

欺瞞網絡：在《夕霧花園》回憶/重組暴力

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中文摘要

本論文以陳團英《夕霧花園》為研究文本，拆解日軍戰俘張雲林為留下戰時回憶而編織的欺瞞網絡。在集中營裡，姊姊被迫成為慰安婦，雲林則擔任廚工與翻譯，最後只有她逃出集中營，其他戰俘全部罹難。對兩個正值青春年華的戰俘而言，支撐她們面對戰爭摧殘的方式，就是想像靜謐的日式庭園風情，並承諾於戰後一起打造一座屬於兩姊妹的日式庭園。然而，「所有的園藝造景都是一種欺騙的伎倆」，如果雲林要透過夕霧花園回憶/重組殘忍的戰爭記憶，她必須在早發性失語症奪走她所有的表達能力之前，重新組織和她有類似戰爭創傷經驗的受難者，幫助她走出戰爭的陰暗幽谷。所以她透過「借景」南非、中國、日本、馬來人物與文化的手法，娓娓道出日軍暴行對她所造成的傷害與難以抹滅的傷痕。當雲林體認到，她的「夕霧」其實不是花園而是創傷的偽裝，看穿謊言並擺脫自我欺騙的壓抑將指日可待。

關鍵詞：回憶/重組、暴力、失語症、欺騙網絡、陳團英、夕霧花園

**A Network of Deceptions:
Re-membering Violence in *The Garden of Evening Mists***

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Abstract

This paper reads Tan Twan Eng's *The Garden of Evening Mists* (2012) as a book of re-membering to examine the psychosocial impact of war memories and the network of deceptions Teoh Yun Ling builds up when remembering her days spent in a secret Japanese prison camp in Malaya. During the internment, her sister was a comfort woman while she herself was assigned to be the camp's kitchen maid-cum-interpreter and became the sole survivor after the war. In order to survive, Yun Ling and her sister distanced themselves from the wartime ordeals by dreaming about the mesmerizing allure permeated in the classical Japanese garden that they wish to build together after the war. Yet, "every aspect of gardening is a form of deception." Yun Ling is fully aware of this, so she starts to connect herself and her memories of war to those of the traumatized people in an attempt to conjure up the collective trauma they all once experienced before dementia deprives her of the ability to remember. Subsequently she borrows from South African, Chinese, Japanese and Malaysian characters and cultures to weave a network of deceptions to reveal, rather than conceal, her traumatic memory of violence. When she comes to realize that her *Yugiri* is not a garden but trauma in disguise, it will not take her long to cease repression and disassemble the network of deceptions.

Keywords: re-member, violence, dementia, network of deceptions, Tan Twan Eng, *The Garden of Evening Mists*

A Network of Deceptions: Re-membering Violence in *The Garden of Evening Mists*

Memory is like patches of sunlight in an overcast valley, shifting with the movement of the clouds. Now and then the light will fall on a particular point in time, illuminating it for a moment before the wind seals up the gap, and the world is in shadows again.

The Garden of Evening Mists (Tan 294)

Personal memory is evanescent, subject to forgetting and ultimately to death. But when memory is understood as the kind of collective memory that grants immortality to the people and actions it preserves, memory becomes perpetual and independent from the contingencies of human existence. Such a propensity for immortality of memory, however, would very likely evolve into collective trauma in remembering and understanding the ineffable pain because it is not the acknowledgement of a sense of order and calm, but the knowledge of people's or actions' names, reputations, and the legacies that lived on in perpetuity. While claims regarding language's inability to convey extreme experiences of the violent past are lodged, it is always imminent and imperative for the victims of violence to establish an alternative model or device that allows for a sense of closure of traumatic memories and a limit to the grieving process if they wish to attenuate the experience of loss and incorporate trauma into an identifiable lived experience in the processes of remembering.

