DALARNA UNIVERSITY

Degree Project

Level: Master's

"We are not other families": The Depiction of Otherness in Ken Liu's *The Paper Menagerie*

Author: Alba Quintairos-Soliño
Supervisor: Billy Gray
Examiner: Carmen Zamorano Llena
Subject/main field of study: English (literature)
Course code: EN3063
Credits: 15 ECTS
Date of examination: 29th May 2024

At Dalarna University it is possible to publish the student thesis in full text in DiVA. The publishing is open access, which means the work will be freely accessible to read and download on the internet. This will significantly increase the dissemination and visibility of the student thesis.

Open access is becoming the standard route for spreading scientific and academic information on the internet. Dalarna University recommends that both researchers as well as students publish their work open access.

I give my/we give our consent for full text publishing (freely accessible on the internet, open access):

Yes ☒ No ☐

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Challenging the Notion of "The Self vs. The Other"	6
Challenging the Notion of "Reality vs. Fantasy"	10
Contextual Othering Dynamics in Jack's Environment	13
Jack's Internalised Othering Dynamics	18
Conclusion	27
Works Cited	31

"Who is mother tongue, who is father country?"
(Kim 30)

Introduction

In 1987, the Japanese-American activist and writer Janice Mirikitani published the poem "Recipe," where she provides instructions to transform the monolid eyes, which are often considered to be the eyes of an Asian girl, into round double-lid eyes (Komura 24). Later, in *Out of the Dust*, Mirikitani would dedicate her poem "Breaking Tradition" to her daughter, acknowledging how both of them have denied their Japanese-American backgrounds as well as their "more traditional" mothers (Lowe 1031) in verses such as "My daughter denies she is like me / her secretive eyes avoid mine. […] She mirrors my ageing. / She is breaking tradition" (Mirikitani 183–184). Likewise, the Korean-American poet Myung Mi Kim reflects on cultural hybridity and diaspora in her literary production, in which she questions the American national identity and tries to resist being assimilated into it (Zhou 76).

Mirikitani and Kim's poems can be regarded as examples of the many literary works that express the identity crisis many migrants and people of mixed origins suffer during their lives within the American context, given that "questions of identity haunt minority groups in many countries" (Komura 21) and that Asian-American diasporic literature plays "an important role in transforming national hegemony, and in displacing national cultural homogeneity" (Zhou 61). Cliff Akiyama also confirms the psychological struggle of Asian-American migrants regarding their identity and sense of belonging: "second-generation Asian Americans often feel trapped between two different, often oppositional cultures resulting in ethnic identities that are negotiations between them" (257). In a similar vein, Min Hyoung Song points out that "for a very long time, Asians in America

have been viewed as newcomers to the country and destined always to be outsiders" (3). In fact, the population from Asian countries "had previously been the target of systematic and thorough exclusion from the United States for much of the 20th century" (Akiyama 251) and, even though migration from Asia to the United States experienced a sharp increase in the last quarter of the 20th century prompted by the Immigration Act of 1965 (Akiyama 251; Hanna and Batalova), "the Asian as perpetual foreigner is a perception that continues to be widespread" (M. H. Song 3).

In this context, after having migrated from China to the United States in the 1980s, writer and translator Ken Liu is often considered an author who has challenged the principles of science fiction by "making Chinese SF [Science Fiction] visible to Anglophone readers and promoting its circulation through translations" (Chau 121), as well as by creating the 'Silkpunk' genre.[1] More importantly, Angie Chau emphasizes that Ken Liu's role is that of "a genre mediator" who addresses the "issues of cultural translation" in his fiction and forces "readers to think about questions of language and how culture is transmitted" (121). Furthermore, Liu's notion of science fiction seems to be deeply related to the contemporary Chinese concept *kexue huanxiang* ("science fantasy"), thereby defying the real limits between science fiction and fantasy in the American literary polysystem: "I [Liu] don't pay much attention to the distinction between fantasy and science fiction […]. For me, all fiction is about prizing the logic of metaphors […] over reality" (Liu, "Preface" vii).

[1] Silkpunk is a revision of steampunk based on the "rebellion, resistance, re-appropriation and rejuvenation of tradition, and defiance of authority, key 'punk' aesthetic pillars" (Liu "What is 'Silkpunk'?"). Thus, Silkpunk aims at resisting colonialism by highlighting a technology aesthetic central to East-Asian and Pacific communities (e.g.: bamboo, shells, silk, feathers, etc.) instead of using the Europeanized retrofuturistic elements of steampunk, which derived from the nineteenth-century industrial revolution aesthetics.

Being a Chinese-American author himself, Ken Liu published in 2011 the short story "The Paper Menagerie," which became the first literary work to win all three of Science-Fiction's major awards, that is, the Hugo, the Nebula, and the World Fantasy Award. "The Paper Menagerie" tells the story of Jack, a second-generation Chinese-American boy who is ashamed of his Chinese identity due to his neighbours' racist comments, which make him hate his own mother, who is Chinese. Thus, this story does not only bring the migrant's identity struggles to the forefront, but also highlights the cultural biases of society and migrants' themselves, justifying the pertinence of a reading of the story from the perspective of Migration Studies. This idea is supported by Chau, who claims that, in "The Paper Menagerie," "the narrator's search for cultural belonging and identity and his struggle to understand his family's immigration history" are essential features of the Asian-American literary conventions (121–122), undoubtedly positing Asian-American fiction as diasporic literature, as well.

Moreover, "The Paper Menagerie" includes some passages where magical realism plays a key role (Jabeen et al. 6), as some *origami* animals made by Jack's mother are brought to life by her breath when he is a child, accompanying him during his childhood and conveying Jack's inner thoughts and emotions. In this regard, the use of magical realism as a narrative device that moves the plot forward (Jabeen et al. 7) suggests a correlation between what scholars like Stephen Slemon or David Neo and Sanghamitra Dalal consider a discourse of resistance against hegemonic cultures and the configuration of Otherness through the circulation of emotions. In fact, Hang Yu's "An Analysis of the Reconstruction of Chinese American Identity in *The Paper Menagerie*" describes how Jack's identity is culturally and emotionally "reconstructed" in "The Paper Menagerie," pointing to a

relatively unexplored connection between traditional Chinese myths, the main character, and his mother (794). Even though Yu does not develop the metaphorical use of folklore and magical realism regarding the depiction of Jack's emotions, it would not be farfetched to imply a further correlation between emotions, which are represented through magical realism, and othering dynamics that would justify the application of Sarah Ahmed's theory of "affective economies" in this research. Ahmed suggests that emotions are a form of capital which only has value when circulating between individuals. Given that this circulation of emotions may affect people's perception of belonging to certain social groups, it could be argued that emotions play a key role in the configuration of Otherness. Therefore, Ahmed's theory serves as an explanatory model of emotions as sociological mechanisms behind othering dynamics, which is deemed valuable when exploring certain passages of *The Paper Menagerie*.

