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AN ANALYSIS OF THE UNNARRATABLE IN FAE MYENNE NG'S *BONE*

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Abstract

Bone, a novel written by Chinese American novelist Fae Myenne Ng, is concerned with the fictional history of a family of Chinese immigrants who live in the Chinatown of San Francisco from the 1960's to 1990's. In *Bone*, Ng not only does a good job in speaking out the difficulties and hardships the immigrants encounter on the new soil but also hides some information beneath the surface, leaving it unnarrated, like Ona's inner activities and Mah's adultery and the Chinese Exclusion Law. Therefore, this study, drawing on the theory of the unnarratable put forward by Warhol, aims to study the supranarratable, the antinarratable, and the paranarratable, three categories of the unnarratable, so as to discover the connection between the author's intentions with the text and to fumble out the hidden plot within Ng's *Bone*. Only when we find out the unnarrated and combine it with the narrated can we better understand the Chinese Americans' stories and their unspeakable bone-piercing pain.

Keywords: Fae Myenne Ng, *Bone*, the unnarratable, pain

Introduction

Fae Myenne Ng (1956-) is a first-generation Chinese American novelist. As the offspring of Chinese immigrants in America, she has seen her parents' hard-working and has experienced a difficult life in the new country. And she writes those sufferings into her first novel *Bone* (1993), which mainly talks about the story happening in a Chinese immigrant family of five. Leila is the narrator. Her stepfather Leon is a "paper son", marrying Mah, who has cheated in their marriage. Even though they toil and moil every day, they still cannot build a happy family because a succession of defeat, friend's treachery, and most importantly, the death of their daughter Ona, give them a huge hit and cast a shadow over their lives. Although the story is melancholic, *Bone* still has been welcomed around the world once published and is a finalist for the 1994 Faulkner Fiction Award.

There are already quite a lot of studies dealing with *Bone*. The research can be segmented into five groups. The first one is concerned with Ona's committing suicide and her bone. For example, Chang (2010) analyzes Ona's death from the perspective of racial-political essentialism. The second group copes with the characters' trauma. For instance, Juliana Chang studies the main characters' traumatic experience. The third group focuses on self and subjectivity. To name a few, LeBlanc (2000) elaborates on the relationship between Leila's quest for self and "the invention of new language promised in Leila's neologism 'backdaire'" (p. 12). And Ferguson (2015) delves into how "the subjectivities of Ng's characters are informed by the unstable and shifting binary of Chinese/American identity within the American capitalist economic system" (p. 248). The fourth one concentrates on the characters' position in society. For instance, Szmanko (2018) discusses how Ng presents Chinese American characters' positionality in Chinese American community and American society through "the representation of whiteness" (p. 131).

The last category is about narrative strategies. Gee (2004) elucidates how Leila takes advantages of her status as the first-person narrator to create "a distinguishable hierarchy based on her attempt to find a center that is neither too Chinese nor too American" (p. 129). Gee (2004) discovers that in Leila's discourse, herself and her boyfriend who "share a hybrid space between the American and the Chinese" (p. 139) enjoy the highest hierarchy. And Gee finds that Leila puts other characters in the lower level of the hierarchy because in Leila's eyes they either strictly confirm to the Chinese tradition or are completely Americanized.

From the literature review, we can see that there is no one analyzing the unnarratable within the novel. And the unnarratable is very important for us to comprehend the unspeakable sufferings those Chinese Americans have experienced. Therefore, this paper tries to study the unnarratable in *Bone* based on American literary scholar Robyn Warhol's definition and classification of the unnarratable.

Method

The method applied in this essay is close reading, which is helpful for us to discover the unnarratable in Ng's *Bone*. In order to find out why Ng chooses not to make the narrator speak out the unnarratable, this study takes into consideration the historical factors, cultural difference, and intertextuality.

As early as in 1994, Warhol has discussed "the unnarratable" in essay "Narrating the Unnarratable: Gender and Metonymy in the Victorian Novel". And in 2007, in "Neonarrative; or How to Render the Unnarratable in Realist Fiction and Contemporary Film", Warhol, based on the word "the disnarrated" which is newly-coined by Gerald Prince, puts forward another word "the unnarrated". It "refers to those passages that explicitly do not tell what is supposed to have happened, foregrounding the narrator's refusal to narrate" (Warhol, 2007, p. 221).

