

**Teaching Chinese-Canadian Literature to Taiwanese Students—An
Educational Strategy**

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Abstract

This thesis explores alternative ways for English literature students in Taiwanese Science Universities to choose more culturally accessible works in addition to the canonical English and American literature. Currently, many students consider their experience of reading Western literature to be both perplexing and frustrating because of inadequate language capability as well as unfamiliarity with Western culture. The rationale for introduction to works emerging from the Chinese diaspora is to enable students to situate their personal experiences within the context of different cultures, but ones that nonetheless have accommodated Chinese communities and values. Bearing this in mind, choosing English language works from within the Chinese diaspora is a natural progression and is based on the assumption that its content shares the same cultural identity that Taiwanese students are already familiar with. My hope is to provide teaching strategies for literature teachers of Taiwan to consider. The learning culture in Taiwan tends to dissociate the self and sentiments from the learning experience. Accordingly, it is hard for them to express their own feelings within the learning environment. In this thesis I try to address these

problems through examination of Rosenblatt's transactional theory (1995), and exemplification of the theory through Nussbaum's literary exegesis of Henry James' *Golden Bowl*. I then attempt a parallel study of Wayson Choy's *The Jade Peony* (1995) as an example of how a work from the Chinese diaspora might be used in a Taiwanese classroom. I argue that the application of transactional theory could enhance meaning making in English literature classes for Taiwanese students. The thesis concludes with a discussion of strategic emphases for teachers of English literature in Taiwan.

Synoptique

Cette thèse explore les différentes approches disponibles aux étudiants de la littérature anglaise dans les universités des sciences au Taiwan qui leur permettraient une meilleure compréhension des oeuvres anglaises et américaines en général ainsi que celles de leur littérature classique.

Actuellement, un grand nombres d'étudiants taïwanais éprouvent un sentiment perplexe et frustrant en lisant la littérature Occidentale vu la difficulté de pouvoir bien comprendre la langue ainsi que la culture elle même.

L'introduction des étudiants aux oeuvres émanant du sein des communautés chinoises expatriées, leur permettra de situer leurs expériences personnelles dans le contexte de différentes cultures, particulièrement celles qui ont accommodé les communautés chinoises et leurs propres valeurs.

Ceci prendrait en considération le fait que le choix des oeuvres rédigés en langue anglaise émanant des communautés chinoises expatriées représente une progression naturelle, et repose sur l'hypothèse que le contenu de ces oeuvres partage la même identité culturelle des étudiants taïwanais

Je souhaite donc offrir aux instructeurs de littérature taïwanais des

stratégies d'enseignement qu'ils pourraient prendre en considération. La culture de l'enseignement au Taïwan a tendance de dissocier les sentiments et l'expérience personnelle de l'expérience d'apprentissage. Par conséquent il est difficile dans ce contexte pour les enseignants d'exprimer leurs propres sentiments.

Dans ma thèse j'essaie de traiter ces problèmes en examinant la théorie transactionnelle (1955) de Rosenblatt, tout en l'illustrant par l'entremise de l'exégèse littéraire appliqué par Nussbaum sur l'oeuvre de Henry James intitulée *Golden Bowl*. Ensuite j'effectue une étude parallèle du livre de Wayson Choy intitulé *The Jade Peony* (1995), pour illustrer comment une oeuvre provenant de la communauté expatriée chinoise pourrait être utilisée dans une classe taïwanaise. Je maintiens donc que l'application de la théorie transactionnelle pourrait faciliter une meilleure compréhension de la littérature anglaise par les étudiants dans les classes taïwanaises. La thèse se termine par une discussion sur les stratégies de formation proposées pour les enseignants de la littérature anglaise au Taïwan .

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Prologue

I have been teaching English literature in the Applied Foreign Language department of a Science University in the center of Taiwan for fifteen years. Most of my students graduated from vocational high schools. Some majored in business, some in accounting, some in computer science, and a few were in nursing. They chose to enter this department to improve their English ability in order to have a competitive edge in their future careers. In our department, we offer practical English courses, such as translation, business English, conversation, composition and Western literature. The study of Western literature has long been considered a way to enhance students' ability to comprehend the English language as well as students' understanding of Western culture. However, Western literature for most of the students seems to be incomprehensible. I have identified four problems that prevent them from understanding and appreciating Western literature as language and as an exemplification of a culture. These include: inadequacy of English comprehension, inappropriate teaching materials, rote teaching method and the perceived unimportance of literature.

Inadequacy of English comprehension: Students receive little English training.

They have problems in comprehending syntax, grammar and semantics. Therefore, their limited understanding of the complexities of the English language discourages them from engaging with the study of Western literature. Thus, the attempt to increase their comprehension as well as language abilities through the study of Western literature is handicapped from the start.

Inappropriate teaching materials: In most schools in Taiwan Western literature is defined as American or English classical works, such as Melville's *Moby Dick*, Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*, Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* (see also Appendix I and II). There has been a heated debate among literature teachers in Taiwan about which works of literature should form the basis of the curriculum. That is, on one side there are those who argue in favour of canonical works thought to represent typical American or English cultural values. For example, Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* depicts moral decadence in the Victorian age. On the other side are those who argue for students' experiences as the first priority in any educational endeavor because, they insist, the learning experience would be effective if it was related to students' personal experiences. My experience has convinced me that canonical American and English works are beyond students' comprehension, not only

in language but in culture. Therefore the literature fails to accomplish its mission — to improve students' English proficiency and cultural understanding. Some students regard the literary language in classical works as quite different from daily language. Moreover, the culture the author reflects in the canonical works is outside their experience. The concept of decadence within the context of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, for instance, is incomprehensible to the students in our program.

Rote teaching method: The teaching culture in Taiwan emphasizes collective values rather than individual ones and is inclined to stress certitude. Students as well as teachers try to give standard answers to questions. Alternative answers sometimes will be regarded as a challenge to the authority of the teachers. Individuality in Chinese culture sometimes is considered as egocentricity. Similarly, teachers tend to dissociate the self and sentiments from students' personal experiences. Therefore, Chinese teachers of English and Chinese literature ignore the cultivation of affective response. In other words, they do not pay attention to how the students feel about the works and how the works relate to their own experiences. However, I contend that attention to affective response is essential to develop students' critical minds as well as to establish their own meanings towards the text and the world. The key point lies in

the awareness of one's own value judgments through those affective responses. For instance, I feel displeased about the nihilism in Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* because it is contradictory to my cultural value about the conflict with parents and the negative attitude towards life. The world to me is not nothingness. From this story I learn that different attitudes create different meanings towards the world.

Insignificant role of literature: Some students think the study of literature is not a prerequisite for a successful life. They do not see the connection between literature and professional studies, like computer science or engineering. They can improve their English ability in other courses like conversation, writing or oral drills. In other words, literature means little to them because the "market-oriented" education fails to acknowledge the value of reading literature.

Besides those aforementioned four problems, I would like to include teachers' personalities in education. In Chinese culture, teachers' personalities play a very important role to students. Teachers may sometimes become the determining factor in a student's capacity to learn or not. Thus, to develop a good personality on the teachers' part is also an essential issue in education.

To sum up, there are many reasons that students do not appreciate Western

literature in Taiwan, although I think the aforementioned four problems are the main elements. It requires students' language capabilities to appreciate the classical works and their interests in reading literature. To excite their interests the teacher needs to create more teaching strategies in connection with students' learning experiences.

In Taiwan, most English literature teachers receive an orthodox literary training, such as the elements of different genres, different literary criticism approaches and classical masterpieces of each period, as I did. We study American and English classical works as well as literary criticism chronologically from ancient times to the present, period by period. As we become literature teachers, we also follow suit. However, I find that teaching Western literature like this is a torture not only to me but to my students. I need to change my teaching style and the proper works for Taiwanese students to study. This is the motivation that brings me to this research project.

In next chapter, I am going to introduce the main theoretical frameworks for teaching Western literature.

Introduction

A central problem in teaching English literature in Taiwan is that literature teachers tend to believe that the teaching of Western literature should cover only American or English canonical works. In part, this concept is not misguided because those canonical works really do reflect Western social events, such as the fact that the Industrial Revolution in the Victorian age widened the gap between the rich and the poor. Many authors describe the poverty in their works, like William Blake's *Songs of Innocence — The Chimney Sweeper*. But if students find the canonical language and plot incomprehensible, then an understanding of western culture remains problematic. Nonetheless, a teacher's job is to help students to cross the barriers and enjoy literature.

In this thesis I will argue that the ideas of Rosenblatt (1995) and Nussbaum (1990) provide a suitable theoretical and philosophical basis for an improved pedagogy for the teaching of English language literature to Taiwanese students. My goal with this thesis is to develop a philosophically and theoretically sound basis for literature teachers in Taiwan that may lead to a more culturally relevant way of teaching. The

whole concept of Rosenblatt's transactional theory is based on tapping students' experiences in both efferent and aesthetic reading. The aim is to guide students toward a transactional literary performance in order to create their own interpretations of the text as well as of the world. The literary experiences that Nussbaum describes from her reading of *The Golden Bowl* to explicate the meaning of Aristotle's idea of practical wisdom provide an exemplification of Rosenblatt's transactional concept. Such transaction in literary experience has been ignored by the literature teachers in Taiwan. Therefore it is my hope that through my discussion of Rosenblatt and Nussbaum I may lay the philosophic ground work for a more effective teaching approach for Taiwanese students to engage in the study of literature.

Thus, in the first chapter, I will discuss the ideas of Rosenblatt and Nussbaum. I will demonstrate Nussbaum's exegesis of James's novel as an example of Rosenblatt's theory by her efferent and aesthetic reading stances. In the second chapter, I will discuss the affective contribution to engagement with literature. I argue that affective response is an essential component of meaning making in encounters with literature, as it is in any educational endeavor. In the third chapter, I will briefly introduce Wayson Choy's *The Jade Peony* (1995) as an example of

Chinese diaspora literature. I will highlight certain passages for critical examination, with particular attention to the place of feeling in response to the story. In the fourth chapter, I will illustrate some teaching strategies I think are useful in relation to this novel. I will also cite other works for parallel studies. Those teaching methods I suggest here are the purposes for exemplifying Rosenblatt's transactional theory. In the fifth chapter, I will draw my conclusions.