Indeed, "The Paper Menagerie" has recently caught the attention of researchers, who have studied the implications of this work from multiple perspectives, including the migrant's situation (Jacobo; Omidvar), the "hero's journey" (Lingo), Liu's narrative techniques (Jabeen et al.), and the main features of an alleged "Asian American science fiction" (Chau; Jerng; H. Song). However, their scope tends to be quite limited and, even though previous research on this work provides ground for a deeper analysis of Liu's short story, many papers are not directly related to the field of Migration Studies (as is the case of Chau's approach to Chinese science fiction), or present manifest weaknesses regarding the use of theoretical frameworks and concepts, which tend to be Westernized even when their alleged aim is to overcome Orientalist approaches —as in Jabeen et al.'s analysis of magical realism in Liu's fiction, in which there is a focus on Latin-American

magical realism as understood by American and European authors, whereas the Chinese perspective on said subject has not been considered. In fact, the absence of a non-Western theoretical framework in the analysis of a literary work that presents the struggles of a child of mixed origins inexorably implies that part of the individual's identity that is being analysed may be misinterpreted. Moreover, basic sociological dynamics affecting the main character, such as Otherness or Orientalism, are not mentioned in these papers, either. Considering this, a new study of "The Paper Menagerie" where these research gaps are filled is more than justified.

By complicating a monological Western approach to the study of this text with the incorporation of Chinese literary theories, along with relevant theoretical contributions in the field of Migration Studies authored by Asian and Asian-American scholars, the aim of this research is to understand how Otherness is depicted in Liu's "The Paper Menagerie" by exploring both the cultural biases that circulate in Jack's environment and those which have been internalised by Jack himself and affect his perception as an individual and as a member of a minoritized group. In the light of Ahmed's *Affective Economies*, the guiding thread of this analysis is the role of magical realism in the configuration of the Orientalist dichotomy between the West and the East, given that previous research has pointed to a circulation of emotions prompted by magical artifacts that would explain key othering events in the short story (Jabeen et al.; Yu), even though this line of research has only been hinted at and scarcely explored. In this research, it is claimed that, in "The Paper Menagerie," the emotions circulating within the American context and adhering to diverse cultural elements have shaped Jack's perception of the Self and the Other, resulting in an explicit representation of this phenomenon through Jack's own relationship with his mother's *origami*. In this vein, magical

realism is present in the story through the figure of the living *origami* animals, which gain relevance in those parts of the plot focused on Jack's identity conflicts; thus, the animate paper animals can be interpreted as an allegory of Jack's Chinese heritage.

This thesis is divided into four sections. Given that the theoretical concepts applied to this study belong to two clearly differentiated academic approaches, the theoretical framework comprises two sections: the first challenges the binomial notion of "The Self vs. The Other" and is focused on describing the theoretical concepts of Otherness and Orientalism within the context of Migration Studies. The second section aims at deconstructing the dichotomous perspective on "Reality vs. Fantasy" by presenting the main features of magical realism and the Chinese idea of magical realism or "the ultra-unreal". Thereafter, the analysis has been divided into two sections, the first dealing with those othering dynamics operating in Jack's contextual environment and the latter focused on Jack's internalized othering dynamics.

Challenging the Notion of "The Self vs. The Other"

In this thesis, migration is understood as the "movement of a person either across an international border (international migration), or within a state (internal migration) for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate" ("Migration"). In this regard, during the 19th and 20th centuries, migration sharply increased, making the American continent one of the most common destinations (Sánchez Alonso; Moya and McKeown). However, in line with escalating xenophobic discourses regarding Asian migrants, the American Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882

to ban Chinese citizens from entering the U.S. and, four decades later, the 1924 Immigration Act considered all Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino and Asian Indian migrants "ineligible to citizenship" (E. Lee 51). It was not until forty-one years later that the Immigration Act of 1965 tried to reverse this situation, focusing on family reunification. This changed migration trends in the United States, with migrants from Asia and Latin America outnumbering those from Europe (C. Lee 529). In particular, migrants from mainland China reached 536,000 in 1990 (Hooper and Batalova).

The Chinese Exclusion Act or the 1924 Immigration Act are examples of the dominant group's systematic discrimination against minorities and, more precisely, Asian communities. As Judith Porter and Robert Washington have proved, hate directed towards migrants affects their perception as individuals ("personal self-esteem") and as a group ("group self-esteem"). In fact, both types of self-esteem are claimed to be interdependent, given that a high group self-esteem "is viewed as protective of personal self-esteem, and high personal self-esteem leads to ability to cope with racial and ethnic discrimination more successfully" (155). In the case of Chinese-American communities' self-esteem, results are inconclusive, but several studies point to low racial self-esteem in children when compared to African-American communities (150).

Moreover, Cliff Akiyama argues that the psychological distress suffered by second-generation Asian-Americans is, in fact, "the result of living in a paradigm of conflicting cultural values" caused by "the host environment […] telling them that they are doing something wrong" (262), leading to most migrants only identifying themselves as part of an ethnic group within the American context, rather than ascribing to a larger national identity (253). Although José Yuste-Frías explains that

this perception is mostly due to a misunderstanding of the concept of *identity* with *belonging* (113), Akiyama affirms that it is a consequence of the U.S. society being perceived as a "melting pot" according to assimilation theories, where "first-generation persons are expected to be distinct" whereas "second-generation persons less so" (253). For Yuste-Frías, the "melting pot" is part of an intercultural perspective, meaning that any manifestation of belonging to a foreign identity is blended with a dominant identity to obtain a homogeneous result (115).

Multiculturalism is also key to understanding sociocultural dynamics in the U.S., as the *one drop rule* —"the principle of hypodescent," where having one ancestor of a particular ethnicity implies that all the descendants are considered part of said ethnic group— has led to the *one hate rule* (Hollinger 18–20) and become the basis of the American multicultural approach: "multiculturalism accepts and emphasizes the migrant's cultural differences, but also subdues them into a generalized *American way of life* that is supposed to perfectly assimilate said migrant" (Yuste-Frías 116; own translation). In other words, American multiculturalism "allows the existence of multiple racial, ethnic and cultural communities, yet does not consider *métissage* as a feasible identity" (115; own translation). For Lawrence Venuti, systematically *domesticating*, that is, hiding what is seen as foreign has led to the hegemony of some cultures over others —a common trend in Anglo-American societies—, resulting in monolingual cultures that are provided with "the narcissistic experience of recognizing their own culture in a cultural other" (12).

In essence, migrants have been subject to cultural biases arising from Otherness, that is, the dichotomous criterion that "allows humanity to be divided into two groups: one that embodies the norm and whose identity is valued and

another that is defined by its faults, devalued and susceptible to discrimination" (Staszak). In the case of cultural biases against Asian communities, Otherness often takes the form of Orientalism, a discourse based on the "West-East" dichotomy where both the West and the East are a European invention where the former tried to build its own identity by opposing itself to the latter, that is, the Other (Said 20). Hence, Orientalism has traditionally relied on binary oppositions (e.g. artificial-natural, rationality-irrationality, etc.). However, Ulrich Beck challenges the binary character of Orientalism in contemporary times, as "the Other is among 'us', and even more, 'we' are the Other" (qtd. in Sayegh 1). This discourse attempts to deconstruct the traditional othering view of identity configuration (i.e. the Self vs. the Other) by emphasizing the "changeability and uncertainty" of one's attributes (Sayegh 1).