Warhol further points out that both the disnarrated and the unnarrated belong to the unnarratable. And the unnarratable can be classified into four categories. They are the subnarratable, the supranarratable, the antinarratable and the paranarratable.

Based on Warhol's remarks and classification regarding "the unnarratable", this paper aims to analyze the supranarratable, which is Ona's psychological activities, the antinarratable, namely Mah's committing adultery and the paranarratable, Chinese Exclusion Law. Through the analysis, it can be figured out how Ng takes advantage of the three types of "the unnarratable" to hide secrets from readers and the bone-piercing pain in the hidden plot can be dug out.

Findings and Discussion

The Supranarratable: Ona's Psychological Activities

In terms of the definition of the supranarratable, Warhol points out that it means something that "can't be told because it's ineffable" and "is not susceptible to narration". The prefix "supra" is "above", which means that something has gone beyond the reach of narration. And it "comprises those events that defy narrative, foregrounding the inadequacy of language or of visual image to achieve full representation, even of fictitious events" (Warhol, 2007, p. 223). Warhol also gives some examples to better illustrate what supranarratable refers to, one of which is "the shock she received can better be imagined than described" (Warhol, 2007, p. 223). From this example, we can see that how other characters feel is beyond the narrator's comprehension or that the narrator's narration of other characters' emotions can hardly match up with their true feelings. So we can conclude that except the narrator's inner feelings, other characters' psychological activities are supranarratable. It is also the case in *Bone*. The narrator is Leila, and she cannot tell us how her sister Ona feels. Nor can she inform us of what kind of psychological activities Ona goes through.

In *Bone*, due to the limitation of focalization, Ona's psychological activities are supranarratable. Whether when she is forced to break up with her beloved boyfriend, or when she is seen crying in the bathroom, or when she decides to commit suicide, there is no description about her inner feelings and psychological activities. And the most noticeable example is her shoplifting. When she gets caught shoplifting, Leila and their father Leon come to pick her up. From Leila's perspective, we can see that Ona "looked as calm and rested as if she were lifting her head from a nap" (Ng, 1993, p. 139).

Later, Leila repeats that "Ona looked like Little Miss No-Big-Deal" (Ng, 1993, p. 139). From the two descriptions, we can sense that in Leila's eyes, Ona behaves in a queer fashion. Even though Leila confesses that she feels "surprised" towards Ona's abnormal reaction of being caught shoplifting, she doesn't question Ona why she behaves in that weird manner and Leila fails to provide readers with Ona's inner feeling. This is quite strange because we can see that later when Leon takes them to eat ice-cream, Leila mentions that they "sat in a lipstick-red booth" (Ng, 1993, p.

140). Instead of saying that it is a red booth, she adds that it is lipstick-red. So we can sense that Leila cares greatly about her sister's stealing lipstick and her mind is occupied with it, that's why she sees the booth lipstick-red. But Leila still fails to find the reason behind Ona's aberrant reaction, nor does she narrate Ona's psychological activities. Seeing this, we cannot help wondering why Leila doesn't ask about Ona's inner feelings.

In an interview with Shaw (1993), Ng herself confesses that sometimes she purposefully leaves out some information and she holds the following view:

I wanted the narrator's trueness to invite the reader into this world, and I allow the unfolding of the story itself to sustain this intimacy between the narrator and the reader. Reading is a very private experience and the reader brings their own worlds of insights and possibilities to the book. (8)

With her words, we readers can make bold assumptions regarding the reasons for the supranarratable.

The assumption I come up with is that Ng wants to expose the pseudo communication within the immigrants' family. In terms of the definition of pseudo communication, the Psychology Dictionary gives the following explanation, "Pseudo communication refers to distorted attempts at communication using fragments of words and apparent gibberish. Some cases also include gestures." In the case of Ona's shoplifting, Leila chooses to remain silent even though she realizes that Ona's reaction is abnormal. This is the extreme version of pseudo communication. And Leon also doesn't question Ona about her misdeed, instead, he asks his girls not to tell Mah. "Our secret. It was only a little thing. Only lipstick." (Ng, 1993, p. 139-140) Ostensibly, what he conveys to his daughters helps Ona get rid of being scolded by Mah and it seems that Leon solves the problem quickly. But profoundly speaking, Leon has done a piece of pseudo communication because the communication is not two-way; he has not listened to Ona's inner feelings. What he has done is just to make Ona accept what he says, ignoring her willingness.