Chapter I

In this chapter, I turn to the ideas of Rosenblatt and Nussbaum for my thesis framework to address the problems of teaching literature. The following discussion is to clarify those four components of the problems as outlined in my prologue. First is the choice of works. Second is the evocation of students' experiences in studying literature. Third is the concept of words. Fourth is the place of literature in education.

Choice of works

Literature teachers in Taiwan argue about the choice of works. Johnston (n.d.) claims that the history of the study of the great English works within countries under British influence derives from the colonizing practices of the British East India Company in the nineteenth century. This influence is still being felt in Taiwan today. However, I think those classical works really do reflect universal human values, like the downfall of heroes owing to their tragic flaws. The problem is that those values are expressed from a single perspective. We now need multiple voices from diverse racial groups in order to increase perspectives.

Education in Taiwan purports to follow the North American model. Today's literature programs in North America tend to pay more attention to those once ignored works from other cultures in order to open further opportunities for students to experience different cultures and to restore those forgotten and hidden histories. Through reading those others' hidden stories, one can establish a personal relationship with history, that is, see oneself in relationship to it. Johnston (n.d.) states:

Literature study today offers the potential for a creative re-reading of past "classic" works and an exploration of contemporary texts in ways that expose their ideological nature and allow for dialogue on the multiple ways we understand ourselves as citizens and members of a democratic community.

(para.11)

If this is so, then literature teachers in Taiwan might well consider some works related to the students' culture and experiences, then gradually extend reading beyond their usual cultural boundaries in order to distinguish the differences between two cultures, and finally, enlarge the students' meaning making frameworks. To increase enthusiasm for the so-called canonical works, literature teachers in Taiwan might well need to reconsider their materials for teaching. The best choice should depend on the students'

language levels and emotional maturity as well as experiences. Emotional maturity here means that students can consider diverse opinions and interpret the works that are meaningful to their own values. But such meaning may derive from diverse sources.

Therefore the choice of literary works should not rely on a general rule in favour of canonical works only. The aim of education is to find a way to let students comprehend according to their particular life experiences.

According to Nussbaum (1990), when we make a decision according to general rules, we tend to ignore the particulars — the particulars in this case being the context surrounding my Taiwanese students. Nussbaum places the particulars as her priority. Appropriate choice needs to fit the person, the situation and the context.

Likewise, Rosenblatt (1995) points out that the choice of literary works should build on the “links between these materials and the student’s past experience and present level of emotional maturity.” (p.41) Further, she acknowledges that works that are beyond students’ comprehension because of language problems are likely to prevent them from embracing the literature.

Evocation of Experiences

Rosenblatt’s (1978) transactional theory is derived from the ideas of John Dewey,

Arthur F. Bentley and William James. However, where Dewey takes science for his model and sees everyday problem solving as a stimulus-response action, Rosenblatt reinterprets readers' actions in regard to the study of literature. (Rosenblatt, 1978, p.17). For example, readers choose some words to respond to while engaging literary works. The choice depends on readers' habits, beliefs, cultural values and expectations. In other words, readers intentionally draw upon their past experiences in response to the words, according to Rosenblatt. Yet reading is an event that occurs in the here-and-now. Therefore, transactional theory draws attention to not only "the past experience but [on] the present state and present interests or preoccupations of the reader" (p.20). Readers will have different responses at different times in a different environment.

Further, Rosenblatt makes an important distinction between two different reading stances. The stances here mean the attitudes readers choose to respond to the works. That is, Rosenblatt distinguishes efferent from aesthetic reading. In an efferent reading the reader focuses on the analysis of plot, characters, the grammatical meaning of the text; whereas aesthetic reading emphasizes the reader's personal input — feelings, imagination and opinions prompted by the text. I will elaborate

further on these differences in Chapter VI. In short, aesthetic reading “heightens awareness of the words as signs with particular visual and auditory characteristics and as symbols.” (p.29) Understanding of the plot and analyzing characters’ personalities or making outlines of the works belong to efferent reading. On the other hand, in an aesthetic reading, one enters into the spirit of the story, grasps the gestalt instead of analyzing the details. Such an aesthetic stance depends on how much previous knowledge and experiences readers draw upon.

For example, in Nussbaum’s analysis of James’ *The Golden Bowl*, Nussbaum (1990) employs both an efferent and an aesthetic stance. When she adopts an efferent stance, she analyzes the plot according to moral judgment as a form of Aristotelian rational deliberation. Briefly the plot is as follows: Maggie marries Prince Amerigo who is a poor Italian nobleman. Maggie Verver’s father, Adam Verver, is a rich American financier and art collector. Both daughter and father have a very good relationship. However, Adam marries Charlotte who is a former mistress of Prince Amerigo, Maggie’s husband. They commit an adulterous affair which Maggie discovers when she buys the golden bowl. Maggie is torn between her love for her father and her husband. Then she saves her marriage by dealing with it dexterously.

She realizes that both her father and husband are important in her life. She considers how to deal with the delicate situation without hurting one another. As the incident shows, rational deliberation depends on one's value judgment — in this case having to do with Maggie protecting both her father and her marriage. Nussbaum shows that to make a rational choice one should imagine all related things as fully in detail as possible. That full detail is the efferent focus.

Nussbaum adopts an aesthetic stance as she interprets the depth of feeling between father and daughter. Nussbaum convinces us of her own emotional involvement in Maggie's dilemma through her description of how both father and daughter realize they must lessen their hold on each other without appearing to be sacrificing themselves for the sake of the other. In her interpretation, Nussbaum emphasizes that the precise images or pictures transmitted by lyrical language are touching and lucid. Nussbaum says: "It is relevant that his [James'] image was not a flat thing but a fine work of art; that it had all the detail, tone, and color that James captures in these words. It could not be captured in any paraphrase that was not itself a work of art." (p.152)

With these lines, Nussbaum brings the efferent and the aesthetic together. She

argues that novels such as James's *The Golden Bowl* are designed to guide readers to become attentive and discriminating beings (p.97). The transactional experience Nussbaum performs in this case is the result of her deep engagement in both efferent and aesthetic reading. However, Nussbaum admits that cultivation of such skills needs time and life experience. I argue, however, that although young people are lacking in experience, studying novels could provide them an alternative way to broaden their experience.

Further, as Rosenblatt reminds us, past experiences are evoked as we interact with stories. In turn, new meanings and perspectives on the world emerge. It follows that readers can expand their experiences by studying a wide range of literary works. This raises the question of current goals in Taiwanese education.

Concept of words

As words are the only medium in literary works, readers need to understand the potential meanings of the words. In literature, words can have connotative as well as denotative meanings and need to be understood in context. Thus, words in literature are rich with possibility because words have different layers of meaning. Writers use words to convey sensations, feelings, actions, emotions, imagination and values.

Rosenblatt emphasizes that “understanding of even one word demands a framework of ideas about humankind, nature, and society.” (p.106)

For example, Nussbaum (1990) quotes Book five, Chapter III of *The Golden Bowl* to illustrate how Henry James evokes moral imagination through powerful words. Nussbaum describes James’ art as “richness of feeling and a rightness of tone and rhythm that characterize the original...” (p.154). For example, early in the novel Adam sees Maggie as an antique statue. Nussbaum feels James uses such a metaphor to express how Adam treats Maggie as one of his collections and negates her autonomy. The image is provided by words such as “antique”, “refined”, “immortal”, “statue” and “perfect”. In contrast with this image is, later on, the metaphor of a sea creature, “buoyant among dangers”, when Adam realizes Maggie needs his protection no longer and he should let her experience her own life. To Nussbaum, comprehension of moral knowledge is not simply intellectual grasp but an all-encompassing perception. She says: “It is seeing a complex, concrete reality in a highly lucid and richly responsive way; it is taking in what is there, with imagination and feeling.” (p.152) That Nussbaum could have such a strong response is due to her full understanding of the words as well as her identification with “alert winged creatures” (p.155). For

Nussbaum, the right words shown in a right situation can evoke right feelings —on the part of the characters in the novel and a corresponding response on the part of a reader. Nussbaum says “to respond ‘at right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right aim, and in the right way, is what is appropriate and best, and this is characteristic of excellence” (p.156). By this she does not mean that there is only one correct response to the reading. Rather, she is referring to the interaction between the characters, who must respond to each other in precisely the right way in order for the author to make his point.

Literature and education

In this section, I am going to discuss literature in terms of education. I argue that the purpose of the study of literature is to deal with humanity with a view to addressing the issue of human dignity, to teach us to be more aware of our biases or prejudices in order to adopt a new positive attitude towards life and to connect with personal experience through the learning process. However, not all novels have such a function since writers sometimes present alternative goals. But the most important reason to study literature is to experience multiple contexts as a means of reflecting on the complexity of the world. This process needs to combine efferent and aesthetic

efforts.

Nussbaum describes how literary experiences help to cultivate a discriminating being. Likewise, Rosenblatt (1995) argues that literary education can free oneself from the “tyranny of attitudes” (p.261). Moreover, it can bring one positive feelings. For example, the love between homosexuals depicted by Lee Ang’s film *Brokeback Mountain* would have been considered a taboo for a long time. Now we find that the audience also can be touched by the homosexuals’ feelings and acknowledge their love. Likewise, through reading other’s stories, students can “externalize” their own stories and compare or contrast others’ within their own cultural context (Rossiter, 2002, p.4). The acts of comparison may lead to insight and a critical perspective on one’s own story.

Some narratives are to remind people to be more open-minded in considering human affairs. Artists show readers the foolishness of humans, as in Moliere’s *Tartuffe or The Imposter*, the downfall of Achilles’ wrath, the irony within beliefs about the status role in marriage, as Jane Austen describes, or an unbearable existence under harsh communism, as Kundera creates in his works. Some works employ the technique of conflict and contrast to illustrate the unfairness of categorization in the

human world; for example, the love between homosexuals, the struggle of the females' role in dominant patriarchal societies, the miserable lives of minorities and the revelation of the unjust treatment towards powerless people. Such works question and challenge the boundaries of ingrained prejudice for people to reconsider its validity. Temple (n.d.) uses Adler's idea to stress that "those great works are now approached, not because they have great answers, but because they raise great questions" (as cited in Temple).