This paper analyzes the psychosocial impact of war memories experienced by Teoh Yun Ling, the protagonist of Tan Twan Eng's *The Garden of Evening Mists* (2012), when she remembers the part she played in the Japanese Occupation of Malaya from 1941 to 1945. Yun Ling, the narrator and also a Girton-educated retired judge in independent Malaysia, and her elder sister Yun Hong were both detained as "Guests of the Emperor" in a Japanese prison camp located in a desolate Malay jungle (Tan 235). In fact, however, they were nothing but prisoners of war (POWs), or more precisely, the Japanese soldiers' female slaves. Yun Hong was repeatedly raped as a comfort woman while Yun Ling was allocated to work in the kitchen and later appointed the camp's interpreter after her

predecessor, a Dutch Father and also a POW, died of malaria (Tan 257). In order to survive, Yun Ling and her sister distanced themselves from the wartime ordeals by dreaming about planting together a classical Japanese garden with the mesmerizing allure. Creating a Japanese garden therefore opens up a crack allowing Judge Teoh to reconcile with a violent past when she learns that her degenerative neurological condition will inevitably lead to aphasic dementia. Before she loses the ability to remember the allurements of her garden permeated with evening mists, she has to rally people of her kind, that is, victims of war, to establish a network of deceptions because there is always something already involuntary in her attempt to remember. Besides, “every aspect of gardening is a form of deception,” says Nakamura Aritomo, the self-exiled former gardener to the Emperor of Japan and master of *shakkei*, or “borrowed scenery” (Tan 139). He teaches Yun Ling the importance of borrowing scenery from nature in creating a traditional Japanese garden, which serendipitously becomes a significant strategy remembering her trauma. In light of this, to re-member for Yun Ling is to start afresh the assemblage of the war victims to conjure up the collective trauma they all once experienced before it retreats into oblivion. Nevertheless, remembering the dreadful embarrassment is too ghastly to handle individually, so Yun Ling tactically applies the skills of borrowing she learns from Aritomo to her recalling the past. She then borrows from South African, Chinese, Japanese and Malaysian characters and cultures to weave a network of deceptions to reveal her traumatic memory of violence incurred under Japanese imperialism. When she comes to realize that her garden is not a garden but trauma in disguise, it will not take her long to see that her memory is as translucent as the full moon floating in the dark night, “so bright [that she] can see all its scars” (Tan 322) without concealment.

Trauma results from “a disruption and reorientation of consciousness,” but the meanings it articulates fluctuate due to “a variety of individual and cultural factors that change over time” (Balaev 4). To understand trauma in terms of Freud as the return of the repressed or of Lacan as a sense of absence, Michelle Balaev follows what Cathy Caruth writes in *Unclaimed Experience* that “trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual’s past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it is precisely *not known* in the first instance—return to haunt the survivor later on” (Balaev 5; Caruth 4). Caruth’s widely acknowledged trauma model uses psychoanalytical referents in a literary criticism that emphasizes the claim about the

dissociative nature of trauma. Each individual trauma is dissociated from each other trauma, either because the victim is unaware that what s/he insists on not remembering is something known as traumatic memory, or because s/he intentionally forgets the plight in order to separate their experience of here-and-now from that of what is bygone. It is in this regard that the essential causality between trauma and dissociation, the idea that an extreme experience directly refers to a dissociative consciousness wherein the hidden truth resides, supports the assertion that history functions the same as trauma insofar as “history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence” (Caruth 18). History is inaccessible precisely because it is not our attempt to forget the past but because it is in the urge to move forward through associative mechanisms that history is learned and retained. In like manner, a history of trauma is “referential” because it is “not fully perceived as it occurs” (Caruth 18). One cannot regard the hardships one has endured as traumatic without realizing that it is the recurring reminiscence of the repressed memory that one suffers from a haunted past. To create connections between the traumatized individual, society, and the historical past on the premise that trauma is inherently dissociative is therefore referentially significant in our understanding violence embedded in a concealed and embarrassing truth. According to Caruth, however, “one’s own trauma is [always] tied up with the trauma of another” (8), and “we are implicated in each other’s trauma” because “trauma is never simply one’s own” (24), particularly when trauma involves “the suffering of survival,” borrowing from Laura Murphy’s apt phrase (55). Any denial of the referentiality of traumatic experiences can be pertinently considered self-deceiving even though an individual’s trauma story is always cloaked with stories of other victims who also suffer from repressive emotions that verbal forms very likely find no access to reveal. Nigel C. Hunt also notices an intriguing relationship between individual narrative, social discourse, and collective memory. He says in *Memory, War and Trauma* that collective memory is “information about society that is accumulated over the years and develops into a kind of ‘social fund,’ and is drawn upon in the development of social discourses and individual narratives” (Hunt 5). Due to such a collective injury that representing trauma becomes essential to many societies and individuals when they remember war (Hunt 6). But to claim that trauma “is not known in the first instance” and that trauma “returns to haunt the survivor later on” (Caruth 4) is by no means to narrow our conceptualization of the psychological dimension of trauma and the range of traumatic experiences and responses,

