

UGC Post-Doctoral Research Award

Dynamics of Repression and the Other in Chinese Diaspora in Canada: A Study of Select Novels of Su Tong and Wayson Choy from Psychoanalytic and Cultural Perspectives

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Abstract

Keywords: Acculturation; Chinese-Canadian diaspora; Repression; Su-Tong; Wayson Choy

The post-doctoral research, titled "Dynamics of Repression and the Other in Chinese Diaspora in Canada: A Study of Select Novels of Su Tong and Wayson Choy from Psychoanalytic and Cultural Perspectives" was carried out and completed under the Post-Doctoral Research Award Scheme of the UGC during the period from 29.02.2012 to 28.02.2014. The objective of the research was to explore the inhibiting factors and the elements of repression within the Chinese cultural ambience that lead to the relatively slow pace of acculturation of the Chinese diaspora across the globe as is conspicuously revealed through the prevalence of Chinatowns. Key postulations in psychoanalysis, cultural studies, and diaspora studies were employed for examining the theme within a theoretical framework. The select novels of the highly acclaimed Chinese writer, Su Tong and the Chinese-Canadian diasporic writer, Wayson Choy were brought under critical analysis for mapping the cultural and psychic life of the Chinese subject, both at home and in diaspora. This also entailed an overview of the Chinese cultural and literary history and the Chinese diasporic experience, with special focus on the Chinese-Canadian diaspora. What is discernable is the profile of a nation that is constituted by heterogeneous historical and cultural factors and

confounding paradoxes, evincing a "discordant blend of authoritarian politics and liberal economics . . . where new freedoms and old oppressions, anarchy and discipline, modernity and tradition coexisted without any obvious mechanisms for resolving the tensions that ensued." The present cultural fabric of China is underpinned by the continuing impact of a wide gamut of social, economic, and historical elements accruing over many centuries. What is most repressed is undoubtedly the incessant silent tension that is engendered by the insistence of a monolithic political and ideological rubric that fails to address the heterogeneity and diversity of its vast population, aggravated by political opacity, persistent patriarchal axioms, and a dearth of space for dissent. Diasporic writings also foreground these facets of the Chinese cultural landscape.