grasp a very clear conception on the issue of identity. Chester can be regarded as the representative figure of the third generation. His talent and success in music seems to win the recognition of the mainstream society to some degree. At the same time, he also begins his search for his identity. Finally, he finds his way-out, which demonstrates that his tie with Chinese culture is kinship, which can never be cut off



completely.

As Gabriel Sheffer has pointed out in his *Diaspora Politics: at Home Abroad*, in spite of the fact that Diaspora theory has immediately drawn academic attention in recent years, the studies on that subject has still been rudimentary. Now with the increasing number of diasporan community, and with the growing importance of their effect on global politics, economy, and culture, Chinese American immigrants no longer remain marginal and ignored. On the contrary, they have played and will play an increasingly important role. Therefore, the theoretical study on that issue is required to go deeper and more detailed.

On the one hand, as a new perspective of literary criticism, domestic scholars have neither provided a clear definition nor given a theoretical demonstration on that issue. Most scholars have focused on specific works. On the other hand, as to the study of David Henry Hwang, scholars in China mostly concentrate on Hwang's *M. Butterfly*, while the rest of his works failed to draw sufficient academic attention. In addition, as far as the researching method is concerned, domestic scholars generally limit themselves in the perspective of post-colonialism. They, however, have not paid enough attention to identification, which is none other than the essential issue of Chinese American literature.

Taking all the above mentioned issues into consideration, this essay firstly aims to make a theoretical illustration on the definition and main elements of Diaspora theory, especially the latest attainment of this theory by foreign scholars. Secondly, this essay sets Hwang's *Family Devotions* as the target of our analysis, and the focus of our analysis is the different values on the identity issue among three generations of Chinese immigrants. Thirdly, this essay aims to set an example for the application of Diaspora theory into contemporary Chinese American drama.

## Chapter 2 Background Information on *Family Devotions* and Diaspora Criticism

### 2.1 Brief Introduction to David Henry Hwang and *Family Devotions*

#### 2.1.1 Biographic Information on David Henry Hwang<sup>1</sup>

David Henry Hwang (1957 – ) is one of the most preeminent contemporary Chinese American playwrights. Hwang was born in a middle-class Chinese family in Los Angeles, California. Hwang's father came from Shanghai. Having received college education in America, Hwang's father became a successful businessman and banker. Hwang's mother, though also a Chinese, lived in Philippine before she came to America. Influenced by mother's piano talent, Hwang became interested in music at very young age. On seven years old, he began to learn to play the violin. All of these details in his early life appeared in his *Family Devotions* (1971).

On the last year of his senior middle school, Hwang watched *Indians* written by Arthur Kopit (1937 – ). This was the first time that he had been exposed to drama. As a successful businessman, Hwang's parents expected their son to follow his career, but Hwang failed to meet their expectation. On his graduation, he entered Stanford University. Moreover, the reason why he chose this university was none other than the fact that business degree was not available in this university<sup>2</sup>. In Stanford, his major was English, and he also took the opportunity to learn from John L'Heureux (1934 – ). On John's guidance, Hwang read a lot of plays. In summer, 1978, Hwang attended Padua Hills Playwrights' Festival, learning from Sam Shepard (1943 – ) and Maria Irene Fornés (1930 – ), thus beginning his writing career.

The focus of Hwang's early plays is mainly about the lives of the Chinese American and Asian American in the modern society. While learning from Shepard and Fornés in school, Hwang began to prepare for his *FOB*. In this work, Hwang describes the contrasts and conflicts between established Asian Americans and new immigrants. The play was developed by the National Playwrights Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. Premiered in 1980 Off-Broadway at the Joseph Papp Public Theater, *FOB* immediately received the acceptance from the audience. Moreover, it also helped Hwang to win the Obie Award in the same year. The success of *FOB* also paved the way for Hwang's reputation. The moment that *FOB* appeared also ushered in the first peak season of his writing career.

Then four more of Hwang's plays were produced at Joseph Papp Public Theater,

including *The Dance and the Railroad* (1981), and *Family Devotions*. *The Dance and the Railroad* is about a former Chinese opera star who works as a coolie laborer in the nineteenth century in California, and this play also won nomination for Pulitzer Prize. Those three plays make up of the "Trilogy of Chinese America", and this term also came from Hwang himself.

After this trilogy, another show was also produced in Joseph Papp Public Theater, which is *Sound and Beauty* (1983). *Sound and Beauty* contains two one-act plays written by Hwang, both of which were set in Japan. At this time, Hwang broke a new path, for he started to work on projects for the small screen. If we look at Hwang's writing career, we can find Hwang was always self-motivated to break new paths. Afterwards, *Blind Alleys* (1985) was produced. This work was written by Hwang and Frederic Kimball, and such stars as Pat Morita and Cloris Leachman also took part in the production. Some scholars pointed out that it is during this period of time that Hwang met his "identification crisis". As a young writer, Hwang seemed to be at a loss when faced with his immediate success. What's worse, when mentioning Hwang's works, critics at that time more focused on Hwang's Chinese American background. All of these made him very depressed.<sup>3</sup>

His next play, *Rich Relations* (1986), was also a path-breaking work, since this is his first work that features non-Asian characters. It premiered at the Second Stage Theatre in New York. Few critics regard this work as a success, but this does not mean that it played a minor role in Hwang's writing career, for it did make an all-round preparation for his best-known play, *M. Butterfly* (1988). The appearance of *M. Butterfly* marked his second peak season.

Premiered in Nation Theater in February 10, 1988, *M. Butterfly* came to Broadway on March 20, 1988, and soon won a great success. *M. Butterfly* brought Hwang countless honors, including Tony Award, the Drama Desk Award, the John Gassner Award, and the Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Play, etc. This play almost made his Pulitzer dream come true (finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, and this is also the second time that he won the finalist of Pulitzer). But the failure to win Pulitzer will not shadow his great success as an outstanding Chinese American writer, for he was the first Asian American to win the Tony Award for Best Play.

The success of *M. Butterfly* once again motivated Hwang to widen his writing territory. He began to set foot on opera, film, and the musical theatre. Besides, Hwang also frequently worked with Philip Glass, the world-renowned composer, for libretto writing.

Then Hwang began to be interested in adaption. Such an interest might be inspired by David Geffen, one of *M. Butterfly*'s Broadway producers. He made a pioneering attempt to adapt this play to the film, and the film version was directed by David Cronenberg. Motivated by Geffen, Hwang also wrote an original script, *Golden Gate* (1994), and this work was

produced by American Playhouse. Based upon A. S. Byatt's Booker Prize-winning novel *Possession*, he wrote an early draft of a screenplay. Though having planned to invite Sydney Pollack as the director, he worked with director/playwright Neil LaBute and Laura Jones to transform it into a 2002 film.

In the 1990s, Hwang continued to write stage plays. Meanwhile, he also set out writing short plays for the famed Humana Festival at the Actors Theatre of Louisville. Moreover, he also finished his *Golden Child*. 1996 witnessed the world premiere of this work at South Coast Repertory. Later *Golden Child* was also performed on Broadway stage, and this is also his second work that had close contact with Broadway. *Golden Child* also brought Hwang the Obie Award for its Off-Broadway production in 1997 and another Tony nomination.

The beginning of the new century witnessed Hwang's two Broadway successes one immediately after another. With director Robert Falls's arrangement, Hwang helped co-write the book for the musical *Aida*. This work was based upon Giuseppe Verdi's opera, and it did not receive positive feedback in regional theatre tryouts in an earlier format. Hwang and Falls made a significant portion of contribution on the book (by Linda Woolverton). With music and lyrics finished by Elton John and Tim Rice, *Aida* opened in 2000, which enjoyed a great box office success. Besides, Hwang also took part in the composition of English language libretto of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. With music by Korean composer Unsuk Chin (he also participated in the libretto composition), this work was scheduled to be adapted to opera. In 2007, this operatic version premiered at the Bavarian State Opera, and its DVD version was also released in 2008. Besides, Hwang also wrote the libretto for Howard Shore's opera *The Fly*. This work was based on a 1986 film, which was of the same name by David Cronenberg. The operatic version of *The Fly* received its premiere on July 2, 2008 at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, directed by Cronenberg as director and conducted by Plácido Domingo. Among Hwang's recent works, his librettist for *Tarzan* can be regarded as top quality, which is based on a film by Walt Disney Pictures.

David Henry Hwang holds honorary degrees from Columbia College Chicago and The American Conservatory Theatre. Now he lives in New York City with his wife Kathryn Layng, who is an actress, and their two children named Noah David and Eva Veanne respectively.

On Hwang's writing career, *M. Butterfly* is widely accepted as his masterpiece. Generally speaking, Hwang got his inspiration from two sources. For one thing, he got his inspiration from Giacomo Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*. For another thing, this play is based on true story between French diplomat Bernard Boursicot and a male Peking opera singer Shi Pei Pu. Rene Gallimard is a French civil servant working as an ambassador in China. On a Chinese opera performance, he got acquainted with a beautiful "actress" Song Liling. Soon Gallimard falls

in love with Song, but he has no idea about the fact that Song is a male. In traditional Chinese opera, females are not allowed to take the stage, and female roles were all played by male performers.

