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Janice Y. K. Lee's *The Piano Teacher*: A Chronotopic Analysis

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Abstract

Drawing upon the concept of the chronotope developed by M. M. Bakhtin and other theorists, this paper is devoted to a chronotopic analysis of Janice Y. K. Lee's *The Piano Teacher* (2009), a novel set in the British ruled Hong Kong from 1941 to 1953. First, the present study attempts to explore the literary representation of the ideology of empire in *The Piano Teacher*. The term "empire" in this paper refers not so much to a particular polity as to the ideology that uploads it. Empire denotes large-scale control, dominance, and the subordination of the alien or the other by means of difference. Second, the paper aims to analyze the impact of the ideology of empire upon the self-actualization of Claire Pendleton, the title character of the novel. The interest and motivation for this study is triggered by the question why Claire abandons her identity as an English public official's wife and presents herself as a solitary woman embracing the local wet market and the amah's uniform. An examination of the power relations portrayed in the novel's various chronotopes adequately explicates the heroine's remarkable transformation. A chronotopic reading of the novel also contributes to the interpretation of Lee's postcolonial position and her critical attitude towards the power of empire and its impact on the building of individual identity.

Keywords: the chronotope, empire, M. M. Bakhtin, Janice Y. K. Lee, *The Piano Teacher*

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I. Introduction

Drawing upon the concept of the chronotope developed by M. M. Bakhtin and other theorists, this paper seeks to achieve two goals. First, it attempts to explore the literary representation of the ideology of empire in Janice Y. K. Lee's *The Piano Teacher* (2009), a novel set in the British ruled Hong Kong from 1941 to 1953, when British imperialism and Japanese imperialism collide there. The term "empire" in this paper refers not so much to a particular polity as to the ideology that uploads it, although most of the time the analysis will draw upon the British Empire, the then ruler of Hong Kong and an exemplar of imperial projects. Rather, here "empire" denotes large-scale control, dominance, and the subordination of the alien or the other by means of difference. In her study of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century fiction of intrigue, Yumna Siddiqi defines empire as "an umbrella term for the different forms of Western hegemony over the rest of the world" (1). Patrick Brantlinger, a scholar of Victorian studies, offers a similar definition but omits the West/East dichotomy: "Empires emerge when stronger polities or nation-states dominate weaker ones, typically through military conquest" (735). For Michael W. Doyle, an international relations scholar, empire refers to a relationship whereas imperialism is a process to achieve that relationship. According to Doyle, "Empire . . . is a relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be achieved by force, by political collaboration, by economic, social, or cultural dependence. Imperialism is simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an empire" (45). Scholars point out that empire depends on masculinity, racial superiority, and class distinction (Ghose, Roy, Smith). An imperial project, therefore, is highly hierarchical in terms of race, gender, and class.

The second goal of the present study is to analyze the impact of the ideology of empire upon the self-actualization of Claire Pendleton, the title character of the novel.[1] Lee employs the technique of braided narratives to depict Will Truesdale's two love affairs

[1] *The Piano Teacher* caught a lot of attention from reviewers and critics upon its publication in 2009, and most of them featured the novel's themes of love, war, and betrayal. See, for example, Spark, Stone, and Sullivan. However, this paper intends to go beyond these obviously seen elements.

before and after the imperial Japanese occupation of Hong Kong from 1941 to 1945, with Trudy Liang and Claire Pendleton respectively. Claire makes her first appearance in this Hong Kong based novel as an English public official's young wife fresh from England. At the end of the novel, she separates with her husband, feeling comfortable with her small apartment, the amah's uniform, and the wet market.[2] "The amahs," as the online reading community LitLovers rightly observes, "are a steady but silent presence throughout the book."[3] To what extent does the presence of the amahs in the novel influence Claire and lure her to the amah's uniform for comfort? The answer to this question paves the path to the second goal of the paper. The amahs are not only silent characters but also a backdrop against which Lee ponders the power relationships embedded in imperial projects. I propose that Claire's remarkable transformation is brought about by her penetrating insight into the ruthlessness of empire, the absurdity of loyalty, and the fragility of mutual reliance between masters and servants. Before I proceed, I outline the "servants" Lee delineates in this novel.

A servant can refer to someone who is employed to work in a house, someone who works in the service of a government, or someone who is devoted to a cause or a deed. Two categories of servants are identified in *The Piano Teacher*: servants of the home and servants of the empire. We also call them domestic servants and imperial servants. Most domestic servants delineated in the novel are amahs. Amahs refer to paid Chinese women servants specialized in various domestic jobs and employed by wealthy Chinese families since the early twentieth century (Constable, "Jealousy" 452). According to Nicole Constable, "*Amah* is not often used when speaking Chinese but has long been used by Chinese who speak English and by English speakers in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia" (*Maid* 52). In *The Piano Teacher*, we see amahs working in the houses of wealthy and powerful local people as well as in those of the English. Lee uses "amah" as a general term, but, besides traditional amahs, she portrays two specific types of female servants in the novel: sohei and mujai. The term "sohei" refers to spinster amahs from Guangdong, China, who sought employment in Hong Kong because of the decline of silk industry in their hometown. The

[2] "Amahs" refer to paid Chinese women domestic workers in Hong Kong. A traditional amah usually wears black trousers and white tunics. I will discuss the term "amah" in more detail shortly.

[3] See "Piano Teacher (Lee)" in Works Cited for further information about LitLovers.

term "mujai" applies to poor young girls who were purchased to be used as bondservants. Mujai were not paid wages and could be sold again as commodities (Constable, "Jealousy" 452-53; *Maid* 49-53).[4] Servants of the empire abound in the novel: local elites, English civil servants, English expatriates, and the Japanese military police. The new imperial power, such as the imperial Japanese, recruits local social aliens to run errands. The established imperial power, such as the British Empire, depends on English civil servants, English expatriates, and local elites. The established imperial power also has room for female servants of the empire, for example, public officials' wives and single women who pursue a career in education.

As is discussed earlier, empire denotes large-scale control, dominance, and the subordination of the alien or the other by means of difference. Judging from this perspective, the home in a colonial setting, as is portrayed by Lee in the novel, can be counted as a miniature empire because imperial order builds upon domestic order. Lee sees obvious parallels between domestic servants and imperial servants. While domestic servants work for wages, imperial servants work for financial benefits and power. The master in the house demands obedience and subservience from the servants. The empire requires its imperial servants to be loyal and steadfast. The domestic service is a symbol of the service of empire because both imply control, submission, sacrifice, and betrayal. However, do the master and the empire care about the servants? This is a question that Claire must answer in her pursuit of transformation.

