CROSS-CULTURAL BRIDGE IN ELIZABETH WONG'S *KIMCHEE AND CHITLINS*

Asst. Prof. Marwa Ghazi Mohammed, PhD
Dept. of English, College of Education for Women
University of Baghdad
Prof. Sabah AtallahDiyaiy, PhD
Dept. of English, College of Education
University of Baghdad

ABSTRACT

The United States is a multi-ethnic society whose minor groups suffer of cultural gaps among them. Moreover, it is a society who is controlled by white-man dominance. People belonging to ethnic minorities have the problem of identification; many of them want to be recognized as Americans rather than citizens living in the United States. Thus, they have the sense of denial towards their original heritage and ethnic group. Another cultural problem those ethic groups face is the difficulty of communication among the various groups.

In her play Kimchee and Chitlins, Elizabeth Wong depicts in comical way these cultural difficulties among ethnic minorities. She builds technically and thematically builds a cross-cultural bridge to cover the gap by emphasizing the significance of accepting the variety to form the textual of their society.

Key words: ***cultural conflict, cultural understanding, the other, heritage, kimchee and chitlins, identification.***

Elizabeth Wong (1958-) is an Asian American playwright. Wong used masterful combination of highly charged political topics interwoven with a sense of wit and fun.[1] Wong states that "I use humor as a tool and a weapon. The funny bone is my sword. I like to tackle serious subjects through a humorous lens. Comedy is just a funny way of being serious. I believe comedy has the power to disarm, the armed".[2] She dealt with the themes of self-identity and self-discovery. Wong refused to be marginalized: "I am an American. If anything, I abhor the hyphen that makes me Chinese-American, because I am American".[3]

Kimchee and Chitlins (1990), was first read at the New York City's Primary Stages in June 1991 after the Brooklyn conflicts.[4] It was originally presented in 1993 at the Victory Gardens Studio Theatre in Chicago. It was produced by the West Coast Ensemble in Los Angeles in 1994 and received the NAACP Theatre Award for the best production.[5] The play was performed at the CS Huh Auditorium in the Center for Global Citizenship on the Saint Louis University campus February 3 and 4, 2012.[6]

The Los Angeles Times called it a 'prophetic drama',[7] when it was read at the Mark Taper Forum in May 1992. It preceded the race riots in Los Angeles that occurred in the Korean community ten months later in April 1992.The real boycott took place because of a certain incident. On 18th of January, 1990, a tension between GiselaineFelissaint, a customer of the Family Red Apple Grocery in Flatbush, Brooklyn, claimed that the manager of the store, Bong Ok Jang, attacked her. On the other hand, Jang insisted that Fellisaint got angry after an argument over the bill and began throwing products at him. That incident caused a protest by African Americans who claimed that Korean American store owners and employees treated customers with disrespect. That protest was one of other boycotts that happened in New York in the 1980s

and 1990s.[8] In the 1980s, the South Koreans immigrated to the United States because of the rapid growth of an export-based economy, a repressive government, and relatively low wages in South Korea. Korean immigrants were able to open stores in neighborhoods. The relations between Korean American merchants and African American customers were influenced by the complex multiethnic topography of the related neighborhoods.[9]

Wong was inspired by the media's coverage of a 1990 boycott of Korean-owned stores and African Americans in Brooklyn. She was disappointed because of the lack of unbiased reports of other stations. She listened to angry African Americans, who shouted at the Koreans. Wong chose the medium of theatre both to give a more equal treatment of the subject and to critically comment on the constraints of television news.[10]