The questions authors raise in their works aim to explore the depths of the human heart in order to see human affairs from different perspectives and the outcome is to touch readers, to broaden their views. Feelings may lead to empathy and further learning.

We only have to acknowledge how a particular novel or poem affected us to know that literature concerns itself with feelings. With this in mind, literature teachers should lead students to respond to feelings prompted by stories. Otherwise, teaching literature by emphasizing only criticism, analysis of characters or plots and summary of the story is likely to maintain students' lack of authentic engagement with literature.

But the study of literature is not only about feelings. Stocking (1986) introduces the concept of aesthetic hardness. Aesthetic “hardness” refers to a “combined passion and intellect —..., that is, an emotional, personal commitment to aesthetic craftsmanship and intellectual striving...” (Stocking, 1986, p.131). When authors create their works, they must have something that touches them, no matter whether it is as trivial as everyday routine or a matter of life and death. They draw attention to the significance of the details and touch their readers by employing artistic techniques. The “hardness” in works of art captures authors’ sincere attitudes towards their views of life.

Marsha Rossiter (2002) likewise draws attention to the link between passion and literary techniques. She notes that literature “enable[s] the students to bring a sense of order to life, to highlight moments of decision, to bring closure to painful events, and to gain insight into their own development.” (p.3) Rossiter mentions the “restorying” process, employed by Kenyon and Randall, to help people to “foster positive life change” and enable learners to assess their own stories in a larger cultural context. (p.4)

Likewise, Mello’s (2001) research on children’s reactions to folk stories found

that students connect their own experiences with those of fictional characters. Mello adopts qualitative arts-based research on participants' responses and research question. Through his investigation, Mello shows that students relate their own experiences to the stories while they discuss those stories. Mello uses the term "transactional relationship" to describe this reading experience. All the above examples point to literature's capacity to enhance students' understandings of others, articulate feelings and develop multiple world views.

Literature has the capacity to demonstrate the prevalence of feelings in relation to experience and meaning making, a point on which I will elaborate in the next chapter. On the topic of feelings it is worth noting that disparate writers, from Tolstoy (1971), Wordsworth (1971) and Jung (1971) have all commented on the relation of feelings to understanding.

Therefore, the study of literature is not an insignificant pursuit. Instead, literary experiences can inspire in us a new meaning towards our lives. I personally go through ups and downs in my life, yet literary experiences help me when I encounter those adversities. It helps me to be more open-minded toward the world and brings me a positive feeling towards my own life. In the case of my students,

however, they are not used to connecting their experiences to the text, nor have they experienced the kinds of texts that they can relate to. They have yet to see how literature can broaden their experiences of life.

To sum up, the importance of education in literature rests on its potential to connect with the experience of readers. Such transactional experience is triggered by a writer's expression in his/ her words. Through attention to a combination of feelings and literary style writers move readers to gain empathy while engaging in the reading, and to work towards a gestalt, that is, the interpreted meaning of the work. Readers' responses naturally count on their experiences accumulated in their past, including their cultural background, knowledge and affective response to words. The aim of literature teaching is to direct students to develop what they already have and shape their own values in the journey of life. As literature searches for meaning in life, it needs not only our intellect but affective response to fully comprehend. Thus, in the next chapter I am going to address more fully the issue of affective response.

Chapter II

In this chapter I will investigate further the role of affect in literary experiences. Both Nussbaum and Rosenblatt discuss the role that emotion plays in understanding not only the fictional world but our reality. The association of personal experience in aesthetic reading that Rosenblatt mentions can be found in Nussbaum's reading of *The Golden Bowl*. Rosenblatt (1995) argues that literary experiences need to "clarify emotion and make it the basis of intelligent and informed thinking" (p.226). Rosenblatt considers that the novel can help students form a habit of awareness of the human condition, "the behavior of living, feeling people" (p.231).

Nussbaum (1990) appreciates the complexity of the human condition that she finds in James's *The Golden Bowl*, especially through Maggie's "yearnings of thought and excursions of sympathy" (p.88). Nussbaum describes Maggie's efforts at solving her dilemma as follows:

She allows herself to explore fully the separate nature of each pertinent claim, entering into it, wondering about what it is, [and] attempting to do justice to it in

feeling as well as thought. (p.89)

In other words, our comprehension depends on affect as well as intellect.

Nussbaum's understanding of Aristotle's "practical wisdom" in terms of the particular situation provided by novels offers an exemplification of Rosenblatt's theory of literary experience.

In the following section I will discuss aesthetic emotion generally and its relation to education. I will conclude this section with a discussion of the role of the teacher's personality in education.

Concept of aesthetic emotion

Most people refer to emotion as one's anger, pleasure, scorn, spite and insolence, and responses of this sort. As I turn to Solomon (2003) whose collected articles discuss emotion from ancient to contemporary times, I find emotion has a broader meaning, one that might alter our perceptions about learning. Traditionally, emotion is associated with bodily expression. Some experiments prove that as emotion arouses, our heart will beat faster and the rhythm of breathing quickens. Our mental state is triggered by external facts, by thoughts and is expressed by action: we feel sorry for losing our beloved one, and then we cry. In contrast, feelings are less obvious to

external observation.

However, Green (n.d.) points out that in aesthetic emotion there are particular perceptions producing bodily effects “by a sort of immediate physical influence, antecedent to the arousal of an emotion or emotional idea” (para. 20). Green shows the evidence by associating with literary experience as follows:

...In listening to poetry, drama, or heroic narrative, we are often surprised at the cutaneous shiver which like a sudden wave flows over us, and at the heart-swelling and the lachrymal effusion that unexpectedly catch us at intervals. In listening to music, the same is even more strikingly true. If we abruptly see a dark moving form in the woods, our heart stops beating, and we catch our breath instantly and before any articulate idea of danger can arise.

If our friend goes near to the edge of a precipice, we get the well-known feeling of “all-overishness,” and we shrink back, although we positively *know* him to be safe, and have no distinct imagination of his fall...” (para.21)

The above quotation suggests clearly the place of feelings in relation to understanding. Green stresses that the aesthetic response in this case depends largely on a predilection toward socially prompted feelings. For example, he points out that the feelings of

shame and insults are “purely conventional, and vary with the social environment” (para.14).

At this point, a word about aesthetic emotion is in order. Richards’ (1971) points to T. S. Eliot’s discussion of Shakespeare’s Lady Macbeth on this topic. Eliot writes that what readers comprehend is the level of tension felt by Lady Macbeth. Together with that comprehension comes the reader’s feeling of tension as the plot develops. But the reader is not going to act out these feelings, for example, is not going to feel guilty. Rather, the reader preserves and appreciates the consequences of guilt. That is, the tension we feel follows directly on the perception and our tension varies according to the plot. The feeling of tension rather than guilt can be explained by the fact that readers balance subjective feelings with an intellectual awareness that they are reading a play. During the reading process, readers will make a judgment according to what they consider right. As Green says, our mental condition can judge the *right* thing. “And such a judgment is rather to be classed among awareness of truth. It is a *cognitive* act.” (para. 10) This appreciation, or aesthetic emotion, is based on our former experiences, understanding and feelings of guilt, which are formed by our social environment as well as education. But we do not feel guilty. Rather, we

understand Lady Macbeth's reasons for feelings of guilt, and that her guilt is an appropriate response.

The literature teachers' job is to clarify students' thoughts in relation to what they are reading. To have a full understanding of the fictional situation it is essential to feel as the author intends. Richards (1971) expounds on four contributing factors to meanings in literature — sense, feeling, tone and intention. To sum up his thoughts, Richards argues, students should be guided to pay attention to “what the author says through words (sense), his attitude to what he is talking about (feeling), his attitude to his listener (tone) and his endeavoring to promote his effect (intention)” (p.849). As a result, students will gain empathy for the author's intention and attain an intellectual comprehension. Such a step involves efferent engagement. An aesthetic reading involves a further step. Students need to connect the meanings they infer from the works with their own experiences, to see the relationship between themselves and the other as a unity.

Mischel (1974) suggests that there must be some objects triggering our feelings for the desire to learn, and the degree of feeling depends on what kinds of relationships we have with these objects. Likewise, Lazarus (2003) draws attention

to the relation between the entities that result in meanings. According to Lazarus, both subject and object “must be united in terms of a meaning” (p.126). My educational task, therefore, is to guide my students to a meaningful relationship between themselves and English literature.

Authors like Nussbaum and Rosenblatt already understand the necessity for such an affect-oriented subject/object relationship. Likewise, Sousa (2003) tells us that affective response can be encouraged in children and adults through interaction with literature. (p.255) Affective response varies according to different situations. But an understanding of those situations depends upon a group of complex linguistic skills such as simile, symbol, figures of speeches, understatement or overstatement, sarcastic or ironic tone, etc. For students reading in a second language, literary training such as the concept of words, evocation of their experience, increasing vocabularies abilities, plus appropriate works are essential to guide students to appropriate responses.

Personal relationship in Education

I now turn to the place of feelings on the part of the teacher. In order for students to find a meaningful relationship with literature their teachers need to model a parallel relationship, with their subject and their students. Both teachers and students

need intellectual as well as emotional engagement in education. I use Parker J.

Palmer's idea to develop this point.

In *The Courage to Teach*, Palmer (1993) explains that teaching and learning are founded on the relationship between teachers and students. Palmer (1993) proposes that: "Great teaching invites people into a personal relationship, the relationship of the lover to the beloved. Only so can we truly know... We know that knowledge comes from relationship." (p.199) Teachers should build a relationship with students in order to seek the meaning of learning. What is his/her self identity in terms of learning? Can learning change his/her relationship to others, the world, and the environment? Is learning important for him/her in seeking quality of life?

Palmer (1983) builds a personal relationship with students through listening with open-mindedness and "dialogue". (p.43) The aim of this is to "recall education to the forgotten roots and meanings of its routine practices." (p.18). The "forgotten roots" are the self, and the "meanings of its routine practices" are the meanings to be found in the lived world. Similarly, Zen and Confucianism explain that teaching is to "remind oneself and others of the knowledge within." (Cheng, 1985) Thus, education is to build a bridge for the self to establish a relationship with the world in terms of his/her

nature.