Told by a third-person narrator, *The Piano Teacher* unfolds with braided narratives about two worlds separated by the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong. These two worlds manifest two specific spatiotemporal configurations, which witness a drastic change in the power relation between empire and its servants. I adopt Russian literary theorist M. M. Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope to analyze these spatiotemporal configurations. Literally, the chronotope means time and space, or the setting, of literary narratives. More precisely, however, it denotes an objective time-space configuration joined by subjective ideological features (Blommaert 96). I argue that an examination of the power relations

[4] Despite her depiction of the two types of domestic servants, Lee did not use the two terms in the novel.

portrayed in the novel's various chronotopes adequately explicates the remarkable transformation of Claire, through whose eyes the novel's nonparticipating narrator sees.

II. The Concept of the Chronotope: Bakhtin and Other Theorists

In "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel," collected in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, Bakhtin coins the term "the chronotope" to highlight the inseparability of time and space in the study of literary narratives. One can reach a hasty conclusion by saying that chronotopes and settings are close in meaning. However, as is pointed out by Michael Holquist, the editor and translator of *The Dialogic Imagination*, "'Chronotope' is a category that no brief introduction (much less glossary) can adequately adumbrate" (xxxiii). The cryptic concept invites numerous discussions and interpretations, thereby developing and enriching the theory of the chronotope and opening new possibilities to its application (Bemong and Borghart 5; De Fina and Perrino 67). The following analysis of the chronotope, therefore, draws upon not only Bakhtin's original theory but also his successors' insights into the concept.

Originally designed as a study of genre theory, Bakhtin's essay aims to examine kinds of genres and illustrate the features that distinguish one literary genre from another. Bakhtin sees distinct time-space relations in specific genres. The adventure novel of ordeal and the idyll, for example, illustrate different types of time, space, and action respectively (88-91, 225-26). The generic chronotope, then, provides a particular world view of the text (Bemong and Borghart 8). While the spatiotemporal configurations determine a particular genre, the genre prescribes the time and space of the plot and, consequently, the actions of the characters. Bakhtin's interest in genres stems from his "perception of a human being's spatial and temporal situatedness in the world" (Morris 18). Bakhtin claims in his essay, "The image of man is always intrinsically chronotopic" (85). Accordingly, Pam Morris describes the chronotpe as "the artistic imaging of human life as always concretely embodied within a specific temporal-geographical location" (18). Judging from the interrelations among space, time, and the human being, we can infer that the chronotope, or

the temporal-geographical location, has significant impacts on the building of human identity.

Linguists Anna De Fina and Sabina Perrino relate "spatiotemporal identity configurations" to "prevailing ideologies" (68). Based on their argument and what has been discussed previously, we can propose that the chronotope an author chooses to represent in his/her artistic work also reflects his/her specific world view. In her essay "The Chronotope and the Study of Literary Adaptation: The Case of *Robinson Crusoe*," Tara Collington examines the chronotopic differences between Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, two of the story's historical sources, and Michel Tournier's twentieth-century adaptation of the Robinson story, *Friday*. It is found that both Defoe and Tournier changed the time and space context of the story in their artistic creation, thereby disclosing their perspectives, that is, a colonial world view and a post-colonial world view respectively. Defoe and Tournier spent their lives in different time-space configurations; consequently, they developed distinct perspectives on the world. Collington aptly sums up the relevance of the chronotope to an author when he says: "the lived chronotope of the author becomes reflected in the fictional chronotopes of the work of art" (192).

Along with its function to highlight the relationships between the author and the text in terms of time and space, the chronotope also serves to interpret the complex spatiotemporality, or existence in space and time, within a text. Frequently, literary spatiotemporality is compressed and represented as a powerful image in the text. Bakhtin defines the artistic chronotope as follows:

> In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indictors characterizes the artistic chronotope. (84)

How time becomes thick and visible and how space becomes charged and responsive need elaboration. Using the chronotope as an analytical tool, literary theorist Lynne Pearce demonstrates that the thickness of time emerges through the merging of imagination and

materiality. In her analysis of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Pearce asserts that "the chronotopes . . . in the novel are thick with the flesh and blood of slavery" (185). It is through dialogues among Morrison's characters that things of the past, which show the trace of time, are "exposed and rematerialized" (187). Thus, time becomes concrete and visible, loaded with memory and re-memory.

Moreover, space becomes charged and responsive when it becomes a physical manifestation of the flow of time. Bart Keunen, a scholar of comparative literature, relates the chronotope to literary imagination: "A chronotope only becomes a chronotope when it shows something, when it brings to mind an image that can be observed by the mind's eye" (35). Although the image evoked is imaginary, what Keunen means by "something" can be material. The spatiotemporal quality of an ever-flowing river perfectly exemplifies the chronotope. In his monograph on postcolonial literary geographies, John Thieme uses the river image to describe Bakhtin's chronotope: "[It] is of course mistaken to see space and time as binary opposites. New waters are always flowing in the river and Bakhtin's use of the term 'chronotope' to describe 'the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships' . . . foregrounds the dynamic interconnectedness of time and space in the formation of social relations" (5). A flowing river is always responsive to the flowing of time, Thieme argues, as is indicated by the aphorism "one can never step into the same river twice" (1). Keunen illustrates "spatial temporalities" with two spatial events: "the size of a building lot" and "the speed of a runner" (38). Both are exemplars of Bakhtin's chronotope. One epitomizes a materialized chronotope, the other exemplifies a chronotope embodied by the human body.

I summarize the features of the chronotope as follows. First, the chronotope refers to space-time configurations. Second, the chronotope contributes to the interpretation of space-time relationships in a literary text. Third, different chronotopes give birth to different world views. Fourth, the chronotope an author adopts reflects his/her world view. Fifth, as the chronotope prescribes the actions of characters, it also contributes to the building of their personal identities. Lastly, the chronotope becomes visible, or an image, when space and time are condensed and materialized by physical objects or embodied by the human body.

