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Gendering China Studies

Peripheral Perspectives, Central Questions

JEROEN DE KLOET

Abstract This article explores the connections between the field of China studies and the field of gender and sexuality studies. It engages with three questions. First, why is it that theoretical, conceptual and methodological cross-fertilization between China studies and cultural studies remains quite scarce? Second, why are popular culture and art important domains of academic inquiry? Third, why is it crucial to theorize and problematize “Chineseness”? Drawing on the debates surrounding the translation of alleged “Western” theories related to the sex–gender distinction, feminism, and queer studies to a “Chinese” context, it is argued that the call for local knowledges runs the danger of becoming an essentializing, hegemonic discourse on its own. The article concludes with a plea for an interdisciplinary approach that combines theoretical and empirical insights from area studies and cultural studies, and an intersectional take in which gender is analyzed in conjunction with other parameters of difference, such as ethnicity, class or age, and, finally, a multisited, comparative research agenda as to avoid a sino-centric or Han-centric analysis. This may help to identify, understand, and hopefully resist the seduction of both cultural essentialism and cultural relativism.

Keywords gender, sexuality, queer, cultural studies, popular culture

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The 2007 release of the all-female Beijing punk band Hang on the Box is titled, in English, “No More Nice Girls.” In fact, all the tracks on that album are delivered in English. The CD resonates with a wave of gendered products that attempt to appeal to a global audience, among which are sexually explicit books from female authors such as Mian Mian, Wei Hui, and Chun Sue. The winner of the 2005 Idols-like competition “Supergirl,” Li Yuchun, caused a national media craze. She is not only billed as the outcome of the first democratic voting procedure in mainland China but; with her androgynous looks she also became the icon for gay and lesbian culture. Compared to the colorful, exotic women as depicted by Zhang Yimou at the turn of the 1990s,

this current wave of Chinese feminine mystique is located firmly in the contemporary, the urban, and the sexually transgressive. Nonetheless, both Zhang Yimou's gendered portrayals as well as the popularity of young, hip, and urban women underline the observation that "Chinese" femininity remains an important signifier, be it as commodity, as fetish, as symbol of either change or tradition, or as embodiment of the nation.¹ Media have been playing a crucial role in this display and construction of gender. The steady flow of mediated representations of gender and sexuality attests to the continuous relevance of Chinese gender studies and motivates the choice for this special *China Information* issue.

Three questions, all of which will be explored in this introductory article, underpin the contributions in this issue. First, why is it that theoretical, conceptual, and methodological cross-fertilization between China studies and cultural studies remains quite scarce? Theory does not flow that easily over disciplinary boundaries. Whereas, for instance, China studies, and in particular its continental European trope sinology, puts a strong emphasis on language and history, and arguably less on theory, the research practices of cultural studies, with its heavy theoretical grounding, remain by and large focused on "Western" societies.² The current selection of articles, all of which share a strong affinity with cultural studies, a mongrel domain in itself according to Bourdieu and Wacquant,³ is published in a journal in which contributions in the field of China studies dominate, which inspires me to pose the question of interdisciplinarity.

The second question concerns the object of study: why are popular culture and art important domains of academic inquiry? To begin with, both domains help to display *and* construct everyday realities, they shape our fantasies, feed our imagination, and consequently fuel the production of imagined communities.⁴ More relevant for this special issue is that both domains operate as the staging ground for performances of gender and sexuality and both domains provide important symbolic toolboxes for the construction of identities. But, as will be shown later, the analysis of representations of gender and sexuality should insist on taking an intersectional approach in which both categories are studied in conjunction with other identification processes related to, among others, class, ethnicity and nationality. By including both art and popular culture, I also wish to resist any implication of hierarchy. Instead, this special issue of *China Information* is driven by the idea that art and popular culture are equally important symbolic domains, even though the logic of both cultural fields is significantly different, with dif-

ferent gatekeepers, distinct processes of sacralization and popularization, and specific ways of reputation building, caused by different modes of production and dissemination, and—crucially—a different relationship with the economic domain.⁵

Third, why is it crucial to theorize and problematize “Chineseness?” To insist on placing “Chinese” between quotation marks is theoretically urgent, albeit visually tedious. While quotation marks are generally avoided, what remains is the task of interrogating the social and political implications of what we mean by “Chinese.” This issue is inspired by a desire to multiply the “Chinese” in Chinese gender studies by including, apart from the mainland, other localities: Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and the Netherlands. Obviously, this choice is not without its pitfalls, for each inclusion produces yet another exclusion. The current selection runs the danger of being Han-centric and of reifying the nation-state.⁶

In short, the three questions just presented boil down to, indeed, three central issues: how do we study? (the question of academic *discipline*); what do we study? (the question of the *object* of inquiry); and where do we study? (the question of *locality*). It is my contention that gender and sexuality serve as a unique prism that can help us to arrive at (temporary) answers to these questions. The title speaks of *peripheral* perspectives because gender and sexuality are, when compared to other topics such as politics and economy, as marginalized in the field of China studies as China is in the field of gender and sexuality studies. The articles in this issue therefore traverse a double periphery, located at both disciplinary fields.

