Mixed-race Migration and Adoption in Gish Jen's *The Love Wife*

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Migration is a way of geographic movement. It involves a sense of belonging, nostalgia and diaspora issues. Besides, adoption in the migrated family illustrates the fluidity and tenacity of racial boundaries in different national and racial origins. In Gish Jen's *The Love Wife*, the question of Mama Wong's motives haunts Blondie and Carnegie. Is Lan a nanny who teaches their two Asian daughters to be more Chinese, or is she a love wife who drives Blondie out? In contemporary America, an interracial marriage like Carnegie and Blondie's is increasingly common. We might expect Carnegie to naturally speak Chinese and know his culture, but it is Blondie who speaks Chinese and instructs their adopted children on Asian heritage. It is not natural. However, when Carnegie discovers that he is adopted, and adoption is a natural occurrence in China, he finally realizes that nothing is unnatural. His home is based on mutual love and sharing multiple cultures, not blood or skin colour.

In the dimension of mixed-race migration, home is a discourse of locality, and place of feelings and rootedness. According to Henri Lefebvre, home belongs to a differential space, i.e., a spiritual and imaginary space. Our memories and souls are closely related to such differential space. Gaston Bachelard, too, argues that our home is a privileged entity of the intimate values that we take it as our differential space: "Our [home] is our corner of the world" (4). Home is no longer fixed, but fluid and mobile. Nostalgia is inevitable. But loving homes provide more stability than do memories of good old days. In the dimension of mixed-race adoption, the American dream is internalized as the way of the mixed-race family's lifestyle. In America, Chinese culture is also highly strengthened in the diversity of Chinese American families. However, how can the second generation of Chinese immigrants enjoy their individual American dreams, but still have to cope with the demands and expectations of their familial Chinese parents?

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In *The Love Wife*, we observe that the adopted children perceive and negotiate their ethnic/racial identities and sense of esteem as well as their acceptance and ease with such an adopted status. Wendy and Lizzy are both Asian Americans. Blondie, who has a WASP background, has always been at the mercy of Carnegie's Chinese mother, the imperious Mama Wong. When Mama Wong dies, her will requires a "relative" of hers from China to stay with the family. The new arrival is Lan, middle-aged but still attractive. She is Carnegie's mainland Chinese "relative," a tough, surprisingly lovely survivor of the Cultural Revolution. Blondie is convinced that Mama Wong is sending Carnegie a new wife, Lan, from the grave. Nevertheless, through identifying the sweet home with multiple cultures, Carnegie and Blondie's mixed-race family opens the room for the practices of migration and adoption.

The author, Gish Jen, is a second generation Chinese-American. Her parents emigrated from China in the 1940s, her mother from Shanghai and her father from Yixing. She grew up in Queens, New York, moved to Yonkers, and then settled in Scarsdale. Different from those prominent Chinese-American writers who look back at Chinese-American history for their subject matter and focus on the conflicts between Chinese parents and American children, such as Amy Tan, Maxine Hong Kingston, etc., Jen is developing her distinctive voice. She aims at full participation in American life and reveals in her writings a strong desire to be a real American. *The Love Wife*, her third novel, portrays an Asian-American family with interracial parents, a biological son, and adopted daughters as "the new American family." Jen turns to the story of transnational adoption, addressing that kinship plays a crucial role in an interracial family.

Jen's *The Love Wife* has been discussed critically in several articles. Fu-jen Chen and Su-lin Yu's paper explores the imaginary binary relationship between Blondie and Lan, as well as Žižek's "parallax gap," through the gaze of the (m)Other in *The Love Wife*. It argues:

> The polarized differences between Blondie and Lan are sustained on the grounds of a safe distance at which they keep each other. The truth of the very gap between Blondie and Lan is one of parallax: they appear different due simply to a gap in perspectives. (396)