In "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel," Bakhtin examines not only major generic chronotopes but also several other types of chronotopes where time and space converge and trigger specific actions. These types of chronotopes are called minor chronotopes. Bakhtin attempts to explain the relationship between major and minor chronotopes when he writes, "We have been speaking so far only of the major chronotopes, those that are most fundamental and wide-ranging. But each such chronotope can include within it an unlimited number of minor chronotopes; in fact, as we have already said, any motif may have a special chronotope of its own" (252). Scholars interpret major (or dominant) chronotopes as generic chronotopes and minor (or local) chronotopes as motivic charonotopes. A major chronotope, as literary theorists Nele Bemong and Pieter Borghart notice, "serves as a unifying ground for the competing local chronotopes in one and the same narrative text" (7). They also equate the generic chronotope with the world view of the text. Despite its origin as a tool to distinguish narrative genres, Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope has fostered remarkable development and wide application. Instead of identifying a single chronotope in a narrative text, we should be reminded that multiple chronotopes can appear in this text. Marc Brosseau and Pierre-Mathieu Le Bel, scholars of social and cultural geography, highlight the coexistence of chronotopes and expect to better understand how the dialogism of chronotopes inform the representation of space and spatiality of a given text (50). In the section that follows, I identify important chronotopes in *The Piano Teacher* and analyze, first, how these chronotopes work as a showcase of empire for Claire and, second, how their interrelations demonstrate Lee's world view and critical attitude towards control, dominance, and the subordination of the other.

III. Chronotopes in *The Piano Teacher*

As is mentioned previously, empire relies on large-scale control, dominance, and the subordination of the alien or the other by means of difference, featuring masculinity, racial superiority, and class distinction. It is also proposed that there is a correlation between domestic service and the service of empire in *The Piano Teacher.* In this section, I explore the representation of empire and servants in the novel by delving into its chronotopic design. Firstly, the spatiotemporal configurations that accommodate an author determines his/her

vantage point. In the words of Bakhtin, "Out of the actual chronotopes of our world (which serve as the source of representation) emerge the reflected and *created* chronotopes of the world represented in the work (in the text)" (253). Briefly, he terms it as "the chronotopes of the author" (252). The braided narratives of Lee's historical novel present her critical reflections on pre-war and wartime Hong Kong through Claire's post-war point of view. The characterization of Claire highlights Lee's twenty-first-century attitude towards the power of empire and its impact on human identity. We can identify three major chronotopes in the novel: pre-war Hong Kong, wartime Hong Kong, and post-war Hong Kong. Moreover, five minor chronotopes embedded in the chronotope of post-war Hong Kong deserve our meticulous attention and will be examined in due course. Here I follow Keunen's concise definition of the major chronotope as "overarching plot construction" (48). On the other hand, minor chronotopes are produced when spatiotemporal significance is condensed and materialized. Because minor chronotopes represent the motifs and images of the novel, they are also treated as motivic chronotopes. The chronotopes in *The Piano Teacher* not only contribute to the differentiation of different time-space constructions, but also underscore the ebb and flow of competing ideologies.

A. The Chronotope of Pre-War Hong Kong

The space-time construction of pre-war Hong Kong manifests a chronotope standing at a condescending height. In the first place, Lee's representation of three types of spatiality shows that topographical distinctions are emblematic of hierarchical differences. The representation of May Road in Mid-Levels, which means halfway up the hill, and the Peak, the highest hill in Hong Kong Island, illustrates a correlation between race, class, and space. May Road is described by Lee as "a bourgeois suburb of England" (38). The neighborhood is inhabited by expatriates, their wives, and servants. Affluent Chinese people also live on May Road. We have a glimpse of Sudie and Frank Chen, who have Will to take care of their flat when they are staying in London. Trudy, the Eurasian with a wealthy Chinese father, also lives in this neighborhood. We can reason that Sudie and Frank, as well as Trudy, are pillars of the empire, either with their connection with London, the center of the Metropole, or with their capital to financially underpin the project of empire. On the other hand, the English, the empire's subjects from the Metropole, take up residence in the Peak and exercise a monopoly on the area. Angeline Biddle, a Chinese woman living on the Peak with her English husband, is a source of unease because "Chinese are supposed to have permission to live there" (31). At the other extreme of The Peak is Happy Valley, where Will takes up residence as a relative newcomer. Happy Valley is described as a place with "loud, rude locals" and "lively shops" (38). Although Will appreciates its vitality, Trudy considers the place "dreadful" (38). The names of the three regions—The Peak, Mid-Levels, and Happy Valley—carry symbolic meaning. While indicative of the elevation of a geographic location, these names also imply the hierarchical structure of the imperial colony. The English stand on the top of the pyramid, the affluent Chinese share the middle layers with expatriates of different nationalities, and massive locals are placed at the bottom.

We can interpret the time in the chronotope of pre-war Hong Kong from two perspectives. Firstly, Lee depicts a span of six months, from June to December 1941, when the impending war is a mounting concern. The topic of war is brought up time and again in parties and other social gatherings, where pleasure is oddly mingled with tension. Secondly, by quoting General Maltby, Commander of British Troops in Hong Kong, Lee suggests a

concept of synchronous time despite geographical difference: "I expect . . . that my force will become a great example of high-hearted courage to all the rest of the British empire who are fighting to preserve truth, justice, and liberty for the world" (83-84). To defend the British empire, an empire on which the sun never sets, the empire's servants are supposed to extent their service around the clock.

In *The Piano Teacher*, the empire involves its servants not in battles but in espionage concerning its property. Lee places the Crown Collection at the heart of the problem of service. The Crown Collection, whose name is reminiscent of imperial power, contains ancient Chinese artifacts, known as the legacy of former Chinese empires. As the novel's narrator tells us, "[The] Chinese want their heritage back, the Japanese want them for their value, and the English think it all belongs to them" (195). The Crown Collection, then, serves as a metaphor of Hong Kong, a target of imperial projects launched by the afore-mentioned imperial forces. Originating from the past and transported from afar, the Chinese heritage has evident spatiotemporal significance and functions as a motivic chronotope. As the novel's plot develops, the Crown Collection's hidden location during the war is entrusted to three characters, Reginald Arbogast, a successful businessman and importer, Edwina Storch, a headmistress, and Victor Chen, a local personage. As will be demonstrated shortly, the three characters exemplify three types of servants of the empire: the diehard patriot, the memsahib, and the indigenous elite.