Unequal constructions

It would be a grandiose claim to perceive this special issue as a mapping of Chinese gender studies. By now, that subdiscipline has in itself become too fragmented and multivocal to possibly suggest an all-inclusive overview. Gail Hershatter recently published a wide-ranging and highly pertinent overview of the field of Chinese women’s studies,⁷ which she aptly opened with the following sentence: “The study of women in twentieth-century China has expanded so quickly since the mid-1980s that a state-of-the-field survey becomes outdated in the time it takes to assemble and write one.”⁸ Apart from Hershatter’s monograph, Susan Brownell and Jeffrey Wasserstrom’s introduction to the acclaimed volume *Chinese Femininities/Chinese Masculinities* also presents a concise and comprehensive overview of Chinese gender studies.⁹

Whereas articles in this special issue can be positioned at the juncture of cultural studies and China studies, paying more attention to issues of representation, the volume *Chinese Femininities/Chinese Masculinities* combines history with anthropology, offering rich accounts of gendered lives in China, in the past as well as in the present. It pays equal attention to both men and women—a unique approach in a field where gender is all too often conflated with women. Brownell and Wasserstrom inventorize and position a variety of books on gender in China,¹⁰ structuring these earlier works into a continuum, with the inequality–patriarchy approach on one side, and the construction of gender on the other. While “[a]dherents of this inequality–patriarchy approach take for granted the immutable existence of two biologically differentiated sexes and ask how power is divided between those,”¹¹ the second approach sees “man” and “woman” as “socially and culturally created categories, the borders between which may be contested.”¹² Judith Butler serves as the theoretical high priest of the latter approach, in which ample attention is given to “third genders,” “trans-genders,” and likeminded tropes of gender-bending behavior and performances.¹³

Over time, scholarly work in (Chinese) gender studies has moved from the first (inequality–patriarchy) to the second (difference–gender) paradigm, but it seems most fair to locate authors—including the contributions in this special issue—as hovering between both. In fact, we can in general observe a renewed interest in questions of inequality. Whereas the 1990s can be considered heydays of postmodern thought in cultural studies, the new century has brought questions of hegemony, inclusion, and exclusion back to the forefront. Attesting to this trend is a renewed interest in Marxism.¹⁴ Furthermore, one can question whether the assumed dichotomy between, say, realism and postmodernism, is not a false one. The acknowledgement of the constructedness of reality can go hand in hand with a critique of patriarchy and its symbolic *and* material—that is, political and economic—processes of exclusion. As the work of Butler shows, it is not impossible to read gender as performative, drawing extensively on poststructuralist theory, and to pursue an explicit political agenda.¹⁵

Gender, sex, and the body

Gender does not equal sex; instead, it refers to the social construction of femininities and masculinities—in the plural, indeed.¹⁶ Following the work of Butler, gender roles are performative, “the action of gender requires a perfor-

mance that is *repeated*. This repetition is at once a reenactment and reexperiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; and it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation."¹⁷ Art and popular culture provide an important staging ground for the performances of gender. These performances are enmeshed in a sexed binary in which female and male bodies are constructed as opposites. Butler contends that there is not such a thing as "true sex" to which gender roles are being ascribed, while the body itself should be seen as a specific construction. For Butler, drawing on Foucault, a body is not an objective fact, not a "being," but "a variable boundary, a surface whose permeability is politically regulated, a signifying practice within a cultural field of gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality."¹⁸ This, finally, opens up possibilities for a performative politics. In her words, "that gender reality is created through sustained social performances means that the very notions of an essential sex and a true or abiding masculinity or femininity are also constituted as part of the strategy that conceals gender's performative character and the performative possibilities for proliferating gender configurations outside the restricting frames of masculinist domination and compulsory heterosexuality."¹⁹

The title of this introduction hints at the possibilities of locating alternative gender performances outside "the West": in Chinese cultural spheres. While Butler serves as a timely reminder of the constructedness of gender, her work has its roots in the West, more specifically, in the USA (although it is strongly influenced by French philosophy). This raises the question of whether and how her work is applicable in a Chinese context. When Butler writes that gender needs *repeated* performances in order to become ingrained into our bodies and minds, her point of departure is "Western" bodies. The embodied repetition of globalized imageries of "Western" gender roles poses a problem for "Chinese" bodies. Given the hegemony of "Western" ideals of female and male beauty, illustrated by the global appeal of Hollywood stars and the abundant use of white models in advertising campaigns in Asia, Chinese bodies face the problem of repetition; despite attempts to come closer to the global hegemonic beauty standards, for example, through whitening of the skin, extensive body building, or plastic surgery (notably eyelid, nose, and breast "improvements").²⁰ In other words, the Chinese face the impossibility of embodied repetition, necessitating a process of cultural translation resulting in acts of indigenization. This may be equally true for the theoretical conceptualizations themselves. How far can theory travel; how useful is, for example, Butler's performative theory in a Chinese context?