Apart from Song's true gender, what goes beyond Gallimard's widest dream is Song's true identity. On the surface, Song is an opera diva. However, his real job is a spy for Chinese government and his duty is to get close to Gallimard and make use of such an affair to obtain vital information. His love affairs to Song completely change his life and career. It is just because of Song that Gallimard makes a huge mistake in his job during Vietnam War, and finally he is sent back to France disgracefully. Moreover, it is just due to his heartfelt love for Song that his marriage with his wife Helga comes to an end. On the other hand, with Gallimard's return to his homeland, Song is not useful to the Chinese government any longer, and he is put in a reeducation camp.

At the beginning of Act II, Song comes to France, and the affairs between them continue. It is 20 years after that the truth comes to light. Being convicted of treason, Gallimard is sent to jail. He cannot face up to the fact that the "perfect woman" on his mind for decades turns out to be a man, so he totally lives on his memories. On The third act, with the same last words as the Cio-Cio-San, Gallimard commits *seppuku*, while Song watches his death in a male dress.

On March 20, 1988, *M. Butterfly* premiered on Broadway at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre. From the premier day to January 27, 1990, 777 performances had been achieved. The director of this play was John Dexter, with stars being John Lithgow (Gallimard) and B.D. Wong (Song Liling). In addition, quite a few actors were conquered by the charm of that play and made their contribution on playing Gallimard, such as David Dukes, Anthony Hopkins, Tony Randall, and John Rubinstein. In 1990, famous director Roman Viktyuk undertook a staging performance, adopting Puccini's music and starring Kazakh countertenor Erik Kurmangaliev, and this performance has been widely regarded as classic. In 1993, film version of *M. Butterfly* has been made by Hwang himself, with David Cronenberg being the director and Jeremy Irons and John Lone as the leading roles.

This plot of the play develops in accordance with Gallimard's recollection of the events on the love affairs with Song, and his memory is disordered. The themes of the play are complicated, ranging from the cultural conflict between east and west, bisexual relationship, to homosexuality, but among them the critique on Orientalism is the most eye-catching one. This play is a subversion of *Madama Butterfly*. In the latter work, Cio-Cio-San is one of the most well-known figures in western drama. She is beautiful and kind, but her most important characteristic is her infatuation for her American lover. On winning the widespread

acceptance from western audience, this play also helped form a stereotype for Asians on western people's minds. It is just from this perspective that *M. Butterfly* makes a cultural deconstruction on Giacomo Puccini's masterpiece.

Song Liling breaks this stereotype on westerners' minds. In *M. Butterfly*, Song undoubtedly plays a multiple role. Firstly, he is a Chinese opera diva, acting as a woman on the stage. Secondly, he dresses and behaves as a woman in his daily life, making others believe that he is a woman. Lastly, he is also a spy. On the command of Chinese government, his job is to spy out military secrets from his diplomat lover. It is only after several years that his multiple identities have been exposed. All of these are completely different from Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly*. The moment that Song first meets Gallimard, he begins to challenge the stereotyped image of eastern women on traditional westerners' minds. Having watched *Madama Butterfly* starred by Song, Gallimard makes compliment on his performance, only to meet Song's counterattack:

*It's one of your favorite fantasies, isn't it? The submissive Oriental woman and the cruel white man. ... Consider it this way: what would you say if a blonde homecoming queen fell in love with a short Japanese businessman? He treats her cruelly, then goes home for three years, during which time she prays to his picture and turns down marriage from a young Kennedy. Then, when she learns he has remarried, she kills herself. Now, I believe you would consider this girl to be a deranged idiot, correct? But because it's an Oriental who kills herself for a westerner – ah! – you find it beautiful.<sup>4</sup>*

In their 20 years affair, it is Song who always takes initiative. At the beginning, Song invites Gallimard to watch his performance. When their affair comes to crisis, it is also Song who successfully conceals his true identity with his wisdom. So Gallimard always takes the passive role, and he no longer gathers sufficient information. In the end, when everything becomes clear, Song undoubtedly will not act like Cio-Cio-San to die for love. He is the winner, standing at the court, watching Gallimard despisefully.

On the other hand, Gallimard knows nothing about Song's true identity. On his mind, eastern women are all Cio-Cio-San – beautiful, submissive, and always ready for sacrifice. He is so absorbed in the story of *Madama Butterfly* that the moment he first meets Song, he convinces himself that Song is his Butterfly. On his mind he is Pinkerton. Just as the latter spends 100 yen on Cio-Cio-San and the house, so Gallimard wishes to win Song's love in the same way. He is so trapped into the Oriental stereotype of *Madama Butterfly* that he himself becomes the victim. He loves Song less than the stereotyped image on his mind.

The ending of *M. Butterfly* is also the subversion of *Madama Butterfly*. Gallimard's role

is the exact inversion of that of Song. It is Gallimard who puts on the Cio-Cio-San's kimono and kills himself. He keeps saying "butterfly", bearing the illusion on the oriental until his death. On the other hand, Song is wearing suit, watching Gallimard coldly and despicably with cigarette on his mouth. The inversion of these two roles does not only subvert the image of eastern women on westerners' mind, but also culturally disintegrate the long-established stereotype of westerners towards the Oriental.

Quite a few critics turn their attention on the political significance of the play. Frank Rich, senior critic of The New York Times, made comment as follows. "An inversion of Puccini's 'Madama Butterfly,' 'M. Butterfly' is also the inverse of most American plays. Instead of reducing the world to an easily digested cluster of sexual or familial relationships, Mr. Hwang cracks open a liaison to reveal a sweeping, universal meditation on two of the most heated conflicts - men versus women, East versus West - of this or any other time."<sup>5</sup>

It is not difficult to find among Hwang's works that he absorbs merits from quite a number of writers, ranging from Bertolt Brecht (1898 – 1956), Anton Chekhov (1860 – 1904) to Eugene O'Neill (1888 – 1953) and Tennessee Williams (1911 – 1983). Undoubtedly, Sam Shepard can not be ignored. Sam's writing style that character should be considered as a "fractured structure" and built "more in terms of collage construction or jazz improvisation" always find expression in Hwang's works.

Hwang excels in making use of both eastern and western art technique in his works. In *M. Butterfly*, Hwang puts montage into use. At the same time, he also makes full use of light and music. On the other hand, elements of Chinese opera appear in several Hwang's works. In the Act II of *FOB*, Steve and Grace change into Gwan Gung and Far Mulan respectively, and they take broadsword and spear, using movements typical of Chinese opera to fight. In *M. Butterfly*, the music of Chinese opera always comes with the movements of Song. For one thing, Song himself is a Chinese opera singer; for another, elements of Chinese opera symbolize the beauty and mystery of eastern culture. Moreover, the music of Chinese opera and western opera repeatedly appears, representing the conflict between western and Oriental cultures, which is also the main theme of the play.

Many of his plays touch on the experiences of Asian immigrants and to East – West relations, and that's why quite a few critics pigeonhole him as an Asian author. Hwang's Chinese-American heritage has been both "a minor detail, like having red hair," as he remarked in a *New York Times Magazine* interview, and the inspiration for most of his successful plays. Hwang successfully mingled Chinese influences with those of his own country, and in this process, he addressed wider concerns of race, gender, and culture, according to William A. Henry III of *Time*, Hwang is "the first U.S. playwright to become an

international phenomenon in a generation". In the *New Yorker*, Edith Oliver described the play as "funny, mysterious, and often beautiful" and labeled Hwang the most "audacious, imaginative, [and] gifted" young playwright in America.<sup>6</sup>

### 2.1.2 A Brief Review of *Family Devotions*

*Family Devotions* is Hwang's third play. This work describes the East-West clash and conflict within three generations of an Americanized Chinese family, who live in the suburban area of Los Angeles. Premiered on October 18, 1981 Off-Broadway at the Joseph Papp Public Theater, this play is directed by Robert Allan Ackerman, with Michael Paul Chan, Jodi Long, Lauren Tom, and Victor Wong. The play was nominated for a Drama Desk Award.

#### 2.1.2.1 On the "Trilogy of Chinese America"

*FOB*, *the Dance and the Railroad*, and *Family Devotions* make up the "Trilogy of Chinese America". These three works were written on Hwang's "Isolationist-Nationalist Phase", during which period of time he was primarily interested in writing for and about the identity of Asian Americans.

In *FOB*, Dale is a second-generation Chinese immigrant. He is very Americanized. As the curtain rises, Dale's monologue introduces his negative definition of "F.O.B." to the audience. He mocks at those "fresh off the boat" Chinese immigrants and at their pitiful attempts on the one hand to assimilate into the American society and on the other hand not to discard their traditional ways. His cousin Grace is a first-generation immigrant, but she has been in America for a while. Unlike his brother Dale, Grace holds many traditional customs and thus more "Chinese". However, with the arrival of Steve, an arrogant, wealthy new Chinese immigrant, the relationship between Dale and Grace is affected. Though both Dale and Grace are unsatisfied with Steve's arrogance, they have different reactions to him. Dale holds hostile to Steve and attempts to be competitive with him. Grace, on the other hand, manages to win Steve over by means of the traditional Chinese culture. At the end of the play, Steve and Grace leave together, while Dale is alone, still hold his negative opinion toward the F.O.B.