Though not a public servant, Reginald has close ties to the government. In Reginald's loyalty to his country and grave concern over the Crown Collection, we see what Stephen Ross, a scholar of cultural and political thought, terms as "business-government collusion" (10). In an essay about Joseph Conrad and empire, Ross points out the replacement of national interests by commercial interests in modern empire and highlights "the production of goods and services" and "the quest for markets and resources" (11). Whereas the empire enables Reginald to take a superior position in the colony, symbolized by his residence on the Peak, he is supposed to maintain the empire's commercial interests. Also concerned about his interests is Victor, the indigenous elite. According to John M. MacKenize, a scholar of imperial cultural history, the indigenous elites "were able to travel to the centers of empires, sometimes to be educated, and to acquire knowledge of political systems and of

new ideologies of nationalism and developing democracy" (18). Victor apparently fits MacKenize's description. Having studied in University of Oxford and speaking "English with the faintest hint of a Chinese accent" (13), Victor has established a good connection with London, the center of the Metropole. When it comes to the Crown Collection, he asserts that it is "part of English heritage" (54), showing his loyalty and respect to the empire. The indigenous elite is provided a stage on which he can go between the empire and the colony.

As is mentioned previously, the empire is supposed to be a male-dominated project. Thus, the vital role Edwina plays in the narrative reveals Lee's observation about gender and empire. By the representation of Edwina, Lee provides a variation of the figure of the memsahib popular in colonial writing. The term memsahib refers to an official's wife in the British colony, especially colonial India. According to Indira Ghose, a specialist in literature of the British Empire, "Memsahibs were portrayed as intolerant, viciously racist, and abusive to servants" (107). They were also depicted as "collaborators in the construction and maintenance of empire" (Buzard 444). The memsahib is the chronotopic product of a colonial setting. Instead of participating in her husband's public life, a Victorian memsahib exhibited the superiority of Englishness by transplanting English middle-class domesticity into their colonial home (David 569). At first sight, Edwina bears no resemblance to a memsahib; she is single and holds the post of a headmistress. However, like a memsahib, Edwina is involved in the construction and maintenance of empire. As is observed by history scholar Stephen Constantine, single women in empire can render service by pursuing professional careers in medicine and education (474). Edwina displays a modern version of Victorian memsahibs. Whereas memsahibs promoted Englishness through domesticity, Edwina "civilizes" the colonialized subjects by school education.

"Englishwomen," Ghose concludes in her study of memsahibs in British India, "fulfilled the role of both guardians of home values and policing agents in charge of upholding racial exclusiveness" (110-111). What Edwina is expected to safeguard is the purity and superiority of Englishness. What she guards against, then, is embodied by Trudy, a Eurasian woman. Trudy represents a spatiotemporal construction where East meets West, but where she belongs to nowhere. From the imperial perspective, Trudy's position is higher than local girls. Simonds discourages Will from dating a Chinese girl but considers dating

Trudy not as bad because "she sounds rather more than a local girl" (25). However, when the government sends the women in the colony away on the eve of the war, which is a policy indicative of the empire's masculine properties, Trudy is not eligible for evacuation regardless of her British passport. As the novel's third-person narrator tells us, "[Only] the white British, those of pure European extraction, get passage on the ships" (56). On Trudy's body we see spatiotemporal compression of what is conspicuously under way in the colony: impurity and hybridity; however, these colonial characteristics are not welcome to the empire and its servants.

Masters and their domestic servants share mutual reliance in the same way that empire and its servants do. Trudy's relationship with her spinster amahs, Ah Lok and Mei Sing, is the epitome of the relationship between the empire and its servants in the chronotope of pre-war Hong Kong. Trudy depends on Ah Lok and Mei Sing. She "never lifts a finger" as she "belongs to those who have been waited on since birth" (33). Ah Lok and Mei Sing also relies on Trudy. For twenty-five cents a week, "they will do anything for her" (32). Placed in a broader context, amahs' devotion and loyalty to their masters may result from a lack of economic and familial resources elsewhere. When amahs show their loyalty to their masters, they expect to have their interests guaranteed. This principle is also true to empire's servants.

While they are entrusted with the care of the Crown Collection, Reginald, Edwina, and Victor are defending their self-interest. As is pointed out previously, the Collection is a metaphor of Hong Kong, a target of the imperial project. Hence, taking care of the Collection is equal to taking care of the empire. Reginald's loyalty to the empire comes before anything else because the security of the empire is equal to that of his commercial success. For Victor, as a middleman between the empire and the colony, the empire allows him to secure his economic and political advantages. However, the knowledge of the Collection points to Victor, the indigenous elite, a short cut to self-interest, as will be discussed later. Edwina cherishes the empire because it enables her to possess a position much higher and more powerful than back in England, but she also casts covetous looks at the Collection.

B. The Chronotope of Wartime Hong Kong

Wartime Hong Kong witnesses the collapse of the hierarchy that characterizes the chronotope of pre-war Hong Kong. The Japanese occupation transforms the spatiotemporal relations and has a profound impact on personal identity. The English on the Peak are interned by the Japanese in Stanley Prison on the south coast of Hong Kong Island. Hong Kong's surrender to Japan not only isolates the colony from its empire but also disrupts the concept of synchronous time. The colony is no longer synchronized with the rhythm of the empire where the sun never sets. Winston Churchill's radio broadcast to Hong Kong, which clearly separates "we" from "you," stands for an imperial position: "The eyes of the world are upon you. We expect you to resist to the end. The honor of the empire is in your hands" (108). The irony is that the imperial servants are highly recommended to safeguard their empire whereas the empire has no intension of protecting them.

In the chronotope of wartime Hong Kong, Lee once more draws a parallel between amahs and the empire's servants. A scenario demonstrates that the master-servant relationship can become fragile in the face of war. The setting of the scenario is a candlelit New Year's Party organized before the Japanese have complete control over Hong Kong. Without electricity and in need of supplies, the party is a potluck for the inhabitants on the Peak to share food and seek comfort. Even at this critical moment, servants are brought to prepare and serve. In case their servants run away, the Millers bring to the party a string of servants: "two or three amahs, a baby amah, a cook, a houseboy, and a gardener" (123). This scenario manifests not only the Millers' dependence upon these servants, but also their fear of doing without them. War changes the spatiotemporal configuration and hence shatters the master-servant relationship in the wartime chronotope. Simply put, "the days of amahs and chauffeurs are gone" (134). Lee portrays what happens to amahs for the sake of the war. Some relationships break up. Angeline's amahs make their escape; Trudy's aged spinster amahs are sent away to their relatives. Other relationships remain. Lucky internees in Stanley make their amahs outside bring them food and supplies regularly. An amah who performs such duties unfortunately has her hands cut off by the Japanese. We can regard what these amahs do as loyalty, but we can also take it as a sign of economic reliance. If it is permitted, maintaining relationships with their masters is still advantageous for amahs.