Lost in translation

One recurring issue in the literature on gender and sexuality is whether and to what extent one can apply “Western” theories and ideologies towards China. What gets lost in translation, and what do we gain?²¹ Historical and anthropological approaches are often combined with linguistic comparisons so as to tease out an assumed unique, distinct Chinese take on gender and sexuality. This produces valuable insights in particular, situated, indigenized discourses that can help to undermine the hegemony of “Western” theorizations. Here I would like to discuss three discourses whose imperialistic conceptualizations have been strongly critiqued: the discourse on gender and sex, the discourse on feminism, and the discourse on homosexuality.²²

First, the sex/gender distinction. Following Brownell and Wasserstrom, in the social sciences, sex generally refers to reproductive autonomy, whereas gender refers to the roles attributed to anatomical sex.²³ Whereas Butler’s critique is directed against the assumed naturalness of sex, historical studies on gender in China show that gender determines sex, rather than the other way around.²⁴ As Charlotte Furth argues, in 16th- and 17th-century China, “in Chinese biological thinking, based as it was on yin–yang cosmological views, there was nothing fixed and immutable about male and female as aspects of yin and yang ... sexual differentiation depends upon the momentary balance of fluid forces in dynamically interacting relationship with one another.”²⁵ The primacy of social gender provides a space for androgynous performances and gender transgressions. Brownell and Wasserstrom quote Chinese feminist Li Xiaojiang who argues that “it would be redundant to introduce the notion of gender (*shehui xingbie*) [literally, social sex difference] to the Chinese language, since *nü* [woman/female] and *nan* [man/male] are already understood as social, not natural, beings.”²⁶

Epistemological differences between Chinese and Western conceptions of gender and sexuality explain that sex was understood in China not as an irreducible polarity in traditional Chinese cosmology, but as “one principle among many (e.g., kinship, generation and class) that determined a person’s position in the family and in society.”²⁷ One’s role, in particular in the family, rather than one’s sex, was of paramount importance. Another example that points at the differences between “the West” and China follows from research by Tani Barlow, who observes that while in the West heterosexuality is crucial in the production of gender—resonating with Butler’s heterosexual matrix—in China before the 1920s, the family was the prime site for the pro-

duction of gender.²⁸ Bodies, sexuality, gender, love, family—all of these constructs have specific cultural histories, Butler's idea of heteronormativity may be less applicable in a Chinese context, as is its underpinning assumed causal unity of the experience of sex → gender → heterosexual desire.

In relation to the contestation of the sex–gender paradigm, a second discourse that has received strong critique for its implicit imperialist conceptualizations concerns the discourse of feminism. Again, history is often invoked to articulate the Chinese take on feminism. In her review article on feminism in China, Sasha Su-Ling Welland recalls the Western coverage on the 1995 United Nations World Conference on Women, in which Chinese women were frequently depicted as not yet modern, and hence not yet free. According to Welland, this denial of coequality is akin to “banal neocolonial interpretation [that] sees Chinese feminism as behind, as not yet having caught up with the advances of feminist praxis in the West.”²⁹ Such reading denies the importance attached to women in China's pursuit of modernity over the 20th century, “from late Qing (1875–1911) repudiations of tradition to the Communist revolution.”³⁰ In particular, print media have played a crucial role in this process: “That the translation and circulation of feminism on such a massive scale was possible in the first four decades of the twentieth century was in no small part a result of the active participation in the new media by women.”³¹ The subsequent proliferation of a discourse on “new woman,” however fragmented, was quite unambiguous in its orientation to a cosmopolitan, urban middle class.³² Not surprisingly, gender roles changed significantly under communism. Under Maoism, class and political considerations primarily defined people, sexual discrimination was countered by an official rhetoric insisting on the equality of men and women, through “the denial of Woman as a distinct, collective gender.”³³ Claiming that the Chinese case is different from the West as well as from other Asian countries, Lin Chun attributes this uniqueness to the assumption that “China has had an epic and long-fought revolution for national and social liberation in which changing women's place in society was high on the agenda.”³⁴ In postsocialist China, the legacies of both socialism and feminism, with their emphasis on emancipation of workers and women, still play a distinct role that, according to Lin Chun, “can be a check on globalization while guarding the local social.”³⁵

Tani Barlow argues along similar lines, but urges us to emphasize the global implications of local knowledges. She proposes that we should read Chinese feminism as a generalized form, rather than looking for particular Chinese feminisms. Mapping out a body of recent scholarship, ranging from

the work of Dai Jinhua to the scholarship of the late Elizabeth Croll, Barlow claims that “in China’s immediate past, there exists sufficient feminist presence and practice to enable generalizations about broader contemporary problems that may not be specifically Chinese problems.”³⁶ International feminism can and should be more inclusive and use Chinese feminism to rethink issues of, for example, “poverty, geopolitical inequality, the international division of labor, legal culture, and popular claims to justice.”³⁷ This remains a formidable task for the immediate future, one that is becoming increasingly important and urgent: how to translate the scholarship as, for example, presented in this special issue, back into the general academic discourse on gender and sexuality? How to avoid it becoming ghettoized in the domain of China studies? Can the subaltern speak, to quote the title of Gayatri Spivak’s famous essay, and if so, how, when, and where?³⁸ And when searching for an answer, it is crucial to include questions of economic and political inequality, alongside the question of symbolic representation. After all, to be able to speak seems insufficient to undermine gendered differences in economic and political power.³⁹

