

Hall Gardner

**Year of the Horseshoe Bat—In Exile  
Or the Legend of JV**



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“If a single homicide is considered a crime, but a multiple homicide involved in attacking another country can be considered a good and legal action, then how can we possibly call that a reasonable distinction between good and evil?”

—Mo Zi (ca. 479-381 B.C.)

“Money is not words and companies don't even have free speech. So when they invoke this right they are trying to make our democracy plutocracy.”

—Barbie

*“End of the World*

*End of Month*

*Same Struggle!!!”*

—French Protest Slogan

“Citizens, if the storm breaks out, we will have to act as soon as possible to stop the crimes of our leaders. If there is still something we can do, if there is still time, we will double our efforts to prevent catastrophe...”

—Jean Jaures, July 25, 1914



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# General Introduction

by Hall Gardner

I.

*Year of the Horseshoe Bat—in Exile* paints a dark satire of governance and society in the United States, France and China during the COVID-19 (Horseshoe Bat) pandemic written from the first-person viewpoint of Chia Pao-yu—the Chinese dissident who was forced into exile after playing a significant role in helping to organize the student-led protests on Tiananmen Square in April-June 1989—as depicted in the prequel, *Year of the Earth Serpent Changing Colors*.

As one of its primary themes, this second novel seeks to explore how the rapid (in historical terms) rise of the Chinese Red Dragon onto the world stage, as a power *for itself*, has begun to impact global, regional, national, local, and inter-personal relations—given the geo-pornographic reality that Beijing has begun to forge a new Eurasian Axis with Moscow, Tehran and Pyongyang, among other states—in the effort to counter the global hegemony of the American Balding Eagle and its Oceania Allies.

In becoming a power *for itself*—in terms borrowed from the French philosopher and former Maoist, Jean Paul Sartre—the Red Dragon is no longer being exploited by other major powers as was the case during the historical period that the Chinese Communist Party has called the “Hundred Years of Humiliation” from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Opium Wars to the victory of Mao in 1949.

A major theme of the novel is to illustrate how rival, and seemingly uncontrollable, global forces—as symbolized by the 12 Riders of the Posse Comitatus—can drag both societies and individuals unwillingly into systemic conflicts that transcend their daily lives whether they like it or not. When alliances and wars call for pledging allegiance to the flag, it is risky, if not impossible, to resist...

## II.

Look at the bizarre way in which power and political ideologies have been transforming in the post-Cold War period. It is certain that *Homo Geopoliticus et Economica* is once again entering into perversely dangerous times. There are so many self-proclaimed Tsars, Duces, Caudillos, Mini-Führers, Vozhds, Conducători, Guides, Mullahs, Maréchals, Marszaleks, Monarchs, Kleptocrats, Presidents for Life and Prime Ministers for Multiple Terms, who are raising their hydra heads much as they once did in the 1920s and 1930s.

Many of these individuals claim that they, as Fearless Leaders, know the best way to make a better society—that is, if only the executive branch can put the parliament and the population under its direct control—in the effort to break and eliminate any form of resistance....

Look how ideologies are rapidly transmogrifying. Look how former Soviet “Gulag” KGB officials have so suddenly metamorphosed from arch-Communist atheists into militantly Orthodox Russian FSB nationalists under a Tsarist Leader Maximum.... Look how Sade-damn “Abu Ghraib” Hussein’s Iraqi Ba’ath Socialists and their secret service Mukhabarat have so militantly, and over just a few years, become flag waving “Islamic State” execution fanatics.

And look how the Iraqi Abu Ghraib prison space itself has been expropriated from the post- “Sade-damn” regime by the “Boys of the Company”—to practice the “democratically” approved humanitarian use of “enhanced interrogation techniques”. Look how Chinese Maoists and their Red Guards, who once vandalized the cemeteries of Confucius, the poet, Li Bai, among many others, have not-so-gradually rebranded themselves by planting Confucian “soft power” propaganda institutes across the globe under the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought.

Perhaps even more hypocritically bizarre are the American Democrats who pretend all is well with the “rules-based international order”—even if the military expansion of the Balding Eagle and NATO’s White Compass Rose, the war on drugs, the global war on terrorism, and multiple US-led military interventions (endorsed by Democrats and Republicans alike)—and the LIES associated with those Wars after only pretenses of diplomatic engagement to resolve those conflicts—have wreaked havoc in country after country and are now threatening the prospect of major power war. Aging Cold Warriors are just itching to get their first chance for global military action since “World War II” ...