As Chizuko Ueno argues, Orientalism can also be used to construct an "Oriental counter-identity" (4) through a process known as "reverse Orientalism" or "Self-Orientalism." Thus, one's identity is defined by accepting "the imposed 'otherness' and attempt[ing] to take advantage of it" (4). For Jinhyun Cho, Self-Orientalism is a "process of misrecognition relating to power relations grounded in racial and linguistic hierarchies" and, therefore, it can be understood as a form of "inferiority complex" (32). It is also worth noting that Cho emphasizes the role of languages in self-Orientalist processes, as individuals under the influence of Orientalism may misrecognize "the binary system […] that sustains and is sustained by individual efforts to achieve a better self through the use of a superior language, which is oftentimes, English" (32). In other words, self-Orientalist individuals are often affected by diglossia.

Indeed, this connection between language and Otherness has also been explored by other researchers. In her theory on affective economies, Sarah Ahmed posits that emotions are not private, as they circulate and mediate between individuals as a "form of capital" (120), generating a sense of belonging to certain social groups in people. With this in mind, Ahmed suggests that language can positively or negatively shape emotions, as what words are chosen to refer to a certain phenomenon may influence one's perception of it. Consequently, the generation of the Self as a group involves emotions considered positive/beneficial, whereas the contrary (belonging to the Other or not belonging enough to the Self) is subject to fear and suspicion. In this regard, fear leads to the configuration of binary oppositions which relegate the Other —whoever they may be— to a position where they [the Other] are defined by the possibility of being dangerous or causing damage to the Self. Thus, if Ahmed's theory is valid, then it could be argued that emotions underlie and affect othering dynamics, as they are key to configurate collective identities. This approach provides a basis for understanding how emotions act as sociological mechanisms shaping othering dynamics.

Challenging the Notion of "Reality vs. Fantasy"

Coined in 1925 by Franz Roh, the notion of "magical realism" lies in a "theoretical vacuum" due to its similarities to other concepts such as "fabulation, metafiction, the baroque, the fantastic, the uncanny, or the marvellous" (Slemon 9). Simply put, magical realism is a literary device "that mostly represents life as it really is but with some events or features that are magical or supernatural" ("Magical realism"). Even though it is often associated with Latin-American communities (Jabeen et al. 1), Neo and Dalal argue that magical realism is a global phenomenon that challenges

dichotomies, for "it is a mode suited for exploring and transgressing boundaries (whether ontological, political, geographical, or generic), facilitating fusion or the coexistence of possible worlds, spaces, and systems that are often irreconcilable in other modes. Thus, magical realism is often liminal and pluralistic" (256). Given its liminal presence, Neo and Dalal or Slemon conclude that this literary practice has become part of the postcolonial discourse, as it signifies "resistance to central assimilation" (Slemon 10).

According to Tahira Jabeen et al. (5–6), magical realism is characterized by: (1) the irreducible element of magic, which is "highly accepted by the environment;" (2) the thorough description of the real world; (3) the reader's confrontation of the "unsettling doubts" caused by the introduction of magical elements in the story, which may lead to contradictory interpretations of the inexplicable incident; (4) the combination of magic and realism in the narrative; and (5) the disruption of time, space and identity. In this vein, Antonio Rappa states that magical realism is defined by a juxtaposition of "outlandish and unreal events, things, activities, and sequences," resulting in an undiscernible pattern and in the plot not following a linear development (13). Furthermore, Amaryll B. Chanady adds that "the supernatural is not presented as problematic" (20) in magical realism, for the supernatural element is "part of everyday reality" (19) and, therefore, it should not be seen as uncanny.

Ben Holgate claims that magical realism is a popular "narrative strategy […] to counter political and social repression, to reinstate indigenous points of view and belief systems and to reassert epistemologies that challenge the scientific rationality imposed by European-derived capitalism" (189). In fact, his overview of magical realism in contemporary Chinese fiction (*mohuan xianshizhuyi*) shows its

prevalence in the Chinese literary polysystem. Therefore, given that "The Paper Menagerie" includes references to Chinese folklore and magical realism, reviewing the notion of magical realism in this context contributes to adding complexity to predominantly Western approaches to the study of Ken Liu's short story.

Even though the Chinese term *mohuan xianshizhuyi* is used to refer to the Westernized concept of "magical realism," Chinese literature has a specific notion to reflect the particularities of this literary device in the Chinese literary context. Coined by Ning Ken, the *chaohuan* or "the ultra-unreal" refers to a narration "surpassing the unreal" or the "imaginary." The term derives from Ken's perspective of reality as a mutable phenomenon, which means that the individual's perception of reality will vary depending on the context: "if you look at reality from the viewpoint of tradition, then the reality you write about will seem traditional. If you look at reality from the viewpoint of the 'ultra-unreal', then your writing will be 'ultra-unreal'." Therefore, magical realism is constructed on how a culture interprets the combination of reality and unreality —what Ken has named "the compound eye"—, resulting in *chaohuan* being the particular presentation of the Chinese worldview in literature.

As stated, *chaohuan*'s features also differ from those of *mohuan xianshizhuyi.* Contrary to Jabeen et al.'s described features, Ken establishes only four rules: (1) *Chaohuan* should engage with social issues; (2) it is philosophically speculative; (3) it has the quality of a fable or an allegory; and (4) it takes risks, as it challenges the conventions of fiction, while appealing to the reader.

Contextual Othering Dynamics in Jack's Environment

Ken Liu describes "The Paper Menagerie" as "a story about systemic racism and internalized racism" ("An Interview with Ken Liu"). This dual perception of racism can also be detected when Judith Porter and Robert Washington's study on minority identities is applied, thereby establishing a correlation between "systemic vs. internalized racism" and "group vs. personal self-esteem." In "The Paper Menagerie," the main character's self-esteem as a migrant has been largely shaped by contextual othering dynamics that Ken Liu describes as "systemic racism." Thus, two main groups are shown to greatly interfere in Jack's perception of Chinese culture: (1) his neighbours, who represent the dominant adults' perspective, and (2) his classmates, represented by Mark, who conveys the dominant children's worldview.