A third line of research in which the universality of knowledge is questioned concerns research into non-Western same sex practices. Two historically oriented examples that pursue an exceptionalist agenda in which “Chinese” sexual practices are considered essentially different from “Western” practices are Chow Wah-Shan’s *Postcolonial Tongzhi* and Bret Hinsch’s *Passions of the Cut Sleeve*.⁴⁰ Both readings tend to project an idealized past onto a sinified future. Chow argues that the Chinese attitude towards sexuality, including same-sex acts, has always been tolerant, nonstigmatized, if not downright celebratory. Chinese culture, for him, is “a crystallisation of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, all of which do not consider sex shameful, nor is homosexuality treated as a perverted, sinful act.”⁴¹ Turning again to historical sources, he notes: “This positive praise of sexual enjoyment, regarded as one of the most natural things in human life, fills the pages of many Chinese literary works through the dynasties.”⁴² As long as such sexual enjoyment, be it same-sex or not, did not threaten family responsibilities, Chow adds, it would not lead to any problems in the Chinese societies. He consequently argues for a nonconfrontational-, nonverbal-, and nonsex-oriented model.

Other attempts at exploring Asian queer cultures have been more critical and self-reflexive, most notably the work of Chris Berry, Helen Hok-sze Leung, Song Hwee Lim, Fran Martin, and Audrey Yue.⁴³ According to Chris

Berry, even when concepts such as “gay” and “lesbian” travel globally, they may not mean the same everywhere.⁴⁴ Western discourse is appropriated selectively and indigenized, “to fit local cultural constructions of same-sex eroticism and multiple gender identities.”⁴⁵ In a recent special issue of *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, the editors aimed to provide space for “the abundant heteroglossia of ‘local’ theorizations that inevitably come along with the queer struggles carried out at specific locations.”⁴⁶ The issue includes a piece by Helen Hok-Sze Leung in which she not only critically engages with the already mentioned work by Chow but also digs up queer stories and analyses that have largely escaped the academic gaze, most notably Anson Mak’s *Bisexual Desire*.⁴⁷ Mak’s work, according to Leung, searches for new spaces of thought and writing, a process during which her discomfort with queer and *tongzhi* (同志) discourse becomes increasingly prevalent.⁴⁸ What Leung aptly describes is the queer struggle over meaning, in which theory and everyday life feed each other, propelling the endless and utterly self-reflexive—and hence critical—production of a discursive comfort zone, neither colonized by global theory nor essentialized by local fantasy. Moving from queer discomfort to the production of homosexual identities in Chengdu, the work of Wei Wei shows how gay men navigate between different identity labels: “wandering men” (*piao piao* 飘飘), *tongzhi*, and gay—all of which have their specific cultural references and political implications. The *piao piao* identity is very much characterized by being rootless, associated with outcasts and rebels. Due to such associations, the term *tongzhi* was eagerly employed, after which gay became the vernacular term in the Chengdu gay scene. For mobilization purposes, in Wei Wei’s view, a politics of identity would entail a skillful navigation between these identity labels, making the best use of their cultural and political implications.⁴⁹ Wei’s observation resonates with Lim’s point that “the untidiness of the linguistic and translinguistic practice should suffice to alert us that each discursive mobilization is contingent, contemplated, and at times contested, be it labeling by others or a self-identificatory strategy.”⁵⁰ Studies such as these, in which thick, contextualized, and historicized descriptions of queer (or, by the same token, gendered) lives—or mediated representations of which—are analyzed, may work best to counter the universal pretensions of global theorizations on gender and sexuality. They probe into alternative modes of thinking and living reality, helping to uproot histories and liberate voices that have so far by and large been silenced.