Following this concept, oriental Zen education focuses more on developing a well-balanced individual, the transformation of one's humanity and the mind through everyday practice. By guiding students to feel the world in terms such as the eternal cycle of birth, suffering, death and rebirth, students might gain compassion, empathy and become more open-minded.

Education and affect are connected in the sense that both deal with human relationships. The meanings we make of the world are influenced by the emotional bond between man and man as well as the cognitive bound between man and knowledge. Neither Westerners nor Easterners would deny this concept. However, emotional responses vary in accord with contexts. Consequently, the great part of education, also the most difficult part, is how to provide students opportunities for vicarious experiences of the world far beyond what they could otherwise experience in a single life time.

Personality and Education

In the prologue, I mention that teachers' personalities might be a determining factor in students' capacities to learn. Palmer (1993) compares education

to a religious enterprise (p.105). Moreover, Palmer says that “the right teaching is reverence, not power” (p.117). In other words, teaching means respect for all life. Besides, knowledge comes from love and “authentic education always lets the student make a choice.” (p.122) A teacher’s function is similar to that of religious leaders who need to demonstrate their charisma in order to gain a following. Teachers’ personalities could be the most important tool in students’ learning. Cheng (1985) compares Confucianism to Zen and states:

A good educator would not force others to follow him. He would discipline himself before he disciplines others, and teach others by what he does as well as what he says. His own living example should attract students. (p.202)

In other words, it is the teachers’ personality rather than “conceptual analysis or verbal arguments” that attract students (Cheng, 1985, p.201-202). However, I argue that the teacher’s knowledge is no less important than her/his personality. Students are inclined to judge whether a teacher can be trusted, whether a teacher can accept their opinions and whether a question will offend the teacher. Educators should be aware of their own emotions, understand their values and express their feelings appropriately. Most importantly, students should be encouraged to express their own feelings too.

This requires an open, positively reinforcing learning environment.

If students do not have the “right feeling” to learn, their efforts will be to no avail. For Zen and Confucius, “teaching is not to give new information but to remind oneself and others of the knowledge within. A master’s role is not to force disciples to receive; instead, it is to know when the opening [mind] will occur and how to bring it about from his own experience.” (Cheng, 1985, p.206) Therefore, teachers should explore what students have already, guiding them to see more and think more with a view to open their minds. This process involves teachers’ patience, and it is time-consuming. As such, “good education should start with oneself” (Cheng, 1985, p.200). The concept of self-education echoes what Palmer means when he says that educators should first claim their own identity and integrity.

To sum up, all literary works require some affective response in addition to an intellectual one in order for a meaningful transaction to take place. The work invites readers to respond reciprocally. Such a reciprocal relation will arouse in readers an empathic response. The particular nature of those responses depends on a reader’s past experience as well as present mood. That role requires of teachers a willingness to model the attitudes essential to meaningful interaction with both subject matter and

students. Teachers need to demonstrate how the words on the page are significantly connected to their personal lives. These considerations should be the first priority in literature teaching.

In the following section, I focus on a practical strategy in teaching literature in terms of transactional theory.

Chapter III

In what follows I introduce Wayson Choy's *The Jade Peony* (1995) as a good example of literature from the Chinese diaspora that could be used in a course for Taiwanese students. Choy's purpose in writing *The Jade Peony* is to re-examine Chinese values as experienced within Western culture. I support the example with reference to similar works: Wong-Chu' *Chinatown Ghosts* (1986), Sugiman's *Jin Guo: Voices of Chinese Canadian Women* (1992) and Choy's other book *Paper Shadows: a Chinatown Childhood* (1999). I use these works for the following reasons:

- (1) The language is more accessible than that in American and English canonical works.
- (2) These novels reflect the conflict between Eastern and Western cultures, with which Taiwanese students are familiar.
- (3) The novels emphasize the feelings of Chinese immigrants — feelings being the central focus of my teaching strategy. And those feelings pave the way for

readers as well as students to compare and contrast their own values by the questions that Choy raises in *The Jade Peony*. Examples of works from the Chinese diaspora may enable students to identify more closely with the characters portrayed.

- (4) According to Applebee's (2003) research on the continuity and cohesiveness of teaching in 19 English classes in Grades 7-12, he found that in order for students to develop deep knowledge and understanding, the most effective curriculum is focused around one or more central topics. (Applebee, Langer, Nystrand and Gamoran, 2003, p.692) The central topic of Choy's novel is the Chinese immigrants' feelings of being "in-between" Chinese and Western culture.

Diaspora feelings

A feeling of being "in-between" cultures permeates Chinese Canadian literary works. Like all who emigrate into foreign cultures, Asians encounter difficulties in adapting to the new, seemingly harsh world and the accompanying cultural values. Once established in their new country they find themselves caught "in-between". The color of their skin separates them from the dominant majority. At the same time, children brought up in the new country do not speak or act like Chinese people. We

may clarify those feelings generally as ones of double identity crisis and cultural conflict. As a result, Chinese diaspora authors often orient their themes to roots-searching. The purpose of guiding Taiwanese students through such works is to heighten their sensitivity to parallel feelings — emerging adulthood, estrangement from mainland China, participation in a newer, evolving culture, etc.

Furthermore, the feeling of being “in-between” is an accurate portrayal of the situation Taiwan now faces as people of Taiwan argue whether they are Chinese or Taiwanese. I must add that the conflict between the Taiwanese and Chinese is not a cultural problem; rather, the problem is one of sovereignty.

Main Characters

In Choy's *The Jade Peony* (1995), the author divides the story into three parts by narrating from the point of view of three children — the only sister, Jook-Liang, the second brother, Jung-Sum, and the third brother, Sek-Lung. Their big brother, Kiam, is the only one who does not narrate in the story. The three narrators deal with their different concerns in their own stories. However, grandmother becomes their mutual concern and she is the only person who unites the whole story. The three children see their grandmother from different perspectives and provide for us a rich view of her.

This kind of narrative technique is not unusual in story telling. It is like a collage for readers to figure out the grandmother's character. As a matter of fact, grandmother represents "faithfulness" to cultural traditions. The father is more "in-between". He wants his children to learn Western culture and at the same time remain Chinese. He knows that Chinese children should learn new things in Canada but in their hearts they should always remember they are Chinese. The stepmother represents the self-negated woman in the male-dominated traditional culture. Her role in this family is "more a wife than a concubine to Father, more a stepdaughter than a house servant to Grandmother" (p.14). Although she gives birth to two children, Jook-Liang and Sek-Lung, her two children still call her "stepmother" instead of "mother" because the first wife had died in China and the first wife's son calls her "stepmother". Therefore, all the children follow suit to keep the kinship simplified, as the grandmother demands. All the women's characters demonstrate that they are doomed to be subordinate to the man. However, Choy's women characters re-examine their roles in Western culture. Ultimately, they find their personal meanings in regard to the family, to the children and, most importantly, to themselves.

The story begins in 1933 with Jook-Liang introducing the background of her

“stepmother”, actually her natural mother who becomes a voiceless person in this family. Her helplessness to rebel against grandmother’s order is the most painful thing in her life. Grandmother has had a hard life, having been sold as a servant when she was young. She regards girls in China as useless, a point of view which is often protested by Jook-Liang. Jook-Liang, however, seeks comfort from Wong Sin-Sang who works for a Canadian railroad company but is deserted by the labour contractors when the work is done. Mr. Wong and Jook-Liang develop a relationship like father and daughter. Jook-Liang would like to dance for him, share her dream with him and regard him as her best friend in the world. The second part is narrated by the second brother, Jung-Sum who is an adopted son in this family. Jung-Sum is different not because he is adopted but because his weakness and thinness makes him look like a female. Thus, grandmother always compares him to the moon and describes him as showing yin versus yang. He has a special feeling towards his boxing coach, Frank Yuen. During a fight with Frank, Jung-Sum recalls his bad memory of his childhood. To him, Frank represents the sun. Jung-Sum’s story is the hidden, dark side of the story, which people can feel but do not name.

The third part is told by the third brother, Sek-Lung. In this part, Sek-Lung

talks a lot about the conflict between Chinese and Canadian culture, the confusions of identity and the differences between English and Chinese. Sek-Lung is the only one who can see grandmother's ghost after she died. Sek-Lung in this family is the most influenced person by his grandmother since grandmother takes care of him when he is born. He likes his English teacher, Miss Doyle, who always talks about "rescue", "courage" and "kindness" instead of killing in the war. From her, Sek-Lung learns about equality. However, Sek-Lung also witnesses the tragedy of his neighbor, Meiying, who looks after him after school. The tragedy happens when she falls in love with Asahi, a Japanese boy who was born in Canada. At that time, there was a war between China and Japan. Meiying's love is considered a traitorous. In the end, Meiying commits suicide. At the end of the story, stepmother finally expresses her own unfair treatment in her family.

Historical Background

In this novel, Choy did a background research on Chinese immigrants who came to Canada around 1858 during the gold rush in Fraser Valley, British Columbia, and again between 1881 and 1885 when they were engaged to help in the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Following the invasion by Japan, 1931 - 1945, China

faced poor economic conditions and a shaky political climate. During these periods, many Chinese immigrants left for Canada to seek their dreams (Li, 1998, p.16-19). Despite this, these immigrants went through many discriminatory regulations. For example, in 1879 they were excluded from working on the CPR and heavy taxes were imposed on them. In 1923 there was a prohibition against wives (still in China) of married men who were already working in Canada except those who were businessmen. Then, on completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, those contracted workers were unable to go back to China because their companies did not pay for the fare of the trip as promised, and left them in poverty. Chinatown called them “bachelor men”. (Choy, 1999, p.73) Many poor bachelors could not go home or send money back. This led many to commit suicide. Under such harsh living conditions, the twisting of human nature, the hopeless broken dreams, the losing of self, and the separation from families became unbearable for these immigrants.