At the beginning of the story, it is described how Jack and his family moved to "a new house across town" when he is ten years old (Liu 178). To welcome them, two neighbours visit their residence and, given that Jack's father needs to go to the utility company, he asks them not to think his wife is "being rude for not talking to you" because she does not speak English (178). Thinking they are not being understood, the neighbours engage in a "not particularly quiet" conversation about ethnicity that unsettles Jack, as they wonder why Jack's father selected a mail-order bride to get married to, given that "he seems like a *normal* enough man" (179; emphasis added). In terms of Otherness, the neighbours are establishing a dichotomic line between what is normal ("the Self") and what is not ("the Other") and explicitly placing Jack's father in a liminal position coined as "the inbetweenness," which "highlights the qualification required to be considered approximate to the dominant culture at a given moment" (Garner 99). This

negatively affects Jack's conception of his in-group ("the Self") due to his family's social dynamics being actively redefined by members of the new community they are moving in; in fact, his family does no longer "embody the norm," in Jean F. Staszak's terms. Furthermore, knowing this detail about his parents' relationship is disturbing for Jack, who asks himself "what kind of woman puts herself into a catalogue so that she can be bought" (176) and he puts all the blame on his mother, redirecting these negative emotions towards her, even though she is a victim who resorted to the "mail-order bride" system in an attempt to escape "hell": "If I can cook, clean, and take care of my American husband, he'll give me a good life. *It was the only hope I had*" (Liu 188; emphasis added).

The neighbours also criticize Jack's appearance: "Something about the mixing never seems right. The child looks unfinished. Slanty eyes, white face. A little monster" (179). According to Yuste-Frías, the neighbours' emphasis on cultural differences, as well as their rejection of *métissage* "as a feasible identity" (115) are nothing but the manifestation of a multicultural approach to societies where different cultural communities are *allowed* to exist, but not to mix. Not only do the neighbours reject the possibility of *métissage* as a valid identity belonging to the Self ("the child looks *unfinished*" [Liu 179]) and establish a clear connection between appearance and identity, but also the use of the term "monster" implies that Jack is being otherized, since monsters are often (negative) manifestations of Otherness (Kearney 3). By being described as a non-human creature, Jack is also being explicitly dehumanized and devalued, which, according to Staszak, makes him "susceptible to discrimination." Moreover, by applying Ahmed's *Affective Economies*, this connection between Otherness and monstrosity attaches negative emotions —which are traditionally *stuck* to said concepts— to othered notions such as *migration* and

métissage, prompting the circulation of these emotions among other concepts and individuals related to them. Thus, when Jack's mother tries to speak English, Jack feels embarrassed by "her accent and broken sentences" (Liu 181–182), implying a connection between Otherness and language where not fully mastering the language of the dominant group involves negative emotions (i.e. Jack's embarrassment) and reasserts the perception of said individual as the Other.

Likewise, the neighbours also complain about Jack's first name because it "doesn't sound very Chinesey" (178). As Kenneth Dion's study on the close interrelatedness of names, identity, and self suggests (245), the neighbours would be using this remark to ascribe Jack to his Chinese identity and, therefore, to challenge his belonging to "the Self." Considering this passage, it would not be farfetched to interpret that the neighbours' rejection of *métissage* has been motivated by the one-drop rule, for their emphasis on the lack of a "Chinesey" name would imply the repudiation of Jack's American identity.

In a similar vein, Jack's relationship with Mark, his neighbour and classmate, is also framed by these othering dynamics. When they meet, Mark has a Star Wars action figure for people to see, whereas Jack's toys are the *origami* animals his mother made for him to play with. Even though the action figure is not being used as a toy ("we watched him repeat this performance five times on the coffee table. 'Can he do anything else?'" [Liu 179]), Mark is disgusted by Jack's lack of interest in his figure and, more importantly, by his paper menagerie: "That doesn't look like a tiger at all. Your Mom makes toys for you from trash?" (179). In the light of Ahmed's theory, the term "trash" implies the circulation of negative connotations and, therefore, emotions. Even though Jack is fond of Laohu, Mark's negative words affect his perception of the *origami* tiger: "I had never thought of Laohu as *trash*.

But looking at him now, he was really just a piece of wrapping paper" (179). However, Mark's words do not only put into circulation negative emotions about Jack's *origami,* for these remarks and further harassment in the classroom later redefine Jack's self-perception as well, prompting him to ask his father if he has "a chink face" (180).

Mark's encounter with Jack is also a reflection of sociocultural values. Indeed, it can be argued that Mark's Obi-Wan Kenobi action figure is a metaphor for a capitalist society (in the American context, "the Self"): even though it does not look "like the real Obi-Wan at all" and it is not a toy per se —for it cannot be used to properly play—, it "was very expensive" and it cannot be found in stores anymore (179), stressing its value as an exclusive item. By contrast, Jack's paper menagerie —which is alive thanks to the magic of Jack's mother— represents folklore (in the American context, "the Other"), for it is not only sustainable, but also part of his mother's traditions: "Sigulu is famous for its *zhezhi* papercraft, and my mother taught me how to make paper animals and give them life" (187). As *zhezhi* ("origami") was taught by Jack's grandmother to his mother, it can be interpreted as literary ecology being "traced through folklore that is passed down from generation to generation" (Samsuddin 25) and, therefore, an allusion to intergenerationally preserving one's traditions. In this allegory, folklore would be endangered due to the capitalist culture cannibalizing other forms of knowledge. This idea is supported by Hang Yu, who claims that "the torn paper tiger actually symbolized the vulnerability of Chinese culture in a society dominated by American culture" (791).

Moreover, the introduction of magical realism to depict folklore in "The Paper Menagerie" seems to be related to the idea of folklore functioning as a device for cultural and natural preservation with magic as a dichotomous approach to a

Westernized rationality, for "traditional knowledge is mercilessly being colonized, which implies that scientific rationality makes individuals avoid the use of folkloric references and mythical thought" (Quintairos-Soliño and Ojeda-García 3):

> This means it is not necessary to believe that folk creatures are true because folklore can be preserved by not forgetting traditional practices and wisdom as well as by identifying folk references and transmitting them from generation to generation. The importance of protecting certain traditions relies on ecology. It is essential to preserve one's roots as well as one's nature because it is beneficial to everyone and enables one to live in harmony with oneself. (Quintairos-Soliño and Ojeda-García 15)

Therefore, folklore has an ecological value which allows for the preservation of the traditional Self (now displaced as "the Other"), challenging the established dichotomous concepts of "the Self" and "the Other." This reasserts magical realism as part of the discourse aimed at reinstating the indigenous points of view which confront the European-derived capitalism, as Holgate (189) suggested. In this vein, it could be argued that the magical-realist paper menagerie is an explicit form of folklore which symbolises Jack's Chinese heritage —as inherited from his mother— as well as the need for acknowledging one's roots to be able to accept oneself as the Self again.

Furthermore, this idea of folklore as part of a literary ecology which challenges Otherness connects to Ning Ken's theory on *chaohuan* or "the Ultra-Unreal," since this approach makes "The Paper Menagerie" fulfil several of Ken's requirements to be considered as such, including its engagement with social issues (being Otherness and sustainability two of them) and the configuration of a fable or allegory (being fables a traditional literary form of folklore). Therefore, the presence

of the *origami* animals as characters in the story and the conveyance of a moral regarding one's identity and self-acceptance make "The Paper Menagerie" a contemporary fable, for fables are "a short story that tells a moral truth, often using animals as characters" ("Fable").