Another question follows, why is there pseudo communication among them? One sound reason is cultural difference. Leon has been brought up within Chinese culture and he is influenced by the creed of turning problems into small ones and small problems into no problems at all. So he speaks such kind of words and takes no account of Ona's real need. Ona who receives more western education than her father does, in fact, needs others to regard her as an individual and care about her inner feeling. But what she obtains is only the pseudo communication.

However, the pseudo communication is not merely confined to Leon and Ona. In terms of mother-daughter, husband-wife relationships, there also exists such kind of communication. Leila notices the pseudo communication within her family and reveals her inner desire for a sound and effective conversation with others.

I wanted to say: I didn't marry in shame. I didn't marry like you... I wanted to shake [Mah] and ask, what about me? Don't I count? Don't I matter? ... I

should have asked Ona, Why are you crying, what are you sad about? ... We didn't talk about Leon's bruised and swollen face or his limp. (Ng, 1993, p. 23, 91, 137, 171)

From Leila's plea, we can notice that her family is imbued with pseudo communication. Because they have no opportunity to express their inner feeling, just as some scholar points out that "Leila's role as second-generation caretaker, as manager of immigrant labor, requires that her own feelings become encrypted secrets: the unspoken" (J. Chang, 2012, p. 34). They are accustomed to hide their feeling and they take it for granted not to question others' emotions. Gradually, their conversation is pseudo communication.

Based on the above analysis, it is sound to conclude that Ng exposes pseudo communication through the supranarratable, namely Ona's psychological activities. And there is a need to recognize that the pseudo communication has something to do with the difference between Chinese culture and the American one. Through the exposition, we readers come to realize the grave consequence culture clash brings about and the family hardships the immigrants have to experience in the new and vast territory.

The Antinarratable: Mah's Committing Adultery

As for the antinarratable, the prefix "anti" means "against". And Warhol thinks antinarratable is the equivalence of "what shouldn't be told" because it antis "social convention" and "the antinarratable transgresses social laws or taboos, and for that reason remains unspoken" (Warhol, 2007, p. 224). She also mentions in her paper that "[s]ex ... is always antinarratable, and can only be known by its results as they play themselves out in the plot (for instance in the presence of new babies, disillusioned hearts, or ruined reputations)" (Warhol, 2007, p. 224). From this, we can see that because of social taboos, sex is usually the topic that authors make narrators avoid talking about, not to mention adultery. In *Bone*, Ng, without exception, arranges characters to circumvent narrating Mah's committing adultery. "Leon and Mah never talked about Tommie Hom." (Ng, 1993, p. 112) Tommie Hom is the man whom Mah has sex with.

Therefore, if Leon and Mah refuse to mention Tommie Hom, it means that they are reluctant to speak of Mah's adultery. Yet the adultery is still known by "ruined reputation". Other Chinatown people talk about it. "Wives have told their husbands, who told their park-bench buddies, who told the Newspaper Man, who kept on telling till it was old news." (Ng, 1993, p. 156)

Among Chinese American writers' works, another book also involves Chinese woman's adultery in America. That is Louis Chu's *Eat a Bowl of Tea*. In this novel, Chinatown people also spread out the female protagonist Mei Oi's adultery. One Chinese says, "I told you the last time that Ah Song... I saw him coming out of Wah Gay's daughter-in-law's apartment. He didn't go there just to pin a flower on her dress this time either." (Chu, 1979, p. 116) The narrator uses

negative sentences to express a positive meaning, in an attempt to pass on the scandal to others.

With the two examples, we can see that adultery is something antinarratable and usually known in the presence of “ruined reputation”. But why do authors, following the social taboos, make characters avoid narrating adultery? In *Bone*, Ng does it with the purpose to show the traditional Chinese way of dealing with a family scandal, which is to hide it and deliberately forget it. In *The Woman Warrior*, a novel written by Maxine Hong Kingston, there is a story about the unnamed aunt’s adultery. When the narrator’s mother is going to tell her the aunt’s story, her mother says, “[y]ou must not tell anyone what I am about to tell you. In China your father had a sister who killed herself.” (Kingston, 1997, p. 3) The aunt commits suicide because of the villagers’ abuse and attack towards her adultery. The whole family members regard it as a scandal and purposefully remove the aunt from their memory and give her no name. Following the traditional Chinese way, family member’s adultery is antinarratable.

