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TIME AND SETTING IN THE NOVEL BY XIAO BAI “GAME POINT”

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Asian American literary tradition has maintained through diverse branches – Afghan American, Chinese American, Filipino American, Indian American, Iranian American, Japanese American, Korean American, Vietnamese American, etc. English-speaking Asian literature, as well as other post-colonial literature, has raised a range of identity-based questions – ‘Who am I?’, ‘Where am I?’, ‘How did I become what I am?’ According to “The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Asian American Literature” by Guiyou Huang, “The writing of Asian Americans dates back to the last years of the nineteenth century, and, following World War II in the middle of the twentieth century, experienced a notable rise that began to shape an identity of its own. Catalyzed by the civil rights movements of the 1960s and inspired by women’s liberation movements in the 1970s, Asian American literature has since produced works that have caught the attention of mainstream literary critics who started to take serious note of this distinct voice in the expanding canon of American literary writing now called Asian American.” [1 p. xvii]

Domestic American Orientalism initially evolved within the ghettoized community of the Chinatown and various diasporas of Asian origin. “Asian American texts bear a special burden in negotiating the incommensurate and unevenly matched topics of America, gender, and sexuality”, says Rachel C. Lee.[3, p. 3]. The typified voices of Asian American authors (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino) dwell on the topics of racial segregation, ethnicity, cultural integrity, heroic tradition, distinguished by courage and wisdom, value system, sexuality, victimization of a woman and woman trafficking, a white space, white racism in regard to the Chinese, and Asian American masculinity. Despite the contemporary notion of America as an exceptional site of color-blind democracy, equal opportunity, and universal citizenship, historically the formation of American society is limned by the accounts of violence, flight, racial persecution, and regulated sexuality. The

white-on-brown dominance finds its reflection in language stigmatization of Asian Americans as “unassimilable aliens,” “yellow perils,” “coolies,” “modern-day high tech coolies,” or as a “model minority,” notions that were ideologically woven through the complex interactions of capital and labor in U.S. labor history.

On the other hand, contemporary Chinese literature, written or translated into English, deals with the issues of public morality, moral degeneracy, confused values, and having reached the baseline for being human. The literature provides a sketch of life with all its hidden mud and mercury. If in Chinese American literature the very area of Chinatown becomes a symbol of Chinatown morality and sexuality as lewd and debauched: perverse, drug-addicted, pedophilic, syphilitic; where a human being gets animalized, being portrayed as irrational and immoral, Chinese cities in contemporary Chinese literature uphold all the mentioned within the frames of the criminal underworld.

The Novel by Xiao Bai “Game point” demonstrates the snapshot of Shanghai during the dynamic period shortly after reform and the opening of China. Shanghai is represented as a point of contrast which is foreshadowed in the epigraph: “in you I see dirty // in you I count stars // in you I feel so pretty // in you I taste good // in you I feel so hungry // in you I crash cars.” [2, p. 8] The city is depicted through love, friendship and business. Admittedly, the place stays marked by a range of Soviet realities, which built particular connections: “She’s got beautiful blue eyes. Just like those Soviet Union prostitutes working at Hotel Equatorial. Oh yes, it was years after the collapse of the former Soviet Union, yet we were still not used to the term Russia.” [2, p. 9] Shanghai location gets represented through a number of recognizable toponymical features: the Chinese Academy of Science, Fumin Road, Changle Road, Yandang Road, the Jinjiang Tower, Shanghai dialect, Wuhan International Club, the Jing Jiang Hotel, etc. Together with Shanghai setting, the world toponymy like Thailand, Chicago take place, symbolizing the opening of the borders of China. American realities like Victoria secret underwear, bar culture, gangster lifestyle take a separate place in the novel.

In Chinese American literature the depicting of a Chinese woman often handles the prostitution motif, addressing Chinese women’s double social marginalization. Women in contemporary Asian American literature often admit to pejorative self-constructions, becoming “matter out of place”. Eroticized, traumatized and victimized woman, offering sexual services, a woman-slave, woman trafficking within the frames of a Chinatown, a woman as a supplement to a man are the archetypical roles for the female characters, which refers to the problem of intra-ethnic violence. Scenes of eroticism get coupled with brutality. Cultural expectations that dictate “good” women as submissive sexual and marriage partners, as tractable servant “hands”, no matter how inconsiderate partners, husband, or employers may be. While Chinese femininity is achieved through sexuality, male masculinity manifests through violence. Chinese character reveals through a

fight. Thus, a young Asian Americans could use violence to remasculinize themselves. Asian American masculinity is problematically based on a patriarchal belief in measuring adequacy in terms of male aggressiveness and violence. In contemporary novel by Shanghai author a woman, as a central character, represented by Xiao Mi, is still a means of trade, “currency” given in return to favor, while male protagonists tend to be tough and serious, the way people who do illegal business are.

Thus, the novel by Xiao Bai “Game Point” is an encyclopedia of Shanghai marginalized criminal group, who to a certain extent treat life as a game, with its moves, wins and failures. The success is valued through food, cars, apartments and girls. The game gets complicated with the involvement of different players and their agendas. Echoing the quick changing pace of modern China, the alliances the players form are broken and realigned again sometimes in the span of one night, a day, or a week as they realize that not all players are created equal and not all games have a clear winner.

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THE FUNCTIONALITY OF ONEIRIC RECEPTIONS IN THE WORK OF LU XUN

Key words: dream visions, modernist aesthetics, oneiric symbolism, chronotope, symbol, archetype.