The setting of *the Dance and the Railroad* is again California, but the time is a century earlier. There are two main characters in this play, Lone and Ma, and both of them are Chinese laborers. Their job in America is to build the transcontinental railroad in 1867. Lone has been in America for two years, and he is worldlier. Before he came to America, he studied performing Chinese opera on his childhood and wished to become an actor. However, such a dream was completely smashed later when his family was so poor that his parents sold him into servitude. In America, he has to toil 10 hours every day with his co-workers. Though his promising career put to an end, he still cherishes his performing skills. Every night after his



hard work, Lone goes to the top of a mountain to practice his theatrical performing skills. He believes that "as long as he makes his muscles work for himself as well as the railroad, he will not be merely another coolie slave". Compared with proud and cynical Lone, Ma is a naive dreamer. He has been in California for only four weeks. On his mind, American mountains are full of gold, and the Chinese can finally make the "white devil" "civilized". He still believes that his working here will bring him a large fortune, by which he will go back home and lead a comfortable and even luxurious life. He has no doubt that his future life will be "the best of both worlds." *The Dance and the Railroad* runs about an hour, during which we can find a series of encounters between the two men. Ma is deeply impressed by Lone's performing skills of Chinese opera and he is eager to learn such technique from Lone. Though Lone regards Ma as somewhat foolish, he still teaches some skills to him. On the process of teaching, learning, and practicing of theatrical actions, they exchange and share their experiences and past lives in their homeland and their visions of the future. It is also during that process that the progress of their ongoing revolt against their white bosses is touched upon.<sup>7</sup>

#### 2.1.2.2 Plot Summary of *Family Devotions*

*Family Devotions'* autobiographicality lies in the fact that Hwang himself was raised in an evangelical Christian family. This work advocates that Chinese Immigrants should shake off the yoke of such Western cultural symbols as mythology and religion that impose upon Asian cultures. The setting of *Family Devotions* is an idealized house, which contains an enclosed patio and a tennis court. Such a house obviously indicates a moderate success of materialism, which means that the American Dream of this Chinese family has come true. This Chinese family is an extended family, making up of three generations. As the curtain rises, Ama and Popo, the first generation of that family, are waiting for the arrival of their brother Di-Gou from Communist China, whom they have not seen for thirty years. On their waiting, these two old ladies mention the atrocities of the Communists, thus they are fully convinced that Di-Gou must feel grateful to escape from their homeland. Then they also mentioned their great ancestor See-goh-poh, the great Chinese Christian evangelist, from whom this family descended. Moreover, Di-Gou had seen her miracles when he was a child. Therefore, Ama and Popo are looking forward that Di-Gou will repeat his fervent testimony and spread his witness to other members. However, when Di-Gou arrives, he directly and calmly denies himself as ever being a Christian. On his conversation with Popo's grandson, Chester, Di-Gou taught him that Chester must believe the stories "written on his face," and these stories reflect many generations, only from which can Chester be able to establish a true American identity.

When the Act II begins, Ama and Popo organize a family devotion ceremony, and they invite Di-Gou to witness for Christ, which causes a quarrel among family members to happen. Di-Gou is forced by his two sisters to remember See-goh-poh's miracles on his childhood. He attempted to tell the truth, only to be tolerated by Ama and Popo. At that instant, Chester rushes in to rescue Di-Gou, and then the scene changes into a Chinese-opera-like style. Di-Gou rises up, speaking in tongues, and the gas grill bursts into flame. Finally it is Chester that interprets the truth to everyone: See-goh-poh got pregnant and gave birth to a child out of wedlock, and her evangelicalism and preaching are nothing but deceiving her family. Therefore, their stories turn out to be meaningless. The old sisters collapse and die, and Di-Gou realizes that "No one leaves America." At the end of the play, Chester is standing where Di-Gou first stood, and the "shape of his face begins to change." This scene also indicates that he begins to accept his Chinese heritage.<sup>8</sup>

As the last play of the trilogy, *Family Devotions* does not seem to win as much acceptance as the other two plays of the trilogy. Critics from *the New York Times* claimed that this play is not as good as the previous two works. In view of the fact that *FOB* has long won wide acceptance, critics' remark that "'Family Devotions' is not as fully achieved as 'the Dance and the railroad'"<sup>9</sup> seems to prove that Family Devotion makes the trilogy a little top-heavy. However, if we read this play carefully, we may have different ideas.

## 2.2 Introduction to Contemporary Diaspora Theory

### 2.2.1 The Origin and Evolution of the Term "Diaspora"

"It is well accepted that the first mention of the word 'diaspora' is found in Septuagint in the phrase 'esē diaspora en pasais basileias tēs gēs', translated into 'thou shalt be a dispersion in all kingdoms of the earth'. Its use began to develop from this original sense when the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek; in Ancient Greece the term *diaspora* meant 'the scattered' and was used to refer to citizens of a dominant city-state who immigrated to a conquered land with the purpose of colonisation, to assimilate the territory into the empire".<sup>10</sup> However, until the late 1960s, the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* did not mention the term "diaspora" at all. The reason that this term did not catch sufficient attention in social science is that "both experts and laypeople have related, and still relate this term only to or mainly to the Jewish exile existence in closed, frequently ghetto-like communities that have persisted outside the Holy Land"<sup>11</sup>, and even those world-class dictionaries still held this view for quite a long time. For example, as late as 1975, *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* defined the term "diaspora" as "the settling of scattered colonies of Jews outside Palestine after the Babylonian exile," as "the area outside Palestine settled by Jews," as "the Jews living outside Palestine or modern Israel," and as "Migration: the great black diaspora to the cities of

the North and West in the 1940s and 1950s.” Another example can be seen in *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. Even in its 1993 edition, *Oxford* still defined the term as “the dispersion of the Jews among the Gentile nations” and as “all those Jews who live outside the biblical land of Israel.”

Yet it should be emphasized that it is just in the 1993 edition of *Oxford* that the current meaning of “diaspora” began to be confirmed. The dictionary added that the term also refers to “the situation of people living outside their traditional homeland.” Since then, however, as some critics pointed out, they are quite impressed by the “the contemporary proliferation of uses of the notion of diaspora”<sup>12</sup>.

In the last two decades, the concept of the term has a much wider range of meanings in various areas of American social science, attaining the “full-fledged status of a concept with a multiplicity of philosophical, psychological, linguistic, and literary references”<sup>13</sup>. As far as the use of this term in literature is concerned, American critics has claimed that “the phenomenon of an emerging discipline of Diaspora Studies”<sup>14</sup> has reached.

According to the US government’s official records, the first Chinese immigrants arrived in 1820, and it was not until the California Gold Rush in 1848 that witnessed the first migrating climax of Chinese immigrants. Before 1848, there were fewer than 1,000 men in America. After 1848, however, a large number of people from China, the majority of whom were labourers, came to America. They either mined for gold or performed menial labor. “There were 25,000 immigrants by 1852, and 105,465 by 1880, most of whom lived on the West Coast. Most of the early immigrants were young males with low educational levels from the Guangdong province.”<sup>15</sup>

With the repeal of Chinese Exclusion Act (1885 – 1943), immigration of Chinese to the US began to increase at a low speed. It is not until the 1980s, partly because of the liberalization of American immigration restrictions, that Chinese immigrants began to increase strongly. According to the official records in 2007, the population of Chinese Americans reached 1,930,202 – 3,538,407, accounting for 0.64 – 1.2% of the U.S. population.<sup>16</sup>

### 2.2.2 Main Features of Diaspora Literature on Modern Era

It should be pointed out that diaspora literature has a long history. In the early stage, writers of diaspora literature used to be named after “picturesque novelists” or “writers on the exile”, etc. The former refers to a writing style that makes the protagonist in a moving condition. These writers include Cervantes, Henry Fielding, Mark Twain, etc. This writing style does not necessarily mean that the writer himself is also in a moving condition. The latter refers to another kind of writers. They themselves have to leave their homelands due to

their avant-garde writing styles or sharp characteristics, which make them difficult to be accepted in their homelands. However, it is just thanks to their exile that they compose their masterpieces. Examples of this kind of writers can be found in Byron, Ibsen, James Joyce, and Saul Bellow. The appearance diaspora literature in contemporary era inherits from both of these two traditional styles.<sup>17</sup>

On the era of globalization, mass migration among different continents and countries has made diaspora become a prevalent issue. At the same time, it has also become a hot topic on sociology and cultural studies. Diaspora literature is the direct production of this global trend, the studies on which therefore become a key point for scholars of literary and cultural studies. Coming with the appearance of diaspora, the prevalence of diaspora literature have caused the blur of traditional boundary among nations, countries, and languages. It is not uncommon at all for a diaspora writer to hold multiple national and cultural identities. Now English has become a global language. Meanwhile, since several decades ago, the mass migration of Chinese has also made Chinese a global language which is next to English on its global influence.