The play concentrates on the character of a Chinese American television news reporter, Suzie Seeto who is asked by a Korean Chorus and an African American Chorus about her promotion. Suzie covers a dispute inside the grocery between Korean Americans and African Americans in New York. Mark Thompson, Suzie's boss, comments: "It's like the '60s all over again, but in reverse. I don't mean to sound relieved. But, I mean, this time, the white man isn't part of the lynch party. It's all so strange".[11] He sends Suzie to cover the story fully; "Look, Suzie, all the affiliates are chasing down your story. Fast and dirty. That's the nature of the beast" (19). She gets various accounts from African Americans and from the Korean Grocer Mak, his niece Soomi, and his nephew Willie. She tries to solve the competing claims of those involved. The events of the play take place between the newsroom and the field. When Suzie first comes to the place of the protest, she starts the interviews. Nurse Ruth Betty explains that the boycott is bound to racist banking practices:

> I been asking the bank for three years now. I need a loan so I can start my own shop in my own neighborhood. I want to get out of working for other people, start working for myself. Back in North Carolina, where I'm from, all my people think I'm crazy. A woman alone owning a business. (47)

Suzie's effort to reach reconciliation by fact-finding alone is complicated by the interwoven relationships. The characters shadow the debates about the behavior of Korean American store owners presented in media coverage of the Brooklyn boycott. Nurse Ruth Betty, who suffers from discrimination, seizes the boycott as her chance of empowerment even if this means to victimize other innocent people. Her conduct is an example used to show the impact of cultural difference and underestimating of minorities.[12] She complains about Grocer Mak:

> I've been putting money into that Korean man's pocket for five years, and he can't even look me in the eye when I open my purse. Once, I held out my five dollars, good honest money, and he refused to take it from my black hand. Do I look like I have a social disease? (22-23)

Ruth Betty condemns Mak's avoidance of eye and physical contact. Mak, in response, explains that cultural differences are the cause of misunderstanding of his conduct: "Plenty of respect. I don't look in their eyes. I don't touch them in false sign of friendly greeting. This is our way. This is the Korean way" (42). The cultural misunderstanding leads to racial differences. Ruth Betty is conscious of her black hand which Mak refuses to touch in taking her money. Mak insists on his Korean way of showing respect.[13]

Nurse Ruth Betty thinks that Suzie is Korean and tells her to "Go away, Korean girl" (11), "tell teevee to give us an African-American reporter" (12). The Black Chorus asks her, "Who do you talk to? How do you choose? Do you pick them? Or, do they pick you" (11). The Black Chorus's question refers to the implied choice of interview subject that is conditioned by different social positions of those involved in the protest.[14] Each side gives an account of the incident regarding the other side's version as false. Bias is evident by giving the incident between Matilda Duvet and Grocer Mak. Reverend Carter, a black activist, believes that African Americans are dehumanized by the whites because of their ethnicity "racist America has stripped us of our dignity" (62). He thinks that Koreans follow the same policy with them and they deprive them of job opportunity "those people over there are taking advantage of our captivity in America to become rich" (19). However, he tries to justify his behavior in treating Korean Americans, "A black man in America can never be a racist. To be racist, you have to have power. And that I most certainly do not have. I may be bigoted. I may be prejudiced. But I am not a racist" (57).

As the Black Chorus prepares for their performance, Reverend Carter tells Barber Brown, a black barber, "You are Matilda Duvet. You are going home after a long day sweeping and cleaning for some uptown people". (29) Brown, as Matilda, mentions that her sister's husband in Haiti is missing, a likely victim of true repressive regime's secret police. Thus, Carter and Brown emphasize Matilda's difficult work and concern for family members in Haiti to justify her mood and behavior. In contrast, when Carter takes the role of Grocer Mak, he exaggerates his Korean accent and a stereotypical persona: "I Key Chun Mak, store owner. Two time already today, I catch shoplifts. Stupid things….candy, potato chips, cig-a-letts. How come dey never steal tofu?" (30). The Korean Chorus then objects, "Makie was a civil servant in his own country. Now he is stacking cans of soup. Vegetable soup.Tomato soup.Miso soup.Cup of soup" (30). When Soomi, Mak's niece, takes the role of Matilda in the Korean Chorus's version of events and yells impatiently at Willie, the Black Chorus defends Matilda by informing the audience, "Matilda has had a long day. She is worried about her sister, her husband had disappeared" (37). Each chorus does not seem to give the real information related to the story. The constant disagreement between the two choruses as they comment on the action reflects the conflict between the two ethnic groups.[15]

