

### UGC Approved (old) List of Journals

	Mathematik und Mechanik (ZAMM)						
43931	World Leisure Journal	UNIV	Multidisciplinary	Routledge	16078055	23334509	United States
43940	Concrete Operators	UNIV	Science	De Gruyter Open, POLEND		22993282	Poland
43946	Journal of Robotics and Mechatronics Systems	UNIV	Science	Truro, United Kingdom Tronix Publishing	23991550		United Kingdom
43959	International Research Journal of Business Studies	UNIV	Social Science	Universitas Prasetiya Mulya	23384565		Indonesia
43967	Random Matrices - Theory And Application	UNIV	Science	World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd	20103263	20103271	United Kingdom
43975	Eurasian Business Review	UNIV	Social Science	Springer		21474281	Italy
43977	Market Microstructure and Liquidity	UNIV	Social Science	World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd	23826266	24248037	France
43979	IJELLH [International Journal of English Language, Literature in Humanities]	UNIV	Arts & Humanities	Smart Moves c/o Support Foundation		23217065	India
43982	Journal of Royal Statistics Society - A	UNIV	Science	Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd ,UK		13697412	United Kingdom
43984	International Journal of Financial Engineering	UNIV	Social Science	World Scientific Publishing	24247863	24247944	China
43993	Journal of Royal Statistics Society - B	UNIV	Science	Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd ,UK		00359254	United Kingdom
43995	Observatorio Medioambiental	UNIV	Science	Universidad Complutense de Madrid * Servicio de Publicaciones	11391987	19883277	Spain
43997	Journal of International Finance and Economics	UNIV	Social Science	International Academy of Business and Economics	15556336	2378864 X	United States

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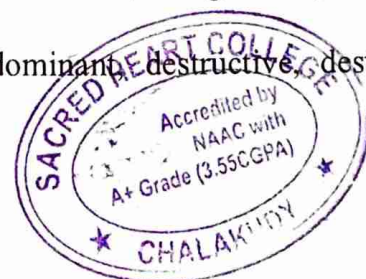
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Visibility of Double Standards: Conflict between the 'Social' and the 'Personal' Perspectives  
in Nellie Wong's "When I was Growing Up"

**Abstract:** When it comes to decision making regarding matters of prime concern, we often experience a kind of crucial divide and dichotomy between the social and the personal perspectives. This visibility of double standards, the social versus the personal, finds expression in the works of many literary luminaries. Nellie Wong's "When I was Growing Up" is a poem that foregrounds the conflict between the societal and personal norms of identity and beauty. The poem is a kind of protest and resistance against the societal tendency to marginalize certain cultures and races thereby establishing the supremacy of the dominant. This destructive tendency of a certain group of individuals is destabilized by the poet as she affirms her true identity. The poem explicitly expresses the poet's disagreement to conform to the communal parameters of identity and beauty myth.

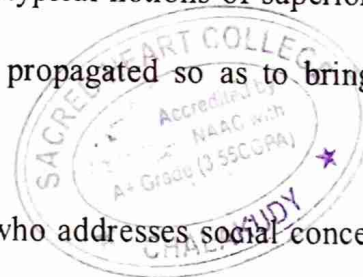
**Key Terms:** dichotomy, perspective, visibility, double standards, foregrounds, luminaries, societal, norms, resistance, marginalize, supremacy, dominant, destructive, destabilized, conform, communal, parameters, identity, beauty myth.



Even in the twenty first century, racism still remains a force to be reckoned with. The new millennium is witnessing an upsetting continuation in racial hatred, racial violence and racial discrimination. The disturbing consequences of racism thus remain a matter of great concern. We tend to see ourselves through the lens of others. Anything that is fair is not lovely. We live in a world in which we are bombarded with the image of a beautiful woman as being one who is light skinned. The lighter the skin, the more beautiful the person is. Such blind adoration of white stereotypes results in emotional and physical suffering of the 'other' races. They are desperate to alter their skin tone and long for the curvaceous body which fascinates everyone's attention. In the midst of these attitudinal changes to beauty and identity, efforts to figure out who we are, how we feel about who we are and who we want to become go on.

Consciously or unconsciously, we are always in the process of finding ourselves. Literary works are replete with victims of such racist bigoted societal norms. Many Asian American women writers have challenged the fondness for the blonde thin white woman through their works. Nellie Wong in her poem of resistance, "When I was Growing Up" presents a sharp and poignant depiction of the Asian American experience, capturing the anguish and agony of the Asian Americans. The poem explores the relationship between beauty and race with the poet being obsessed with the white standards of beauty. Nellie Wong is one such Asian American writer who explored the effects of Western stereotypical notions of superiority of white culture, beauty and identity, on others, boundlessly propagated so as to bring in a forced assimilation into the dominant white culture.