For their part, American Republicans can be diagnosed as “bipolar.” On the one hand, the Republicans—some of whom believe in the most preposterous conspiracy theories—have denounced Black Lives Matter, Antifa and other domestic home-grown American protest movements as being inspired by “Maoism.” On the other hand, the Republican’s Fearless Leader, former President Donald Trump—whose Chimera (or really his fake Social Media image, not his “real” person) plays a role in this book as Donald “Secret

Agent Orange *Jee-Zus!!!*” Drumpf<sup>1</sup>—has strongly praised Mao’s totalitarian legacy by flattering Xi “Winnie the Pooh” Jinping when he became China’s “president-for-life.”

In this fictional story, Chia Pao-yu is outraged to hear an American President extoll the virtues of China’s “President-for-Life” and his totalitarian powers—that Chia had thought was a vital element of the American DNA to oppose and that he himself had risked his own neck to oppose by helping to organize the pro-Democracy and anti-corruption movement in China in April-June 1989. Drumpf’s praise for “Winnie” leads Chia to suffer even more profoundly from depression, self-doubts, and impotence.

Chia Pao-yu simply cannot understand why so many people of differing societies and cultures—now including the Land of the Free—appear willing to submit themselves to dangerous self-serving dictatorships that will rule arbitrarily according to their Benevolent Big Brother whims, folies and pursuit of personal profits—and not in accord with the general interest of the country and the world... Such Fearless Leaders call themselves “Champions of the Forgotten Man”—but will easily turn against their former friends and popular supporters in the effort to sustain their power when it suits their interests...

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<sup>1</sup> The “Orange Jesus” is a moniker that one of Trump’s Republican sycophants called him when he said “the things we do for the Orange Jesus” when asked by Trump to sign electoral vote objection sheets for each of the states that Trump (falsely) claimed had falsified votes in the 2020 presidential election. Drumpf is said to be the real last name of Trump’s forbears.

And much as Chia Pao-yu himself had predicted the rise of “new authoritarianism” in China in 1989 just prior to the Tiananmen Square repression, Chia now sees that the Land of the Free is being confronted with the real possibility of dictatorship. It is incredible how the public media personality of Secret Agent Orange *Jee-Zus!!!* appears to mimic that of Berzelius “Buzz” Windrip in Sinclair Lewis’s *It Can’t Happen Here* (1935). In that novel, Windrip takes over the American presidency backed by armed Minute Men militias—much like Il Duce Benito Mussolini took over Italy in 1922 after his March on Rome...

In Chia’s view, President Drumpf’s call in June 2020, with Bible in hand, for a military crackdown<sup>2</sup> on peaceful American protestors, whom Drumpf had dubbed “Mao-ists,” “Wokeists” and “Anarchists,” among other monikers, had ironically raised almost exactly the same quandary with respect to the relationship between the Executive Branch and the Pentagon as had been the case when then Chinese leader, Deng “Little Bottle” Xiaoping, had called upon the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) to crack down on the

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<sup>2</sup> Drumpf’s actions were in technical violation of the 1878 Posse Comitatus Act that was passed when white supremacists had returned to power in both southern states and Congress after the Reconstruction. The Act was intended to prevent the intervention of northern Federal troops in the affairs of southern states. See Joseph Nunn, <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/posse-comitatus-act-explained> Then, as now, Trump’s actions raise questions as to who should have the power to “enforce the peace”? The Federal government? The State? The Locality? Ironically, Trump was claiming the autocratic right of the Federal government to crack down, while his supporters advocate States’ rights. The 12 Riders of the Posse Comitatus becomes a theme of this novel... and possibly the next!

Chinese democracy movement on June 4, 1989 in a very violent action that challenged the very beliefs and values of the Communist Party and the PLA itself.

The parallel between Drumpf and Deng appeared plausible in Chia’s mind—even if Drumpf’s orders to crack down on protests against the police killing of George Floyd, in addition to Drumpf’s own corrupt, militarist, autocratic, plutocratic, and anti-ecological domestic and foreign policies, were ultimately not implemented by American G.I. Joe’s—as Drumpf had threatened. Much like the Chinese military, the U.S. military did not want to be dragged into domestic politics, but were not called into action.

The parallel becomes even more pertinent just a few months later, on January 6, 2021, when President Drumpf’s violent “March on the Capitol” shook the very foundations of American democracy and its claims that Congressional compromise is the best way to make reforms—even if it is true that the complex American system of “checks and (un)balances” does not always permit significant reforms that would better benefit the American people and the world—very easily to implement.