But does hiding is a reasonable way? From the example in *The Woman Warrior*, the narrator refuses to hide the unnamed aunt’s story and even imagines the love story between the aunt and the man. This example makes us wonder which way is better, the hiding one or the telling one. From my point of view, Ng seems to be in favor of the latter because she senses that keeping too many secrets is a burden for everyone. Those main characters are all very good at keeping secrets.

We learned it from Mah and Leon. They were always saying. Don’t tell this and don’t tell that. Mah was afraid of what people inside Chinatown were saying and Leon was paranoid about everything outside Chinatown. We graduated from keeping their secrets to keeping our own. (Ng, 1993, p. 112)

The secrets are too many for them. For Ona, scholars are analyzing the reasons for her committing suicide. What they find “is not a singular cause, but rather the diffuse unfolding of hardship, sorrow, and endurance” (J. Chang, 2005, p. 114). The endless sorrow and difficulties and unspeakable secrets are too much for Ona, so she chooses to end her life. Ona’s death is for escape and freedom, which accords with some scholar’s remark - “Ona’s falling to her death is imagined as a flight, a common association of death with transcendence and freedom.” (Zhou, 2014, p. 112) So we can sense that Ona’ death, to some extent, is an act to pursue freedom, getting rid of the endurance of keeping those countless unnarratable secretes. And for Nina, the youngest daughter, after her parents’ marriage gets broken and Ona’s death, she leaves home and gets rid of those secrets immediately. Even “Leila herself seeks to be released from Mah, this alley, Chinatown” (Lee, 2008, p. 28). And for Leon, some scholar notices that “Mah’s affair cannot be spoken of because of the pain that it causes Leon” (J. Chang, 2012, p. 34). But not mentioning Mah’s affair doesn’t ease Leon’s pain, instead, it leads to his escape. Some scholar contends that Leon’s sailing is a kind of escape, forty-days outside

Chinatown is a medicine to cure his broken heart (Zhou, 2014, p. 112). From these, it is fair to say that hiding or not narrating the secrets is not the ideal way and it even results in serious consequences.

In the interview with Shaw (1993), Ng also claims that “[t]he book is about the desire to escape and the dangers of doing so”. Seeing the danger, the author thus arranges Nina to set an example for Leila to tell secrets out. Nina is brave to speak out that she has a miscarriage, regardless of others’ opposition towards it. Influenced by Nina, Leila gets the courage to narrate the family secrets in the reverse chronology within the novel and she presents the story to readers step-by-step. Therefore, we can conclude that Ng thinks telling out is the better way to deal with those secrets.

In short, after studying the antinarratable, which is Mah’s committing adultery, we readers get to know the traditional Chinese way of dealing with such kind of scandal, that is they choose to hide it. However, hiding a scandal makes people involved in it suffer more and unable to cope with it but escape from it. Taking this, Ng hopes to give Chinese Americans a suggestion, namely, telling out their secrets.

The Paranarratable: Chinese Exclusion Act

In light of paranarratable, Warhol defines it as “what wouldn’t be told because of formal convention”. It “transgresses a law of literary genre” (Warhol, 2007, p. 226). For readers’ better understanding, Warhol presents an example: “[I]n the feminocentric nineteenth-century novel, ... the heroine can in the end only get married or die... For a Victorian novelist to choose an alternate outcome to a heroine’s marriage plot, then, would be to attempt to narrate the paranarratable” (Warhol, 2007, p. 226). In this example, we can see that if the author intends to give a detail that runs counter to the “formal convention”, then the writer is narrating the paranarratable.

In Chinese American literature, the Chinese Exclusion Act is the paranarratable because “[d]ominant narratives of the modern nation-state are structured by Enlightenment values of development and progress” (J. Chang, 2012, p. 32) and the Chinese Exclusion Act is the opposite type, so it is left paranarratable. Some scholar adds that narrating the Chinese Exclusion Act is against the “dominant narrative of assimilation, progress, and the American Dream” (Zhou, 2014, p. 100). Therefore, in *Bone*, Ng writes the Act vaguely. She only mentions that “the laws that excluded him now held him captive” (Ng, 1993, p. 57).

