

Interracial Romances in Asian-American Literature
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Each week, I would usually read two novels and secondary sources, while also writing a 4-6 page response paper for my Friday meetings with Professor Kong. In preparation for my project, I read Erika Lee's historical account *7KH0 DNQJ R \$VDQ\$PHUFD* and Kumiko Nemoto's *5DFLQ 5RP DQFH*, a sociological inquiry based upon interviews with white-Asian couples.

The first part of my project officially began with the famous Orientalist text, "Madame Butterfly" by John Luther Long, in which a Japanese woman falls in love with an American official and commits suicide when she learns that he has abandoned him. This text is infamous for its depiction of the relationship's power dynamics: the American official is indifferent to his lover and treats her as a toy, whereas the Japanese woman remains devoted to him for years after he leaves and kills herself out of the sadness he has caused her. I also read Mit

by Susan Choi.

by Maxine Hong Kingston, (*YHU WLOJ*), *1 HMU7RC <RX* by Celeste Ng, and *1 DMH6S-DNHU* by Chang-Rae Lee. These works describe the disillusionment of Asian characters who believed that they had successfully assimilated.

7KH
(*[SDWIDM/Larissa Lai's 6DOY LK* UOT* Ed Chiang's "The Story of Your Life," and Ken Liu's *7KH 3DSHU0 HQDJHUIHDQG2 WHU6VUIHV*

While I had originally set out to write two 12-15 page essays as the capstones to my project, I ended up writing a 30 page essay about Choi's *7KH*) K

characters. I leaned upon the thoughts of postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha, who argues that colonial relationships are characterized by a mimicry of the elite. Bhabha argues that this mimicry always reveals an *DPELYDQFH*, in which the contradictions of the colonizing project is realized through the colonized's dual attitudes of obedience and mockery. The second part of my essay analyzed why the relationship between the two main characters, Chang Ahn and Katherine Monroe, is successful despite--or because--of certain obstacles: different identities, lack of communication, and minor prejudices towards one another. Here, I turn to Hannah Arendt's insights in *2 QWH2 UJLQ/R 7RWDWUJQVP*, and argue that the identities of both characters are *VSDWV* from political oppression and social exclusion, but becomes reunified through the witnessing presence of an affirming other.

Faculty Member: Belinda Kong
Funded by the Martha Reed Coles Fellowship