Kimchee and Chitlins dramatizes the process of news making by showing exactly the inclusion of those debates and issues. The production of racial differences at the interface of the characters' respective habits of sight and speech is explicitly made by the cross-chorus performance.[16] The two choruses exaggerate in the performance of the scene. The Korean Chorus displays Matilda as frustrated by Willie's inability to understand what she wants, "Why don't you speak English? I've been here in dis countree tee years, and see how good my English is? Lime, lemon, how much?" (37). Soomi and Willie, who are non-native English speakers, stress Matilda's Haitian accent to set themselves as less foreign by comparison. Their dispute is due to Willie's inability to speak English, or hear it correctly. The two sides mock and insult each other.[17] Ruth Betty criticizes Mak's English: "Is this guy speaking English? Sounds like gibberish to me? What's the matter? Can't you speak English?" (14). The Koreans are accused of stereotyping the blacks in their community just as the blacks are guilty of stereotyping them in the neighborhood.[18] According to Homi K. Bhabha, stereotypes permit individuals to form judgment based mainly on visible appearances, which means that stereotypes lead individuals to make incorrect assumptions about other individual or groups.[19] The actors perform stereotypical roles, mostly with a sense of exaggeration. The playwright believes that African Americans and Korean Americans contribute to oppressive white culture. [20]

Suzie is chosen as the only reporter to cover what initially seems to be an insignificant story. Wong stresses the role of the news- media in creating and perpetuating stereotypes.[21] Suzie is promoted when she by chance films a fight between Korean Americans and African Americans in a meeting arranged to reconcile the two sides. Against Mark's orders, she attends the reconciliation meeting; ironically she is promoted when violence starts. Suzie asks Mark: "The more in-

depth I get, the less interested you are? Why is that?" (80). The playwright suggests that television news is intentionally arranged to ignore the 'why' of the story and stresses only what is dramatic and easy to comprehend. The world of a television news reporter and those involved in Suzie's first big story provides historical and social contexts for the stereotypes that control minority subjects in television news.[22]

Before her successful coverage, Suzie works as the station's token ethnic reporter who is assigned almost to cover minority stories: "If it's got Asians, Latinos, blacks, …, women…and/or cute fluffy animals, I'm your man" (9), though her white boss states that "there's nothing exotic, nothing Asian about her…To tell you truth, I'm more Oriental than she is" (5). Suzie expresses her dislike to be often chosen to cover such stories; "I hate covering minority issues" (34). Media is directed and dominated by white people who exploit the critical situation by deepening the gap between the two sides and make it difficult to reconcile them again.[23] It is obvious when Suzie's white colleague, Tara, omits some parts of Suzie's talk with the Asian side to give the impression that Suzie stands with the African American side. The Korean Chorus blames her: "You traitor…You buries us like Kimchee" (52). Thinking that she supports them, the African American Chorus starts to praise her "You helped us. You treated us right. You told the truth" (52). Reverend Carter thinks that Suzie has "showed her true color" (56). The two choruses are combined into one united Chorus to depict the problem of minority racism against other minorities showed by both groups across color lines. When Suzie tries to correct the situation by having an interview with Matilda Duvet, Mark stops her. Suzie's naïve concepts about the ability of a reporter to present facts are in contrast with the media's real aim to amuse. The power of white Americans is equated in the play with the power to choose what is and is not seen on television. The whites want to see the performance of racial stereotypes. Mark does not agree to air Suzie's interview with community members when a Korean woman mentions that Koreans lend money to other Koreans, an African American young boy talks about school violence, and an African American woman expresses her refusal of a surname of a slave.[24]