Conflicting ideas can be found in works written by diasporan writers. On the one hand, living in another country, they may hold some disappointment or even resentment on their homelands, hoping to find condolence in the host country; on the other hand, cultural roots of their homelands are deep on their minds, and they cannot escape from their influence. Therefore, they cannot fully assimilate into the social system and custom of their host countries. Living in a torturing life, they always live back in their memories, and make them awake in their writing. Such complicated experiences provide diaspora literature with a trend to go beyond the traditional pattern of their homelands. On the other hand, cultural signs typical of their homelands cannot fully extinguish, thus their ambiguity and hybridity.

### 2.2.3 Gabriel Sheffer's Latest Attainment on Diaspora Theory

The fundamental questions of diaspora theory cannot live in isolation from significant social, economic, and cultural factors that influence the development of ethno-national diasporas. On the development of diaspora theory, two representative figures who make great contributions to it are Stuart Hall and Gabriel Shffer.

#### **Stuart Hall**

Stuart Hall (1932 – ) is a cultural theorist and sociologist. He is one of the founding figure of British Cultural Studies or The Birmingham School of Cultural Studies [the other two being Richard Hoggart (1918 – ) and Raymond Williams (1921 – 1988)]. In his *Stuart Hall*, Chris Rojek said that Stuart Hall as “the leading figure in cultural studies today – no one else has had the same influence in the shaping of the field”<sup>18</sup>. Terry Eagleton regarded Hall as

“a walking chronicle of everything from the New Left to New Times, Leavis to Lyotard, Aldermaston to ethnicity”<sup>19</sup>.

In the 1990s, based on diaspora, Hall introduced “cultural identity” theory. In both literary and cultural studies, identity is a key term, existing in various social and cultural stages. “‘Identity’ remains one of the most urgent – as well as hotly disputed – topics in literary and cultural studies. For nearly two decades it has been a central focus of debate for psychoanalytic, poststructuralist, and cultural materialist criticism in areas ranging from postcolonial and ethnic studies to feminism and queer theory.”<sup>20</sup>

From 1987 to 1992, Stuart Hall published quite a few essays on the issue of identity. These essays illustrated the issue of cultural identity from the perspective of modernity, identity politics, and difference identity. Cultural identity involves such questions as “what we say” or “what we do”. From the exploration of these questions, our basic conception of ourselves will be clear. Stuart Hall’s contribution on cultural identity is that he pointed out two modes of cultural identity: oneness and difference. The first position defines cultural identity “in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective ‘one true self,’ hiding inside the many other more superficial and imposed ‘selves,’ which people with a shared history, and ancestry hold in common. This oneness describes the shared cultural codes of Indianness, Caribbeanness or Englishness, for example”. It is a unified identity as such that had impelled colonized people to rise up against colonization through the concepts of nationalism. Just as some critics have pointed out, “national identity continues to be a very powerful and creative force in emergent forms of representation amongst hitherto marginalized peoples. For immigrants, this kind of oneness is difficult to experience. For them, the identity formation which is more valid is a position which recognizes that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute ‘what we really are’; or rather – since history has intervened – ‘what we have become’”<sup>21</sup>. Cultural identity in this sense is a matter of becoming as well as being, more dynamic than static.

#### **Gabriel Sheffer<sup>22</sup>**

As a professor of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Gabriel Sheffer’s reputation and academic contribution to Diaspora Studies mainly lies in his masterpiece *Diaspora Politics: at Home Abroad* (2003). As the editors from Amazon.com have mentioned, this book is intended to “fill in a gap in the study of modern ethno-national diasporas”. Having pointed out that our current global trend is a mixture of “globalization, democratization, and the weakening of the nation-state and massive trans-state migration”, Sheffer makes an examination on the “politics of historical, modern and incipient ethno-national diasporas”.

Besides, in this book, Sheffer refutes a generally accepted view that both ethno-national diasporism and diasporas are a recent phenomenon. As Sheffer has pointed out, this is “a perennial phenomenon whose roots were in Antiquity. Some of the existing diasporas were created in antiquity, some during the Middle Ages and some are modern. An essential aspect of this phenomenon is the endless cultural-social-economic and especially political struggle of these dispersed ethnic groups that permanently reside in host countries away from their homelands to maintain their distinctive identities and connections with their homelands and other dispersed groups of the same nation. While describing and analyzing the diaspora phenomenon, the book sheds light on theoretical questions pertaining to current ethnicity and politics.”<sup>23</sup>

#### 2.2.3.1 Sheffer's Contemporary Definition on Diaspora

In *Diaspora Politics: at Home Abroad*, Sheffer gave a systematic definition of Diaspora. He openly challenged the traditional conception that the term “diaspora” is only limited to Jewish exile. He discovered that this term appeared as early as in Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War. In this famous work, this term “diaspora” was used to describe the dispersal of Aeginetans. What's more, he studied the Greek origin of the term: speiro = to sow, dia = over. Therefore, he noticed that the essence of this term lies in “settlement” instead of “movement” or “exile”. Thus his redefinition of “diaspora” is not only innovational, but also revolutionary. His definition on this term is as follows:

*“an ethno-national diaspora is a social-political formation, created as a result of either voluntary or forced migration, whose members regard themselves as of the same ethno-national origin and who permanently reside as minorities in one or several host countries. Members of such entities maintain regular or occasional contacts with what they regard as their homelands and with individuals and groups of the same background residing in other host countries. Based on aggregate decisions to settle permanently in host countries, but to maintain a common identity, diasporas identify as such, showing solidarity with their group and their entire nation, and they organize and are active in the cultural, social, economic, and political spheres. Among their various activities, members of such diasporas establish trans-state networks that reflect complex relationships among the diasporas, their host countries, their homelands, and international actors.”*

From this definition, several characteristics of diaspora can be summarized as follows:

Firstly, whether voluntary or forced migration, they have settled down in another country permanently, even for several generations. So they hardly have any ideas to go back to their homelands. Especially from the second-generation down, homeland for them usually is a very

abstract illusion on their minds. However, this does not mean that they must inherit all the negative illusions from their fathers or grandfathers.

Secondly, diasporas live in the host country as a minority group. No matter how their population in the host country grows, or what economic, political or social success they have made, their social position as a minority group will still keep stable. This will make diasporas keep frustrated, the degree of which may fluctuate.

Thirdly, diasporas are usually well organized in the host country. In view of the fact that diasporas live permanently as a minority group, the original function of this kind of organization may be for self-protection and self-support. Therefore, their organization may conflict their relationship with local people, which makes their total assimilation more difficult.

#### 2.2.3.2 Sheffer's Analysis of Contemporary Diasporas' Lives

Sheffer also gave a deep analysis on diasporans lives. He first claimed that some over-emphasized factors did not play a dominant role in diasporas' nature or their behavior in the host country. These factors include the reasons why diasporas choose to move to another country, the economic backgrounds of them, and the economic and political power of their homelands. When diasporas just arrive in their host countries all those diasporas, they have to meet similar problems and dilemmas. Besides, before their arrival of the host countries, the majority of them have not formed a clear view either on whether to live away from their homelands permanently, or on whether to keep their contacts with their homelands. They will not set out to make decisions on the permanent settlement until they have arrived in the host countries and have been aware of both political and economical situations of that country. Moreover, Sheffer pointed out that as far as those immigrants or refugees who voluntarily leave their homelands due to ideological or political reasons are concerned, relatively few of them are driven by the prior intentions either to settle, integrate or even assimilate into the host countries, or to join or organize diasporic entities.

Taking into consideration whether immigrants will make permanent settlement in host countries, Sheffer believes that the majority of those migrants who leave their homelands to go to a host country have no wish to stay there permanently. For one thing, they may meet restrictions on their permanent settlement by local government. For another thing, they may also face economic, political or social difficulties there. Therefore, migrants will not start to assimilate, integrate, join or establish diasporic entities unless they receive welcome from host countries.<sup>24</sup>

Quite a few scholars owe to external factors the fact that migrants are ready and capable of maintaining their ethno-national identities in their host countries and openly nurturing their

communities and supporting their homelands. They regard structural, social, and political environments as the dominant factors in affecting migrants' situations and their options in host countries. However, Sheffer holds a different opinion. He believed that "it is the migrants' capabilities and readiness that make tough decisions on their situations and their options in host countries". Therefore, it is not until migrants have overcome the initial shocks in leaving their homelands do they reach the critical formative stage in their development. Just like he has emphasized in his work, only then can they begin to deal with the difficult problems involved in settling in host countries: interacting with the culture prevailing there, confronting the daunting tasks of finding jobs and renting or buying suitable housing, establishing social relationships, and finding sympathetic and effective supporting systems.