So why does the author follow the trend and refuse to illustrate the laws in a detailed manner? Before that, we should talk about why there is the Chinese Exclusion Act. From 1848, many Chinese came to America because of the lure of gold. Later in 1865, the construction of the transcontinental railway needed a large number of workers and numerous Chinese were attracted by it. Yet in the 1870s, America came across economic recession and the labor market became saturated

and many Americans started to complain that the Chinese took their job opportunities away. So the whole society was hostile to the Chinese, just as western scholar Philip Chin maintains, “economic misery led to xenophobia among many white Americans” (Chin, 2013, p. 8). And in 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act was enacted and the Chinese became the mere community that was excluded from America by the federal government (Chan, 1991; T. Kim, 1999). After knowing how the Chinese Exclusion Act comes into being, we can go back to the question - Why is the Chinese Exclusion Act paranarratable under Ng’s pen?

One supposition can be made that Ng makes this novel embedded with the paranarratable, in an attempt to drive the readers to participate in the meaning construction of the novel by digging out the hidden text of the narrative and finding new clues of the novel. Such being the case, the author succeeds in enriching the text. To put it specifically, she aims to let readers themselves find out the hidden interrelations among the dilemma and hardships Chinese Americans go through. As it is seen by some scholar, “Ng weaves together...the Chinese American working-class paper sons and bachelors, inscribing the Chinatown space with Chinese American histories unavailable in the official history of the U.S. nation-state, invisible in the dominant narrative of assimilation, progress, and the American Dream.” (Zhou, 2014, p. 100)

The first interrelation among hardships and the Chinese Exclusion Act is “paper sons”. Because of the severe restriction laws, it’s almost impossible for Chinese to land on American soil since 1882 (Ng, 2009). Later in 1906, the earthquake in San Francisco caused a great fire, which damaged almost all the files collected in the city hall (Lai, Lim, & Yung, 2014; Lowe, 1996; Ng, 2009). Some Chinese took advantage of this opportunity to change their identity information and lied that they were born in America, aiming at getting a green card. Some even grabbed the spoon to claim that they had children in China, in an attempt to get the immigration quotas. They then sold these quotas to others and many Chinese went to great lengths to get these quotas. In *Bone*, Leon is a case in point. Goellnicht (2000) notices that Leon’s birth year in accordance with his false immigration papers is 1924, “the very year in which a new American Immigration Act was passed specifically ... making it impossible for Chinese men to immigrate unless they could prove that their fathers were born in the U.S” (p. 304). Leon enters into America as a “paper son” with the hope of making a fortune in the vast territory.

However, Leon gradually comes to realize that his American Dream is extremely hard to fulfill and being a “paper son” is not a good thing. Because “paper son” is a false identity, Leon cannot claim his identity in front of the authority for fear of deportation. When Leila takes him to apply for social security, the officer “asked Leon why he had so many aliases? So many different dates of birth? Did he have a passport? A birth certificate? A driver’s license?” “Leon had nothing but his anger, and like a string of firecrackers popping, he started cursing.” (Ng, 1993, p. 56) Faced with the officer’s questions, Leon can say nothing but a curse. Because

once his false identity is revealed, he will face the punishment of being sent back to China. Such kind of worry is so strong that even though the government offers “a confession of illegal entry bought you naturalization papers” program and guarantees that “paper son” will not be sent back if they admit who they are in the confession program, Leon still declines to confess his false identity because he “didn’t trust the government” (Ng, 1993, p. 57).

What’s worse, the exclusion law and Leon’s “paper son” identity bring him a traumatic experience, which makes him can merely find a sense of security in keeping things. “Leon kept things because he believed time mattered. Old made good.” (Ng, 1993, p. 58) The paper he saves and “all the letters addressed to Leon should prove to the people at the social security office that this country was his place, too. Leon had paid; Leon had earned his rights.” (Ng, 1993, p. 58) The habit of keeping things, in Leon’s eyes, is a way to prove his identity and offers him a sense of safety. In *Long Days’ Journey into Night* (1962), the protagonist James also lacks a sense of security because when they immigrate to America, his father abandons them. This traumatic experience makes him can merely feel safe with the possession of motionless land. Both Leon’s and James’ queer habits demonstrate that they have been greatly hurt by the new identity and new environment. And it can be seen that the stranger their habits are, the less secure they feel in their inner hearts.