Lost in translation—part two

Insisting on unique knowledge systems that are at odds with the hegemonic theorizations of the West bears the potential of undermining and challenging the latter, giving voice to an academic community that is consistently marginalized in the global academic milieu. Yet, the appeal to native knowledge runs the danger of becoming an essentializing, hegemonic discourse on its own. The danger of the call for localized theories is that “Western” cultural imperialism with its orientalist undertones is being inverted into an equally problematic occidentalist narrative.⁵¹ It threatens to become culturally essentialist and in convenient compliance with a Chinese nationalism and particularism currently so much endorsed by the authorities. Challenging a universalism by a particularism can easily take the form of talking back in inverted stereotypes (“you stress sex, we stress family”). The task we face is that of “criticizing both the hegemonic status of Western theoretical thinking,”⁵² while simultaneously challenging an “idealist insistence on a separate, self-sufficient ‘Chinese tradition’ that should be lined up against the Western one because it is great if not greater.”⁵³

To evoke and celebrate a vocabulary that is considered uniquely Chinese—such as *tongzhi* as a reference to homosexual—may be interesting in that it shows the multiplicity of global gay culture. Yet it can also turn into another essentializing label—assuming if not demanding a universal Chinese gay experience. Chow’s propagation of *tongzhi* culture as a viable alternative for gay culture has been heavily criticized as essentialist, conservative, and patriarchal.⁵⁴ As Wong observes aptly, “the dynamics of global and local gay culture should be explored in a more sophisticated manner that avoids the reification of Chinese culture and the polarization of the West and the non-West.”⁵⁵ Particularly problematic of such a polarization is that it enacts the hegemonic discourse by equating the West with the global, and the non-West with the local—as if only the West has the privilege to universal knowledge claims. This also denies the point that the alleged local has always already been infected by the alleged global, which further undermines the global/local dichotomy. In line with Lim, the local ought to be understood as the already translated condition: “the terms of translation and the question of translatability have to be problematized as a precondition of any travelling theory rather than as mere effects brought about by the transnational exchange.”⁵⁶

Sinified versions of homosexuality produce their own tactics of exclusion, inclined to repeat the basic global structures of hegemony by its banal inversion. They leave out, for example, the Chinese lesbian who identifies with globalized terms such as homosexual and lesbian, who prefers to listen to K. D. Lang's songs, comes out to her family, prefers a provocative way of dressing, demands political rights, and so forth. As Rey Chow remarks, "the advocacy for a return to indigenous theory and culture usually masks, with the violence of 'the West,' the violence of the cultural politics that is *within* an indigenous culture."⁵⁷ Consequently, as Lim convincingly argues, terms such as "homosexual" or "Chinese homosexual," "are not essential qualities but expressions and constructs determined by social, economic, political, cultural, historical, ideological, and discursive forces. It is not *what* they are but *how* they have been constructed, spoken of, mobilized, by whom, for what purposes, to what audiences, and *why* that are the crucial questions."⁵⁸

Furthermore, the occidentalist trap of a particularist reading of gender and sexuality often operates on a logic where the "West" is presented as a unified, Euro-American sphere. However, just as "China" is not one, neither is "the West." More importantly, under current forces of globalization it becomes increasingly urgent to multiply both constructs while exploring their increasing interdependencies, mutual conceptual cannibalizations, and cross-fertilizations. This requires a paradoxical balancing act that navigates between insisting on situated—that is, historically and culturally contingent—knowledges, while at the same time deeply mistrusting any claim to unique particularity. When discussing the importance of critiquing the hegemony of theory flowing from the metropolitan centers in "the West" to the peripheries, Wei-cheng Chu and Fran Martin argue that "we can expect local theories to be less dependent upon metropolitan ones only if the hegemonic status of the latter is relativized or provincialized."⁵⁹ One step is, following Kuan-hsing Chen, to diversify the interlocutors and aim at an intraregional dialogue. By including different sites of "China," the collection of articles in this issue is precisely trying to do that: showing the multivocality of "Chinese," thereby resisting any claim to assumed essential qualities.⁶⁰

The project of diversifying the interlocutors of Western theory can and should, I believe, be carried out in conjunction with efforts to diversify "the West" and, in particular, to scrutinize the hegemony of the USA vis-a-vis the UK and the more peripheral continental Europe.⁶¹ In their essay 'On the Cunning of Imperialist Reason', Bourdieu and Wacquant wrote that globalized theorizations on, for example, race and multiculturalism, tend "to make

one forget that they have their roots in the complex and controversial realities of a particular historical society, now tacitly constituted as model for every other and as yardstick for all things.”⁶² They speak of “false universalizations” and “conceptual barbarisms” that occur when theoretical concepts are applied to and/or translated outside their place of origin. The attraction of American research equals that of Hollywood, pop music, and the Windows operating system⁶³—in which the UK serves as the Trojan horse through which American theory and conceptualization enter the intellectual field of Europe. The consequences of such conceptual imperialism are, if we are to believe the authors, not just academic sloppiness and populism, but profoundly social, cultural, economic, and political. When arguing, rightly, for the urgency to multiply the idea of “China”—that always contested “discursively produced and socially and historically contingent collective entity”⁶⁴—and “Chineseness,” and as such resist any essentialization, it is crucial to push forward a similar political agenda for “the West” and for “Western” theory.

Interdisciplinary, intersectional, and multisited performances

The title of this section refers to the possible answers I would like to explore to the three questions with which this article started: on the question *how* to study, I argue for an interdisciplinary approach; on the question *what* to study, I propose an intersectional take; and on the question *where* to study, I opt for a multisited methodology.