Choy’s character, Wong Sin-Sang, represents “bachelor men” in Chinatown. Jook-Liang describes Wong Sin-Sang as “no ever human face shaped like that” and calls him “Monkey face”. For Wong Sin-Sang, Liang’s family becomes his surrogate family. He looks like a “half-flopped puppet with its head way down, but there were

no strings moving him about.” (p.22). This twisted body reflects his twisted life, arousing feelings of sympathy in the minds of readers. Choy also exhibits Wong Sin-Sang’s noble personality through his act of rescuing his white overseer from freezing to death on the railway line.

Main Features

Choy raises a number of questions in this novel for readers to consider:

- (1) Self- identity: The question, “Am I a Chinese or Canadian?” is repeated through the whole novel. Sek-Lung, the third brother, finds it difficult to understand the concept of “betrayal” in his situation since he was born in Canada and has experienced no Old China history. (p.135) He is “neither this nor that”, he is “born without understanding the boundaries, born no no — no brain.” (p.135) He deeply feels that there is no simple view of things, as grandma maintains. He says: “I was the Canadian-born child of unwanted immigrants who were not allowed to become citizens. The words RESIDENT ALIEN were stamped on my birth certificate, as if I were a loitering stranger” (p.135-136). During the war between the Chinese and Japanese, Kiam, the oldest boy in the family, wants to join the Canadian

military to fight against the Japanese, but his father says as soon as Canadians accept that they are no longer aliens, then he can join the army. Meiying becomes a traitor because she falls in love with a Japanese boy. However, stepmother questions the boy's status by saying that some Japanese were born in Canada. Are they enemies? Father replies that they are half-enemies.

From the Japanese boy's incident, Choy attempts to guide readers to see that self-identity for those diaspora Chinese becomes complicated according to the different perspectives and situations of each character. The most difficult part is when interests clash and one must take sides.

(2) Language: Sek-Lung always feels puzzled about Chinese language. He says: "Every Chinese person, it seemed to me, had an enigmatic status, an order of power and respect, mysteriously attached to him or her" (p.131) For Sek-Lung, family rankings and kinship are confusing. He knows enough Chinese and English to talk but never understands the more refined parts because the elders speak with Chinatown dialects. He compares English words to road signs and Chinese words to "quicksand". (p.134)

Other Chinese writers talk about children losing their mother tongue in foreign countries. For example, in the poem of “How Feel I Do?”, written by Wong-Chu (1986), the author is upset about losing his native language.

Your eyes plead approval
On each uttered word

And even my warmest smile
Cannot dispel the shamed muscles
From your face

Let me be honest
With you

To tell the truth
I feel very much at home
In your embarrassment
Don't be afraid

Like you
I too was mired in another language
And I gladly surrendered it
For English

You too
In time
Will lose your mother's tongue

And speak
At least as fluent
As me

Now tell me
How do you feel? (p.11).

Native language for Choy means a connection with the past history as well as a person's position in the world. When Grandmother speaks in dialect with her neighbour, Mrs. Lim, she finds her own place in the world. Choy describes that place: "Each dialect opened up another reality to them, another time and place they shared." (p.134) The dialect for grandmother is a feeling of "home", but is a "chaos" for the next generation because they can not share ideas, culture and language, even in one family.

(3) Cultural values: In *The Jade Peony*, Choy gives a new meaning to Chinese traditional culture. For example, to have respect means to honor elder people by treating them well. Nevertheless, Choy defines respect with a sense of humor: "Respect meant you dared not laugh at someone because they were "different"; you did not ask stupid questions or stare rudely. You pretended everything was normal. That was respect." (p.19)

The conflict of cultural values happens between the grandmother and her grandchildren. Jook-Liang who insists she is living in Canada not in Old China, resists the concept of uselessness of being a girl. Again, when Grandma is

searching garbage cans for materials to make her windchimes, Father dares not to tell her that her action is appropriate in poor China but is shameful in Canada. Choy shows that some good values in one culture can look ridiculous in a different culture.

(4) Ghosts: Ghosts capture the feeling of diaspora that Chinese Canadian writers want to transmit. Ghosts in Choy's novels mean not only the bad or good spirits in the other world. Rather, they also mean those diaspora Chinese souls whose unfinished works or wishes make them restless. They are like shadows wandering in Chinatown, as in Jim Wong-Chu's *Chinatown Ghosts* (1986). They are a haunting memory of their lost selves. Chinese used to call those who lost their past history, ghosts. Choy's ghosts relate to the ancestors' ghosts who will protect their generation from harm. In an interview with Sellers (2001), Choy confessed that he does not believe in ghosts. However, he can often feel those ghosts from the past speak to him and sometimes he even can see them dart into the corners. The grandmother in Choy's work becomes a ghost, haunting the family, insisting on keeping traditional values. Her soul will not rest until her son worships her by burying her in a traditional way.

To sum up, Choy tries to create a new identity for Chinese people by reinterpreting Chinese traditional culture within a different culture. He guides readers to cross cultural boundaries to re-examine their own values in order to make new meanings of their lives.

The history of the immigrants that Choy interweaves into his story is redolent with meaning. Finding one's roots is a way to understand one's self by creating a dialogue that connects the past with the present and enables one to go forward into the future. The process is like reconstructing the self in order to experience a new self to relocate one's position in the world. Entering one's past history is like digging at the root; the more we dig, the more we can reinterpret our own selves. The symbolic meaning here is to regard the roots as basic foundations for one to develop. As Diana Brydon explains:

The past no longer belongs only to those who lived in it; the past belongs to those who claim it, and are willing to explore it, and to infuse it with meaning for those alive today. The past belongs to us, because we are the ones who need it. (as cited in Howells, 2003, p.52).

The desire to seek our roots is found in another of Choy's stories, *Paper Shadows: A*

Chinatown Childhood. (1999). As the title suggests, most of the early immigrants bought false papers to come to Canada. “Girls often were bought to train as housemaids to serve the rich merchant families whereas boys were bought by childless couples to continue the family name.” (Choy, 1999, p.282) Thus, those Chinese lived with altered identities. Choy continues, “Whose life, I wonder, is not an endless knot?” (p.332) Everyone has his own secret to hide; nevertheless, Choy wants to unravel it by attempting to piece together the lost part of his life and to make it whole.

Through characters Choy is struggling to “abrogate the existing racial stereotypes...” (Lien, 1997, p.21) like Miss Doyle, Sek-Lung’s English teacher, who shows her concern for her students despite the fact that their “skin colors and backgrounds clashed” (Choy, 1995, p.184). Choy tries to balance the issue of racial discrimination in the hope of bringing a bright side of humanity to his work. Choy really displays his integrity in describing both positive and negative Chinese values, as he interprets them. In Choy’s work, *The Jade Peony*, Choy crosses cultural boundaries and expresses concern for universal values of humanity, equality and justice through the use of particular concrete incidents in his stories. Such universal values echo Nussbaum’s interpretation of universal rules.

Chapter IV

Before demonstrating a teaching strategy using Choy's *The Jade Peony*, I will briefly introduce the concept of reader-response, since Rosenblatt's transactional theory is categorized in this group. In the history of literary criticism, I.A. Richard, D. W. Harding and Louise Rosenblatt are considered to belong to the school of reader-response criticism as opposed to that of New Criticism. New Criticism emphasizes that readers focus on text only. The text itself is autonomous. Thus, the author's autobiography, the reader's response and past experience are considered irrelevant. In contrast, those in favour of reader-response shift their focus from the text to the reader's emotional response and assert that the reader self-determines the meaning (Tomkins, 1980, p.xxv). The readers' experiences are their main focus. Such attention places readers in a prominent role; thus, a reader should be more "aware of his own value system and better able to deal with problems of self-definition" (Tomkins, 1980, p.xi). Following this trend, reader-response criticism develops

various kinds of readers, for example, Gibson's "mock reader" (1980, p.2), Prince's "the virtual reader" (1980,p.9), "the ideal reader" (1980,p.9), and Riffaterre's "superreader" (1980,p.37). Generally speaking, the purpose of those diverse readers is to remind us that there is a certain type of reader while engaging in reading. The "mock reader" is a reader who, figuratively speaking, wears mask and costume to experience the language and accepts the idea that the author expresses. The "ideal reader" is a reader who can understand perfectly and agree completely with authors' intentions. The "virtual reader" is a reader whom the author imagines. The "superreader" is a reader who can have multiple responses according to her/his experiences, interests, and culture. Consequently, an understanding of the internal process of a reader's experience in engaging literary works is a phenomenological process. Iser assumes readers are "actively participating in the production of textual meaning" (p.xv) whereas Poulet (1980) suggests that readers play a passive role. However, Iser considers readers will fill "in the unwritten portions of the text, its "gaps" or areas of "indeterminacy" in their own ways" (p.xv).

Reader-response criticism pays heed to how people gain experience.

Ultimately, reader-response criticism is applied to the educational field as Bleich's

“interpretive community”(1980) He regards literary response as essential to the gaining of knowledge. However, literary works present symbolic meanings. In other words, the meaning of literary works “depends entirely on the process of symbolization that takes place in the mind of the reader” (p.xx). Bleich refers to symbolization as “response”, and understanding response in a coherent way as a “process of resymbolization”, which he refers to as “interpretation”. Bleich claims that the purpose of education is to “synthesize knowledge” rather than to transmit knowledge. In his view point, learning is a self-activated process. Thus, Bleich emphasizes that students’ responses to literature should become part of classroom procedures. Bleich’s position seems to accord with Rosenblatt’s transactional theory, which focuses on the recreation and resynthesis of reader’s response towards the meanings in the text. She emphasizes that the reader’s contribution to the text depends largely on that reader’s experiences. The combination of reader’s experiences with present state of mind and particular mood at the moment will likely result in evolving interpretations of the same text. Her contribution to teaching literature rests in attention to the potential capability which already resides within students.

In short, reader-response criticism pays attention to the value of the reading process and the self-learning that can ensue from the reader's acts of interpretation. Such theory becomes the turning point from conventional teacher-oriented pedagogy to a teacher-and-learner-oriented one.