The amah in *The Piano Teacher* is represented as a chronotope. In an essay about early 1930s woman's films, Andrée Lafontaine explains why the modern woman is considered a chronotope in these films: "To claim that the modern woman is a chronotope is to argue that she is the structuring spatiotemporal knot around which a number of films from the early 1930s are organized, that she possess concrete and distinct socio-temporal markers, and that she functions as the physical ground for the articulation of abstract ideas" (70). In terms of the amah in *The Piano Teacher*, Lafontaine's criteria apply. Amahs appear in every critical moment of the novel's plot. They mark issues specific to the time-space configurations that they inhabit. Amahs represent racial, class, and gender inferiority in a colonial setting. They also embody service, loyalty, and betrayal.

Like how it affects amahs, the wartime chronotope also has impacts on the empire's servants in the novel, namely Victor, Edwina, and Reginald. As a result of the spatiotemporal transformation, the keepers of the Crown Collection take different paths. Victor remains an indigenous elite, rendering his service to a new master—the Japanese empire and, at the same time, endeavoring to seize the Collection as his own. When Japan suffers defeats in the world war, Victor shrewdly measures his own interests and decides to send the Collection back to China, as a "gift from a loyal citizen" (304). Victor is ready to show loyalty to whoever has seized power. Claiming her dead mother is Finnish, Edwina, another servant of the empire, renounces her English citizenship so that she is exempted from interment at Stanley Camp. However, like Victor, Edwina uses the Collection to polish her loyal image. To get rid of Trudy, the Eurasian woman she despises, Edwina misleads the Japanese about the secret location of the Collection and causes Trudy's death. By doing so, in Edwina's opinion, she is performing her "patriotic duty" (302). In other words, Edwina asserts that she has guarded her country against the Japanese theft and the impurity represented by Eurasians. Chronotopic transformations lead to alternative interpretations of loyalty for Victor and Edwina, but not for Reginald. In the words of Regina, Reginald's wife, "He [Reginald] values country over anything, something bred into him by his family" (168). Unlike Victor and Edwina, Reginald is interned in Stanley, where he remains loyal until he loses one hand. Under torture the diehard patriot reveals the secret of the Collection to the Japanese and feels ashamed hereafter. For Reginald, patriotism goes hand in hand with self-interest because a great empire guarantees his commercial success and personal

achievement. Reginald's story is reminiscent of that of the unnamed amah who has her hands cut off when delivering supplies to her master in Stanley. Both suffer because of their "loyalty" to their masters.

Lee also uses the chronotope of wartime Hong Kong to describe the nature of an emerging empire. The representation of the Japanese empire in this novel reiterates the premise that an empire is hierarchal in terms of gender, race, and class. First, the Japanese empire is typified by brutal soldiers and military policemen. The Japanese soldiers are described as animals. To celebrate their victory in Hong Kong, the soldiers "get three days to run wild and do whatever they wish" (111-12). This causes the victimization of the residents, especially women. The only Japanese woman depicted in the novel is Akiko Maartens, who chooses to be interned in Stanley camp with her Dutch husband. The Japanese guards "spit at her and leer" (143), but Akiko ignores them. Although woman has never been considered an integral component of the imperial project, Akiko's choice indicates to the guards her complete disregard for the triumph of the Japanese empire. In their eyes, Akiko is a traitor and deserves punishment.

In a ridiculous scenario, Lee portrays ways the Japanese claim their racial superiority. An Englishman is severely beaten because he looks down on some Japanese soldiers from a roof. The prisoners are informed that only the Japanese soldiers are allowed to look down on others. The prisoners fall into an odd habit in the aftermath of this event, as the narrator recounts: "[Their] enemies' peculiar preoccupation with placement and particularly with height, because of their generally smaller stature, becomes ingrained in all the prisoners until many years after the war is over, when they automatically check who is standing where, on what step or from what position" (138). The scenario suggests two things. First, rather than being self-evident, the so-called racial superiority is problematic. Second, the spatial relationship matters.

While some Japanese characters show their racial superiority through brutality, others have a certain ambivalence towards their enemies. They despise the English but seemingly admire their culture at the same time. According to MacKenize, the Japanese empire "was specifically modeled on Western examples" (2). Ueki, a Japanese lieutenant, is representative of such an imperial project. Ueki has learned English from an English missionary and speaks good English. MacKenize also points out that "successful empires

develop information-gathering techniques to a high degree" (10). A translator in the Japanese gendarmerie speaks English with almost unnoticeable accent. Otsubo, the head of the gendarmerie, demands that Trudy teach him English and Western table manners. The Japanese officers' desire to learn the English language might result from their admiration for the English culture, but it also comes from their ambition to acquire information for the benefits of their empire. Behind the racial superiority Otsubo assumes lies a feeling of uncertainty about where the Japanese Empire stands.

The wartime chronotope of Hong Kong endangers the servant-master relationship of the old British empire, but it nourishes a new relationship between the Japanese empire and its newly recruited servants. Abundant resources and capable imperial servants are lacking for the Japanese Empire in the wartime chronotope. Aside from its soldiers and police officers, the emerging empire establishes its hierarchal system by subordinating the social other. Trudy and her cousin Dominick are good cases in point. In a study of the Court Jews of Baroque Germany and the Christian renegades of the Ottoman Empire, sociologist Lewis A. Coser argues that, in "periods of social transformation," "alien elements" are very "suitable instruments" for rulers to "maximize their power" (575). He reaches a conclusion that, because of rootlessness and powerlessness, the alien is "easily bent to the ruler's purposes and an ideal servant of power" (580). Although both are the British passport holders, Trudy and Dominick are marginalized by the British Empire. As is discussed previously, Trudy is treated as an Other because she is Eurasian, not pure European. An editorial Dominick shows Trudy highlights the problem of the Eurasian in all British colonies: "That Britain and some other of the Occidental powers chose to victimize the Eurasian rather than accept him and make use of his qualities is astonishing to students of the question. The Eurasian could be of great help to these powers, contributing valuable liaison between the ruling nation and the native population" (183).