Chen and Yu argue that Mama Wong's desire for her authentic essence—Chineseness— is forever in the "parallax gap" toward Blondie's superficial semblance (Chen and Yu 407). Jay W. Rojewski concerns that when a child from China is adopted by US parents, the adoptive family must acknowledge the birth cultural heritage of their child. He writes that parents should feel positive about "the importance and relevance of recognizing Chinese cultural heritage regardless of the age of their children" (144). According to Rojewski's paper, *The Love Wife* can be seen, to some extent, as a depiction of a typical mixed-race American family because Carnegie and Blondie are willing to model Chinese heritage to Lizzy and Wendy. Besides, as Jean MacLeod describes:

> We [MacLeod and her husband] will bring chunks of our [Chinese adoptive daughter's] home in our hearts. Piece by piece, we will work to understand this other, very different culture, and maybe if we are lucky, our children will be comfortable with a foot in both of the worlds, by birth and adoption, they claim as their own. (23)

Just like MacLeod, Blondie in *The Love Wife* is an open-minded American mother who studies Asian-American culture, would like to adopt two Asian baby girls, and raise them as her own American children. In her thesis, Wan-ning Tu explores the racial relations between the white mother, Blondie, and her Asian family. Tu focuses on the newly arrived Lan, who tries to find the appropriate presentation of her Chineseness in order to make connections in the new land, America. Furthermore, in his paper, "Postmodern Hybridity and Performing Identity in Gish Jen and Rebecca Walker," Fu-jen Chen argues that the characters in Jen's novels embrace "a new mode of subjectivity in today's postmodern capitalist regime, an identity that is no longer situated in between binary oppositions but incessantly moves among a proliferation of differences" (379). He further remarks, "[a]ccepting the partiality of enjoyment is a way to form a new symbolic bond" (392). Lastly, Erika T. Lin's paper "Mona on the Phone: The Performative Body and Racial Identity in *Mona in the Promised Land*" describes that the discourse of the racialized body is deconstructed through the device of Mona's telephone calls. Lin expresses that "the novel exposes the racialized body as a performative construct" (51), and admits that "the [racialized] body is always already immersed in culturally constructed meanings" (56). Lin, then, concludes that Jen's novel opens the door to thinking about the relationship between the body and racial identity as a performative one against normative notions.

In *The Love Wife*, Mama Wong and Lan come from China. However, they live and build their homes in America. America is their differential space. In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre discusses differential space for human beings to share their lived experiences. Differential space is the "space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users' as well as of artists and writers to seek and create their own spaces through appropriation of the environments" (39). We build homes and have our memories in such differential space. Bachelard, in his *The Poetics of Space,* also states that our home is a privileged entity of intimate values. Home is not experienced from day to day only. Through dreams, home penetrates and retains the treasures of former days. Through recollections, we touch the ultimate poetic depth of the space of our home. When we recall the hours we have spent in our home, we even remember all silences around our bodies, and we are well hidden when we take refuge at home. We cultivate various lifestyles in order to search for the ideal homes for us to dwell. In *The Love Wife*, even though Mama Wong, Lan and Carnegie have their past homes and relatives in China, and Grandma Dotie has Scotch and Irish land and pond in Europe, they only claim the feelings of these spaces as nostalgia. They do not feel as though these spaces belong to them. They do not perform daily practices in these places. However, they would rather regard America as their real home, which is full of actual lived

experiences.

Both Mama Wong and Lan bring diverse concepts of race and culture to their American home. Carman Luke and Vicki Carrington argue that when people perceive and interact with others, the concept of race serves to "construct and negotiate their own identities in everyday public life and in immediate, nuclear and extended family relations" (5-6). When Lan arrives in America, she says, "I can see American fashion is not like Chinese fashion....In China, we have fashion too" (Jen 18). Lan is proud that her family comes from Suzhou, which is near Shanghai, where there are beautiful gardens. Her family once owned one of those gardens, and she is proud of that. On the contrary, Lan comments, "America is cold. In China, many more people help you....Nothing tastes right in America" (Jen 135). Race and cultural identifications matter significantly for people: "Identity and identifications are reconfigured in ways that are often unpredictable and unexpected" (Luke and Carrington 22). Obviously, Mama Wong and Lan are searching for real homes in America. They embody their diasporic hybridity and bring their nostalgia of the past memories to America. But, finally, they form concrete, solid homes in the new land.