such as amnesia, dissociation, or repression. They might be the most discernible but never exclusive responses to psychological effects of traumatic situations, as Salah Qureshi and his colleagues put it in their studies of refugees and war victims (Qureshi et al. 24-25). In addition, “literature narrates scenarios of trauma, violence, anxiety and the like” on account of the fact that it “originates in a social and political reality which is shaped by such phenomena” (Tancke 3). The representation of trauma in literature, therefore, highlights not only the damage caused by a traumatic experience, but also key moments of reconciliation. Such moments help define and change war victims when they stand at the juncture of the traumatic past and a utopian future, in which a type of social amelioration of suffering would be as feasible as it is expected.

There has been “an increasing fascination with history and memory in literary studies” in the past two decades, as Anne Whitehead points out in her 2004 work, *Trauma Fiction* (81). Such actively engaging history and memory in literary productions gives rise to trauma fiction because “the distinction between memory and history has become blurred” (Hunt 6). More significantly, this active engagement with history and memory invents as well as intervenes in the historical past to question the violence experienced by not only the victim but also the perpetrator and the witness. For the three parties involved, remembering and forgetting are inseparable in their attempt to understand violence experienced in the past because “the history of trauma itself is marked by an alternation between episodes of forgetting and remembering, as the experiences of one generation of psychiatrists have been neglected only to be revived at a later time” (Leys 15). Ruth Leys’ investigation of the genealogy of trauma and of the role of history in trauma theory is echoed by Whitehead as she posits that “memory and forgetting do not oppose each other but form part of the same process” (82), an outlook that finds support in Jenny Edkins’s point that “memorialisation often constitutes a form of forgetting” (xiii). In her investigation of trauma and the politics of memory, Edkins reminds us that a struggle over memory takes place after traumatic events, sufficient to enable her to advocate that “some forms of remembering can be seen as ways of forgetting” (16). To put it succinctly, to remember the unrepresentable or the inaccessible is to forget extreme experiences. It is always because of what the traumatized subjects wish to forget that they must create a mechanism to remember in order to confront the notion of survivor guilt and find the route to recuperation and growth.

Tan Twan Eng's *The Garden of Evening Mists* is trauma fiction, revealing a damaged, wary woman's traumatic memory of the Japanese occupation, while David C. L. Lim reads it from the perspective of Japanese Zen and argues that *The Garden of Evening Mists* uncovers a "'hidden' layer of history underlying the 'known' history presented on the surface of the novel." What is hidden is the "obscured history of 'Zen' as a 'forgotten' ideological tool employed by the militarily aggressive Japan during the Second World War," with which the Japanese imperialists advanced their imperial ambitions (436). Utilizing history to "subvert readings that overlook both its mobilization of Zen as a narrative device and the fact that Zen [. . .] has been distorted by Western orientalists and Japanese apologists since the turn of the twentieth century" would assist readers to "step closer to unlocking the mystery at the heart of the novel," that is, Yun Ling's "understanding of her experiences of the historical events that shaped her" (Lim 436). Following Lim's argument, I would like to contend that Yun Ling's traumatic memory of war is everything but a story of her own. Rather, it is through the stories of the other victims' memories of war engaged in her remembrance of the roles she plays in the war that the dissociative nature of trauma is revealed in her re-membering of the violence.

The protagonist, Teoh Yun Ling, has to take an early retirement from a prestigious career as a revered judge because she is losing her memory and her ability to speak to "primary progressive aphasia" (Tan 126). She leaves Kuala Lumpur for *Yugiri*, the eponymous "Garden of Evening Mists," where she agrees to meet Professor Yoshikawa Tatsuji for a book he is planning to write about Nakamura Aritomo (Tan 18-21). Four decades earlier, being a prisoner in a Japanese internment camp and later the only survivor of murderous war crimes during the Japanese occupation, Yun Ling, her loathing and fear subsiding, apprenticed herself to Aritomo in the hope that she would learn to create a traditional Japanese garden to honor her sister, Yun Hong, who died inhumanely in the camp. Almost thirty-eight years have passed since Aritomo disappeared in the jungle in the wake of the State of Emergency (Tan 312), and Yun Ling now is threatened with the deterioration of her mental competence. She cannot but wonder: "what is a person without memories?"