First, interdisciplinarity. The call for interdisciplinarity so as to avoid monodisciplinary biases, if not obsessions, and to arrive at a theoretically sound, critical, and reflexive analysis almost feels like an outdated, worn-out story. Many disciplines are keen to present themselves as very open and hospitable, as cheerfully including insights and methods from other disciplines. But, generally, academic practices remain comfortably in disciplinary enclaves with heavily guarded boundaries. China studies, for example, has by and large refused to take up Edward Said’s challenge to scrutinize the ways in which the production of knowledge on China is implicated in global power imbalances rooted in colonialism and imperialism. In the words of Harootunian, “As for this significant but missed opportunity, it is important to say here that the indifference of Area Studies to Said’s strategic observation meant that it would remain locked in its own enclaves of knowledge and

that the work of rethinking regions outside Europe, what had become marked as the Third World, would pass to English studies and the humanities.”⁶⁵ In proposing more promiscuity between cultural studies and China studies, it becomes possible to challenge the Anglo-Saxon bias of cultural studies,⁶⁶ while simultaneously aiming at more reflection upon the power-knowledge nexus that underpins China studies. As Appadurai remarks, “critical research on globalization requires Area Studies more than ever. But this new kind of Area Studies must be prepared to look at geography, history, language and culture in new ways, not only as conditions and heritages but as horizons and as projects.”⁶⁷ Rather than reifying China as an existing entity, we need to “move into new regionalisms, new mobilities, new cartographies.”⁶⁸

Second, intersectionality. In his book *Global Modernity*, Arif Dirlik laments the demise of class as an analytical and political concept in favor of other labels such as gender and race. The concept of class, according to Dirlik, “has gone out of fashion these days, partly due to the failures of class politics but also because the concept has been the object of systematic forgetting not just in conservative circles but among radicals preoccupied with other concerns such as gender and race.”⁶⁹ In the regionalism of area studies and the constant valorization of the formation of subjectivity in cultural studies, Dirlik is right that questions of politics, and in particular capitalism, tend to be rendered invisible. However, claiming that a focus on one concept necessarily rules out attention to other concepts is questionable, as testified by studies on gender, which frequently relate female experiences and identities to other categories, such as class or the nation-state.⁷⁰ According to Brownell and Wasserstrom, the current proliferation of discourse on gender in China produces a “multiplicity of theoretical perspectives [that] has brought increased attention to the ways that understandings of gender can change according to a person’s life stage, ethnicity, social class, or sexual orientation. We are also paying more attention now than in the past to the ways in which the meanings attached to maleness and femaleness help to structure other identities, such as nationality, ethnicity, social class and so forth.”⁷¹ These words resonate with the afterword of Hershatter’s book, in which she warns against the erection of boundaries producing Chinese women studies as a distinct field. Hershatter proposes to think of women studies not as a field, but as a “conjuncture” involving a constant recombination, flux, and variety of determinants, always “entangled with the tracing out of other processes of subject formation.”⁷²

Intersectionality can help do that, as it locates identity politics at the intersection of two or more aspects of identity, for example, ethnicity and gender. It points at “the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations.”⁷³ The aim of an intersectional approach is to avoid essentializing identities under the rubric of “black” or “woman” by pointing at not only intergroup but also intragroup differences. Crenshaw argues that “intersectionality offers a way of mediating the tension between assertions of multiple identity and the ongoing necessity of group politics.”⁷⁴ While identity politics takes place at the intersection of, for example, being Chinese, being a factory worker, and being a woman, analyses of gender representations should zoom in on these focal points of intersection.⁷⁵

Third, the need for comparative and multisited studies. Following the tendency of China studies to take mainland China as the epicenter of its academic endeavors and the current global fascination for mainland China with its spectacular economic growth and social transformation, epitomized by the hosting of the 2008 Olympiad in Beijing, it becomes increasingly relevant to insist on multiplying if not queering “China” and “Chineseness.”⁷⁶ Different trajectories are possible, one of which is to follow fault lines of differences *within* China. The work of Louisa Schein, for example, shows how the Miao women serve as the feminized keepers of tradition and the exotic others through which Han Chinese can perform their assumed modernity.⁷⁷ Unpacking China’s internal Orientalism and its gendered implications may help to further problematize the imagined community called China. Another option is to move outside mainland China and take more peripheral sites such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and the Chinese diaspora as sites of research.⁷⁸ Such an approach runs the danger of slipping into a narrative of an emergent transnational cultural China, bound by assumed unique cultural traits.⁷⁹ As Ang observed, Tu Weiming’s idea of a cultural China, although located in the periphery, is motivated by another kind of centrism along cultural lines that tends to imprison Chinese as well as Chineseness. To quote Ang’s belligerent response, “if I am inescapably Chinese by *descent*, I am only sometimes Chinese by *consent*. When and how is a matter of politics.”⁸⁰