Rosenblatt (1978) applies reader-response criticism to literary pedagogy. Her transactional theory focuses on two types of reading stances: efferent and aesthetic. Their differences lie in the direction of a reader's attention. She derives "efferent" from the Latin, which means "to carry away" (p.24). Thus, efferent reading in literary experiences means the readers pay attention to what they will carry away in terms of plot, structure, style, and so forth; whereas aesthetic reading refers to reader response, that is, how the work affects one. Transaction happens when the two types of response interact with each other. A teaching approach based on cultivating these two types of stances would be appropriate to adopt in the study of literature in Taiwan because, there, literature teachers generally ignore the importance of connecting learning with students' experiences.

Framework of theory

I now move to an example of how literature might be taught in Taiwan, using

Rosenblatt's theory and related others. I employ Jokhadze's word-concept (2003), what Crawford (2003) calls "emotional thinking", Woodlief's (1995) hypertext method, Katz's (2001) symbolic meaning with action, Cohen's reflective capacities (2001), expressing feelings through art form, parallel study, and Rossiter's (2002) autobiographical writing. I believe these teaching strategies could help my students to attain the transactional goal.

First I am going to demonstrate how I respond to and interpret the words in the following passages from *The Jade Peony* (1995). Then I will attempt a version of Rosenblatt's efferent and aesthetic reading. Following is a paragraph narrated by Sek-Lung about grandmother's precious jade peony which is given to her by her first lover.

Most marvelous for me was the quick-witted skill her hands revealed in making windchimes for our birthdays: windchimes in the likeness of her lost friend's parting present to her, made of bits of string and the precious jade peony, a carved stone the size of a large coin, knotted with red silk to hang like a pendant from the centre, like the clapper of a sacred bell. This wondrous gift to her had broken apart years ago,

in China, but Grandmama kept the jade pendant in a tiny red silk envelop, and kept it always in her pocket, until her death.

Hers were not ordinary, carelessly made chimes, such as those you now find in our Chinatown stores, whose rattling noises drive you mad. But the making of her special ones caused dissension in our family, and some shame. Each one that she made was created from a treasure trove of glass fragments and castaway costume jewellery.

The problem for the rest of the family lay in the fact that Grandmama looked for these treasures wandering the back alleys of Keefer and Pender Streets, peering into our neighbours' garbage cans, chasing away hungry, nervous cats and shouting curses at them.

“Stop this, all of you!” Father shook his head in exasperation.

How could he dare tell the Old One, his aging mother, that what was appropriate in a poor village in China was shameful here? How could he prevent me, his youngest, from accompanying her?

“She is not a beggar looking for food. She is searching for—for...”

Stepmother attempted to speak, then fell silent. She, too, was

perplexed and somewhat ashamed. They all loved Grandma, but she was inconvenient, unsettling. (p.144-145).

As the word “windchimes” appears, not only the picture of a windchime but its sound made by the wind occurs in my mind. The image of a windchime for me prompts a nostalgic feeling. It reminds me of its sound echoing in the long corridor of a Japanese garden breaking through a hot silent summer afternoon. Then the descriptive words follow “a carved stone the size of a large coin, knotted with red silk to hang like a pendant from the center”. I imagine the shape, the color, the feeling of silk. The pendant is “like the clapper of a sacred bell”. This is a simile. The pendant is “sacred” because she always kept it and wrapped it in a red silk envelop. Red in Chinese society appears on a very special occasion, like in a wedding ceremony. Brides should wear a red wedding gown and the guests should also wear red dresses. The symbolic meaning of “sacred” relates to her action in treating it as a precious thing in her life. The pendant to her has a special meaning in memory of her first lover and in solemn commitment to him till her death. The next paragraph describes her windchimes as not “ordinary” but “special ones”. Here, it is natural for her windchimes to be “special” because windchimes remind of her first lover.

However, as I go on reading, I encounter the word “shame”. It is unexpected and gives me a feeling of suspense. It arouses my interest to keep going. Then I understand. Her windchimes are not ordinary, but special, because they are made from “fragments and castaway” costume jewelry. Then I adjust my original meaning of “special” in accord with the context. More surprising, she obtains these materials from neighbours’ garbage cans, struggling with “nervous” cats and “shouting curses” at them like a beggar. I can imagine what kinds of curses that Grandma shouts and the ears of cats standing erect with tails curling up. Grandma brings shame to the whole family and becomes “inconvenient, unsettling”. She is a burden and troublesome. The scene is not strange for me, for, one day, while Canada was still new to me, I saw a middle-aged man holding a bag, collecting plastic containers in a neighbour’s garbage cans to earn money. The scene continues to hold my attention, as stepmother tries to explain grandmother’s action but stutters by saying “She is not a beggar looking for food. She is searching for — for...” (p.145). This open-ended sentence invites readers to use their imagination to fulfill the gap according to their own feelings or experiences. I may fill the indeterminacy as searching for her love, or her faded memory, or her youth, or her sense of

belonging. Furthermore, I could turn to free association from my experiences in human nature. Is it not that we are always searching for something in our journey through life? Some are searching for love, some for money, some for fame, some for dreams and some for knowledge. Words offer us imagination, association, action and feelings, which guide us to construe our own meanings based on our past experiences. Thus we accumulate our literary experiences as we read a broad range of works.

Strategies for teachers

To achieve efferent as well as aesthetic reading I turn to Jokhadze's (2003) word-concept strategy. The strategy is to identify the basic words in the literary texts which serve the main meaning that authors intend to transmit. By selection of those words, students may involve the feelings of anticipation as well as unexpected frustration. Therefore, students are forced to compare and analyze those words and to conjecture the possible meanings in the text. A teacher's job is to guide students to pay attention to those words by asking questions connected to their experience. From their responses, students could develop their own interpretation. The following strategy is to show how to connect the words with the main idea that authors want to

express in the work.

List significant words

One can use a numbers of strategies, for example, make a list of words that indicate the feelings of diaspora; or give students a paragraph, asking them to point out those words related to diaspora; or read aloud the following paragraph describing the poor conditions of those railroad contractors in Choy's *The Jade Peony* (1987):

In the city dump on False Creek flats, living in makeshift huts, thirty-two Old China bachelor-men tried to shelter themselves; dozens more were dying of neglect in the overcrowded rooms of Pender Street. There were no Depression jobs for such men. They had been deserted by the railroad companies and betrayed by the many labour contractors who had gone back to China, wealthy and forgetful. There was a local Vancouver by-law against begging for food, a federal law against stealing food, but no law in any court against starving to death for lack of food. (p.17)

Then ask students to write their response to “but no law in any court against starving to death for lack of food”. What is the feeling that Choy portrays in this sentence? I

would ask the students what words specifically assist that portrayal? Which words refer exclusively to diaspora experience?

To extend these activities, teachers could also ask students to replace the words by their own words or phrases. For example, ask students to replace the word “dilapidated” in the sentence of “I saw myself on our dilapidated porch, tapdancing and whirling about, and I thought of Wong Suk’s (Wong Sin-Saang) delight.” (p.37) Such an exercise could enhance students’ expressive capabilities.

In order to increase the students’ vocabulary, teachers could require them to try to make lists of unfamiliar words from a selected paragraph, infer their meanings from the context first, and then look up the definitions from dictionary. Let them compare their own definitions to the dictionary one. As a result, they will have the impression of those words and remember them in the context. For example, Jook-Liang describes Wong Sin-Sang as follows: “His cheek, I remember, had the look of wrinkled documents. He looked secretive, like Poh-Poh (grandmother), saying nothing.” (p.66) The word “wrinkled” here has both denotative and connotative meanings. Ask them to explain this word in both ways.

Emotional Thinking

Showing the contrasting tensions in the context can guide students towards what Crawford (2003) calls “emotional thinking”. Teachers could ask students to compare Chinese culture with the Western one that Choy portrays. How do those cultural values affect their lives? For example, Father criticizes grandmother for leading a traditional way of life and protests that his children need to live the new ways.

Choy shows how the status of eldest son in a Chinese family is higher than that of the rest of the children. Chinese parents pay more attention to the first son who will take on the whole responsibility for looking after the family. Therefore, Jung-Sum says: “Ever since Kiam had come to Canada, Third Uncle always told him that, as First Son, he had to behave more like a man than a boy. Father agreed, and together, he and Third Uncle taught Kiam as much as possible how to behave responsibly.” (p.98)

In another example Choy shows how girls in old Chinese society were devalued:

A beautiful girl-child from a poor family is even more useless than an ugly one from a rich family, unless you can sell either one for a jade bracelet or hard foreign currency. Then you can feed your

worthy sons, give them educations, arrange marriages, make them proud men. But a girl-child? (p.43)

Choy also writes many scenes related to signs and portents in *The Jade Peony* (1987, p.158) to express traditional belief. For example, the white cat that grandma saw indicates she is going to die. Seeing a cat in the night is regarded as a bad omen by some Chinese. Teachers could make a list of those related symbols from the text and ask students to give other examples showing traditional Chinese customs. What do they think about those superstitions? How do they feel about those customs?

Students can make a list of contrasting tensions in the novel while adding their own interpretations and sharing their interpretations with others. Thus, they would listen to alternative opinions and adjust their ideas through discussions. After discussing, they could take down notes of the others' opinions and write their own responses to these views in order to negotiate their own self with others. This process could strengthen their communicative ability and teach them to respect others, moreover, learn from one another.

Hypertext method

Ann Woodlief (1995) uses hypertext method to “embed and link texts” in order

to feed the students with “intertextual ideas”. The purpose of this method is to move students towards a holistic meaning. Woodlief points out that the requirement of writing a paper discourages students from developing self-discovery. For example, Woodlief employs five projects for students to select for reading. These include five love poems of Anne Bradstreet and four poems of Phillis Wheatley, the prose of Jean de Crevecoeur and Thoreau’s chapter two of *Walden* and Poe’s *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Then she designs three-part questions for students to answer — first-reading questions, after-reading questions and re-reading questions. The first-reading questions are related to personal feelings about the works they selected. After-reading questions are concerned about their responses to the words from the context. For the third step, students are asked to re-read their first-reading notes in order to see whether they have changed their impression. The final stage of re-reading questions focuses on developing their association with those related works. An example of a first-reading question is “What do you think relationships between husbands and wives were probably like in early Puritan times? Why do you think that?”(Woodlief, 1995,para. 20) An after-reading question is “Find your dominant responses, describe the major impact of the poems on you, your strongest reactions.”