Jack's Internalised Othering Dynamics

As an individual, Jack has internalized part of the othering dynamics which have been present in his environment since he was a child, which has led to an identity crisis, as Cliff Akiyama suggests in his study of identity attitudes (262). In this regard, Ken Liu has depicted a character that must "struggle against self-hatred, to resist the cowardly desire to conform" (Liu, "An Interview with Ken Liu"). If Jinhyun Cho's approach to self-perception and misrecognition in Orientalism is applied, then it could be argued that Jack's individual and group self-esteems are mostly influenced by an inferiority complex linked to Self-Orientalism.

From the beginning of "The Paper Menagerie," numerous Chinese cultural references have been mentioned as an essential part of the story: "soy sauce" (177), "stir-fried green peppers with five-spice beef" (180), "chopsticks" (180), "cheongsam" (176), "Qingming" (183) or "*zhezhi*" (176). At first, they coexist and transculturally merge with culturemes grounded on the American culture, as happens when Jack's mother uses wrapping paper with Christmas decoration on it to create the first *origami* animals for her son: "The skin of the tiger was the pattern on the wrapping paper, white background with red candy canes and green Christmas trees" (Liu 175).

However, Jack has been subject to bullying due to his mixed origins and blames his mother for it: "*I look nothing like her, nothing. […] Other families don't*

have moms that don't belong" (180). As Akiyama points out, "the second generation often experiences a combative dialogue between experiences inside and outside the home environment." In "The Paper Menagerie," this inner conflict between what Jack lives at home and what he experiences outside results in him demanding his parents to lead an American lifestyle, partially engaging in the discourse of the *melting pot,* since "belonging to a certain identity prevails over belonging to other identities" (Yuste-Frías 115; own translation): "We should eat American food. […] And I want some *real* toys" (Liu 180–181; emphasis added). When his father explains to him that many families "cook Chinese sometimes" in an attempt to normalize their diet, Jack simply replies "We are not other families" while thinking to himself that "*other families don't have moms that don't belong*" (181). Thus, the main character is trying to reestablish himself and his father as part of the Self by absorbing the "dominant society's cultural practices and beliefs" (Akiyama) and, therefore, hiding what he now perceives as "foreign." Hence, by domesticating his own identity, he is adopting a self-Orientalist approach as well as legitimating the hegemony of the American culture over the rest, as Lawrence Venuti described in his research.

Furthermore, Jack's father also justifies the domestication of non-American cultural references by stating that his son "needs to fit in" because he is "in America" (Liu 181). This statement has three implications: (1) it proves the dynamic nature of migrants and their descendants, the latter being described as "a more mobile figure who travels across more boundaries, who seeks something different than assimilation, who disrupts and changes and makes demands" (H. Song 4); (2) it posits the necessity of completely adapting oneself to an environment to be accepted by the dominant group rather than merging; and (3) it restates the perception of

Whiteness (and a set of related cultural elements) as the core of the American society, as Steve Garner (99) suggests. In fact, Jack himself has internalized that he needs to "fit in" to be able to be happy: "I could continue my all-American pursuit of happiness" (Liu 182).

In the process of reinstating himself as "the Self," Jack has decided to ostracize his mother, turning her into the unavoidable Other, for it does not matter how much she tries to adapt herself to the American context, it is never enough: "by then her English was much better, but I was already at that age when I wasn't interested in what she had to say whatever language she used" (Liu 182). It does not matter how much Jack's mother forces herself to acculturate to the U.S. because Jack is immersed in a Self-Orientalist process himself, reproducing othering attitudes and redirecting the xenophobic discourse towards his mother in an attempt to protect himself —who is undergoing a similar process—: "She tried to hug me the way she saw American mothers did on TV. I thought her movements exaggerated, uncertain, ridiculous, graceless" (182). In fact, he does not only view his mother as unable to adapt to the American lifestyle by stating that "it was a mistake to have tried to take a Chinese peasant girl and expect her to fit in the suburbs of Connecticut" (182), but dehumanizes her as well by establishing a parallelism between her and a traditionally othered creature, i.e. the alien: "We had nothing in common. She might as well *be from the moon*" (182; emphasis added). In this vein, Jack is reproducing his neighbours' behaviour, who immediately othered him by calling him "monster" because of his physical appearance.

For Jack, all Chinese cultural references must be domesticated, and that includes language. Even though his mother explains to him how she cannot convey her feelings in English because it is not her mother tongue, emphasizing how she

feels Chinese words in her heart whereas English is only felt in her lips (181), Jack is determined to live in a monolingual environment where English is the only spoken language. As per Venuti's theories, this would reinforce the role of English as a *lingua franca,* that is, a vehicular language and, more importantly, as a tool to justify and maintain the hegemony of a particular speech community over the others. In fact, Xiaojing Zhou suggests that "unlearning English" and learning the subordinated language sets in motion a process whereby individuals achieve their own autonomy by contesting the alleged hegemony (71). Jack's mother not wishing to express herself in English and preferring the use of Chinese even when she knows her son may not understand her would point to her as a character who tries to defy the hegemonic elements of American society to preserve both Jack's and her own Chinese identity.

Hence, Jack's attitude towards languages is self-Orientalist as well, as Self-Orientalism tends to perceive English (or the language of the dominant group) as the "superior language" (Cho 32). According to Guillermo Rojo, the fact of considering certain languages prestigious and useful in all sociocultural contexts, yet relegating others to informal situations is called "ascribed diglossia" (614). Moreover, Rojo claims that the alleged prestigious languages are mostly used by the most favoured social classes, whereas the other languages are spoken by people from less-favoured social groups. Thus, it could be claimed that Jack is affected by this type of diglossia, as he perceives English as the high-prestige language of the American speech community, thereby using it in all communicative contexts. Likewise, he believes that the Chinese language is not prestigious, for it is spoken by a minoritized group, so he decides not to speak Chinese anymore in an attempt to dissociate himself from the Chinese-American community. The sociolinguistic

phenomenon of ascribed diglossia suffered by Jack seems to prove Jinhyun Cho's remarks on self-Orientalism being related to "power relations grounded in […] linguistic hierarchies" which prompt the migrant's "inferiority complex" (32).