As soon as migrants finish their initial adjustments and solve the immediate problems in their settlement of host countries, the main dilemma in their new lives will soon arise, that is, whether they should finally assimilate into the host countries or maintain their ethno-national identity. Here, Sheffer touches on a very important issue. He regards that issue as a "crucial strategic dilemma". In addition, he believes that immigrants are also required to make "many tactical decisions". Such decisions concern the migrants' expectations on better economic and political opportunities. To what degree those expectations are met will influence their decisions on assimilation or full integration. He warns that such dilemmas and questions may be further complicated if mixed marriages happen, or if the receiving societies provide attractive incentives and rewards to migrants as long as they would like to give up their old identities and achieve integration and even complete assimilation.

Immediately after migrants have arrived in the host countries, their decisions will have a far-reaching effect both on themselves, and on their kin in the countries of origin and even on the host countries and governments. As to their future lives in the host countries, migrants take a complex mixture of considerations, emotional and rational. Sheffer points out that both immigrants' primordial and psychological / symbolic identities and their practical instrumental considerations have a large effect on the majority of their decisions in the host countries.

As is mentioned above, ethno-national diasporas are those groups that remain minorities in their host countries. They may be faced with potential threat of expulsion and social, political, and economic hardships and rejection. No matter where migrants come from, upon their settlement in the host country, their primary target is to lead a stable life. So it is easy to understand that they rarely get involved with the conflicts with the host government actively. On the contrary, just as Sheffer points out, "to avoid undesirable conflicts between diasporas' norms and the norms and laws set by host governments or by dominant groups in those host



countries, most diasporas accept the basic rules of the game prevailing in their host countries". On this point, Sheffer offers a very clear illustration:

*"Diasporas are predisposed to come into conflict with their homelands, host countries, and other international actors. The likelihood of such conflicts is closely related not only to economic competition with other groups in host countries but also to absolute and relative degrees of economic and political deprivation. Such conflicts are sometimes caused by cultural subjective factors related to diaspora members' identity and identification, as well as the complex patterns of divided and dual authority and loyalty."*<sup>25</sup>

### 2.2.3.3 State-Linked Diasporas' Strategies and Tactics

Generally speaking, democratic host governments (for example the US), now show comparatively great tolerance toward all ethnic minorities, and this influences the stance of state-linked ethno-national diasporas in those countries. In various Western countries, those groups are gaining relative freedom, at least to pursue "cultural autonomy," which means they are able to maintain their own traditions, mores, and customs.

There are various grand strategies and specific tactics available for diaspora communities to tackle the relationship with both host countries and homelands. Sheffer pointed out that these various survival strategies employed by ethnic groups form a spectrum, ranging from full assimilation into host societies, at one pole, to separation from dominant host societies and eventual return to homelands, at the other pole. It is necessary for us to examine these strategies on this spectrum. There is a delicate balance between the types of strategies that diasporas pursue in host countries and those they adopt in dealing with their homelands, as Sheffer stresses.

To begin with, Sheffer introduced two general principles. The first principle is that diaspora members will choose strategies that aim to diminish their relations with the homeland on such conditions that they are eager to assimilate or fully integrate into their host societies, or weaken or even discard their ethno-national identities and either dissolve their organized communities or refrain from establishing them. On the other hand, diasporas who are aimed at maintaining their identity will adopt strategies that serve to consolidate their relations with their homelands. Another principle is that it is less popular and common for international migrants and both incipient and established diasporas to choose to fully assimilate into host societies. Then Sheffer pointed out six strategies as follows:

#### **The Assimilationist Strategy**

On his works, Sheffer directly pointed out that an assimilationist strategy is adopted by relatively few international migrants and members of incipient diasporas today. Generally

speaking, only established diasporas who “firmly intend to settle and do not intend to cultivate their connections with their homelands” choose such a strategy. As a full assimilationist, not only will he or she just identify with his/her host society totally and show his/her indifference to connections with the homeland, but also completely eradicate his/her own ethnic identity and adopting that of the predominant sector in the host society. However, taking into account what happened in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we can find that this is not an easy job. It is greatly difficult to discard one’s “primordial and psychological/symbolic identity” and identify a new one. Especially for those who have long kept aware the distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them,’ between ‘us’ and all ‘others,’ this is often impossible.

However, Sheffer himself also emphasizes that what he mentioned above is at present a hot and controversial topic between academic observers and diaspora members. This issue is touched on and debated from the perspective of both theory and practice. Some diasporans and academics hold such a viewpoint that assimilation is both possible and even highly desirable. Therefore, such diasporans will undoubtedly try their utmost to assimilate. The view here is that although individual assimilation definitely occurs, such a trend does not reach entire diaspora communities. Therefore, despite demographic losses, relatively large core groups maintain their ethno-national identities and connections with their homelands. Also, as for members of incipient diasporas, assimilation tends to be less appealing. Moreover, as Sheffer noted, many “assimilated” diasporans are “rediscovering” their old identities, rejoining their diaspora communities, and identifying as such”.

### **The Integrationist Strategy**

When immigrants adopt the integrationist strategy, they will not choose to assimilate. Instead, they tend to participate in social, economic, and political areas of the host society to substantial degrees. In other words, diaspora members make efforts to gain the same personal, social, economic, and political rights as the majority in the host society, and recognize and strive for their equal status. Diasporans who adopt such a strategy may, for one thing, try to make their ethno-national traits and characteristics less visible, and, for another thing, cut off their ties with official institutions in their homeland. Nevertheless, being different from immigrants adopting the assimilationist strategy, they will not discard their ethnic cultural features. Nor will they deny their homelands. Some of them may even return to their homelands.

In Sheffer’s words, those groups of long-established diasporas that have adopted either the assimilationist or integrationist strategies can be regarded as “dormant” diasporas. Under certain circumstances, those entities can “reawaken”. In other words, many of those in these two groups have relived their interest in their origins, played an active role in diaspora

organizations, and consequently reestablished contacts with their homelands.

### **The Communalist and Corporatist Strategies**

If an immigrant adopts the communalist strategy, he will participate in forming a "voluntary and relatively loose framework". This framework serves for three functions. First, it preserves his ethno-national identity. Second, it defends the diaspora. Third, it organizes members' activities vis-à-vis the host country, the homeland, and the other fragments of the dispersed nation. In other words, immigrants who adopt such a strategy tend to absorb into the host society to a reasonable degree, but they will not integrate into the host country completely, which might lead to assimilation. They will maintain constant and solid relations with the homeland.

As for the corporatist strategy, it has quite a lot in common with the communalist strategy. There are two key elements in the corporatist strategy: to maintain the ethno-national identity, and to identify with the group and provide services complementary to those supplied by the host country. The main difference between the communalist and corporatist strategies lies in the fact that as far as the relations with the host country's legal and political systems are concerned, immigrants that adopt the latter strategy hold formal status for communal organizations. As to their relationship with host-country authorities, those organizations officially represent affiliated members. Sheffer stressed that it is the political conditions prevailing in host countries that has an effect on whether immigrants adopt the communalist or corporatist strategy.

### **The Autonomist Strategy**

Immigrants who adopt the autonomist in their host countries strive for more special political and cultural rights and freedoms. Generally speaking, the question of whether such a strategy is feasible and effective is relied on two factors. The first factor is to what extent the territorial concentration of the host country is, and how culturally homogeneous diaspora groups are. The second factor is whether or not the host countries are willing to transfer some of their powers to ethno-national groups and to what extent such a transfer will be. Both factors may turn out to be major hinderances in the way of achieving such rights. In the past, various diasporas were granted certain degrees of political autonomy. However, according to Sheffer's research, such formal autonomist arrangements for diasporas hardly exist at present.

### **The Irredentist Strategy**

As for immigrants that adopt the irredentist strategy, their former historical homeland may (at least partially) be controlled by their host country. If they hold such a strategy, they aim to separate such territories from their host country, and tie them to the rest part of their historical homeland.

### The Separatist Strategy

Both the separatist strategy and the irredentist strategy can be referred to as the most radical political strategies that can be adopted by diasporas. The separation strategy strives for setting up an independent state in a diaspora's former historical homeland. On the other hand, the target of this strategy may also be return all or most parts of the ethnic nation.

As for Sheffer state-linked diasporas (Chinese American diasporas, for example), Sheffer emphasized two factors that play an important role in their selection of a strategy among these six choices. First, in spite of the fact that under certain circumstances a moderate strategy may cause conflicts with homelands, which always, undoubtedly, calls for immigrants' commitment and action on their behalf, such a strategy is still the best for many diasporas. Second, a moderate strategy seems to be the best way for diasporas to both pursue their most vital interests and deal with the relations with their host societies and governments. It is widely accepted that such a strategy makes host countries feel less dangerous, and such a strategy pose minimal (both actual and potential) threats to host societies. It is only then that the well-being of such groups can be secured both in host countries and in a changing global environment. Another reason why the majority of diasporas adopt a relatively moderate and inoffensive strategy is that diasporas also share the common idea with other groups, which is to lead a serene and secure life. The diasporan identity will not automatically dupe them into illegal or subversive activities. State-linked diasporas that tend to become involved in provocative activities only account for a relatively small portion. Therefore, in a word, it is clear that adoption of a communalist strategy is a carefully calculated response to social and political needs.