Suzie does not use chopstick to eat the Thai food that her boss orders and she asks for a fork instead, because of her Midwest childhood. Throughout the play, Suzie passes a process of transformation. As a reporter, she tries to keep herself away from the subjects of her reports.[25] At the beginning of her mission, Suzie announces: "That's right. I believe in facts. Gather up enough facts, and they add up to a decision, an action, even revelation. I'm not in this business for the glamour or the money" (34). However, by the end of the play, she tells Reverend Carter, "I still don't know what happened in the store" (73). She realizes that gathering more information is not necessarily revelatory. The honesty of her claim that she is only collecting facts without personal motive is contradicted by her choices that seem largely motivated by ambition. Her professional distance finally collapses when she tries to cover the violence against a Vietnamese American boy by a group of African American kids.[26] She tells Mark:

> Standing there, watching those boys and that kid. I wasn't hating them. No, no…I was too busy, too preoccupied with disassociating myself from that squirming, weak, yellow boy on the ground. Coolly, I hid behind my profession, thoroughly brainwashed by my complete…and-utter-certainty, that I could not and would not be hurt…because I was NOT like that kid. Those black boys with their baseball bat shattered my beautiful delusion once and forever. For if I wasn't yellow, then what color did I think I was…? (82)

She identifies herself with the Vietnamese kid because of his apparent ethnicity. Suzie's ambivalence is related to the representation of ethnic group stereotypes.[27]Bhabha explains the other dimensions of stereotyping:

> Stereotyping is not the setting up of a false image which becomes the scapegoat of discriminatory practices. It is a much more ambivalent text of projection and introjection, metaphoric and metronymic strategies, displacement, overdetermination, guilt, aggressivety; the masking and splitting of 'official' and phantasmic knowledge to construct the positionalities and oppositionalities of racist discourse.[28]

The scene of the beaten boy reminds Suzie of a girl from Taiwan who was with her at school, and how she has been afraid to be associated with her. Many times Suzie works to hide behind her profession to appear as an unbiased reporter. The bogeyman speaks about Suzie's childhood when she meets a black man. The bogeyman represents her natural fear of the stranger whom she does not know. Later she realizes that she herself is one of the underestimated minorities.[29]

When Reverend Carter is captured on camera referring to Grocer Mak as "Korean monkey" (19), Suzie's boss thinks that Reverend Carter is a racist. She answers him by quoting Reverend Carter's words: "people of color can't be racist. It implies power, which we don't have" (63). She agrees with Reverend Carter's attitude. Also, using the word 'we' by Suzie refers to her realization that she belongs to the minorities, who are stereotyped. She begins to change from the state of self-denial to that of self-discovery by being aware of her ethnicity.[30] Minority groups try to assimilate into the larger culture for the sense of belonging, just like Soomi, who states loudly: "Yellow is beautiful" (66), which echoes the slogan of the black Americans in the 1960s. However, their attempts to assimilate are not successful.[31]

Stuart Hall argues in "Introduction: Identity in Question" that the changing world gives rise to new identities constructing the modern individual as a unified subject. Some of these identities are formed by the interaction between self and society, bridging the gap between the personal and the public worlds. Another kind of identity is the post-modern one which refers to the unstable and permanent identity. Thus, the process of identification becomes various and complex depending on the way an individual represents her/himself. Representation forms and transforms the concept of identity.[32] The sociological and post-modern conceptions of identity are suggested by the playwright in presenting the interaction in the multiethnic society. *Kimchee and Chitlins* enables Wong to show the possibility of change that occurs in realizing a shared history of oppression between quite distinct groups. She draws a comparison between the desires, frustrations, and cultures of African Americans and Korean Americans in order to present the shared ground between the groups.[33] Suzie Seeto, Soomi, and Nurse Ruth Betty state how African American and Asian American women are similarly not included in white standards of beauty:

> Nurse Ruth Betty: Straight hair. All the boys flocked around the girls with straight hair.
>
> Suzie Seeto: Then mom took away my eyeliner. Why do you wear so much? Because, Mom, it makes my eyes look bigger.