In this vein, Runze Wang and Cheng Xu claim that this self-Orientalist perception can only be destabilized in intercultural communication by relying on "the presentation of homeland memory for the curiosity of other culture, and the [breaking] such unsophisticated culture curiosity so as to take a new position to write about thoughts on problems shared by mankind" (para. 10). Jack's mother relies on her homeland memory to challenge Jack's misconceptions and cultural bias through a letter written in Chinese inside Laohu: by presenting her homeland, she raises Jack's curiosity of her culture; then, she introduces her thoughts about the migrant's experience: "*In the suburbs of Connecticut, I was lonely.* […] *But no one understood me, and I understood nothing*" (Liu 188). Finally, she ends her letter reflecting on the relationship between parents and children and emphasizing how she has always been aware of Jack's identity conflicts, but wished her son could empathize with her as well: "*But can you understand how much joy your very existence brought to me? And can you understand how it felt when you stopped talking to me and won't let me talk to you in Chinese?* […] *The pain makes it hard to write*" (189). Thus, this letter makes Jack reconceptualize his idea of himself, for he finally knows his family origins, thereby making possible for him to be able to understand his Chinese heritage. This makes him adopt what has been described as one of the most common identities in the Literatures of Migration:

> Identity is not stable because *the self is constantly shifting from one identity to another,* and this is mainly because of the inherent diversity within identity. Identity cannot be restricted to only one particular thing: instead of being

> enclosed within the boundaries of particularism, identity opens out to embrace pluralism. (Karkaba 93; emphasis added)

At this point of the analysis, it is feasible to affirm that Jack's internalized othering dynamics are shaped by emotions. In fact, the character states that "contempt felt good, like wine" (Liu 176) to describe his behaviour towards his mother, hinting at the possibility that the fact of redirecting his self-hate towards her made the pain of being discriminated against more bearable. In fact, her mother's letter includes a passage where she admits that she is aware of Jack's reasons to *loathe* her: "*Son, I know that you do not like your Chinese eyes, which are my eyes. I know that you do not like your Chinese hair, which is my hair*" (189).

The manifestation of the Other through Chinese cultural references —such as artifacts, festivities, proper names, linguistic interactions, or physical appearance— triggers Jack's Self-Orientalism. According to Ahmed's theory, this would be caused by the attachment of negative emotions to these cultural elements. Hence, Mark's disdain for Jack's toys is transferred to the paper menagerie itself, influencing Jack's perception of his mother's *origami* and, by extension, of their Chinese origins. In fact, every time he encounters the paper animals in his room, the negative emotions attached to these items affect him and he tries to avoid their presence: "I caught them [the paper animals], squeezed them until the air went out of them, and then stuffed them away in the box in the attic" (182). Years later, after Jack's mother dies, his girlfriend Susan finds the old paper animals and comments on the uniqueness of her *zhezhi,* emphasizing how Jack's "mum was an amazing artist" (184) and transferring positive emotions to the paper menagerie.

As an adult, Jack is not disgusted by the presence of the paper animals. In fact, he seems surprised when he discovers that the paper animals no longer move: "The

paper animals did not move. Perhaps whatever magic had animated them stopped when Mom died" (184). In line with Orientalist binomials, Jack attempts to reject folklore by presenting a rational explanation as to why the *origami* remains lifeless: "Or perhaps I had only imagined that these paper constructions were once alive. The memory of children could not be trusted" (184). Inadvertently, by stating that children's memories may not be reliable, the main character has introduced a new perspective on his own identity which opens the door to the reconfiguration of his cultural biases: if the memories of his childhood cannot be trusted, his past experiences regarding discrimination may be reinterpreted as well.

The magical, yet now inanimate paper animals suggest not only a connection between them and Jack's mother as their creator, but also between magical realism (in the form of the *origami*) and Jack's emotions towards his mother and, by extension, towards his Chinese origins. Thus, when Jack is a carefree child who is unaware of racism, the paper animals are alive thanks to his mother's breath: "Mom's breath was special. She breathed into her paper animals so that they shared her breath, and thus moved with her life. This was her magic" (176). Even though his mother's magic seems to disappear when she dies ("Susan found the shoe box in the attic. […] The paper animals did not move" [184]), Jack discovers that the tiger has been brought back to life two years later, during the celebration of *Qingming*, the Chinese Festival for the Dead. This phenomenon could be interpreted as the soul of Jack's mother visiting his son, given that she begs him to "keep that box you have in the attic with you, and every year, at *Qingming,* just take it out and think about me. I'll be with you always" (183) before passing away. In fact, Jack is fondly remembering his "mom's hands" (185) crafting a paper shark for him when the paper tiger, which is in the same room, suddenly "unfurled itself," "pounced

playfully" and even "purred" (185). This suggests that not only the Qingming, but also the positive emotions towards his mother and the *origami* were necessary to reactivate the magical nature of the paper menagerie. Ultimately, this passage also confirms that the narrated events were not a figment of a child's imagination, for they are indeed part of magical realism.

Written in the tiger Laohu, there is a letter by Jack's mother telling her story to him and describing her suffering when Jack decided to neglect her. Jack is unable to read the letter, for it has been written in Chinese, and he decides to ask for help to a tourist. A young woman helps him and, when she finishes, he "could not bear to look into her face" (189) because he is ashamed of himself. Jack's mother wanted his son to act as a mediator between her and her husband ("You grew up a little, and now you could even help your father and me talk to each other" [188]) so she could finally feel at home, but Jack othered her instead. In this regard, the main character reveals that he even tried to forget what he had learned about his Chinese heritage, although it was not completely possible: "The language that I had tried to forget for years came back" (186). Moreover, the Chinese language becomes a positive cultural reference when Jack hears the tourist reading the letter in Chinese and begins to feel "the words sinking into me, through my skin, through my bones, until they squeezed tight around my heart" (186) just like his mother described to him when he was a child. Thus, it could be argued that Jack has started to deconstruct his self-Orientalist attitude, challenging the traditional dichotomy of Otherness (that is, *the Self vs. the Other*) and becoming himself a changeable Self/Other, as Pascal Yan Sayegh suggests when he posits that the traditional binary perspective on identity configuration needs to be deconstructed due to the fluidity of one's attributes (1).

Jack's mother reaches the end of her letter by reflecting on a particular emotion, which the Chinese describe as "the saddest feeling in the world" (Liu 189) according to her: "It's for a child to finally grow the desire to take care of his parents, only to realize that they were long gone" (189). The connection between this remark about the alleged Chinese mindset and Jack's actions at the end of this short story seems to be a reminiscence of a magician foretelling Jack's future, as he becomes embarrassed by his behaviour and starts to trace "the character for *ai* [love] […] again and again on the paper, intertwining my pen strokes with her words" (189). Thus, his mother's letter has also transferred a set of new emotions to Jack, who thinks of the piece of paper as his mother: hence, when the young tourist hands the letter back to him, "she got up and left, leaving me alone with my mother" (189).

Even though the letter has been written in Chinese, Liu has reproduced it in English in the story for ease of communication. Despite being in English, the writing style seems to emulate what could be perceived as the speech patterns, sentence structures, and cadences of Chinese: "*Because I have to write with all my heart, I need to write to you in Chinese*" (186). It could be argued that the translation of this letter into English may hint at the possibility of *métissage* that Jack's neighbours denied him when he was a child, since both languages are needed to fully comprehend the contents: from the reader's perspective, knowing English is necessary to read the text and to imagine what Jack is hearing from the tourist. However, from Jack's perspective, Chinese is required to get access to the contents of the original letter, which he is physically seeing at the same time the reader sees its translation.