The mixed-race adoption issue is complicated, especially in *The Love Wife*. Generally speaking, mainland China has become a country of choice for Americans adopting internationally. For one reason, the enforcement of China's One Child Policy, implemented in 1979 to control the population boom, provided Chinese couples with only one pregnancy opportunity. Despite the fact that rural Han Chinese can have another baby if the first one is a girl, hundreds of children each year are born and cannot escape the fate of being abandoned by their biological parents. Therefore, adoption ensures the babies' survival in China. By the end of the 1990s, China had become the leading "sending" country of children to the United States and the world, and more than 30,000 adopted Chinese children, mostly girls, were growing up with their (mostly) white parents in North America (Volkman 30). As Chan Kai-tin states, "in the case of Chinese migrants in the United States, where they have noticeably distinct features and cultural traits, intermarriage represents a significant stage in the assimilation process" (5).

In *The Love Wife*, Carnegie and Blondie love their first adopted daughter and the second adopted Chinese daughter no differently from their biological son, and wish both their daughters to grow up as Chinese-Americans. They raise their adoptive daughters with awareness of their culture, history, holidays and homeland. Carnegie expresses clearly:

> Had we not, after all, done Chinese lanterns and Chinese dragon races and Chinese dumplings since [Wendy] was two? Chinese culture camp? The Chinese Community Center? We subscribed to the *Families with Children from China* newsletter. And how mightily we had strived to build her self-esteem, to give her "tools for her tool kit."
>
> (Jen 206)

Though Blondie immediately falls in love with Lizzy and Wendy when she decides to adopt them, it takes time for Lizzy and Wendy to fall in love with Blondie because

they have an identity crisis. "Carnegie and Blondie take Lizzy to China with them when they adopt for a second time, in hopes of giving her a positive sense of her origins and of the process of adoption" even though the trip is traumatic for Lizzy (Jerng 258). Blondie claims that "I had had the heart to take these children in, after all. Had I not loved them deeply and well, as if they were from the beginning my own?" (Jen 133). Mark Chia-yon Jerng observes:

> [T]he arrival of Lan, whom Carnegie's mother, Mama Wong, has sent to live with them, magnifies Blondie's anxieties around adoption, forcing her to question anew her own place in the family, where she belongs, if she is the "best" mother for her adopted children, Lizzy and Wendy. (256)

This proves that "persons with similar socialization and value orientation would tend to associate with persons of similar cultural traits" (Chan 18). Strained by the familial difficulties, Carnegie and Blondie end up separating, dividing the household into basically two families—a "white" one comprised of Blondie and Bailey, and an "Asian" one comprised of Carnegie, Lan, Lizzy and Wendy.

Toby Alice Volkman sees that "as part of the adoption proceedings, [American] parents must promise the Chinese authorities not only to provide their children with love and care but to impart respect for 'Chinese culture'" (37). In *The Love Wife*, Blondie insists that "our children would be smart, because mixed children were smart" (Jen 111). She and Lizzy even talk about the difference between birthing and parenting—between having a baby and bringing it up. Blondie persuades Lizzy, "We've lived with you every day for fifteen years. We couldn't begin to imagine life without you" (Jen 52). However, it is not easy for Lizzy to involve the adoption issue: "Of course I'm sensitive. I'm sensitive because I totally don't belong to this family....I really, completely don't belong to this family" (Jen 53, 55). Lizzy complains, "It's not fair. It's not fair that Wendy's adopted from China and speaks Chinese, while nobody even knows what I am or where I came from. I hate being soup du jour" (Jen 211). Blondie argues back to Lizzy:

> You're right, and you don't have to learn Chinese if you don't want to. Although it's hard for a lot of people to say where they came from, they come from so many different places. Like me, I come from a lot of different countries. I don't have a simple label, like German American or Scotch-Irish American. I'm soup du jour, too. (Jen 212-23)

Nevertheless, Lizzy still argues, "I'm not like [Wendy], adopted from China. I'm plain adopted from nowhere, I'm soup du jour, it's completely different" (Jen 217). Wendy also cries, "Nobody wanted me exactly. Really they wanted their own baby, I was their second choice" (Jen 105). Carnegie comments to her, "Second choice didn't mean second best" (Jen 105). From the above-mentioned description, we understand that it's not easy to settle down the issue of mixed-race adoption.