The second interrelation among dilemma and the Chinese Exclusion Act is the “bachelor society” in Chinatown, just as some scholar observes that “Ng further indicates the connection between the deprived lives of Chinese immigrants like Leon and the history of Chinese exclusion through...her observations of other old bachelors in other places of Chinatown” (Zhou, 2014, p. 100). And Ng (2009) herself acknowledges that “the creation of the Exclusion Act resulted in a bachelor society that interrupted the continuity of a generation of Chinese Americans” (p. 120). The Chinese Exclusion Act makes it clear that Chinese women are prohibited to enter into America to reunite with their husbands and American women will lose their green card if they marry Chinese immigrants, which leads to many Chinese men being single in the rest of their lives. Quite a lot of Chinese American writers have described the “bachelor” scenario in their works. To name a few, in *Eat a Bowl of Tea* Louis Chu mentions Wang Wah Gay and Lee Gong can only contact their wives who are in China through letters. They live as “married bachelors” (E. Kim, 1982, p. 97) even though they have wives. Just as certain scholar puts forward, “*Eat a Bowl of Tea* portrays the waning years of Wang Wah Gay and his fellow Chinatown ‘bachelors’, men whose labor was recruited by the United States and who ended up unable to establish families” (J. Chang, 2012, p. 36).

Likewise, in *Bone* Ng also describes the “bachelor society”. Leila once walks past the chess tables where groups of bachelors gather there and she confesses that “I never liked being the only girl on the upper level of the park. More than once, an old guy has come up and asked, ‘My room? Date?’ ‘It was just pathetic.’” (Ng, 1993,

p. 8) Those “bachelors” can only sleep with prostitutes. That’s why the old guy questions Leila if she wants to go to his room. And the word “pathetic” expresses not only Leila’s feelings but also the author’s. Ng expresses her sympathy for those “bachelors”.

Another interrelation among hardships and the Chinese Exclusion Act is racial discrimination, which makes Chinese people encounter many rejections in their lives. “A rejection from the army: unfit. A job rejection: unskilled. An apartment: unavailable” (Ng, 1993, p. 57). Even when those Chinese immigrants are lucky enough to get a job, it is a base one with a low salary. The jobs they undertake can illustrate the discrimination to a greater extent. In *Bone*, Leon has been “a fry cook at Wa-jin’s, a busboy at the Waterfront Restaurant by the Wharf, a janitor at a print shop downtown” (Ng, 1993, p. 55). He takes the basest job and even though he works very hard, the salary is not as per his hard sweat. Some scholar names this situation as “racial labor exploitation” (J. Chang, 2012, p. 35). When Mah says that the money Leon makes is not enough, he replies, “It’s as much as I could. You don’t know. You’re inside Chinatown; it’s safe. You don’t know. Outside, it’s different.” (Ng, 1993, p. 181).

The narrator purposefully doesn’t inform us of the detailed harsh reality outside and how different it is outside Chinatown, in an attempt to let us imagine how hard it is. Just like Leila, she can see that “Leon hardly slept. He worked double shifts - one night slipped into another, tied together by a few hours’ sleep” (Ng, 1993, p. 181). But Leon says that “it wasn’t time he was spending, it was sweat. He said life was work and death the dream” (Ng, 1993, p. 181). His perception of life and death stuns us but it appropriately interprets Chinese Americans’ tough lives brought about by racial discrimination.

From the above three kinds of hardships the Chinese Americans experience, we can find the common point within the three, that is “*Bone* continues to confront the lingering effects of U.S. exclusionary laws on working-class Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans, including the psychological impact of spatialized social positions of race and class on the major characters” (Zhou, 2014, p. 95). The author purposefully doesn’t narrate the act so as to make readers associate these difficulties with the Chinese Exclusion Act and come to realize that its lingering effect has embedded in every Chinese American.

Conclusion

To conclude, in the process of reading *Bone*, we readers not only need to pay attention to the narrated but also should concentrate on the unnarratable, which entails countless difficulties and troubles Chinese immigrants encounter. Ng, as an offspring of Chinese immigrants in America, has experienced the unspeakable hardships and she is fully aware of the fact that the unnarratable can be better understood by readers through their exploration of the unnarrated discourse. So in *Bone*, she manipulates this effective narrative strategy to guide readers to enter into

the novel's hidden text and plot. And only when we readers combine the narrated and the unnarrated can we fumble out the author's intention and the hidden plot in the text and better understand the Chinese Americans' stories and their bone-piercing pain.

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