After flying from France to the U.S. for the first time to participate in a “Future of China” conference in Washington, D.C. in June 2020, Chia is able to witness two highly polarized democratic societies experiencing multiple crises. These crises involve major social protests, coupled with the rise of rightwing political factions that attempt to scapegoat immigrants and minorities—in a situation in which finances and public resources are increasingly being siphoned off into the gluttonous mouths of plutocratic elites. Chia now realizes that both democracies, France and the United



States, are in a deep crisis. Even the movie character, “Barbie,” is concerned that “our democracy” risks becoming a “plutocracy.”

As Chia soon realizes, the multiple crises facing Democracy are not just national—but global. Contrary to the hopes raised by the international “End of History”<sup>3</sup> democratic peace argument, whose critique was a major of theme of *Year of the Earth Serpent Changing Colors*, *Homo Geopoliticus et Economica* is now entering a geo-pornographic situation somewhat like that of the interwar crisis between 1918 and 1939... but with major differences...

Will the democratic “checks and balances” of both American and French/European governance be able to prevent the very real possibility of dictatorship? Will Democracies be able to prevent major power war through a mix of the threat and use of force—plus, most urgently, engaged diplomacy aimed at conflict resolution?

### III.

Another significant issue for this novel is that the totalitarian nature of Beijing’s political and economic system has increasingly begun to inter-penetrate the predominant (yet dysfunctional) American “democratic” system, its economy, and its culture. Until the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, it was America that represented the “shining city on the hill” and that inspired Europeans and much of the world. The Chinese themselves called America the “land of rice”—despite the

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<sup>3</sup> See my critique of the End of History argument, <https://www.meer.com/en/46316-the-vengeance-of-history>; Hall Gardner, *Crimea, Historical Analogy and the Vengeance of History* (Palgrave 2015).

initially poor reception and treatment of Chinese and other immigrants.

During the Year of the Horseshoe Bat lockdown, the depressing reality that the American Dream is rapidly fading leads Chia Pao-yu to reflect and comment on Chinese/Asian impact on French/European and American culture, religion, arts, literature, and values—with a focus on European impressionists, as well as American pop artists and Beat poets. Chia also reflects upon how the testing of China's A-Bomb had led him to become a political dissident.

Even the ostensibly children's movie *Barbie*—whose anti-patriarchal critique sails way over the heads of children and of most adults as well—has been accused of pro-Chinese propaganda. This is because of the way a simplistic map of the South China Sea was shown in the movie that appeared to legitimize Beijing's claims to much of the region. The fact that a child's movie could provoke such geo-pornographic tensions leads Chia Pao-yu to question: Are America, Europe, China, and the world moving toward a new humanized planet where Ken's and Barbie's can live in mutual respect? Or toward a martial world where multicultural versions of Ken's "action figure" rival, "G.I. Joe," reign?

It is that latter martial world that pits the "Arsenal of Democracy" and its Christian *Jee-Zus!!! Freak* America First True Believers in alliance with the anti-Red China "Blue Team,"<sup>4</sup> plus Rabbi Dr. Geyer's anti-Palestinian, anti-

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<sup>4</sup> The Congressional Blue Team swears that the Chi-Com "Red Tide," if not stopped at Taiwan, will soon spread across the Silk Road through Eurasia, the Middle East, and Africa, up through

Iranian, messianic movement<sup>5</sup> against the Chinese Red Dragon and Russian Double-Headed Eagle and their allies.

And it is a dark revelation for Chia Pao-yu to later learn that the American, British, and French secret services had all worked with Chinese Triads and other nefarious groups to exfiltrate him and other leaders of the democracy movement out of the land of the Red Dragon in June 1989.

#### IV.

This story is an exercise in *empathy*—or what the poet John Keats called “negative capability”—the ability to wear the eyes of others and see how the other sees the world. Then again, the ability to wear someone else’s eyes raises the question of how much one sees of the other’s point of view. How much is a figment of one’s own imagination in the dialectical interaction between one’s own perceptions and one’s interpretation of those perceptions and how those individuals who are then perceived and interpreted? How much is the character and how much is the author?

The challenge is even greater when the character is not of one’s one nationality, race, religion, culture, or sexual

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the Balkans and into the Greek Achilles Heel of Europe and across the Pacific to Latin America and Mexico—which Beijing would use as a base to “subvert” North America through the free trade pact between Mexico, Canada, and the U.S.