Gabriel Sheffer's study does not only enrich and develop the diaspora theory, but also keep in pace with modern society. Commenting on Sheffer's reputation and academic contribution, Matteo Fumagalli, School of Social and Political Studies, University of Edinburgh, UK, Ethnic and Racial Studies gave remarks as follows, "Gabriel Sheffer is among the leading figures of this expanding field of research that is diaspora studies...a worldwide known expert. Diaspora Politics represents an important contribution to a field... Sheffer's attempt to define conceptual boundaries and provide tentative classifications is helpful and should be greatly welcomed... His works prove indeed to be excellent and solid contribution to an expanding field of research and will certainly remain a must read for several years to come."<sup>26</sup>

## Chapter 3 Identification among Different Generations of Chinese Immigrants

### 3.1 Assimilations of American Society on Chinese Immigrants' Way of Life

There is something in common on the setting of *FOB* and *the Dance and the Railroad*. Firstly, both of these two plays happen in California. Secondly, the settings of both these two plays are in Chinese communities. The story of *FOB* happens in a Chinatown restaurant, while that of *the Dance and the Railroad* is in a 19<sup>th</sup> century labor camp. Both of these two plays create a Chinese environment, and the external surrounding directly serves for the themes of these two plays.

Compared with these two plays, the setting of *Family Devotions* has two features. First, it is located in a large house. As the curtain rise, a lanai/sunroom and a backyard can be seen. Besides, there is a tennis court in this house. The size of the house indicates the economic background of this family. So this family is well-off, belonging to American middle-class. In Act I, when Di-gou arrived in America, being afraid of spoiling the effect of persuading Di-gou to come back to God, Ama and Popo told Di-gou that Wilbur and Robert are two servants in their family. But Robert protests that he is not from a humble background. "Look, I'm not a country kid. It's not like I was that poor. I'm from Shanghai, you know." But Popo answers fears that neighbors may hear this remark ("Ssssh! Neighbors will hear!"). It can be inferred here that what she really fears is that neighbors may know that this family comes from China. Taking into account both the economic background of the family and the value of the house, we can be sure that this house may be located in a non-Chinese community. Their neighbors may not be all Chinese Americans, some of which may be White people. We can say that from the economic perspective the American dream of the family has come true.

Besides, this house also is very Americanized. Both the sunroom and the tennis court are of typical American style. At the beginning of the play, there is some smoke over the backyard, and a chickie barbeque is being cooked. Judging from the reaction of Ama when seeing the barbeque, she is surprised not because of the barbeque itself, but due to the fact that she finds there is something wrong with their cooking (Wilbur, the heat was too high on the barbeque! ... You should have been watching it! It could have exploded! We could all have been blown up!). From the later analysis, we can surely find that Ama makes such remarks largely because she is hostile to her son-in-law. However, we can also find that the reason for her annoyance here

is that she thinks Wilbur should watch it. She is not angry with the barbeque itself, and we can imply that such kinds of barbeque are not the first time to be cooked at home. Barbeque is not the typical food for either traditional Chinese (most of the family members) or Japanese people (Wilbur). So it can be seen that the lifestyle of the family is very Americanized.

Therefore, on the setting of *Family Devotions*, everything is Americanized. They live in an American community, the layout of this house is Americanized, and the lifestyle of the family is also Americanized. Therefore, one key word that can be used to describe is Americanization. This effect is totally different from the previous two works. The arrangement of the playwright here is not at random. If we say that in *FOB* and *the Dance and the Railroad* the external environments serve for the themes directly, we should say that in *Family Devotions* the setting serves for the theme in the reverse side.

### 3.2 Different Values on Identity among Three Generations of Immigrants

As far as character is concerned, there are totally 9 characters in *Family Devotions*. Taking a look at the other two plays of the trilogy, we can find that *FOB* has three characters (Dale, Grace, and Steve), while *the Dance and the Railroad* has only two characters (Long and Ma). Judging from the number of characters, *Family Devotions* is more complicated. Moreover, the 9 characters are classified into groups, according to their three generations, and they represent three attitudes. What makes the characterization of the play more successful is that not only is each group different from others, but the characters with the same group also have features respectively.

#### 3.2.1 The First Generation: Adherence to Chinese Culture and Customs Despite Their Pious Belief in Christianity

As for the first generation, we first look at the two sisters, Ama and Popo, with the Ama as the representative. They can be regarded as the antagonists of the play. After reading the play, the deepest impression that they leave to us is their insistence on Christianity. So readers may draw such a conclusion that because Christianity symbolizes American culture, Ama and Popo must turn their back on Chinese culture, and that is point that they are criticized in this play. However, if we take a look at Ama and Popo more carefully, we will find that they are not opponents to Chinese culture. Quite the contrary, Ama clearly shows her adherence to Chinese culture and customs on several occasions.

Ama first shows her standpoint the moment she appears on stage. Ama and Popo appear both at the beginning of Act I, and soon we get to know that she does not live in harmony with her son-in-law Wilbur, and the reason is no other than Wilbur's nationality. On Ama's mind, Wilbur comes from Japan, whose army killed numerous Chinese innocent people during the Anti-Japanese War (1931 – 1945). Here we can easily notice that Ama deal with

the relationship with Wilbur from the point of a Chinese. Another important scene that shows Ama's standpoint and values is also in Act I, in which Ama and Popo have a conversation Jenny on her future career and marriage. Knowing that her American-born granddaughter can understand a Chinese phrase, in spite of the fact that this phrase is used for insulting her, Popo still feel excited ("Yes. Very Good! ... Her Chinese is improving!"). While talking with Jenny on her future Mr. Right, Ama and Popo's criteria on Jenny's future husband reflects their standpoint more clearly. First, they directly correct Jenny's opinion on the meaning of "good man" ("Otherwise – no good man will marry you." "You mean, no rich man." "No, money is not important."). As an American-born girl, Jenny's ideas are fully influenced by American values, among which mammonism is the representative. Ama and Popo's critique on this idea indirectly reflects their attitude towards America and American ideas. Later on, Ama and Popo give a definition on the term "good man" in a humorous manner. Among these key words (Christian, Chinese, good education, good school, Princeton, Harvard, Doctor, surgeon, brain surgeon, surgeon general), Chinese is not only a must, but also stand in the second position, only next to Christian, thus the importance of the sign "Chinese" on their minds.

However, if we look at Ama and Popo carefully, we can find that it is difficult to describe these two characters. It is easy to find humorous elements in this play, and quite a few critics regard it as a comedy, or even farce. Ama and Popo is also among the funniest characters in this work. If we say that they are funny just because their belief is the target of the author's critique, our above analysis proves that their Chinese values are very deep. Besides, from the relationship between Ama/Popo and Chester/Di-gou, we may regard the former as the antagonist, and their final death at last seems also to prove that this is a complete comedy. However, the question is that after we finish reading the play, we will get such an impression that they should be punished, but they do not deserve the final death, and their death does not make us feel happy.

### 3.2.2 The Second Generation: Americanization on Material and Spiritual Dimensions

The second generation is made of two couples: Wilbur, Joanne, Robert, and Hannah. There are two main features of this generation: the economic success and the changing of values. On the economic success, Wilbur is the representative figure. With his hard work, he earns money and buys this large house, stepping into American middle class. On the changing of values, Robert is the representative person. Robert's economic success is not as great as Wilbur's, but it seems that he more regards himself as an American ("I respect China!"), the word "respect" here indicating his exclusion of this group "Chinese". Moreover, he seems to have his own understanding on "Americanness" ("Look, in America, there's so much, we don't have to be polite at all! ... Well, here in America, we can be pigs!") But the question lies

in whether his illusion on America and Americans is right. Robert's performance may cause the audience's laugh, but more readers will show sympathy on this character for his twisted identity, which will be discussed on next section.

### 3.2.3 The Third Generation: Total Strangeness to China

The third generation includes two persons: Chester and Jenny. As the protagonist of the story, Chester is surely the representative of this generation. Both of them were born and educated in America. In this work, there is not so much introduction of the educations of these two characters. On the education of this generation, we are told that Jenny learn some Chinese in school, so it can inferred that Jenny's school may be only open to Chinese students, at least segregated from American students. In their spare time, they are also fully exposed to American culture, and their ideas on the homeland are minimal. When Di-gou arrives in America, Ama asked every family member to stay and meet him, but Chester wants to pack and leave. For Ama, Di-gou is her family member, and the meeting is an important occasion both for religion and family affection, the root of which is traditional Chinese family culture. But on Chester's mind, Di-gou is strange to him, and he is not interested in this family member from China. As for Jenny, she tries her best to leave that meeting ceremony as early as possible. When asked what she is going to do, she tells Di-gou that she will read *Vogue*, a fashion magazine.