Moreover, the emotions circulating between the letter and Jack make him "refold the paper back into Laohu" and, "as he purred, we began the walk home"

(189). This ending points to a reconciliation between Jack and his Chinese heritage, represented by his mother and Laohu; therefore, Jack decides to believe again in the magical realism surrounding the paper menagerie thanks to the circulation of emotions between the *origami,* his mother's letter and the people who are present in Jack's adult life (that is, his girlfriend Susan). In this vein, walking home with Laohu in his arms may be a metaphor for Jack's journey into self-acceptance, who has rejected self-Orientalism to embrace his Chinese roots.

Conclusion

The question of the complexities of the Asian-American migrant's identity, which Ken Liu articulates in "The Paper Menagerie," had already been discussed by other writers in the 20th century, as observed by Chau or Lowe. Hence, whereas Janice Mirikitani's "Recipe" and "Breaking Tradition" illustrate one's self-hate and intergenerational family relationships, respectively, Myung Mi Kim explores the national identity and the migrant's sense of belonging in "Into Such Assembly." Likewise, in the 21st century, Ken Liu has brought to the forefront a comprehensive combination of these identity conflicts to emphasize the cultural biases of the American society and migrants' themselves. However, it could be argued that Liu's most relevant innovation lies in the introduction of magical realism as a literary device to symbolically convey the importance of emotions in the process of othering the migrant.

Indeed, throughout fourteen pages, *The Paper Menagerie* thoroughly depicts the sociocultural reality of many migrants in the United States by focusing on the particular, yet translatable experiences of a young boy named Jack, who is discriminated against for being Chinese-American. Through brief interconnected

passages focused on his life, the short story represents the main cultural bias and identity struggles suffered by migrants of Asian American communities, which have resulted in the main character's self-hatred and the repudiation of his own mother.

Jack's environment is predominantly American and, therefore, the main cultural biases he encounters during his youth are directed towards his Chinese heritage. Thus, Jack is being bullied at school for being Chinese-American, whereas several neighbours explicitly deny the possibility of hybridisation by making Jack subject to a process of monstrification through which he is turned into the Other. Therefore, the possibility of *métissage* is utterly rejected by the members of the dominant group. This has an impact on Jack's own self-perception, for if *métissage* is not possible, then he, a hybrid child, should not exist as such. Thus, negative experiences —like being told racist remarks or suffering bullying— affect his self-esteem and, as a liminal member of the Chinese community, he decides to reject this part of his identity as well. As a result, Jack does not only engage in the predominant American discourse on migration but also adopts a self-Orientalist attitude with which he developsa new hatred that he directs towards his mother for considering her a symbol of his Chinese identity.

"The Paper Menagerie" also depicts how emotions circulate among characters and objects, prompting Jack to act in a particular way: as per Ahmed's theory of "affective economies," when negative emotions *adhered* to certain Chinese elements, Jack developed a negative attitude towards the Chinese culture and language, thereby repudiating them. In the same vein, when favourable remarks were made about these items, positive emotions were set into motion, making Jack more prone to accept himself. Likewise, the paper menagerie and the Chinese language are the two main elements affected by the circulation of said emotions and,

at the same time, the presence of magical realism is mostly revealed through them. This interplay between emotions and magical realism is reflected on the configuration of Orientalism, given that emotions, which are prompted by magical realism, have an impact on Jack's self-esteem, establishing a dichotomy between the East (negative emotions – China) and the West (positive emotions – the U.S.) at the beginning of "The Paper Menagerie."

This research has aimed to understand a groundbreaking short story from the perspective of Migration Studies, highlighting not only the migrant's perception, but also the sociological elements that led to such situation. In this regard, it could be argued that Ken Liu has created a complex character whose unbearable identity conflict is depicted through elements such as the sociocultural relationships, the cultural references mentioned in the story, the presence and interplay of the Chinese and English languages, the use of magical realism as a literary device and the circulation of emotions. Likewise, Sarah Ahmed's theory of "affective economies" has been deemed valid as a theoretical framework used to explain sociocultural dynamics that underlie the configuration of identities in terms of individual self-esteem and group self-esteem.

It is true that the limitations of this research undermine the possibilities of a more thorough analysis of incidental aspects that could shed light on particular sociocultural phenomena, as their study would be beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, it would be convenient that future lines of research focus on extending this type of analysis to Ken Liu's whole literary production in an attempt to obtain a clearer understanding of his depiction of Otherness in stories where the migrants' situation is not profusely described. Furthermore, a nuanced analysis of the role of capitalism in the depiction of Otherness would also be relevant, as it has been hinted

that folklore and capitalism influence the perception of identities related to non-Western traditions. Indeed, this research has shown how a perspective focused on Migration Studies is necessary to observe the presence and configuration of the Other in literature, for no matter how much time has passed, one may still wonder "who is mother tongue, who is father country?" (Kim 30).

Works Cited

Ahmed, Sarah, "Affective Economies." *Social Text*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2004, pp. 117–139.

Akiyama, Cliff. "Bridging the Gap between Two Cultures: An Analysis on Identity Attitudes and Attachment of Asian Americans." *Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention,* vol. 8, no. 3, 2008, pp. 251–263.

Chanady, Amaryll B. *Magical Realism and the Fantastic. Resolved versus Unresolved Antinomy.* Routledge, 1985.

Chau, Angie C. "From Nobel to Hugo: Reading Chinese Science Fiction as World Literature." *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, vol. 30, no. 1, 2018, pp. 110–135.

Cho, Jinhyun. "Constructing a white mask through English: The Misrecognized self in Orientalism." *International Journal of the Sociology of Languages,* no. 271, 2021, pp. 17–34.

Dion, Kenneth L. "Names, Identity, and Self." *A Journal of Onomastics,* vol. 31, no. 4, 1983, pp. 245–257.

"Fable." Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, 22 May 2024, *Cambridge Dictionary*. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fable.

Garner, Steve. *Whiteness: An Introduction.* Routledge, 2007.

Hanna, Mary, and Jeanne Batalova. "Immigrants from Asia in the United States." *Migration Policy Institute*, 2021, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/immigrants-asia-united-states-2020#:~:text=Migration%20from%20Asia%20to%20the,countries%20across%20the%20Asian%20continent.

Holgate, Ben. "East Asian Magical Realism." *Magical Realism and Literature*, edited by Christopher Warnes and Kim Anderson Sasser, Cambridge University Press, 2020, pp. 182–197.

Hollinger, David A. "The One Drop Rule & the One Hate Rule." *Daedalus,* vol. 134, no. 1, 2005, pp. 18–28.

Hooper, Kate and Jeanne Batalova. "Chinese Immigrants in the United States." *The Immigrant Learning Center,* Immigration Research Library, 28 Jan. 2015, https://www.immigrationresearch.org/system/files/Chinese_Immigrants_in_the_United_States.pdf. Accessed 14 Feb. 2024.

Jabeen, Tahira, et al. "Magical Realism in Ken Liu's Short Stories." *The Dialogue*, vol. 17, no. 4, 2022, pp. 2–16.