Once I lose all ability to communicate with the world outside myself, nothing will be left but what I remember. My memories will be like a sandbar, cut off from the shore by the incoming tide. In time they will become submerged, inaccessible to me. (Tan 25)

Such a prospect of a life emptied by memory loss terrifies her, for she is afraid that she will become “a ghost, trapped between worlds, without an identity, with no future, no past” (Tan 25). Although she has “spent most of [her] life trying to forget” the violence she experienced during the brutal Japanese occupation of Malaya (Tan 294), at the point when she knows “dementia will shortly follow, unhinging [her] mind” (Tan 22), all she wants is “to remember” (Tan 294) her promises to Yun Hong—to create a garden of their own that no one can take away from them (Tan 257). “A garden in her memory” is the only thing Yun Ling can do for her sister buried in “an unmarked grave” (Tan 49).

The principles of gardening therefore become indispensable for Yun Ling to alleviate her traumatic memories of war. In the hope that they can forget the extreme hardship of internment, the two sisters would imagine their own garden of evening mists and escape into “make-believe worlds” (Tan 48). But “gardens like Yugiri’s are deceptive,” says Frederik Pretorius (Tan 15), the nephew and heir of the Majuba Tea Estate owner Magnus Pretorius. Yun Ling disagrees with Frederik and defends her conception: “What is gardening but the controlling and perfecting of nature?” (Tan 14). It even “pains” her to hear that Frederik hires a local gardener, Vimalya, who is “a fan of indigenous gardens,” to remove the “alien” allurements from Majuba’s gardens to return to “everything nature intended” (Tan 14). “An English garden in the tropics” used to be “admired and loved” and attracted visitors nationwide (Tan 14), but now the heir of the Majuba Tea Estate only wants it to be forgotten because it is one of the kinds of Yugiri in which everything “has been thought out and shaped and built” (Tan 15). It is too “false” to be taken as what a garden should be in the tropics (Tan 15). When Frederik further talks about “indigenous gardening,” Yun Ling contends that he has already involved man in his scheme. Telling Frederik that to “dig out beds, [chop] down trees, and [bring] in seeds and cuttings [. . .] sounds very much planned to me” (Tan 14-15), she is in truth reminding herself of the principles of remembering. To retain her memory of a garden of evening mists after

experiencing war atrocities, she has to re-member a network of deceptions in order to dissociate from traumatic memories. She has come to realize that:

There are some people, like Frederik, who might feel that such practices are misguided, like trying to wield heaven's powers on earth. And yet it was only in the carefully planned and created garden of Yugiri that I had found a sense of order and calm and even, for a brief moment of time, forgetfulness. (Tan 15)

The use of deceptive gardening skills in her attempt to remember the past is further affirmed when Aritomo recommends to her some temple gardens she must visit in Japan. Tenryuji, Temple of the Sky Dragon, for example, is “the first garden to ever use the techniques of *shakkei*,” or “Borrowed Scenery” (Tan 139). He then explains to Yun Ling that there are four ways of doing *shakkei*: “*enshaku*—distant borrowing—took in the mountains and the hills; *rinshaku* used the features from a neighbor's property; *fushaku* took from the terrain; and *gyoshaku* brought in the clouds, the wind and the rain” (Tan 139). Yun Ling ponders his words and comments that “[it is] nothing more than a form of deception,” while Aritomo replies with “hollowness” in his voice and eyes that “[e]very aspect of gardening is a form of deception” (Tan 139). The “hollowness” results from his remorse, and a realization that Japan is “not [his] home anymore.” His parents have long passed away. What he knows and remembers and the friends he is acquainted with have all been “swept away in the storm.” All he holds in Malaya is nothing but memories of a home to which he can never return (Tan 143).