One way to resist global cultural imbalances is to insist on a comparative approach, either involving different research sites, or locating the comparison *within* the fragmented domain of Chinese gender studies. In her reflections on area studies, Rey Chow argues that its “apparently monolingual, monocultural, or mononational investigations ... should be understood as full-fledged

comparative projects, their precarious and enigmatic enunciations bearing testimony to an interlingual, intercultural, and international historicity that exposes the positivistic limits of the (Western) human sciences.”⁸¹ Any study should involve theoretical and cultural translations that propel *mutual* pollution of concepts and practices, and such pollution, a decidedly positive term to me, may poke holes in our theoretical endeavors, just as it may unsettle any cultural essentialism.⁸²

Most banal but nevertheless important to note is that a continuous reflection upon the choices underpinning the locality of one’s research, and in particular on the essentializations, generalizations, and implicit or explicit exclusions this may produce, remains of paramount significance in *all* academic practices. We need, in other words, to provincialize Asia, China, perhaps even more relentlessly, Europe and North America.⁸³ The punk band Hang on the Box sing that they are “No More Nice Girls.” But then not only girls have lost their innocence and fixity, also boys, heterosexuals, homosexuals, places, countries, concepts, theories, and so on. In an era of lost innocence, when all production of knowledge is haunted by its complicity with power, an interdisciplinary, intersectional, and multisited approach may be one of the few tools we have to identify, understand, and hopefully resist the seduction of both cultural essentialism and cultural relativism.

The contributions

The articles in this special issue have inspired my attempt to reflect upon questions of academic discipline, object of study, and site of research. All of the contributions explore, in my reading, different answers, or better, research angles and trajectories, in relation to these questions. The articles navigate through different sites, include concepts and methods from different disciplines, and resist focusing solely on gender or sexuality, but link these to other identificatory processes.

Sun Wanning explores, based on interviews and media reports analysis, how stories about domestic workers proliferate in Chinese media. With the rapid emergence of an affluent middle class, paid domestic work has become increasingly common in mainland China. “Maid stories” in the media catering to the middle class frequently suggest a link between the figure of the maid and criminality and sexuality. Sun explores the range of gendered positions and modes of sexual subjectivity, that have been articulated in these stories.

Carolyn Cartier shows how Hong Kong female artists negotiate a position in an art world that is dominated by male Beijing visual artists. Compared to Beijing, Hong Kong art occupies a more marginal, underground position, both within the highly commercialized context of Hong Kong as well as globally, in which neither female artists nor Hong Kong are appreciated tokens of difference. Yet, as Cartier shows through a case study of one exhibit-event, “If Hong Kong, A Woman/Traveller,” it is precisely the liminal position of Hong Kong, a city facing significant political change and economic restructuring, which has propelled the rise of a contemporary art movement.

Korean drama appeals to a broad audience, producing a pan-Asian cultural sphere. Irene Yang analyzes how the labeling of Korean drama in Taiwan as a distinct genre is motivated by a politics of gender, ethnicity, and class that are the result of postcolonial nation formation and globalization. Hegemonic processes of distinction are at play, privileging Chinese hegemony, neoliberal globalization, and masculinity—at the expense of predominantly rural women.

Moving further south to Singapore, Kenneth Chan explores the proliferation of gay cultures. Under a regime that is openly hostile towards homosexuality—homosexual acts are illegal under the Penal Code of Singapore—television, cinema and, particularly, theater, are pivotal vehicles for the expression and construction of gay identities. Chan expresses the utopian hope that Singapore will manage to engage with the schism between global openness and the insistence on Asian social and moral values.

Whereas gay men in Singapore are being marginalized on the basis of their sexual identity, Chinese men in the Netherlands are trying to come to terms with a hegemonic discourse that valorizes a strong, powerful, and athletic masculinity. Yiu Fai Chow examines the question of how Chinese-Dutch men negotiate their masculinity in a context where their masculinity is marginal. Chow shows how contemporary transnational popular culture, in this case martial arts films, rather than “indigenous” discourses on Chinese masculinity, opens up possibilities for Chinese men in the Netherlands to articulate and construct different masculine ideals.

Finally, back to mainland China, Harriet Evans presents a historical analysis of representations of gender and sexuality. In today’s China, sex sells, and it presents one of the main metaphors for unbridled consumerist modernity. The body is increasingly presented as a site of consumption and a site of pleasure. At first glance this may seem like another feminist step, somehow resonating with the discourse of “girl power.” In her analysis, Evans warns

against optimistic readings, and shows how the 21st-century Chinese sexed body may actually help to keep gender hierarchies and injustices intact.

Notes

The author would like to thank Yiu Fai Chow and Giselinde Kuipers for commenting on an earlier version of this text and Tak-Wing Ngo for his invitation to edit this special issue.

¹It is worth noting that female diasporic authors such as Jung Chang and Amy Tan tend to attract more international attention and reputation than their male counterparts.