Lizzy, too, observes another aspect of mixed-race adoption, i.e., Bailey's identity:

> Mom just wants us not to hate Bailey. She says that I might not realize it, but that I hate him for being bio and a boy and a Bailey, not like us,...He's soup du jour, like you. He's

> just been like more adopted by Mom than by Dad....How can he be adopted, she says, he's natural. (Jen 363)

Further, Wendy also ponders Carnegie's identity:

> I think it's great you were adopted....Look how many sons were given away to other families to carry on their line (in China). Look! In this generation, only one family had sons, all the rest had to adopt a son from somewhere else....Really, she has no choice. (Jen 371-72)

The adoption issue involves the identifications of parents and children. Bailey is fully American, but it happens to be that his father is a Chinese-American. When he grows up, he should appreciate both Chinese and American cultures because of his mixed-race parents. Further, when Carnegie knows that Mama Wong is not his real mother, he is confused about his real origin. He is more conscious of his Chinese heritage to prove that he was raised by Mama Wong.

In this mixed-race family, who will be the most suitable mother for the two adoptive daughters: Lan or Blondie? When Lizzy discusses this matter with Wendy, she simply says, "Honestly, you completely wish Lanlan was your mother" (Jen 354). It is true that "Lanlan is in love with Dad, maybe she wouldn't mind becoming our real mother" (Jen 360). Blondie finally admits, "Mama Wong won, that's all there is to it. I quit. End of game" (Jen 355), and repeats, "Mama Wong won. End of game. I quit" (Jen 364). Mama Wong is strong enough to send Lan to this mixed-race family. She surrenders herself to Mama Wong and would like to invite Lan to be "the Love Wife." In this mixed-race family, it seems that only one mother and one love wife is allowed to take care of the family. However, we see that Blondie and Lan are actually equally positioned to be good mothers for Lizzy, Wendy and Bailey because they both love Carnegie and hope he will be well in the hospital after he finally discovers that he is adopted. It proves that nothing is unnatural, and two wives are not trouble. Both Blondie and Lan help each other for the benefits and goodness of the family. This is the new American family and "the new face of America" (Jen 81), a new mixed-race family that combines the American dream with the Chinese heritage.

The American dream is a national ethos in which freedom includes the opportunity for prosperity and success. It advocates that life should be better and richer for everyone, regardless of social class or circumstances of birth. The ideal of the American dream proclaims that all men are created equal. It is the opportunity to make individual choices without the prior restrictions of their class, caste, religion, race, or ethnicity. For immigrants, especially, the American dream has been a dream of being able to grow to fullest development as men and women, unhampered by the barriers of the older civilizations and unrepressed by social orders for the benefit of classes. In *The Love Wife*, Carnegie and Blondie's mixed-race family, with both a biological son and adopted daughters, is "*the new American family*," and the children are its "mixed-up soup du jour" (Jen 3, 8; italics original). This new American family constructs diverse identities rather than inherited and natural ones. Amy Klazkin

observes, "[t]he biracial child grows up with a whole extended family on the Asian side, and the spouse in a mixed race marriage has to negotiate cultural differences" (15). When biracial children grow up and go out into the world, they are different: "They [even] don't have to choose. What a concept! Even mixed-race and transracially adopted people can be whole" (Klazkin 16). They are not half and half. They are double. They belong to by virtue of being Americans of Chinese ethnicity. They need nurturing in all their heritages. Klazkin further claims:

> Transracial adoptees also face an identity tug-of-war. "I used to think it was either/or," Liza Triggs told the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1998. "I could either be loyal to my family or to [my racial heritage]. Then you grow up and you see things differently. There is a middle ground. You don't have to choose." (16)

The mixed-race couples prefer to see Chinese Americanness as an identity with historical meaning, and wish not to trump other possible identity choices for their children (Klazkin 17-18). When Carnegie expresses his feeling in China, he and Blondie understand well that America is the only place that can offer them the American dream, not elsewhere. They and their adopted daughters have their roots and identities only in America. America is the dominant culture. Lan's first impression of America is: "People can do whatever they want, nobody has anything to say.... America is about freedom" (Jen 45). She continues, "Not a joke. This is America, right? Land of the free. I think free means you have options" (Jen 314). In America, we know the successful story of Mama Wong:

> How much [Mama Wong] risked, lived, made! A pioneer woman, alive to the real miracle of America; namely mortgages. In China of her youth, buildings were bought with cash....Only in America—O America!—were there mortgage loans open to all.... *Only in America!*...Where else could people come with nothing and end with whole blocks of real estate? (Jen 30-31; italics original)

If people work hard, they will succeed. Lan is amazed that people live a happy and abundant life, and they have free opportunities to create ideas and produce things. Lan realizes that the American dream glorifies self-made men and women who achieve magnificent improvement in terms of their living standards and social life. However, she still cannot deny the importance of Chinese heritage in this mixed-race family.

Traditionally, sons in Chinese culture are the legal heirs to family property and bear the family name. The concern about continuity and stability of lineage and ancestors gives rise to the preference of sons over daughters. This preference carries both advantages and obligations. So as to protect their economic stake, the elders, especially in China, strongly discourage their sons from marrying outsiders. Therefore, in *The Love Wife*, Mama Wong totally and completely disagrees when Carnegie marries Blondie. Carnegie grows up in America. He does not really consider the significance of the Chinese heritage. Lan awakens in Carnegie, for the first time in his life, a desire to know his heritage. Suddenly, the heritage becomes his

obsession. He begins researching his culture and chatting on the Internet with other owners of family books. Carnegie believes "not only that there was such a book, but that he had an obligation to get hold of it—that it would be unnatural to keep such a book from being passed from generation to generation" (Jen 200). For Carnegie, the idea of the family book is his genealogical history that conveys the stereotypical signs of Chineseness: "In the fantasied conversation, Mama Wong upsets Carnegie's sensibility by re-situating the grounds of their relationship through the stereotypical Chineseness and what it means to be an American family" (Jerng 262). Carnegie dreams that:

> Ma, I say. I got the book, and it turns out I'm not even your son....So what is the truth? I say. Tell me before I go back to my family.
> Your so-called family, she says, with a laugh.
> My family, I insist....
> She laughs and laughs. No one is so easy to surprise as an American, she says. Let me ask you, honest way. How can you be my son?...
> Ah! Now you are like real Chinese! (Jen 376)

What is the ground of a family? Should it be a biological basis? What about the adopted members in the family? At the end of the novel, "Lan is the 'real' daughter of Mama Wong. Carnegie is not biologically a Wong—he now wonders if he is Mama Wong's son" (Jerng 264). The family book reveals that Lan is Mama Wong's daughter, but what Carnegie learns is that he is not his mother's son. He, in fact, does not appear in the family book. He, like so many children in the famine-stricken China of Mama Wong's era, is adopted. In China, a family book is the emblem of bloodlines and natural descent. Carnegie's desire to obtain the family book is analogous to finding his identity through cultural heritage. When Carnegie discovers that he is adopted, and that adoption is a regular occurrence in China, the fantasy of his primordial culture vanishes. Mama Wong, speaking to Carnegie in his near-death experience at the end of the novel, has the final word on the subject, "Nothing is natural, she laughs. Nothing" (Jen 376).