In 1938 when Aritomo was thirty-eight, both his wife and their baby died in childbirth. More disastrously, he had a terrible fight with the Empress's cousin who required him to make “extensive changes” to his designs so that there could be a tennis court set in the royal garden (Tan 142-43). Out of his pride as a master of Japanese gardening, he refused to apologize or make the changes. Instead, he “visited the Floating World, drank too much and made a fool of [himself] with the women there” until one day he remembered the tea planter from Malaya he met a few years before and decided to “go to Malaya for traveling” (Tan 143). At the moment when Aritomo discloses his lamentation for a preposterous past, Yun Ling looks at “this man who had made his home in these highlands, who watched over his garden as one vague season replaced another,” and says to him: “a garden borrows from the earth, the sky and everything around it, but you borrow from time” (Tan 143) because “Yugiri was designed to look old from the first stone Aritomo set down, and the illusion of

age he had created has been transformed into reality” (Tan 24). So has his device to remember the past. As Yun Ling points out to Aritomo, “Your memories are a form of *shakkei* too. You bring them in to make your life here feel less empty. Like the mountains and the clouds over your garden, you can see them, but they will always be out of reach” (Tan 143). Aritomo seems to consent to Yun Ling but he still retorts that:

“It is the same with you,” [. . .] “Your old life, too, is gone. You are here, borrowing from your sister’s dreams, searching for what you have lost.”
(Tan 143)

The skills of deceiving the senses, which Yun Ling learns from Aritomo in planning a traditional Japanese garden, inspire her to borrow memories from other people of her kind, that is, those who also suffer from traumatic war memories, in order to relieve her of her pain and shame. More significantly, “borrowing from emptiness to create more emptiness” (Tan 201) helps Yun Ling establish a network of deception, allowing her to forget the extreme pain and then to reveal the inexplicable guilt inflicted by her memories of war before she loses all her senses to dementia.

Aritomo was a prisoner-of-war kept in Ipoh by British soldiers for two months not long after Japan’s surrender in August, 1945 (Tan 50). In fact, according to the historian Yoshikawa Tatsuji, Aritomo did not exile himself to Malaya, but was instead sent by the emperor to play a role in “Kin No Yuri,” or the “Golden Lily” plan (Tan 206, 302), one of imperialist Japan’s “worst crimes of the Pacific War, says Tatsuji (Tan 299). That was in 1937, after Japanese troops invaded Nanjin, Tatsuji tells Yun Ling. Military officials “became concerned that the army was siphoning off the spoils of war. To ensure that the Imperial General Headquarters received its share of the plunder, a plan was conceived” (Tan 299), and there the golden lilies bloomed in Malaya. The Golden Lily was a well-organized institution in which “accountants, financial advisers, [and] experts in art and antiques” all worked under the direction of the royal family. It also sent spies to Asia to “gather information about the treasures that could be stolen. Anything that was worth taking was noted, the information scrupulously recorded,” as though “they were compiling catalog for an auction house” (Tan 300). When the Japanese army sent troops to invade China, Malaya and Singapore, Korea, the Philippines, Burma, Java and Sumatra, members of Golden Lily followed without delay:

They knew where to look, and they stole everything they could lay their hands on: jade and gold Buddha statues from ancient temples; cultural artifacts and antiques from museums; jewelry and gold hoarded by wealthy Chinese with their distrust of banks. Golden Lily emptied royal collections and national treasuries. It removed bullion and priceless artworks, carvings, pottery and paper currencies. (Tan 300)

Golden Lily members did not bring the treasure home because they knew that it would be too risky to transport those items back to Japan after the outbreak of war. There was also the concern that if Japan was occupied by foreign powers, they might lose their access to the loot. It was better to “hide it in the Philippines,” says Tatsuji, and Malaya was involved in the Golden Lily plan because “there were factories in Penang and Ipoh that melted down gold and silver stolen from families and banks” (Tan 300). To ensure that those treasures were properly stored and the wealth of imperial Japan secured, Tatsuji tells Yun Ling:

Hundreds of slave workers (POWs) had worked day and night to excavate the tunnels and chambers. Once the chambers were packed full with the treasures, a Shinto priest was brought in to conduct a blessing ceremony for the site. Ceramics experts from Japan sealed the entrances to the chambers with a mixture of porcelain clay and local rocks, dyed to *blend in* with the local geology. Fast-growing trees and shrubs—papayas and guava trees worked best, the engineer said—were planted over the entire area *to blend it into the surrounding countryside*. (Tan 301, emphasis added)

Once the prisoners completed their job, they were forced to enter a cave and the entrance was sealed by explosives after they all went in. They were all buried alive like Yun Ling’s sister, Yun Hong.