> SoomiMak: Stacy was combing her long blonde hair. Her hair was like gold. (41)

They are women of color, belonging to non-white ancestry. They express their shared feelings towards the beauty myth of the whites.

Willie Mak complains that the test of citizenship is difficult and needs "much brain work" (67), yet he passes it. Willie describes how different ethnic people in the courtroom share the moment of success; "We are all so different, but we all have crying faces of happiness" (67). A moment of happiness is celebrated by different ethnic groups with the feeling of triumph having at last succeeded in getting the citizenship.[34] The playwright expresses her wish that:

> people would take more delight in their differences. A lot of times the work by people of color is perceived as angry and complaining, and on the one hand I feel that complaining is necessary….the history of Asian American complaining in America is brief and only now emerging. But I'm also interested in exploring how joyful and enriching inter-relationships can be.[35]

Asian Americans and African Americans have their own cultures and histories apart from the United States. Both groups aspire to succeed there. There is the friendship between Grocer Mak and Barber Brown. The two men have more to share despite their cultural differences. Both of them have small business, both are hard workers. Before the boycott of the grocery begins, the two have a hope that the two groups work together. The play is concerned with identification among individuals, who have mutual cultural memories.[36] Barber Brown talks about his uncle's Korean girlfriend:

> At first, the family said, "what is this Korean girl doing in Harlem?" My uncle said Aunt Natalie was his first real girlfriend. They met at the Fighting Tiger Bar in Pusan [Poo-san]. Uncle Joe says it was love at first sight. I stopped crying. I cut her hair just like she told me. Her long black hair tickled my bare feet as they fell to the floor. (43-44)

Also, Mak talks about the Koreans' experience after WWII that enabled him understand African Americans' slave history and the spirit of Jazz music; "Soomi, Japanese people took your grandfather, made him a slave. Those black people think I don't understand them. But I understand. I know all about slaves. I met many black GI's in Korea during the war" (68).

The playwright suggests the positive combination of cultures through Kimchee and Chitlins. In the play, the two kinds of food symbolize ethnic differences. Both of them have the characteristics of strong smell and flavour that cultural outsiders may find unpleasant.[37] Brown and Mussell mention the significance of food, as a symbol of ethnic sign, in the "Introduction" to

their anthology, *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States: The Performance of Group Identity*:

> Foodways bind individuals together, define the limits of the group's outreach and identity, distinguish in-group from out-group, serve as a medium of inter-group communication, celebrate cultural cohesion, and provide a context for performance of group rituals.[38]

> Mainstream Americans frequently use foodways as a factor in the identification of subcultural groups and find in the traditional dishes and ingredients of 'others' who eat differently from themselves as set of convenient ways to categorise ethnic and regional character.[39]

Part of sharing one's identity is sharing the food of one's culture and the secrets of its ingredients. Kimchee and Chitlins have their importance to the Korean American and African American communities. Nurse Ruth Betty tells Suzie what her grandfather thought about Chitlins, the traditional dish of the African Americans; "Chitlins is our history. It came about because the slave master took the best part of the pig, and left the slaves with the shit. Life is like chitlins, he would say. Someone gives you shit, but you make a banquet out of it" (76). Mak tells Barber Brown that "Kimchee [is] not just dead cabbage, kimchee is the heart of Korea. When I eat it, my homesickness says, 'Adios'" (25). Kimchee and Chitlins symbolize the possibility for inter-ethnic collaboration.[40] When Brown receives a gift of Kimchee from Mak, Brown thinks of putting the Kimchee into his Chitlins. Brown says, "it tasted good, AND it cleared up my sinuses" (25). He suggests that Mak can "sell the stuff in your store. In the food-to-go section *or* in your pharmaceutical department, Kimchee and Chitlins.The wonder *food* or the wonder *drug*" (25). Yet, the boycott ends all these plans. Although both Brown and Mak do not choose to be involved in ethnic conflict, their friendship cannot last.