As for Di-gou, he is the only one in this play who uses Chinese name. Though just arriving in America, he is not an FOB. He used to take college education in the US when he was young, then he came back to China. This time he comes to US again to visit his sisters. Different from other family members, he is not a Diaspora. He has never imagined settling down permanently in the US. He repeatedly stresses that he will come back to China, and China is his home. Di-gou is one of the most important characters in this play. It is his appearance that completely changes the family. His importance in this play can be seen in three points. First, before Di-gou appears, his name is mentioned by Ama and Popo. Since his name is a Chinese name, almost everyone fails to pronounce this name correctly. Here it reflects that not only is Di-gou unfamiliar to them, but also their unfamiliarity to China and Chinese. Second, it is Di-gou who directly challenges the Christian belief, and as for the true story of See-goh-poh, the discussion of whom goes through the play, he is the only person who knows the truth. It is Di-gou's truth that breaks Ama and Popo's values into pieces and causes their death. Third, it is Di-gou that introduces the theme of the play on his talk with Chester ("You must be one with your family before you can hope to live away from it.").

From the perspective of technique, there is one key point in this play. On the story of See-goh-poo, the author borrowed two stories from the Bible, and changed the ending of them.



The meaning of these two stories is the same, which is the absence of Christian God in Chinese community. First, Ama and Popo told the story that See-goh-poh casts out Ah Hong's opium demon. When Ama was young, Ah Hong was the servant of their family. After eating opium, he said that everything was as clear as glass. Moreover, he could even see through wall, floor, ground, and all the way through hell, and he could talk with Satan and demon, who pretended to be Ah Hong's dead uncles. Demon pretended to be ghost, and showed himself to Ah Hong everywhere – in kitchen, well, barn, and streets of village. So See-goh-poh came, called on God, said only, "Demon begone." From then on, there were no more ghosts, and Ah Hong stopped eating opium. The archetype of this story can be found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and the man who cast out the demons is Jesus. Jesus cast out the demon in the name of God, and God is with him. However, Di-gou says the true story is that Ah Hong didn't quit opium, and soon he died. So in See-goh-poh's case, she did the same job, but God was absent. The second story is on See-goh-poh's preach. When Di-gou was eight years old, he went with See-goh-poh on her first evangelism tour – they travelled all round Fukien – thirty days and nights, preach to all villages. Five hundreds of people accepted Christ on these thirty days. See-goh-poh healed many sick, restored ear to deaf, put tongue in mouth of dumb, and cast out the demon. Perhaps one dead man even rose up from his sleep. What really happened was told from Chester's mouth. According to him, Di-gou at eight goes with See-goh-poh on her first evangelism tour. They travelled through the summer heat to a small village in Fukien. While sleeping in the straw next to See-goh-poh, Di-gou heard a baby cry. He woke up and saw See-goh-poh naked and screaming, with her legs spread far apart. Between her legs, a mouth opened up. Soon See-goh-poh put a baby out of the blood. See-goh-poh has a baby before she gets married, and she was dropped out by the crowd. Here this story may originate from John. On chapter 8 of John, Jesus went to the temple and taught the people. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the very act of committing adultery. According to the Ten Commandments, this woman should to be stoned to death. Jesus straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." When they heard it, they went away one by one. Seeing that no one condemned her, Jesus said to the woman, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again." When See-goh-poh was dropped out by the crowd, there was no God to save her from the condemnation. Both of these two stories reflect the absence of God. Some critics claim that the main target of this play is Christianity, and they regard this play as an anti-Christian work. They believe that the author's deconstruction of the Bible in these two stories is to break Christianity into pieces. However, if we say Christianity is the author's target, how to explain the theme of the play, which is not

associated with religion? Quite a few critics point out that the theme of the story is on the identity of Chinese people<sup>27</sup>. If so, what is the relation between Christianity and identity in this work? All of these questions must be answered from the perspective of identity.

## Chapter 4 Symbolic Meanings of Stage Properties Corresponding to the Three Generations

*Family Devotions* is an allegory depicting a cultural awakening of the individual. The world is reversed; “civilized” Christians behave as heathens, and the “heathen” Asian offers wisdom, solace, and love. Hwang calls for Asian Americans to embrace their Asian heritage.<sup>28</sup> As we mentioned above, this theme of the play centers on identity, which is the key issue of diaspora theory. Therefore, an analysis from the perspective of diasporism is necessary for understanding the play.

As we mentioned above, the 9 characters belong to three generations. Among them there are eight diasporas (except Di-gou, for he is only a visitor to the US). On describing these three generations of diasporas, the author delicately uses three stage properties, each one corresponding to one generation. Moreover, the three properties all have symbolized meanings, reflecting their different values on identity.

The property corresponding to the first generation is the Chinese toys that Di-gou takes along when he comes to America. On showing Ama and Popo the truth of Ah Hong’s story, Di-gou opens up his suitcase and takes out these two toys and a small Chinese flag. Di-gou’s idea on his identity is very clear, for he always emphasizes that his home is in China, and that he must come back to China. The two toys are shown at the moment that Ama and Popo tried to persuade Di-gou to turn to Christianity. Here, the meaning of these two toys – a summon to the homeland – is very clear. However, on seeing these toys, Ama and Popo “try to ignore them”. The word “ignore” here indicates the attitude of the sisters. On analyzing the characters of the play, we see that though Ama and Popo fully accept Christianity, which is the symbol for American culture (this issue will be discussed soon), they still cling to Chinese cultures on their minds. So what is the relationship between American and Chinese cultures for them? The word does not only tell us that for them these two cultures are conflicting, but also indicates that their final choice. China and memories on it are repressed, but cannot be erased. So the first generation’s way of life is between assimilationist and communalist strategy. In other words, they consciously repress their affection to China and try to cling to American culture, but they cannot come to the endpoint.

The second generation is made of two couples, among whom Wilbur and Robert are vividly described. The “palace”-like house is the fruit of Wilbur’s hard work. It is not easy to

find that Wilbur corresponds to the integrationist strategy. In Act I, when Di-gou just arrives in America, Wilbur carries a strange machine on the stage and partners with Di-gou to play tennis vs the machine. This machine is made by the US, the function of which is to serve balls automatically. Soon this self-feeder seems to go wrong. More and more balls are shot towards Wilbur and Di-gou, and the speed of these balls is uncontrollable. Wilbur can't tackle such balls and plan to turn the machine off, while Di-gou still try to meet the challenge, and say to himself such words as "Good luck! Persevere! Overcome! ... I will preserve!" But at last Di-gou confessed that he is "overcome". Just then Ama catches sight of their playing, and she exclaims "he is such a bad loser". Here we should notice that all these words mentioned by Di-gou are key words for American dream. Spoken out by Chinese immigrants, these words have special meanings. On adopting the integrationist strategy and keeping these words in mind, immigrants of these generations work hard to realize their American dream. However, no matter how hard they work and how firmly they grasp the American spirit, finally they are still overcome by the US-made machine, which symbolizes American society and American mechanic civilizations. So this scene, especially the remark by Ama, indicates the fate of people who hold such a strategy.

If Wilbur is an example for immigrants of the second generation who gets lost in American material society and mechanic civilization, Robert is an example who loses himself in American society spiritually. Robert is not as economically successful as Wilbur, and his characteristics also limit his career development. On his mind, he consciously clings to American society, only to form a twisted illusion on American culture and values. Before Di-gou plays tennis with the machine, Robert has a talk with him about "the American ways". When Robert just arrived in America, he met an American girl, who kissed him on their first date. Then Robert believed that America was a "land of opportunity", and turned his back to China since then. Not only does this case prove that he is not accepted by American society, but reflects his abasement in the American society, for his excitement comes from nothing but the fact that an FOB can win the romantic affair with an American girl. So the low social status of Chinese FOBs in this "land of opportunity" can be seen. Another example is his tackling of *guo-tieh*, which is also the property corresponding to him. After sharing his romantic experience with Di-gou, Robert invites him to enjoy the *guo-tieh* on the table, but Di-gou prefers to wait for the dinner time. Robert says, "Look, in America, there's so much, we don't have to be polite at all! ... Well, here in America, we can be pigs! ... I know. You're not hungry. Think I'm hungry? No, sir! What I have to do is to convince you? Here. This is the land of plenty!" Then he drops a tray of *guo-tieh* on the ground, and tromps them all. When asked what he is doing, Robert answers, "Only us immigrants really know American

ways. ... What's a few *guo-tieh* in defense of America?" *Guo-tieh* is a typical Chinese food, and Robert believes that the ruining of Chinese food is worthy in defense of America. However, the question is whether his defense of America is worthy. He believe that the difference between Chinese and American lives is that in America people can forget about politeness and live like pigs. He also chooses the integrationist strategy. His integration is more spiritual, and he does integrate into American life in his own way. However, he misunderstands the American spirit both because of his low social status and the ill-treatment from the society, and he goes astray and loses himself in searching for the true American spirit.

The third generation includes Chester and Jenny. As the protagonist of the story, the change of Chester's attitude is the main thread of the play. The stage property that corresponds to him is the violin. Reading through the play, we can easily find that it is his violin that symbolizes his attitude towards his identity. At the beginning of play, Chester is prepared for joining Boston symphony. As a professional musician, violin symbolizes his career. His worrying about packing reflects his excitement. He regards his Boston journey as the beginning of his American dream. As for the granduncle from distance, he has no interest. Later, Robert comes to tell Chester that the news of his joining into Boston symphony has been published on the newspaper. At this moment Chester's American dream has reached its climax. He cannot wait to take a look at the newspaper, for this indicates that he has been accepted by American society. However, he soon discovers that it is a Chinese newspaper, which is only circulated within Chinese community. For him the acceptance from the mainstream society has still been out of reach. From the detail that Chester asks Robert to translate the Chinese news to him, we know that Chester does not speak Chinese. And as for another child Jenny, she cannot master Chinese, either. So the cultural values of the third generation can be seen. They never come to China, nor do they speak Chinese. So China and Chinese culture is very strange and unfamiliar to them.