(para.23) A re-reading questions is “Explore your own reactions, biases, and expectations, as they have emerged in your notes. How have they affected your understanding and appreciation of the poetry?” (para.28)

I modify this method in order to focus on how authors address similar topics. For instance, I would ask students to compare Wong-Chu Jim’ poem of “*Tradition*” (1986) with Choy’s Chinese tradition in *The Jade of Peony* to see different expressions of diaspora.

Tradition

I grasp
In my hand
A bundle of rice
Wrapped in leaves
Forming triangles

I pull the string
Unlocking the tiny knot releasing the long thin strand
Which binds

I tug at the dry green leaves
Holding the sweet rice within

Peeling it back
I begin to open (Wong-Chu, 1986, p.11)

All Chinese students know this poem is describing one of Chinese traditional foods in memory of a patriot who drowned himself in the river to protest against the

corrupt government. For Wong-Chu, tradition is associated with food; whereas for Choy, tradition is associated with Chinese operas.

Another documentary work named *Jin Guo: Voices of Chinese Canadian Women* (Sugiman, 1992) is composed of the personal interviews with several Chinese Canadian women. From these interviews, readers can see how different personalities respond to different cultures. Some enjoy experiencing two different cultures; some feel that they are in between because they do not speak Chinese well and do not act like Chinese women. Some even encounter discrimination, not from white people but from Hong Kong Chinese, as Gretta Grant and Sharon Lee remark. Some cherish Chinese heritage very much. Some choose another culture, like Anne Fong, whose interests are more Canadian and European than Chinese (p.163). As a teaching strategy one could ask students to choose one interview and elaborate on it to express their views about self-identity issues.

It is easy for teachers to show different short stories, a version or a paragraph from local Taiwanese writers who deal with the same theme. There are many good novels that deal with experiences of living in other countries, such as *The Moonlight Under South Cross* by Zhang ZhiZhang (2003), the immigrant novels by Meng Yao,

Heart in My Dream by Bing Zi(2003), *Australia's Golden Dream* by Liu XiRang (2004) , *Jia Li Po* by Zhong LiHe(2005), *Flying to Auckland* by Lin Shuang (2001) and *The Subway from Paradise Lost* by Ye XiXi (2003).

There are also many novels recounting the stories about mainland Chinese immigrants to Taiwan when Chiang Kia Shek was defeated and led soldiers to settle in Taiwan. These novels could also provide students with an understanding of both Chinese and Taiwanese history as well as those who cross borders and settle in other countries such as Japan, Australia, New Zealand, America and Canada. The different life experiences of customs, thoughts, cultural habits and life styles are vividly portrayed in those novels. If teachers could provide films related to the countries that the novels describe, I think students would be eager to learn the context.

To increase their interest in reading literature, teachers could use buddy reading (Alden, Lindquist & Lubkeman, 2003) by pairing two students together to read a selection. Teachers could require each pair to select any one of the books mentioned above or other books related to diaspora. Students like to study collaboratively. This strategy is to expose them to reading by sharing or exchanging different ideas with a partner.

Symbolic meaning

This section addresses how authors develop a symbolic relationship between an action and an emotion, and the connection between nature and the human situation (Katz, 2001, p.9). The symbolic meaning that authors use in their works could provide the clues to the author's intended meaning. The farewell scene in *The Jade Peony* illustrates:

Wong Suk (Wong Sin-Sang) never looked at them, and he never looked back. The hump of his back animated his cloak. The sea-salt wind lifted up its mended edges. Fighting the wind, Wong Suk's (Wong Sin-Sang) cloak began to flow away from him. The cape continued to move, as if in slow motion, to unfurl. (Choy, 1995, p.66-67)

Jook-Lian sees Wong Suk (Wong Sin-Sang) off from the dock and she says:

I forgot to cry and shout his name and urge him: Turn around! Come back! Come Back! (p.67)

Why does Wong Suk (Wong Sin-Sang) "never look back"? Does this action show his determination to leave without any regret or does he just want to hide his sad

feelings? The strong wind reveals his shabby cloak and makes his progress slow.

Only his hunchback makes his cloak look alive. What does his hunchback symbolize?

What is the tone? Here, one could ask students about their personal experience or feelings when they read these lines. Have they had a comparable experience? How would they describe such feelings? Can they describe and make a comparison to the images of a farewell scene from Chinese literary works that they studied?

Choy also illustrates symbolic meaning in the Chinese concept of Yin and Yan. But Choy intends to apply this concept to describe Jung-Sum's personality in order to see his situation. Jung-Sum is not strong like his big brother. Therefore, Poh-Poh (grandmother) compares Jung-Sum to the moon. The moon and Yin in Chinese represent female. However, Jung-Sum chooses boxing to show his toughness.

What does Choy intend to express from this incident?

Choy, in *The Jade Peony*, juxtaposes the positive as well as negative sides of human nature. Although the descriptions of the miserable lonely bachelor life like Wong Suk (Wong San-Sing) and the tragedy of Meiying exemplify that they are victims of racial discrimination, Choy also reflects the positive side of human nature in Miss Doyle.

Sek-Lung describes her thus:

We were an unruly, untidy mixed bunch of immigrants and displaced persons, legal or otherwise, and it is her duty to take our varying fears and insecurities and mold us into some ideal collective functioning together as a military unit with one purpose: to conquer the King's English, to belong at last to a country that she envisioned including all of us. (p.180)

In the last paragraph, Sek-Lung writes:

At recess, our dialects and accents conflicted, our clothes, heights and handicaps betrayed us, our skin colours and backgrounds clashed, but inside Miss E. Doyle's tightly disciplined kingdom we were all — lions or lambs — equal.

We had glimpsed Paradise. (184).

What is Choy's intent here in introducing Miss Doyle? What is Miss Doyle's position in the story? How does Sek-Lung feel about her? What do students feel about Miss Doyle? What is the tone here?

Again, Choy arranges different situations for readers to gain profound insights

into self-identity. I argue that Choy is deliberately leading readers to see that these incidents have two symbolic meanings. First, he wants to convey that self-identity sometimes is hard to define. For example, the incident of Meiying falling in love with a Japanese boy is tragic because of the war between China and Japan. The dilemma of the identity problem rises sharply in this episode. (p.163) Is her Japanese boyfriend an enemy because he is Japanese? Is he just a half enemy because he was born in Canada? Should he be seen as an enemy at all?

Second, the loss of self-identity sometimes occurs by destiny, like stepmother's ambiguous identity. In contrast, Jook-Liang is free from traditional bias against girls because she was born in Canada. How do students interpret these episodes? What are their opinions? Do they also have a similar experience about identity? Above all, what does Choy imply here?

Reflective capacity

Jonathan Cohen's emphasis on reflective capacities (2001) in connection with social issues could be applied here. Cohen stresses the feeling of the immediate moment, here-and-now. Nevertheless, Cohen (2001) aims to use growing awareness to "solve social problems, to learn and to be creative." Thus, the controversial issue

of social problems such as sex education, drug problems, conflict resolution and cooperative learning become dominant themes. Through reflection on these themes, students could discover that they do have position that they maintain and thus become active learners.

In this case, teachers could ask students' opinions about the issue of being Chinese or Taiwanese since Taiwan now encounters a double-identity crisis. Can students imagine themselves in the place of those immigrants in Canada and can they compare their situation to those who were against mainland Chinese immigrants after 1949? Students could also discuss those "others" like people from Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, etc. What are comparable situations in Taiwan? In this respect, teachers could lead students to foster a deeper understanding of the current situation of "others" in Taiwan, their historical backgrounds related to recent Taiwanese history and their influence on the contemporary society of Taiwan.

Expression of feelings

Students are required to choose the most impressive paragraphs to express their feelings by any media that they are familiar with, such as: recite the paragraphs with a musical background, rewrite the paragraphs, write a script or draw a picture of the

paragraphs and act out the scene. Expressing the paragraphs in other art forms could draw upon their imagination as well as their emotion. Students of Shakespeare could rewrite the story of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and play it in a puppet drama. In a mythology course, students could dance to the music to express Media's turbulent emotion. Creative expression engages students with the text. Several years ago, a famous art group performed Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in Chinese opera. It caused a great sensation in Taiwan. An exercise such as this could inspire students' own creations and encourage their interpretation as well as their expression.

Parallel Study

This is an advanced exercise. It is designed for those students who want to know more about comparable expressions between English and Chinese, with the aim of improving their knowledge of both languages. Yu Guangzhong (2005) stresses the significance of Westernization in improving both Chinese and English. The idea of "close reading" could address the gap between language and literary studies, as Shultz (2001) suggests. Shultz develops "close reading" to address the problems for those whose language skills as well as literary training are insufficient. Close reading relies on "focusing on significant passages" and requires students to "analyze the vocabulary

for both its denotative and connotative meanings and grammatical structures” (p.22).

This method is not unfamiliar to Taiwanese literature teachers. Nevertheless, Shultz mentions the idea of Fantini’s approach of comparing linguistic structure “one-to-one” (p.15) correspondence between English and French. Such a double translation activity; “first the interaction with the language itself and then with its artistic manifestations” (p.16) is possible because both language systems are alphabetically based. But the Chinese system is quite different from alphabetic systems; so many meanings are lost in translating between Chinese and English, especially when translating Chinese poems and vice versa.

Ke Ping (1997) illustrates an example of Dickens’ *David Copperfield* to show the difficulty of translating English literary works into Chinese, especially when the context is playing with words:

I love my love with an E, because she’s enticing; I hate her with an
E, because she’s engaged; I took her to the sign of the exquisite, and
treated her with an elopement; her name’s Emily, and she lives in
the east. (as cited in Ke, 1997,p.168)

If it is translated by word-by-word, it would become a puzzle for Chinese readers to

read. Furthermore, Ke Ping (1997) explains that some words and concepts are not translatable between Chinese and English, and others are very complicated to translate; for example, the word “cousin” could be translated into eight different words in Chinese.(p.10) Therefore, Ke Ping (1997) follows the concept of Eugene Nida’s idea of “the closest natural equivalent of the source language message”(p.9).