Dominick is regarded as an Other because he is born with eleven fingers, which, according to Edwina, is a birth defect. Besides the physical mark of difference, Dominick exhibits feminine traits although he is bisexual. Trudy considers him a mistake and labels him as a girl. At a very young age, Dominick is sent to England by his parents because he rapes the maids. The rape of the servants foreshadows his suffering in England; he is recognized as an alien and is bullied as such physically, sexually, and racially. Simply put,

Dominick suffers racial and gender exploitation in England because he oppresses the maids at home in terms of gender and class. Having received education in England, Dominick "[is] more English than English," but he "has no great love for them" (81). Trudy and Dominick are the social other in the pre-war chronotope; nevertheless, they demonstrate their availability in the wartime chronotope and become the servants of Otsubo, the representative of the Japanese Empire in the novel. Trudy and Dominick serve as Otsubo's spies and sex slaves in exchange for abundant food, luxurious lodgings, and, most importantly, free passes. The master-servant relationship is fragile because both parties are pursuing their interests. When Otsubo becomes suspicious of their loyalty, they lose their lives. Trudy and Dominick are used by the empire as instruments but never recognized as part of them.

Whenever the spatiotemporal qualities change, a new hierarchy arises, and individuals find themselves placed in different positions. De Fina and Perrino summarize sociolinguist Jan Blommaert's arguments and recommend that we should treat "chronotopes as contexts, or as sets of features that enable particular identities, configurations of meanings, actions, and rules of behaviors with associated value judgements" (68). The charonotope of wartime shapes Otsubo's identity as a brutal servant of empire. However, according to Trudy, Otsubo is a family man: "He wants to go back to his country, buy some land in the country, and build a cottage for himself and his family. He wants to bring his parents out, take care of them" (248). To Will this picture of Otsubo is ridiculous and inconceivable, but the stark contrast between who Otsubo is and who he dreams to be demonstrates to what extent the chronotope of war can make a vicious imperial servant out of a simple man like Otsubo. Back in the chronotope of home, the Japanese soldiers are "the most peaceful, serene people, with their cherry blossom paintings and the elaborate tea ceremony" (138). When war plunges them into a disparate chronotope, they turn into brutal animals. Perhaps the remark made by Hugh, an English internee, best summarizes the effect of the chronotope of war: "[W]artime makes different animals of us all" (138). On the other hand, Regina is self-righteous when she says, "You should never see a British soldier behave the way these animals have behaved to us" (138). If Regina can predict the future, she will see that, even in post-war Hong Kong, the English still treats locals like animals, as will be demonstrated by the murder of an amah by two English sappers.

C. The Chronotope of Post-war Hong Kong

The chronotope of post-war Hong Kong provides fertile soil for Claire to mature and to transform. The young woman fresh from England holds a naïve view of the empire and its colonies: "The English government did so much for the colonies, Claire knew. They made locals' lives much better, but they rarely appreciated it" (3-4). On the other hand, Claire takes interest in the local color and frequents Wan Chai, where she is charmed by "the peculiarity of Hong Kong" (66). Lee allows us to see Claire through Will's perspective. Will marvels at "[this] Englishwoman who ventures outside of Central and the Peak" (50). To Will's mind, "Claire, with her blond and familiar femininity, [is an] English rose to Trudy's exotic scorpion" (260). According to *Oxford Guide to British and American Culture*, "English rose" is a term used "to describe any lovely young English woman who looks attractive in a traditional way and has a sweet nature" (177). Rosemary Marangoly George, a scholar of British discourses of Empire, observes in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century English fiction "a radical re-presentation of the heroine . . . as desirable not just in terms of the literary conventions which require that she be young and physically attractive, but because she is white and English" (102). Possessing the qualities of "whiteness" and "Englishness," the fictional heroine qualifies as an ideal woman and ideological prop for empire. Claire bares a close resemblance to the Englishwoman George highlights in her essay, but, unlike her fictional predecessors, Claire declines the role "as pawn and player in the machinations of empire" (George 103). Will summarizes Claire's characteristics as "her silly prejudices, her cherished ignorance, and, surprisingly, her moments of clarity" (206). It is in five minor chronotopes that Claire's moments of clarity come: (1) the Arbogasts' luxurious residence at the Peak, (2) the Chens' enormous house in Mid-Levels, (3) Edwina's large estate in New Territories, (4) the Librarians' Auxiliary, a clubhouse in Mid-Levels, and (5) Will's flat on the hill. These chronotopes are mostly nostalgic and associated with the sentiment of empire.

The chronotope of the Arbogasts' luxurious residence opens Claire's eye to how pretentious an imperial servant's lifestyle can be. Situated in a lofty location, the Arbogasts' house at the Peak features a lofty air. To attend the party at the house, Claire and her husband

Martin first take the tram to the mountain, “a steep ride that seemed almost vertical at times” (43). After that, they climb into the uncomfortable seats in a rickshaw hired by the Arbogasts, which takes them to the house. The Arbogasts’ house highlights some qualities of empire: the enormous size, the Oriental flavor, and a retinue of servants:

> Doors opened onto a large receiving room which led into a large drawing room with windowed doors open onto a lawn with a wide, stunning view of the harbor far below. . . . The house was decorated in the way the English did their houses in the Orient, with Persian carpets and the occasional wooden Chinese table topped with Burmese silver bowls and other exotic curiosities. . . . Swiftly moving servants balanced trays of Pimm’s and champagne. (44)

A diehard servant to the empire, Reginald Arbogast is ashamed of himself for having surrendered to torture and leaked the secret of the Crown Collection. The house represents his revengeful ambition after failing his country and losing his hand in Stanley internment camp. The party is Reginald’s way to “do something good for the community” (44); however, it turns out to be a showcase of imperial complacency. Behind the curtain of this performance of imperial superiority is Regina, Reginald’s wife: “Regina Arbogast’s dinner parties had been sought-after invitations in Hong Kong for their lavish style, elaborate themes, and restrictive guest lists” (166). Regina is a Manchester shopgirl before marrying Reginald, but the chronotope of Hong Kong transforms her into a woman who knows how to assume an air of importance and turns her class inferiority into racial superiority. As is demonstrated by the party, the pose Regina assumes is underpinned by domestic servants and rickshaws pullers.

Lee makes Amelia the spokesperson of the imperial complacency prevailing in the party. As a public official’s spouse, Amelia has been to India before moving to Hong Kong. Her Indian experience is reminiscent of the figure of the memsahib. When Claire becomes stunned by the tennis court outside the house, she is ridiculed by Amelia as “a village girl” (47). Amelia is self-righteous. She is “not physically suited to life outside of England” (46), although she has left there for three decades. She thinks Mandarin is the ugliest language.

More than that, she despises the Englishwomen who take interest in cheongsams and Cantonese. Amelia seems a mother figure to Claire, but Claire feels uncomfortable with her.