Jeffrey F.L. Partridge states, "ironically, Carnegie's newfound desire to discover his heritage ostracizes the woman who had worked so hard at keeping a sense of his Chinese heritage alive in the family. Now Blondie is not 'natural'" (249). Blondie is in many ways more Chinese than Carnegie. The genealogy in the family book does not hold the key to Carnegie's identity. The truth is that Carnegie and Blondie comprise a real, happy, interracial family, and that their family—"the new face of America"—is a true family.

Mama Wong insists on keeping the Chinese heritage and does not believe everything is good in America. Mama Wong comments on the Baileys, "They want to live in the moment. They don't believe in living for the future....Not the success people.... in America people do not want anything, do not work hard, they are go down" (Jen 71). She criticizes Carnegie: "Of course not young, how could you be young! But you never grow up either! That's how I know I brought you up Chinese and still you grow

up America" (Jen 374). Similarly, Lan also has her own criticism in America. Lan thinks that too much freedom is no good either, and that individualism is terrible. She comments that "we don't believe too much in individualism....Chinese people were much relaxed. Everything was so easy in America, so convenient. And yet people were tense" (Jen 45). Lan believes Americans do not care about other people and only care about themselves: "When their parents get old, Americans just put them in a nursing home. Their parents die by themselves. Chinese people say Americans have no feelings" (Jen 46). Lan says, "Freedom? Individualism?...Too much individualism. Too much argue here. Chinese people love peace" (Jen 291). Lan admits she can eat bitter, and that makes her strong, different from an American:

> Eat the bitterest of the bitter, rise above other men....American people are rich but soft.... [R]eal Chinese people think...Anxiety and distress lead to life....Ease and comfort end in death. [T]hese are things Americans will never understand. (Jen 49)

Lan teaches the children, "In Chinese we say *wu ai*—without love. That it is better to be without attachment. Just as it is better to do things—*wu wei*—without effort" (Jen 87). Lan continues, "You will rise again from the East Mountain....After bitterness comes sweetness" (Jen 288). And she repeats, "Where there's a will, there's a way," just like Mama Wong (Jen 292). Lan expresses that, in China, people have filial piety: "Children are supposed to do anything for their parents. Children are supposed to sacrifice themselves" (Jen 223). The Chinese heritage carries importance and significance for Chinese people. However, for Chinese-Americans such as Carnegie, Lizzy and Wendy, it also plays a crucial role in their daily experiences. They own the American dream and they learn the Chinese heritage at the same time.

Often, couples in intercultural marriages face barriers to which most married couples of the same culture are not exposed. Intercultural marriages are often influenced by external factors that can create dissonance and disagreement in relationships. Different cultures endure vastly diverse moral, ethical and value foundations that influence their perceptions of individual, family and societal lifestyles. Sometimes, the members of these families display rejection, resistance, hostility, lack of acceptance for their identities, and generational gaps in ideology. Besides, challenges posted by differing communication styles are common among intercultural couples. Adoptive parents, especially, have an important role to play in their transracially adopted children's development of "a positive ethnic or racial identity and have urged them to do more to help their children form connections to the culture and people of their ethnic or racial group" (Scroggs and Heitfield 4). At the end of the novel, Lan eventually comes to realize that in this age of globalization, with China emerging as an economic powerhouse, "America is not the only America," or "America is no longer America." In this sense, Blondie, not Lan, is the love wife to form "the new American family." Partridge admits, "The Wong family in *The Love Wife* is not an immigrant family making peace with America; it is an American family redefining America" (243).