Aritomo seems to have had no connection with Golden Lily, but he is “a master of *shakkei*,” as Tatsuji reminds Yun Ling (Tan 302). The real purpose of Aritomo’s visit to Malaya, Tatsuji continues, was to “survey the topography” because he had “the necessary knowledge of landscaping and horticulture” to have the locations “camouflaged or concealed” (Tan 302). More importantly, Japan was “heading into war,” and all Japanese “had to play [their] part, to serve the emperor” (Tan 303). Even after the war ended, Aritomo had to continue his role in Malaya. According to what Tatsuji had read in *The Red Jungle*, “there was much lawlessness and unrest immediately after the surrender—

communist guerrillas taking revenge on collaborators; Chinese and Malays killing each other. And British soldiers were coming back. Maybe Golden Lily thought it was not the right time to move the treasures, but someone had to be here to make sure they were not disturbed” (Tan 303). Aritomo was the chosen one. He stayed in his Yugiri, “waiting for things to settle down” in Malaya because “a man of his upbringing” would “have been obligated to carry out his duty properly” all the way to the end, Tatsuji reassures Yun Ling (Tan 303). After hearing Tatsuji’s detailed description of the Golden Lily plan, Yun Ling is sure that the prison camp she and Yun Hong were sent to is one of the Golden Lily slave camps. Through remembering Kin No Yuri and the role Aritomo would have played in the plan, Yun Ling recounts her own role in the internment camp and eventually reveals her guilty secret. She has come to be aware in time of losing her ability to remember that “memory must exist before there’s forgetting.” She tells this to Magnus as they look at the marble statues of the twins, the goddess of Memory, Mnemosyne, and the goddess of Forgetting that stand in the center of the Majuba garden, discussing which would be the older twin (Tan 36).

Like Aritomo, “a Japanese agent” in Malaya (Lim 440), Yun Ling also had a part to play in the war. Being a guest of the Emperor in one of the Golden Lily slave camps, she had to do “whatever was required for [her] to live,” including “working for the Japanese” (Tan 284). She provides information to Captain Fumio, who is in charge of the camp and makes the prisoners bow in the direction of Japan every morning when it is time for the Emperor to have his breakfast in the palace (Tan 251-52). Yun Ling regularly reports to Fumio on “who was planning to escape,” or “who was constructing a radio” and “where it was hidden” (Tan 284). By so doing, Yun Ling received better food rations and even some medicine to help manage a debase life in the camp. Yun Hong discovers that Yun Ling has allied herself with the perpetrators in exchange for a meagre chance to walk out alive from the camp, so she asks Yun Lin to cease this act of betrayal and conspiracy. Yun Ling turns her down. She even accepts the name “Kumomori,” literally, “cloudy forest,” given her by a high-ranking Japanese officer, Tominaga Noburu, a Japanese garden designer as well as an old acquaintance of Aritomo: “it was easier to pretend that the things I did were being carried out by a different person, a woman who did not have my name” (Tan 259). Such self-deception is further encouraged when Tominaga says to her: “You are too useful to me, Kumomori,” interpreting instructions to the prisoners to plant a golden lily for the

Emperor (Tan 259). What Yun Ling leaves behind is not only Yun Hong's plea for dignity and integrity but also her promise to Yun Hong that after the war they would together turn their dream of a classical Japanese garden into reality. Yun Ling eventually walked out safe and sound from the jungle with the assistance of Tominaga, but she "left Yun Hong there" to be buried alive in the cave (Tan 284). Yun Ling's guilt over being the sole survivor of the Golden Lily concentration camp has much to do with her choice to collude with the Japanese perpetrators. However, if Yun Ling negated the hypothesis that Aritomo was sent to Malaya to lay the groundwork for the Golden Lily plans, she would never come to the threshold to forget the cruelty and mortification of being a double agent in the face of adversity.