Jacobo, Rafael. "The Loss of Identity." *Beginnings and Endings: A Critical Edition*, edited by Liza Long. College of Western Idaho, 2021, pp. 483–488.

Jerng, Mark. "The Asiatic Modal Imagination." *Asian American Literature in Transition, 1996–2020*, edited by Betsy Huang and Victor Román Mendoza, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 173–99.

Karkaba, Cherki. "Deconstructing Identity in Postcolonial Fiction." *ELOPE: English Language Overseas Perspectives and Enquiries,* vol. 7, no. 2, 2010, pp. 91–99.

Kearney, Richard. *Strangers, Gods and Monsters. Interpreting Otherness.* Routledge, 2003.

Ken, Ning. "Writing in the Age of the Ultra-Unreal." Translated by Thomas Moran. *New England Review*, vol. 37, no. 2, 2016. https://www.nereview.com/vol-37-no-2-2016/writing-in-the-age-of-the-ultra-unreal-2/

Kim, Myung Mi. “Into Such Assembly.” *Under Flag*. Kesley St. Press, 1998.

Komura, Toshiaki. “Poetics of Self-Loss in Contemporary Japanese-American Poetry: a Case of Janice Mirikitani's ‘Recipe’.” 藤女子大学紀要委員会編 / *The Bulletin of the Faculty of Humanities, Fuji Women's University*, vol. 52, 2015, pp. 21–34.

Lee, Catherine. “Family Reunification and the Limits of Immigration Reform: Impact and Legacy of the 1965 Immigration Act.” *Sociological Forum,* vol. 30, no. 1, 2015, pp. 528-548.

Lee, Erika. “The Chinese Exclusion Example: Race, Immigration, and American Gatekeeping, 1882–1924.” *Journal of American Ethnic History*, vol. 21, no. 3, 2002, pp. 36–62.

Liu, Ken. “An Interview with Ken Liu.” *Grimdark Magazine,* 4 Dec. 2021, https://www.grimdarkmagazine.com/an-interview-with-ken-liu/.

---. “The Paper Menagerie.” *The Paper Menagerie and Other Stories*. Head of Zeus, 2016, pp. 175–189.

---. “Preface.” *The Paper Menagerie and Other Stories.* Head of Zeus, 2016, pp. vii–ix.

---. “What is ‘Silkpunk’?” *Ken Liu, writer*. https://kenliu.name/books/what-is-silkpunk/

Lowe, Lisa. “Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Marking Asian American Differences.” *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, edited by Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan. Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

“Magical realism.” *Cambridge Dictionary,* Cambridge University Press & Assessment, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/magical-realism. Accessed 12 Feb. 2024.

"Migration." *Migration and Home Affairs,* Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs – European Commission, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary/glossary/migration_en. Accessed 4 Feb. 2024.

Mirikitani, Janice. *Out of the Dust: New and Selected Poems*. University of Hawaii Press, 2014.

Moya, Jose, and Adam McKeown. "World Migration in the Long Twentieth Century." *Essays on Twentieth-Century History,* edited by Michael Adas. Temple University Press, 2010, pp. 9–52.

Neo, David H. J., and Sanghamitra Dalal. "The Cosmopolitics of Asian Magical Realism: Decentralisation and Localisation of Chinese Folklore in the Global Netflix Series *The Ghost Bride*." *Streaming and Screen Culture in Asia-Pacific,* edited by Michael Samuel and Louise Mitchell. Palgrave Macmillan, 2022, pp. 249–264. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-09374-6_14

Omidvar, Morteza. "Different generations, distinct lifestyles, same feeling of hiraeth: a postcolonial study of Ken Liu's 'The Paper Menagerie'." *Folia linguistica et litteraria*, vol. 45, no. 1, 2023, pp. 169–181.

Porter, Judith R. and Robert E. Washington. "Minority Identity and Self-Esteem." *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 19, 1993, pp. 139–161.

Quintairos-Soliño, Alba and Francisco Miguel Ojeda-García. "Science, Folklore, and Ecology of Knowledges in Aoyama's *Detective Conan* Anime." *Íkala. Revista de lenguaje y cultura,* vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 1–15, https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.353637.

Rappa, Antonio L. “Magical Realism and Romance in Asia: Avenues for Understanding?” *BOHR International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2023, pp. 13–23. https://doi.org/10.54646/bijsshr.019

Rojo, Guillermo. “Diglosia y tipos de diglosia.” *Philologica Hispaniensia. In honorem M. Alvar,* vol. II, Gredos, 1985, pp. 603–617.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. Pantheon Books, 1978.

Samsuddin, Siti N. (2019). “Literary Ecology in Kongga Owose Folklore.” *Journal of Indonesian Language Education and Literary,* vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 24–30.

Sánchez Alonso, Blanca. “La época de las grandes migraciones: desde mediados del siglo XIX a 1930.” *Mediterráneo económico: procesos migratorios, economía y personas, vol. 1,* edited by Manuel Pimentel Siles, Instituto de Estudios Socioeconómicos de Cajamar, 2002, pp. 19–32.

Sayegh, Pascal Yan. “Cultural Hybridity and Modern Binaries: Overcoming the Opposition Between Identity and Otherness?” *Cultures in Transit,* Institute of Transcultural and Diasporic Studies. July 2008, Liverpool.

Slemon, Stephen. “Magic realism as post-colonial discourse.” *Canadian Literature*, no. 116, 1988, pp. 9–24.

Song, Han. “Chinese Science Fiction: A Response to Modernization.” *Science Fiction Studies,* vol. 40, no. 1, 2013, pp. 15–21.

Song, Min Hyoung. “Asian American Literature within and beyond the Immigrant Narrative.” *The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature*, edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim. Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 3–15.

Staszak, Jean Françoise. “Other/otherness.” *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, edited by Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift. Elsevier, 2008, pp. 43–47.

Ueno, Chizuko. “In the Feminine Guise: A Trap of Reverse Orientalism.” *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal. English Supplement*, no. 13, 1997, pp. 3–25.

Venuti, Lawrence. *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation.* Routledge, 2008.

Wang, Runze and Cheng Xu. “The In-Betweens: the Chinese Immigrant Writings and Inter-Cultural Communication.” *French Journal for Media Research*, no. 13, 2020. https://frenchjournalformediaresearch.com:443/lodel-1.0/main/index.php?id=1990

Yu, Hang. “An Analysis of the Reconstruction of Chinese American Identity in The Paper Menagerie.” *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, vol. 10, no. 9, 2020, pp. 790–795.

Yuste-Frías, José. “Por una comunicación transcultural en los servicios públicos de Traducción e Interpretación.” *Traducir e interpretar lo público*, edited by Óscar Ferreiro Vázquez. Comares, 2016, pp. 105–120.

Zhou, Xiaojing. “Asian American Poetry: Diaspora and National Identity.” *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses,* no. 43, 2001, pp. 59–81.