<sup>5</sup> In his novel, *Old-New Land*, by the founder of Zionism, Theodore Herzl, Rabbi Dr. Geyer (which means ‘vulture’ in German) was the leader of a messianic political party who opposed Herzl’s vision that Arabs should be equal to Jews in Herzl’s proposed “co-operatist” and “mutualist” society in the Holy Lands.

preference—in this case, the celibate Chia Pao-yu possesses nightmare fears of being forced at knife point to become a “eunuch” as punishment for his leadership in the April-June 1989 Tiananmen Square protests—if he does not confess to the “crime” of “disloyalty.” Is it feasible to depict a character not like oneself? Is it possible to speak for those from another civilization? To speak for those who fear to speak?

The French novelist and diplomat André Malraux wrote *Man's Fate* through Chinese eyes and without even having stepped foot for very long in China itself. His work may have been clouded with an Orientalist understanding of the Chinese and of the Chinese revolution, but the moral dilemmas confronted by his characters are universal. While Malraux's novel dealt with characters engaged in the violent struggles of China's Revolution, this novel, *Year of the Horseshoe Bat—in Exile*, examines the essentially non-violent protests taking place in France and America, as well as in China—before and after the Horseshoe Bat pandemic.

After having risked his neck in protesting against the Red Dragon on Tiananmen Square in April-June 1989, Chia Pao-yu once again dares to challenge the Chinese regime in nonviolent protest when he goes to Hong Kong under his French pseudonym, Jean Valjaur. And after the totalitarian Red Dragon sucks up Hong Kong's not-so-fragrant waters after 1997 sip by sip, he opposes Beijing's ongoing threats to pressure Taiwan's Black Bear into submission.

Even in the realization that it is becoming increasingly difficult to tell “Truth” to Power in the age of mass surveillance, media manipulation, and “Deep Fakes” of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Chia Pao-yu also protests against the *unfulfilled* promises of French social democracy and American neo-liberal democracy—after he has lived in Paris long

enough to (more or less) understand French politics and after he visits the still hegemonic Balding Eagle.

V.

Chia Pao-yu's democratic idealism is confronted with numerous questions: Given their cultural-linguistic differences and the present negative state of their inter-relationship as "mental aliens" (in the expression of Jack London), is it at all possible for America and China to reconcile their very different concepts of "human rights," "freedom of speech and protest," and "democratization"? What happens when "freedom of speech" becomes "freedom of action"? And how much and what kind of "action" and "protest" is deemed legitimate and appropriate by these political elites of very different political cultures?

Given the very different, yet nevertheless comparable, nature of "democratic" America and "totalitarian" China—is it at all possible on the domestic level for both the Red Dragon and Balding Eagle to engage in significant reforms that would seek to reduce the glaring inequities in wealth of both societies, while concurrently seeking to interact more closely with the environment in developing systems of sustainable development? Is it possible for both countries (and others) to establish more direct systems of democracy and power sharing in both political and economic spheres of governance?

And, on the international level, given the escalation of greater violence throughout the world after German unification, Soviet collapse, and NATO enlargement, can Washington, Moscow, and Beijing reach compromises without capitulation? Is it possible to engage in diplomacy to prevent a direct major power war between NATO's

White Compass Rose and the Russian Two-Headed Eagle over the muddy Ukrainian *rasputitsa*, while likewise preventing confrontation between the Red Dragon and Taiwanese Black Bear that could drag the Balding Eagle and many other countries into the fray?

Will the “Global War on Terrorism” and the new 21<sup>st</sup> century “Crimean War” over the Black Sea and Holy Lands continue to escalate and expand??? Will the boots of war trounce the hopes of Ken’s and Barbie’s throughout the world for global peace?

Or will saner voices prevail? Can the Balding Eagle, Lady Europe, the Red Dragon, and the Russian Double Headed Eagle, eventually reach out for some form of geopolitical compromise despite their divergent concerns of power, interests, influence, as well norms and values? It is possible for these rival amoral/immoral Dragon Chimera to act in their true national and international interests—and thereby work to establish a new local, national, regional, global, and cosmic equilibrium—a new *Tai Ping Dao*—a major theme of the prequel, *Year of the Earth Serpent Changing Colors*?

These are the immediate, not easily answered, questions that plague Chia Pao-yu—as he finds himself unwillingly caught up in the midst of geo-pornographic struggles between the American-led Oceania Alliance and the China-Russia-led Eurasian Axis of the new Golden Hordes....

—Hall Gardner

Paris, March 19, 2024