To make matters worse, not only does this piece of news merely appear on Chinese newspaper, but also there are full of errors (Boston symphony is mistaken for New York Philharmonic). So Chester realizes that even Chinese community has no interest in this young artist, no to mention mainstream society. After realizing all these, Chester agrees to stay and meet Di-gou. So here the question comes: it seems that the Chester's attitude changes coincidentally. In other words, Having adopted the integrationist strategy, if all these coincidences did not happen, the third generation would follow the same route with their fathers. Is that true? Here we must point out that the change of attitudes of the third generation is inevitable, having nothing to do with coincidence. As we mentioned earlier, diasporas of

every generation live in an environment of globalization and localization. These two conflicting forces combine into one, each of which cannot function without the other. The more successful these diasporas become, the greater the force of localization will be, and vice versa. The second generation has achieved economic and political success to some extent. But as we analyzed above, they cannot avoid being overcome by American society, the reason of which is the force of localization. When it comes to the third generation, on their way to success, the counterforce must be stronger. So we can draw the conclusion that their change of attitude is inevitable.

From the violin, Chester and Di-gou touch on the topic of China and Chinese identity. Chester's violin, which is also the symbol of his American dream, now serves as a mirror, reflecting his root – Chinese identity, thus the theme of the play is introduced ("You must be one with your family before you can hope to live away from it."). Here, we must stress that Di-gou does not ask Chester to become a returnee. First, what Di-gou asks Chester to do is to admit the fact that his ancestors are in China. On explaining the meaning of "family", Di-gou points out that family refers to the ancestors, of which See-goh-poh cannot be the representative. She is the first Christian whose values were changed by white missionaries, but there are many generations before her. Second, Di-gou has no wish to change Chester's diaspora identity ("Chester, you are in America. If you deny those who share your blood, what do you have in this country?"). So Chester will not become returnee. The strategy that he adopts will be also the communalist one, but compared with the first generation who tends to sway between the communalist and assimilationist strategy, the third generation tends to go to the opposite direction, which means that they pay more attention on their Chinese root.

Next we will discuss the Christianity. It seems that what the author attacks in this play is Christianity, and quite a few critics claim that *Family Devotions* is an anti-religion work. However, there are several reasons to prove that Christianity is not the target of the author. First, as we mentioned above, the theme of the play is on the identity of Chinese diasporas instead of Christianity. Second, Christianity in this play is usually put in the binary oppositions between Christianity and China ("In her last moment, See-goh-poh wanted to be buried in Chinese soil, not Christian soil"). As is mentioned above, the word "China" here refers to the identity. Besides, the theme of the play is also the choice of identity. So the opposition between China and Christianity infers that "Christianity" in this play does not only refer to the religion itself, but also implies another choice of identity, which is American identity. Therefore, what the play attacks is not a religion, but a choice of identity, and the symbol of Christianity is cohesive with the theme.

## Chapter 5 Conclusion

*Family Devotions* vividly offers us a glimpse of the life of a diasporan family. On the one hand, quite a few critics have discovered the autobiographical feature of the play through the external study, which means that this work can be used as a material for social and political study of Chinese diasporas. On the other hand, the application of diaspora theory does provide satisfactory answers to questions posed by textual analysis. So diaspora theory is a suitable basis for the analysis of this play.

As the last work of the "Trilogy of Chinese America", *Family Devotions* inherits the theme of identity from the previous two works. Moreover, from the analysis in this story, not only do we disagree with critics' view that this play is "less achieved", but also we have to point out this play reaches the climax of the trilogy. For one thing, the technique of play is more mature. Hwang always likes to use typical Chinese stage properties to feature the theme of Chinese identity, and one of the most typical examples is the elements of traditional Chinese opera. Such elements appear both in *FOB* and *the Dance and the Railroad* (and in his masterpiece *M. Butterfly*).

In *Family Devotions*, the identity issue can be concluded as follows. On the one hand, different generations of Chinese diasporas hold different ideas on the issue of identity. On the other hand, diasporas within one generation may have minor difference on this issue (such as Ama and Popo, Wilbur and Robert, and it should be emphasized that though Wilbur is a Japanese American, his Japanese background is not emphasized in this play, which means that the general character of his identity as an Asian diaspora outweighs his Japaneseness). However, the vertical difference among different generations is greater than the horizontal difference within one generation. On the changing of their attitudes, the coexistence and interaction of globalization and localization forms the both sides of the spectrum, and their attitudes will not move in either side single-handedly. Rather, its moving track will be like the pendulum. This phenomenon has both external and internal reasons. Externally, the host country always maximizes the interests of the native citizens. When diasporas make economic and political success, native citizens' interest will be undermined (only to some degree), so the force of localization will be heavier, putting on more pressure on diasporas, who will accordingly come closer to Chinese cultures. This closeness may be seen in their activity of network among diasporas, or even the intervention of the homeland in assisting diasporan activities.

On the other hand, with the localizing pressure on diasporas increasing, diasporas' network and activities will turn active. Moreover, too much limit on diasporas' living space may also pose social problems, such as social security. Under this circumstance, the force of globalization will take the upper hand, and diasporas' attitude will accordingly go to the other side. As for the internal elements, diasporas' weak position in the host country will not be changed in the near future. So to protect themselves and live a comfortable and stable life will be their top priority, and the realization of which demands them to be obedient to the host country and government. They surely may make use of some opportunities to take initiative, but generally these opportunities are slim.

The two Chinese toys and the small Chinese national flag are another two examples of stage properties with Chinese style. However, for showing the attitude changing of Chester, the most important property is not toys and flag, but the violin. Moreover, Chester emphasizes to the audience that this violin is "made in the US", and we also know that the violin is the symbol of Chester's American dream. But it is such a property which reflects his Chinese identity, and finally stresses the theme. This can be said as a technical breakthrough of Hwang's writing. For another, as for the number of characters, *Family Devotions* also reach the climax of the trilogy. Moreover, these 9 characters belong to three generations. Different generations of Chinese diasporas hold different ideas on the issue of identity. At the same time, diasporas within one generation may have minor difference on this issue. The obvious vertical difference and the delicate horizontal difference of the values among these 9 characters illustrates Hwang's stronger competence on characterization.

From the perspective of diasporism, we get a map of the identification of three generations of Chinese diasporas. As we have analyzed, the conflict between globalization and localization will be constant, and their respective power will also change over time. Therefore, the track of pendulum is dynamic. In view of the passive and weak position of diasporas in the host country, the external force will take the upper hand. This trend will not be changed in the near future. Such is the overall situation of diasporas in the host country.

On the study of *Family Devotions* and diaspora theory, we are excited to receive such fruits. However, we can easily find that these two subjects are like a treasure island, and what we have found so far is only to road to its entrance. The scenery landscape and the innumerable treasure are still waiting for us. First, as for the *Family Devotions*, the literary value of this work has not been fully appreciated by critics. We believe that both literal appreciation and textual analysis are still to be done, and its aesthetic value is also to be reevaluated. Second, as a new critical theory, diasporism opens a new window for us to study literary works. Since this theory appeared, it has aroused scholars' great interest. Not only has



the theoretical study been widely carried out, which makes its theoretical basis more enriched and solid, but also more and more scholars and critics have applied this theory for literary study, especially on those written by authors of minority groups. However, so far the application of diaspora theory on literary study has mainly centered on individual works. Take this essay as an example, we have scribbled a map on the identification of three generations of Chinese Americans, but this map is still based on one single work. If we could apply this theory on works written by different authors and on different periods of times, combine all these fruits together and make a global analysis, maybe we can get a bird-eye view on the issue of identity. Third, the theoretical basis of diasporism is still open to innovation. As we have mentioned in this essay. The analysis of diasporas cannot live without the studying of social and political environment of both the host country and the homeland. Take Chinese Americans for example. Their weak position and their minority in number cannot be changed in the near future. However, on the one hand, for those hard-working immigrants, the political and economic success is inevitable. In view of the limit in the host country, the status of diasporas will be increased in a spiral track. With the increase of their political power and economic success, they will be more eager to get involved in social and political activities. On the other hand, the relationship between their host country and their homeland has been never as dynamic as today. China has developed at an amazing speed, and the power gap between China and the US changes each day. Under this circumstance, the social position of Chinese diasporsas in the US cannot be unaffected. Moreover, their growing in confidence may help them to take more initiatives in political and social activities in the host country, which may accordingly change to some extent the conflicting condition between the power of globalization and localization in the US, which means the internal force of diasporas may prompt the change of external situations. If so, then diaspora theory will meet an opportunity for further enrichment.

## Notes

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