In spite of such difficulties, parallel study could help Chinese students to improve their English as well as their Chinese, if we were to focus on “how language expression carries meaning and how different languages construe meaning differently” (as cited in Schultz,2001, p.15). By comparing the different usage, students could gain differing perspectives provided by the two cultures. For example, the concept of the subordinate clause does not exist in Chinese language. Students are always confused with the long subordinate clause and easily miss their connecting meanings.

English words can have different layers of meaning according to the context. In contrast, Chinese words sometimes need to combine with other words to change the meaning. In Choy’s *The Jade Peony*, Sek-Lung says: “I preferred English, but there were no English words to match the Chinese perplexities” (Choy, 1987, p.134). One could ask students to think about examples of such perplexities.

Parallel study is not a new method. It is popular in the Chinese literary academy where comparisons are made between Chinese classic works and Western ones, such as *The Dream of Red Chamber* (Cao Xueqin) as compared to Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* (1897), *Madam White Snake* (Feng Meng Long) to Keats' *Lamia* (1884), *Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai* (anonymous) to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliette*. Most parallel studies focuses on the analysis of plots, characters or concepts. An interesting point is that there are few studies of author's style. In this case, teachers could give a paragraph from an English work and another one from a Chinese work for students to make a comparison in meaning, thoughts, culture, syntax, a phrase or even a word.

Autobiographical writing

Students could develop their own stories through autobiographical writing. Rossiter (2002) considers that autobiographical writing could develop in students "a deeper understanding of their own learning processes and learning goals." (para.6) It contributes both a "transformative dynamic of the self story" and self-teaching to "locate and assess their own stories within large familial or cultural contexts" (para. 11). Like keeping a diary, autobiographical writing offers a way to reflect on one's

meaning in relation to the world. Choy's roots-searching in *Paper Shadows* (1999) is a good example of autobiographical writing for students to study.

To sum up, helping students to attain a transactional goal depends heavily on the questions teachers raise. Applebee (2003) concludes that a discussion-based approach in teaching literature could lead students to a high literacy level. During open discussions, the "spontaneous scaffolding or support for developing ideas ... is a powerful tool for learning." (p.722). Teachers should bear in mind what kinds of questions students can relate to or the kinds of contexts that they connect their personal experiences with. Teachers must also ask themselves what is the purpose of the questions. How do teachers establish dialogue with students? What activities can teachers think of to make the lesson lively? How should teachers resolve conflicts if the students have differing opinions from one another? How do we practice and encourage open-mindedness? What strategies might be useful to guide students towards sensitive response to social issues and the making of critical judgments?

There is no absolutely perfect teaching model for teachers to follow and even the best teaching theory will not guarantee successful teaching. But, if we adopt Palmer's advice, maybe the first step for teachers is to establish a good relationship

with students, to observe their attitude towards the subject and attempt to create an appropriate learning environment.

Chapter V

Conclusion

English literature is a difficult subject for most Taiwanese students. Even Chinese literature sometimes is confusing for some Taiwanese students. English literature is more so. As teachers of Western literature in Taiwan, we need to question the value of the present curriculum, the educational goals of an English course. We need to choose meaningful materials for students to learn and we need to develop the most effective pedagogies. We should consider more about students' backgrounds since English is their second language and English cultural values are somewhat different from their own values.

Rosenblatt's transactional theory about the efferent and aesthetic stances holds promise for application to Taiwanese education. Nussbaum's analysis provides a vivid example of Rosenblatt's transactional theory. Nussbaum's analysis of James' *The Golden Bowl* provides her an opportunity to clarify her concept not only of literature but of moral conduct and practical reason. She demonstrates how,

employing efferent and aesthetic stances, she arrives at a holistic, coherent understanding of a literary text.

Nevertheless, if the end of teaching literature is to articulate a person's experiences, like Nussbaum who uses literature to explain her philosophical point about morality, then we need to choose suitable works in order to connect with the student's life experience. The present focus on the American or English canonical works is beyond Taiwanese students' comprehension for their abstruse words as well as complicated plots even though these works deal with universal human values. Therefore, the criteria for choosing materials should be based on the students' language levels, and the work's cultural relevance. Choy's *The Jade Peony* is an ideal choice as a reference for Taiwanese students to study.

Choy's *The Jade Peony*, uses a straightforward language style and it re-examines Chinese culture within a framework of Western values. Choy deals with self-identity, like other Chinese diaspora writers while at the same time focusing on universal human values. In this respect, his goals are similar to those found in canonical works. Choy's story could provide Taiwanese students with opportunities to draw on questions related to their past experiences, such as their identity with

Chinese cultural values, their opinions about racial discrimination and their views about the Western world. Furthermore, Choy offers readers the potential to evaluate their own values and enlarge their perspectives on the world. This potential outcome echoes Rosenblatt's assertion that the benefit of literature education is to free students from "anachronistic emotional attitude" (Rosenblatt, 1995, p.261).

Nevertheless, a good work of literature needs an appropriate pedagogy. As literature provides wider particularities and invites readers "to see, and to feel, to imagine, to lend their lives to another's perspective" (Rosenblatt, 1995, p.69), teachers also should figure out ways for the student to engage in the author's world. Writers expect readers to acknowledge or to gain empathy from their works. My aim is to establish a reciprocal relationship with the reader, in the hope that the reader will respond accordingly. Thus, the teaching of literature should start with the reader's affective response. Only with richness of feeling can the reader be moved to enter the fictional world. Rosenblatt (1995) reminds us that "The concern with technique has to be subordinated to a concern with the state of mind, the attitude toward people and life situations revealed by great writers of the short story." (p.97)

In order to expand students' experiences, I suggest parallel studies for them to

compare and contrast the differences between different authors in handling the diaspora experience. Another one is the hypertext method, which provides the students with holistic meaning. The purpose is to initiate students to find various ways to make meanings in regard to the world. The importance of these methods is to create a habit of critical thinking. Autobiographical writing can assist the student's reflective capability. Such a learning process involves self-identity in terms of the self's past history, its relationship with others and its emotional state.

The methods mentioned above should be developed based on questions related to the students' life experiences in order to achieve "sincere" responses to the works. Our challenge as teachers is to guide students to their own personal revelation. Savvidou (2004), quoting Short, says that teaching literature is not only focusing on "what a text means, but also how it comes to mean what it does".(para.16) This emerging realization relies on the teacher's questions in directing students through the text, with all that that implies — attention to context, idiomatic language, form, and so forth. In regard to context, Applebee (2003) suggests that through the use of discussion-based instructional activities students can develop understanding of the context as well as of others and themselves. Likewise, Palmer recognizes that the

whole concept of the teaching of literature is based on the “dialogic” principle and “relationship” between teachers and students.

Suppes (n.d.) refers to Aristotle’s idea about acquiring happiness by learning or education. In other words, learning is related to happiness. However, John Dewey cautions that “the tradition of imposing education on the child by force” is the loss of love. Dewey criticizes such conventional teaching as follows:

The science of education asks how children behave, not how they affect the observer. But the great pedagogues of history are concerned with how and what they feel toward children, with emotions such as love, pity, hope, disgust and horror. They do not see the child as it is but only the relationship that exists between it and themselves...To them the child is a means to some theological, ethical, or utopian end” (as cited in Suppes, n.d., para.26)

To guide students to learn according to their interests instead of forcing them to receive whatever teachers teach is an effective way of achieving learning goals.

Through other’s stories, we gain an understanding of ourselves. Others’ stories show clearly that their identities are situated in relationships; and so do ours. (McCarthy and Moje, 2002, p.231) Likewise, Keynon and Randall comment that

“to be a person is to have a story. More than that, it is to be a story” (Rossiter, 2002, para.2). We need others’ stories to enrich our own lives. Reading through others’ stories we gain a social experience, as Calderwood (2005) remarks: “...no matter how aesthetically thin or thick a reading might be, a reader can use discretion in going public with her experience.” (p.2) Thus, students who do not intend to become literary experts could still benefit from reading literary works.

Above all, the teacher’s integrity and self-identity as Palmer (1998) claims, play the most important role in teaching. Palmer here implies that teachers should be sincere towards their students, their teaching jobs and themselves. If the relationship between teaching and learning is based on sincerity, then we would find it is no less than the relationship between the artist and the works.

In conclusion, the teacher is parallel with the artist in so far as self-identity is concerned. That identity helps create a meaningful relation towards the student as well as the reader or the audience or the spectator. Teaching others’ stories is like self-teaching. The meaning lies in one’s intentional response. Thus, the teacher should assume that each student has his/her own story to tell, one that may become clear to the student upon the reading of the stories of others. This is one possible

outcome of the transaction of which Rosenblatt speaks. The teaching methods suggested in this thesis provide a guide for literature teachers in Taiwan. This is, I acknowledge, only an initial step.

Appendix I

Introduction to American literature in the third grade of the Applied Foreign

Department Winter 2004

**Reference: The Norton Anthology: American Literature Volume 1.2; A Glossary of
Literary Terms.**

Outline of the course as follows:

- 1. An introduction to 19th century American Literature**
- 2. Washington Irving: Rip Van Winkle**
- 3. Herman Melville: Moby Dick**
- 4. Edgar Allen Poe: The Fall of the House of Usher**
- 5. Nathaniel Hawthorne**
- 6. The Scarlet Letter**
- 7. Mark Twain: Hand in a 200-word paper**
- 8. Naturalistic Novels**
- 9. Emily Dickinson**
- 10. Robert Frost**
- 11. Wallace Stevens**
- 12. T. S. Eliot**
- 13. American Poetry since 1945: Robert Penn Warren**
- 14. Elizabeth Bishop**
- 15. Robert Lowell**

Appendix II

Course outline of selected British and American poetry in the third grade of Applied

Foreign Department Winter 2004

Reference: Poetry: A Longman Pocket Anthology

Outline of the course as follows:

1. Understanding a poem and its elements
2. The Middle Ages (5 weeks)
3. The Renaissance Period (5weeks)
4. Presentation(4 weeks)

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