The audience realize that communication without mutual respect is impossible. In an email message to Catherine Cunningham on 2nd of November, 2005, Wong said:

> I can tell you that "Kimchee &Chitlins" takes its inspiration from a book I read back in high school, and I know you read it too, a book that has a profound effect on me as a teenager, Harper Lee's, "To Kill a Mockingbird". I never forgot the advice Atticus Finch told his daughter Scout: "First of all, Finch said, if you can learn a simple trick, Scout, you'll get a long a lot better with all kinds of folks. You

> never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view until you climb into his skin and walk around in it". "Kimchee &Chitlins" takes his advice literary, and asks you to esteem audience to do the same. The play is among other things, a field of test--to see if Finch's wisdom really works.[41]

> In my view, you have to abandon your own pain to recognise another's. Abandon your pain and embrace that other person's, even if you loathe them and they say things that make your blood boil. You have to have what is akin to an altruistic brotherly love, a Godlike recognition that we're all one.[44]

The end of the play provides two resolutions for the ethnic conflict. It is impossible to reconcile the two ethnic communities.[42] After realizing that the two cannot sustain their friendship any more, Mak tells Brown, "You stay with your people. I stay with mine" (84), to which Brown responds "United we stand" (84). The Chorus comments immediately, "We think reality is too depressing. We would like to offer you a more cheerful solution (Everybody goes backwards in time)" (84).

The second imaginative end deals with Mak's and Brown's willingness to keep their friendship. Mak is invited to a dinner by Brown who plans to prepare Kimchee and Chitlins: "My house is gonna smell like the East River and the subway on a hot summer day. The stink is gonna wake up the whole neighborhood. Maybe the whole world" (84).Mak comments, "Us bachelors have got to stick together" (84). Suzie comments on the second unreal resolution, "Just goes to show, the best stories are…the best stories are *invented*" (85). This is a positive and optimistic vision of inter-ethnic community. By giving the second alternative, Wong suggests a vision to end the stereotypical media depictions of tension between ethnic groups:[43]

Throughout the play, Matilda Duvet's case becomes a superficial issue in comparison with the real reason of the tensions among African Americans and Korean Americans. Suzie fails to know the truth about the boycott.[45] Her pursuit of a real account of the dispute limits her report; "I still don't know what happened in the store, and whatever DID happen isn't as important as what HAS happened. How did such a trivial event cause all this--boycott, court injunction, pain, suffering" (73). Reverend Carter remarks in response, "History, Suzie, has often been triggered by such trivial events. Someone in Montgomery, Alabama, order a black woman to give up a seat on a bus. Mahatma Ghandi created a free India all because he got thrown off train" (73).

Wong's comment is that "the play is a satire…comedy is the most powerful tool for dealing with complex problems. You'd be amazed how powerful that play can be once the audience allow themselves to laugh at how people perceive people".[46] Moreover, the playwright uses Brechtian approaches to depict the parallel between the politics of media representation and that of theatrical representation, since both are considered modes that present neutral perspectives and judgments for the viewers away from emotions. However, the play shows the defecting nature of the neutrality assumed by the media representation of ethnic relations, particularly when such representations

depict stereotypes of African Americans and Korean Americans that are dominated by white supremacy.[47] The play's theatrical devices of temporal and spatial manipulations and cross-racial re-enactments reflect the complex intersection of embodied histories and unequal social relations that form interracial conflicts and their public narration.[48] The impact of distinct patterns of immigration, segregation, and racialization is reflected by the behavioral and perceptual habits of customers and merchants. The theatrical performance supports the play in evoking unrecognised relationships.[49]VelinaHasu Houston, a playwright and director, explains the reason for choosing *Kimchee and Chitlins*as one of the plays in her book, *But Still, Like Air, I'll Rise*[50]*:*