The enormous house inhabited by Victor and Melody Chen, the second minor chronotope to be discussed, is an imitation of empire. Like Reginald, Victor attempts to give the house a lofty air: "There was a driveway, with potted plants lining the sides. Inside, there was the quiet, efficient buzz of a household staffed with plentiful servants" (9). Situated at Mid-Levels, the house has geographical superiority over Claire's home in Happy Valley. At her first visit to the house for the job as a piano teacher, Claire feels embarrassed because walking from the bus stop to the two-story house drenches her to the skin. The house also displays masculine primacy. While Victor is preoccupied with his ambitious pursuit of power and wealth, his schemes are mostly left unknown to his wife Melody. During the wartime, Melody is sent to America so that she will not be involved with Victor's schemes. Treated by Victor "like some fragile flower" (237), Melody concentrates her attention on luxury shopping and the management of servants. While luxury shopping adds touches of style to her home and her personality, the management of servants consolidates the sphere of domesticity.

Domesticity and empire are two sides of the same coin in a colonial setting. Like empire, the home of an empire servant is a place where racial, class, or gender conflicts arise. Successful managements of servants delineate the boundary between masters and servants and maintain the hierarchical relationship between them. Victor and Melody's house provides Claire a chance to observe the circumstances of servants. The servants are treated like animals. Melody purchases a girl named Wu Mei from China at low price because the girl has a large black birthmark on her cheek. When Wu Mei shows her ignorance about the new environment and new customs, she is given a beating. The servants are also treated like commodities. Melody talks about "trying out new girls from rural China" (90). Because she plans to visit Italy, Melody renames her servant Francesca. The servants are well trained, however. In the party Victor gives to celebrate the Queen's coronation, the servants are "silent and efficient" (274). Melody values nothing about her servants except their availability. Enquired by Claire about Pai, a servant dismissed for

stealing, Locket, Melody's daughter, claims that Pai is just a maid and hence deserves no concern.

At the same time Claire observes the servants in Victor and Melody's house, she finds herself a servant of her own desire and a pawn in a scheme. Out of envy, Claire steals luxurious tiny items from the Chens, dreaming to become another woman, "sophisticated and groomed" (41), but Pai is made a scapegoat for the thefts and dismissed. It dawns on Claire that a piano teacher is like a servant in the Chens' house when she hears Melody's comment that "all servants steal" (21). Victor and Melody have no regard for Claire. Once when Claire is teaching Locket manners, Victor interrupts her, hinting at the possibility of her transgression. Victor and Melody also have no concern for Locket's learning attitude. Their Steinway piano and Locket's piano lessons are merely used to demonstrate their cultural capital.[5] For Victor, hiring an English piano teacher ensures an access to the English profession of piano teaching, but belittling the teacher satisfies his vanity. Having Will work as a chauffeur serves the same purpose. Victor feels complacent to have "an Englishman chauffeuring him around" (49). The chronotope of the Chens reverse the relationship between the empire and the servants. In this imitation empire, the indigenous elite becomes the employer and the Englishman and Englishwoman become the employees. The chronotope, however, also lays bare Victor's ambivalence towards the empire. Victor clings to the British empire for prestige and benefits, but he despises the empire as well.

Edwina's large estate in New Territories, the third minor chronotope to be discussed, manifests a nostalgia for the glory of empire. Edwina takes pride in "a large, graceful oak tree and an expansive lawn rolling down to a view of the mountain" (302), which makes her home distinct from Hong Kong, but she cannot go back to England because she has "gone native" (203). To regain her queenly dignity, Edwina invites "a mix of nationalities, professions, personalities" (203) to her luncheons, but Claire sees various mismatched

[5] According to Sally Cathcart, the piano became a symbol of social status in the Victorian period. Many Victorian women took up piano teaching to earn a living. A system of graded music examinations was set up since then and has been extended to other parts of the British Empire (31-42). In Hong Kong the piano also represents wealth and a preeminent position in society. Moreover, the Steinway piano is widely acclaimed as one of the best pianos in the world. Only an affluent family can afford it.

glasses and chipped place settings on the table. Without exception, the retired headmistress and her lifelong partner, Mary, cannot do without their servants. An amah named Ah Chao embodies a domestic servant's plight with her deafness. Ah Chou is knocked deaf by the Japanese when she brings weekly provisions for Mary at Stanley. Edwina keeps Ah Chou and sends her on dangerous errands because Ah Chou's family cannot feed her. The amah's deaf ear becomes a chronotope because it renders visible her suffering in a particular spatiotemporal configuration.

While the luncheon leads Claire to see Edwina's futile endeavor to sustain the aura of empire in her large estate, the teatime at the clubhouse in Mid-Levels, the fourth minor chronotope, takes Claire to a moment of revelation. Shielded from the sun by heavy curtains, the clubhouse exhibits a dim space: "Inside, it was dark and cool, fans swaying as they turned, and heavy damask curtains shielding the furniture against the bright sun outside. Claire squinted, trying to make out the shapes in the room" (256). The heavy curtains are suggestive of the dark secrets that are about to be disclosed to Claire. The clubhouse reveals itself as space-time of the past, signified by old tables, faded scratched glasses, and the manager who has been around since long ago. Meanwhile, Edwina sets the clock back to the wartime, revealing to Claire all the appalling happenings at that time. At this moment, Edwina is in her old age: "as she walked with her cane, she swayed ever so slightly from side to side" (256), but she leads Claire into the chronotope of wartime Hong Kong, when she is younger and more authoritative. What Claire encounters in the chronotope is an imperial woman and her imperial nostalgia.

In her examination of British print culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Michelle J. Smith observes an ideology about the shaping of girls for the benefits of the British Empire. Imperial girls, as was promoted by the ideology, should "potentially civilise 'natives' in imperial locations such as India, and be physically and mentally equipped to live in a rough colonial environment while gracefully bringing the domesticity of home to it" (17). Given her teaching profession, her racial intolerance, and her anglicized garden, Edwina is a woman bred of the upbringing of imperial girls. In the clubhouse, the retired headmistress shows great discrimination at the sight of a Eurasian waitress: "Something incomplete, something wanting in [the Eurasian]. I always feel they are

searching for something to make them whole" (257). Edwina takes harsh measurements to civilize unqualified subjects of the empire. Her vigorous discipline has once caused the hospitalization of a Eurasian schoolboy. In her retelling of the wartime events, Edwina justifies herself to Claire, claiming that she does everything "to help our country" (302). Behind Edwina's patriotic language is her selfish calculation. Given the government's plan to rout out all Japanese sympathizers, Edwina decides to have Victor exposed as a collaborator in order that she can be out of it and her reputation can remain intact. Edwina motivates Claire to "rise to the occasion" (260) and to push Will "to do the right thing" (306), that is, to report Victor to the government. Hence, the clubhouse is represented not only as the chronotope of wartime Hong Kong but also as the chronotoope of imperial conspiracy.