She is a renowned revolutionary American feminist writer who addresses social concerns in her writings. Her parents were Chinese immigrants. This resulted in her intersectional identity of being a Chinese American. She was an advocate of revolutionary feminism. Immigration especially Asian immigration to America, plight of immigrant women, feminism, and identity

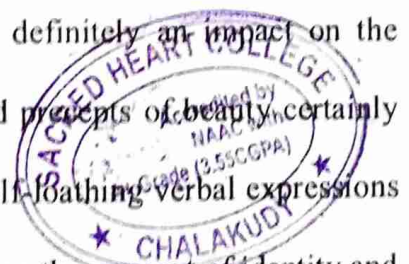




became major concerns in her writings. She thinks women as the most oppressed in the world. According to her, women are not condemned to live as victims on this earth. Many of her poems, raising issues regarding her Chinese American identity, came from her working life. She says, "A lot of my poems come from the workplace, which is where I have experienced a great deal of sexism and racism." Some think she is a Korean, others as a Mexican, or a Filipino.

"When I was Growing Up" is an out and out autobiographical poem by Nellie Wong. The poem is a verbal document of the poet's protest and resistance against all kinds of fixed notions against cultural and racial supremacy. She scathingly criticizes the setting up of the double standards. The social stance is often found to be in conflict with the personal point of view in her writings. The poet foregrounds the identity crisis experienced by the Asian Americans. The poem explores the three significant phases of the growing up of the poet- infancy, childhood and adolescence. The poet is forced to incorporate the dominant white culture and disown that of her own, owing to the fear of being discriminated. The white culture allures and ensnares her with all its privileges. The poem analyses the struggle of a lady to fit into the cultural majority. The poem concludes with the reconciliation of the authenticity of poet's own culture as she recognizes and acknowledges the sense of innate goodness within it.

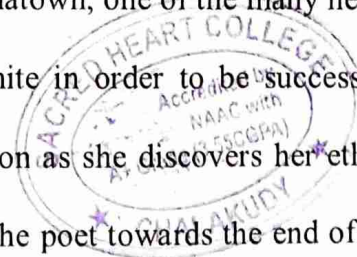
The reconciliation effected at the end of the poem is evident through the twin notions of identity and beauty as seen through the lens of the society and how the poet refutes this viewpoint altogether. The concept of beauty and identity is ever changing. The changing social perspectives regarding one's identity and beauty have definitely an impact on the personal attitudes. The dominant white culture and its encoded precepts of beauty certainly victimize the women of other races. The poem abounds with self-loathing verbal expressions which are expressive and reflective of the societal perspectives on the concept of identity and



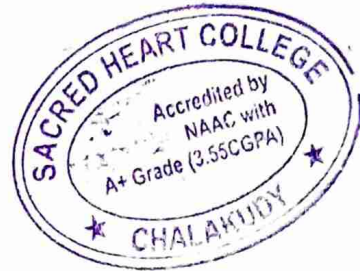
beauty and its after effects on the personal perspectives. The poet hates her yellow skin and yearns for the white skin and perceives herself dirty. Beauty is coded as white. She writes, "As a child I used to desperately wish for paler skin, lighter skin, and rounder eyes. I would have gladly undergone any kind of re-invention available to be able to pass for white and stop hearing ethnic slurs on the playground. The white culture has its own precepts of beauty.

This concept is popularized in their magazines, newspapers and movies. In their concept the first ingredient of beauty is whiteness. Black people, brown people and yellow people are not beautiful to them. The white skin should be accompanied by curly blonde hair. They want their lips to be red and sensuous. They also want robust bodies and rounded eyes. They want their beauties to wear imported clothing and look elegant. The narrator in the poem is a small girl who is not happy with her skin colour. She is the daughter of Chinese immigrants and she feels quite unhappy with the discrimination she faces everywhere. Some people think she is a Filipino, some think she is a Polynesian, some think she is a Mexican and some think she is a Portuguese girl. She does not have blonde curly hair, rounded eyes, sensuous lips and imported clothes. To the whites these are the attributes of beauty. Since she does not have these things she longs for them. She even takes bath many times in the hope it will help her to change her colour. But her colour persists and she can't peel off her skin.

But towards the end she discovers her ethnic identity. "Now I know that once I wanted to be white." She gets reconciled to her situation. As part of her reconciliation, she plans to run away to purple mountains, to houses by the sea with nothing over her head, with space to breathe, uncongested with yellow people in an area called Chinatown, one of the many hearts of Asian American. She knows one does not have to be white in order to be successful, beautiful and desirable. There is a transition and self-realization as she discovers her ethnic identity. There is a sense of belongingness as experienced by the poet towards the end of the poem. She is full of praise for her culture and people. She is now in terms with her Chinese



American identity thereby breaking the stereotypes of the western beauty cult. She doesn't hurl indictments at forces of oppression. It is the race of a people who strive to affirm their true identity.



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