From the very first beginning, Blondie tries her best to create a sweet home with multiple cultures. Carnegie remembers that, at the wedding:

> Blondie changed out of her mother's dress and into a red silk *qipao*. Also when Blondie knelt with me and asked for [Mama Wong's] blessing....Mama Wong was moved.... Meanwhile, every guest with a son or a cousin or a niece who had married in an unorthodox way proudly got out pictures of their new family members, and sometimes of the products of the union. They showed these to my mother. I held my breath, but Mama Wong generously oohed and aahed even over the mulatto babies, agreeing that they were unutterably precious and beautiful. The new face of America. (Jen 81)

Blondie, in her deep heart, always feels happy to adopt Chinese daughters:

> When people asked, *Is [Wendy] yours? Or, Where did you get her?* I could laugh and feel proud—of myself, of my family. It was a species of vanity. I had struggled against it when Lizzy was a baby. But now, I sometimes brought Wendy out into the world to feel that challenge, and my own fine resistance....I had had the heart to take these children in, after all. Had I not loved them deeply and well, as if they were from the beginning my own?" (Jen 132-33)

Blondie not only believes "Our family will always be our family"; she and Carnegie are also glad that they have their biological son (Jen 202). When Carnegie describes his son, he says:

> All this because my son—and I did believe that I had begat him with my own one-two—was not just on the fair side. He was not one of those brownish haired, somewhere-in-between-y kids you see around everywhere these days. This child—my child—was blond blond. He was bright, brassy King-Midas-couldn't-have-made-him-blonder blond. (Jen 154)

When the neighbor Mitchell asks, "When I look at that boy, all I can think is, Is this the new face of America?" (Jen 157), Blondie happily replies:

> How odd our family looked in it—all those heads of black hair, with just two heads of blond. The Wongs and the Baileys. Any passerby would have thought that Lan and Carnegie were the husband and wife of the family, and that I was visiting with my son, Bailey. Was it true, too, that the Wongs moved their heads more, and that we Baileys, being less at home, moved them less....It seemed to me that the Wongs owned the space....I had not felt this way when the family was just Carnegie and Lizzy and Wendy and me. But Bailey had changed things a little, and Lan...had changed things more....*I feel invaded....Is this still my home?*" (Jen 245-47)

At last, Carnegie tells Mama Wong that Lan is her daughter. He loves Blondie. Blondie is the love wife and he marries the love wife. "It seemed natural enough. Nothing is unnatural. That is the natural way" (Jen 376-77). There are two reasons why Blondie is the love wife. First of all, she creates a good home in America in which immigrant family members can identify their differential space. Secondly, she provides the opportunity in America for her adoptive daughters to live the American dream and to learn the Chinese heritage. Even though Lan is not the love wife, she is Mama Wong's daughter. She is also one of the family members of Carnegie and Blondie's

family. She helps considerably in this loving home of multiple cultures. No wonder Wendy finally, fully comprehends:

> It's hard to believe you could ever call either one of them a love anything. But these are our seats. They're our family's. Mostly we don't leave anyway. Mostly we sit, minute after minute, watching the same clock, here in the corner of the waiting room that is where our family sits. Soon we will know, soon we will know, soon we will know something....We made it! How we cheer and cheer then, wildly, all of us—cheer and cheer, our whole family, together....It's happy, so happy,...Look at us all hugging, after all, Lizzy and Bailey and Mom and Lanlan and me, and look now! How Lanlan grasps Mom's hand, and Mom grasps hers. That's happy!...We made it! And yet we know now, too, what we know. (Jen 379)

According to Arnold R. Silverman, though transracial adoptees are troubled with some degree of doubt and discomfort, there is strong evidence that most of them "evaluate their nonwhite backgrounds and appearance positively. Transracial adoptees do not deny their racial identification nor, for the most part, do their adoptive parents" (117). Ellen D. Wu also claims that "Chinese Americans have maintained transnational ethnic, cultural, and political identities and ties to China throughout their history in the United States" (52). In *The Love Wife*, it is not easy to settle the issue of mixed-race migration. It takes time for immigrants to have a sense of belonging and build homes in America. It is also hard to deal with the issue of mixed-race adoption. In *The Love Wife*, Carnegie becomes a typical American man, and cherishes his Chineseness. After his heart attack, Carnegie realizes that nothing is unnatural. His sweet home is the new mixed-race American family which lies in shared mutual honesty and love with Chinese and American cultures, but does not necessarily lie in the same blood or skin.

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