Finally, Will's flat is an exemplar of the historical chronotope. According to Brosseau and Le Bel, in the historical chronotope we see time compressed in space. Claire finds Will's place almost empty: "There was something strange about the room, which she couldn't place until she realized there was absolutely nothing decorative in the entire flat. There were no paintings, no vases, no bric-a-brac. It was austere to the point of monkishness" (64). Despite what Claire sees, however, the flat is meaningful to Will because it is "richly connoted" and "value laden" (Brosseau and Le Bel 56). Filled with remorse for not helping Trudy out during the war, Will keeps Trudy's clothes and photos intact after her death. He leaves the door unlocked, in the futile expectation that Trudy will come back to him someday. On Christmas, the holiday reminiscent of Hong Kong's defeat on December 25, 1941, Will requests no disturbance from Claire and indulges himself in memories. Will's flat is a chronotopic space where the time spent with Trudy are condensed. Despite the scorn Will has for empire, a shred of imperial sentiment is displayed by his relationship with Ah Yik, his amah. Like the domestic servants we have examined elsewhere, Ah Yik is silent and efficient. When Claire's illicit status makes her uncomfortable in Ah Yik's presence, Will assures her that "[Ah Yik] is the soul of discretion and loyal to a fault" (210). Ah Yik possesses qualities of an ideal servant for the home. These qualities apply to the servants of the empire as well.

The five minor chronotopes discussed above materialize and render visible the mindset about empire and servants prevailing in pre-war and wartime Hong Kong. As Claire exists in one of the novel's braided narratives and is unable to experience what is happening in another narrative, these minor chronotopes open her eyes to what she is surprisingly uninformed about. In an interview with PenguinCanada, Lee sums up her protagonist: "She [Claire] was a woman who hadn't known much and struggled to make sense of everything that was laid before her. So, in the end, she was a better person for her journey. So, she was saved" (5:09-5:18).[6] Claire determines to become a better person because a realization about her role in empire dawns on her: she is complicit in empire, and she is also victimized. But on whom should she model herself? Amelia, the public official's wife who enthusiastically advocates the superiority of Englishness? Melody, the seemingly innocent woman who relishes her husband's ill-gotten gains? Regina, the provincial shopgirl who turns her class inferiority into racial superiority in the colony? Or Edwina, the vicious imperial woman who endorses racial purity? Given the realization that dawns on her, Claire would be none of them. By giving away the items stolen from the Chens', she feels relieved. This new Claire would also break off the relationships with Martin and Will. Martin, her husband, is totally indifferent to the issue of empire and insensitive to her feelings; Will, the enabler of her transformation, has doubts about empire but has no intension of loving her. When Claire moves to a small apartment in Wan Chai, "amid locals and wet markets" (322), she is distancing herself from the world on the Peak and Mid-Levels. Claire refuses to be used as a servant in imperial projects, but she identifies with domestic servants. The amah's uniform Claire wears as night clothes is a gesture of her sympathy with amahs, a chronotope on whom racial, class, and gender inferiority in a colonial setting are condensed and embodied.

[6] This quotation is from my transcript of the interview on YouTube. For more information, see Lee, "*The Piano Teacher* by Janice Y. K. Lee."

IV. Conclusion

Employing the concept of the chronotope developed by Bakhtin and other scholars, this paper explores the literary representation of the ideology of empire and its impact on the transformation of Claire, the title character. Bakhtin's theory and further elucidation made by other scholars are examined and summarized for the discussion of the present study. The paper starts with the premise that the presence of the amahs heavily influences Claire and lures her to the amah's uniform for comfort. Two questions have been asked. First, does Claire think the master and the empire care about their servants? Second, on whom should Claire model herself if she determines to become a better person? The chronotopic analysis of the novel answers these two questions.

Five minor chronotopes embedded in the chronotope of post-war Hong Kong are meticulously analyzed to reveal the dawning realization that hits Claire. As a young provincial Englishwoman new to Hong Kong, Claire considers loyalty to the queen and to the empire a quality inherent in British subjects. However, thanks to the five minor chrototopes, Claire gains penetrating insight into the ruthlessness of empire, the absurdity of loyalty, and the fragility of mutual reliance between masters and servants. In the end of the novel, Claire abandons her identity as an English public official's wife and presents herself as a solitary woman embracing the local wet market and the amah's uniform.

By setting her novel in the British ruled Hong Kong from 1941 to 1953, Lee demonstrates her postcolonial position. A chronotopic reading of the novel contributes to the interpretation of Lee's world view and her critical attitude towards control, dominance, and the subordination of the other. As a writer, Lee shows genuine concern for the power of empire and its impact on human identity. Her brief description of some American characters in *The Piano Teacher* foretells the potential involvement of American imperial power in Hong Kong. A sketch of an American government official's wife, who feels relieved to have all the amahs in Hong Kong, anticipates Lee's three women protagonists in *The Expatriates*, her second Hong Kong based novel, where globalization emerges as a new form of empire and Filipina domestic helpers take the place of traditional amahs.

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李倫京之《鋼琴教師》：時空型分析

蕭碧莉 *

摘　要

本文援用巴赫汀及其他理論家所發展出來的「時空型」概念來閱讀李倫京以 1941 年至 1953 年英屬香港為背景的小說《鋼琴教師》，期望達成兩個目標。首先探討小說中帝國意識形態的文學再現。帝國一詞於本文中泛指的是支撐帝國政體的意識形態，意指以大規模的管控和支配臣服異己，而不指涉特定政體。其次，本文研究帝國意識形態如何影響女主角克萊兒的自我實現。鋼琴教師克萊兒引發本文的研究動機：她為何拋下英國公務員妻子的身分，轉而成為擁抱菜市場及傳統女傭大襟裝的獨居婦人？小說中各式各樣時空型中的權力關係能夠充分解釋克萊兒的顯著改變。時空型閱讀不但詮釋李倫京的後殖民立場，也彰顯她對帝國意識形態與其對個人身分認同的衝擊所抱持的批判態度。

關鍵詞：時空型、帝國、巴赫汀、李倫京、《鋼琴教師》

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