> It is a courageous exploration of the collision of multiple cultures in an urban setting that they all think they understand, but do not. They do not because their very presence in it--along with the presence of all of their opinions and their need for their fifteen seconds of "Fame" (whatever that means to each of them) --makes that setting dynamic. It is changing, backsliding, and evolving all at once as they live and breathe. This kind of cacophony isn't easy to orchestrate in life or stage. Elizabeth Wong chooses theatrical devices that allow her to present her story in a unique way that unabashedly gets to the heart of many matters. Furthermore, while the cacophony of reality that Wong represents may not be able to term with their intricate differences, Wong as playwright offers a way for humanity to rise out of the mayhem and find more illuminative, positive points of departure.[51]

Wong succeeds in depicting reality of the biased media that depends on stereotyping of ethnic groups. She achieves her aim thematically and technically. The play is performed by eight actors which is less than the number of the characters. The playwright's aim of using doubling roles is to achieve the process of ethnic identification. Such process confirms the significance of sharing the similarities, rather than stressing the differences. Wong offers a way of living in a society composed of various communities.[52]

Suzie is presented as an example of a member of minority ethnic groups who are treated as the other. She denies her own ethnicity and cultural heritage in an attempt to be recognized as an American citizen without a hyphen. However, she passes a process of transformation that enables her to appreciate her other part. She realizes the significance of her cultural heritage in forming her own identity.

NOTES

[1]Jane T. Peterson & Suzanne Bennett, *Women Playwrights of Diversity: A Bio- Bibliographical Sourcebook* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 354.

[2] Tina Farmer, "An Unexpected Invitation Brought Elizabeth Wong to St. Louis and She Immersed Herself in the Experience" in *Theatre Reviews*, 3 Fab,(2017).

[3]Ibid.

[4] Roberta Uno, *Unbroken Thread: An Anthology of Plays by Asian American Women*, ed. Roberta Uno (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 265.

[5] Randy Barbara Kaplan, "Elizabeth Wong" in *Asian American Playwrights: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook, e*d. Miles Xian Liu (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2002), 352.

[6]Farmer.

[7]Kaplan, 325.

[8]Ju Yan Kim, *The Racial Mundane: Asian American Performance and the Embodied Everyday*(New York: New York University Press, 2015), 126.

[9]Kyeyoung Park, "Use and Abuse of Race and Culture: Black-Korean Tension in America" in *Koreans in the Hood: Conflict with African Americans,* ed. Kwang Chung Kim (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 1999), 63-64.

[10]Ju Yan Kim, 124.

[11] Elizabeth Wong, *Kimchee and Chitlins: A Serious Comedy About Getting Along* (London: The Dramatic Publishing, 1996), 19. Further quotations from the play appear parenthetically in the text with page number.

[12] Christiane Scholte, "Elizabeth Wong (1958)" in *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Asian American Literature*, ed. Guiyou Huang (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2009), 997.

[13] Susan C.W. Abbotson, *Thematic Guide to Modern Drama* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2003), 42.

[14]Ju Yan Kim, 139.

[15]Abbotson, 47.

[16]Ju Yan Kim, 141.

[17]Ibid., 147.

[18]Schlote, 996.

[19]Homi K. Bhabha, "The Other Question: The Stereotype and Colonial Discourse" in *Twentieth-Century Literary Theory: A Reader*, ed. K. M. Newton (New York: Macmillan Publisher Limited, 1997), 30.

[20]Ju Yan Kim, 137.

[21]Ibid., 138.

[22]Ibid., 139.

[23]Kaplan, 351.

[24]Ibid., 351.

[25]Elizabeth Kim, "Elizabeth Wong" in *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Twentieth Century American Dramatists*, ed. Christopher J. Wheatley, vol. 266(Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2002), 306.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Kaplan, 354.

[28]Bhabha,*The Location of Culture*(New York: Routledge, 1994), 33-34.

[29]Kaplan, 354.

[30]Abbotson, 47.

[31]Ibid.

[32] Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Identity in Question" in *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*, eds. Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hurberd, and Kenneth Thompson (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), 612.