The price Yun Ling pays for a double cross is the sacrifice of the last two fingers of her left hand, but Magnus's story of losing one eye in the war serendipitously helps Yun Ling forget the pain of how and why she was violently mutilated by Japanese soldiers. She borrows from Magnus's traumatic experience to recollect that repressed memory to relieve her of the survivor guilt and treachery. Magnus Johannes Pretorius, owner of the Majuba Tea Estate, emigrated from Transvaal and settled in the Cameron Highlands to grow tea after fighting in the Second Boer War and lost an eye in the battle. He was also a prisoner of war captured by the English colonizers and later shipped out to a prison camp in Ceylon (Tan 41). Shortly before Yun Ling was dismissed from her service as a deputy public prosecutor, she went to visit Magnus at Majuba. On her way to find solace, the "smell of the nearby jungle" brings her back to the prison camp (Tan 39), and reminds her of Yun Hong's dream and her own mutilation nightmare. "[Yun Hong] always dreamed of building her own Japanese garden," she tells Magnus. Catching a glimpse of Yun Ling's self-inflicted guilt, Magnus suggests that she "build it for her," and mentions that his neighbor Aritomo, "the *emperor's* gardener," might consent to design a garden for her sister (Tan 41, emphasis original). "He's a *Jap*," Yun Ling replied unkindly. She had no intention to include anything Japanese in her sister's dream, so she says to Magnus, "They'd have to hang their emperor first before I'd ask for help from any of them." On hearing this, Magnus casts a disconcerting look at her, "as though the power of his lost eye had been transferred to his remaining one, doubling its acuity," and says: "you can't let [the hatred in you] affect your life" (Tan 41). "It's not up to me," Yun Ling replies. Magnus realizes that Yun Ling

is still tormented by her memory of war, so he reveals his own traumatic past with the expectation that Yun Ling would stop deceiving herself:

“I was away fighting the English when [Lord] Kitchener’s men showed up at our farm one morning. . . . Pa was at home. He put up a fight. They shot him, then burned down our farmhouse.” (Tan 41)

Magnus’s sister Petronella was then sent to a concentration camp and died of typhoid, but some survivors said instead that “the English had mixed powdered glass into the prisoners’ food” (Tan 42). Returning home from the war to find out that brutal reality, he bought himself a ticket for Batavia in the spring of 1905. The ship he takes is forced to dock in Malacca for repairs. During this accidental detention he finds the grave of Jan van Riebeeck, a Dutch colonizer who founded the Cape in 1652, and conceded to himself that “the world is not made up of only English history.” Seeing Riebeeck’s name “carved into that block of stone,” Magnus comes to believe that “I had found a place for myself here in Malaya” (Tan 42). Instead of returning to the ship to continue his journey to Batavia, he ends up in Kuala Lumpur, “a British territory after all,” and sojourned there for forty-six years. Aside from his own personal experience, he borrows from Chinese Confucianism to demonstrate to Yun Ling the importance of forgetting the violence of war:

“They couldn’t kill me when we were at war. And they couldn’t kill me when I was in the camp. . . . But holding on to my hatred for forty-six years . . . *that* would have killed me. . . . You Chinese are supposed to respect the elderly, Yun Ling, that’s what that fellow Confucius said, isn’t it? That’s what my wife [Emily] tells me anyway. . . . So listen to an old man . . . Don’t despise all Japanese for what some of them did. Let it go, this hatred in you. Let it go.” (Tan 42-43, emphasis original)

“They did this to me,” Yun Ling says, showing Magnus her maimed left hand, which had been hidden in a leather glove. Captain Fumio, knowing that Yun Ling was left-handed, chopped off the last two fingers of her left hand after he caught her stealing a pair of chicken feet from the kitchen (Tan 256). In response to Yun Ling’s refutation, Magnus fingers at his eye-patch and says, “You think this fell out by itself?” (Tan 43). Three weeks later, after revealing her pain to Magnus, Yun Ling is dismissed from her job at court. It was a timely event, motivating her to consult Aritomo about the art of deception in remembering violence. Aritomo’s exquisite skills at borrowing scenes from nature in

designing a Japanese garden help Yung Ling decide, of her own volition, to terminate her search for the camp and end her hatred of the perpetrators. As she writes down in her memoir:

I do not want to search for my camp or the mine anymore. Locating where [Yun Hong] was buried will not ease my guilt or undo what has been done. (Tan 342)

All she can do in the end is to leave behind the traumatic past, which she does, by “compassionately accepting her loss as a loss without recompense” (Lim 438).

The notion of trauma as a silent obsession and as something absolutely inexplicable is functional in Yun Ling’s dealing with her culpable past. As an apprentice to a master of *shakkei*, she borrows memories from people of her own kind to re-member violence in a network of deceptions so as to forget the parts she played in the war. In acknowledging the fact that “memory must exist before there’s forgetting” (Tan 36), Yun Ling catches a momentary glimpse of her garden in the evening mists before the shifting movement of clouds conceals patches of sunlight. Although the moment of reconciliation is fleeting, it suffices for her to see beyond deceptions and recuperate from what she has lost in the act of violence.



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