[33] Elizabeth Kim, 307.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Alexis Greene, "Women Who Write Plays: Interviews with American Dramatists." in*The Dramatist*, ed. Alexis Greene (Hanover: Smith and Kraus, Inc., 2001), 501.

[36]Scholte, 996.

[37]Abbotson, 47.

[38]Linda Brown and Kay Mussell, *Ethnic and Regional Foodway in the US: The Performance of Group Identity* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 5

[39]Ibid., 3.

[40]Abbotson, 47.

[41] Elizabeth Wong, e-mail message to *Catherine Cunningham*, November 2, 2005.

[42]Schlote, 996.

[43]Kaplan, 358.

[44]Greene, 499.

[45]Ju Yan Kim, 125.

[46]Greene, 500.

[47]Ju Yan Kim, 147.

[48]Abbotson, 47.

[49]Ju Yan Kim, 153.

[50]VelinaHasu Houston, ed. *But Still, Like Air, I'll Rise: New Asian American Plays* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997).

[51]VelinaHasu Houston, e-mail message to the researcher, January 27, 2017.

[52] Jae-Ha Kim, "Hated Hyphens: Playwrights Discards Easy Definitions of Origion" *Chicago Sun Times*, 6 May (1993), 2. <http: www.suntimes.com/ archives/>, accessed March 1, 2017.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbotson, Susan C.W. *Thematic Guide to Modern Drama*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2003.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

----------. "The Other Question: The Stereotype and Colonial Discourse." In *Twentieth-Century Literary Theory: A Reader*.Edited by K. M. Newton, 293-301. New York: Macmillan Publisher Limited, 1997.

Brown, Linda and Kay Mussell.*Ethnic and Regional Foodway in the US: The Performance of Group Identity*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984.

Farmer, Tina. "An Unexpected Invitation Brought Elizabeth Wong to St. Louis and She Immersed Herself in the Experience." *Theatre Reviews*. (Faberary, 2017).

Greene, Alexis. "Women Who Write Plays: Interviews with American Dramatists". *Interview*.Edited by Alexis Greene. Hanover: Smith and Kraus, Inc., 2001.

Hall, Stuart. "Introduction: Identity in Question." In *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies.*Edited by Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hurberd, andKenneth Thompson, 274-281. Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1995.

Houston, VelinaHasu, ed. *But Still, Like Air, I'll Rise: New Asian American Plays*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997.

----------. Email Message to the researcher. January 27, 2017.

Kaplan, Randy Barbara. "Elizabeth Wong." In *Asian American Playwrights: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook.* Edited by Miles Xian Liu, 347-361. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2002.

Kim, Elizabeth. "Elizabeth Wong." In *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Twentieth Century American Dramatists*. Vol. 266.Edited by Christopher J. Wheatley, 306-317. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2002.

Kim, Jae-Ha. "Hated Hyphens: Playwrights Discards Easy Definitions of Origion." *Chicago Sun Times*. 6 May 1993. <http: www.suntimes.com/archives/>. Accessed March 1,2017.

Kim, Ju Yan. *The Racial Mundane: Asian American Performance and the Embodied Everyday* . New York: New York University Press, 2015.

Park, Kyeyoung. "Use and Abuse of Race and Culture: Black-Korean Tension in America." In*Koreans in the Hood: Conflict with African Americans.*Edited by Kwang Chung Kim, 60-75. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 1999.

Peterson, Jane T. and Suzanne Bennett.*Women Playwrights of Diversity: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook*. Westport, CT: GreenwoodPress, 1997.

Schlote, Christiane. "Elizabeth Wong (1958)." In *The Greenwood Encyclopaedia of Asian American Literature*. Edited by Guiyou Huang, 294-298. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2009.

Uno, Roberta, ed. *Unbroken Thread: An Anthology of Plays by Asian American Women*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993.

Wong, Elizabeth. *Kimchee and Chitlins: A Serious Comedy About Getting Along*. London: The Dramatic Publishing, 1996.

----------. Email Message to Catherine Cunningham. November 2, 2005.