²Paradigms of cultural studies that are most directly relevant for China studies are the critique of Orientalism (Edward Said); subaltern studies (Gayatri Spivak), and the discourse on hybridity (Homi K. Bhabha). For a critical discussion of these paradigms, see Rey Chow, *Ethics after Idealism—Theory—Culture—Ethnicity—Reading* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 2–4; and Harry D. Harootunian, “Postcoloniality’s Unconscious/Area Studies,” in *Learning Places—The Afterlives of Area Studies*, ed. Masao Miyoshi and Harry D. Harootunian (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 150–74. In my reading, postcolonial studies can be grouped under the more general rubric of cultural studies.

³Pierre Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant, “On the Cunning of Imperialist Reason,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 16, no. 1 (1999): 47.

⁴Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991).

⁵Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

⁶See for a list of risks involved in the “not-so-innocent taxonomical choices” one makes when working in Chinese women studies. Gail Hershatler, *Women in China’s Long Twentieth Century* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 2.

⁷Hershatler, *Women in China’s Long Twentieth Century*.

⁸*Ibid.*, 1.

⁹Susan Brownell and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, “Introduction: Theorizing Femininities and Masculinities,” in *Chinese Femininities/Chinese Masculinities—A Reader*, ed. Susan Brownell and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 1–41.

¹⁰Most notably, Tani E. Barlow, ed., *Gender Politics in Modern China: Writing and Feminism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993); Elizabeth Croll, *Socialism and Feminism in China* (London: Routledge, 1978); Harriet Evans, *Women and Sexuality in China: Female Sexuality and Gender since 1949* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997); Christina Gilmartin, Gail Hershatler, Lisa Rofel, and Tyrene White, eds, *Engendering China: Women, Culture, and the State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); Zheng Wang, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment: Oral and Textual Histories* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999); Margery Wolf and Roxane Witke, eds, *Women in Chinese Society* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975); Mayfair Mei-hui Yang, *Spaces of Their Own: Women’s Public Sphere in Transnational China* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); and Marilyn B. Young, ed., *Women in China* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1973).

¹¹Brownell and Wasserstrom, “Introduction,” 5.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³ However, as Brownell and Wasserstrom also observe, studies on “third genders” remain scarce, often focusing on the past, such as the work of Charlotte Furth on sexual anomalies in the late Ming period and Jennifer Jay on eunuchs: Charlotte Furth, “Androgynous Males and Deficient Females: Biology and Gender Boundaries in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century China,” in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michele Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin (London: Routledge, 1993), 479–97; and Jennifer W. Jay, “Another Side of Chinese Eunuch History: Castration, Marriage, Adoption, and Burial,” *Canadian Journal of History* 28, no. 3 (1993): 460–78.

¹⁴ See Arif Dirlik, *Global Modernity—Modernity in the Age of Global Capitalism* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2007); Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity—The Information Age, Economy, Society and Culture—Volume II* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004); and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

¹⁵ In my own research, for instance, I have criticized the hegemonic masculine practices in Chinese rock culture and identified the performative tactics used by female musicians to challenge or circumvent the male hegemony of this cultural field. These include the denial of gender (by insisting on musical qualities), the dramatization of gender (and of sexuality), and the politicization of gender. See Jeroen de Kloet, *Red Sonic Trajectories—Popular Music and Youth in Urban China* (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, 2001). See also Nimrod Baranovitch, *China’s New Voices—Popular Music, Ethnicity, Gender, and Politics, 1978–1997* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 108–89.

¹⁶ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990).

¹⁷ Judith Butler, “Bodily Inscriptions, Performative Subversions (1990),” in *The Judith Butler Reader*, ed. Sarah Salih and Judith Butler (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 114, italics in the original.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 115.

²⁰ Arif Dirlik, “Markets, Culture, Power: The Making of a ‘Second Cultural Revolution’ in China,” *Asian Studies Review* 25, no. 1 (2001): 8.

²¹ Rey Chow, “‘Woman,’ Fetish, Particularism: Articulating Chinese Cinema with a Cross-cultural Problematic,” *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 1, no. 3 (2007): 209–21; Dorothy Ko and Zheng Wang, eds, *Translating Feminisms in China* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007); Song-hwee Lim, “Queer Theory Goes Taiwan,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Queer Theory*, ed. Noreen Giffney and Michael O’Rourke (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008), forthcoming; and Edward Said, “Travelling Theory,” in *The World, The Text, and the Critic*, ed. Edward Said (London: Vintage, 1991), 226–47.

²² My discussion of these discourses is by no means exhaustive. Only a small selection of works, I stress, is used to illustrate the appeal of and claim to local knowledge.

²³ Brownell and Wasserstrom, “Introduction,” 24.

²⁴ Charlotte A. Furth, *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China’s Medical History, 960–1665* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999).

²⁵ Furth, “Androgynous Males and Deficient Females,” 480–1.

²⁶ Brownell and Wasserstrom, “Introduction,” 25–6.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

²⁹ Sasha Su-Ling Welland, "What Women Will Have Been: Reassessing Feminist Cultural Production in China: A Review Essay," *Signs—Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 31, no. 4 (2006): 941.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Dorothy Ko and Wang Zheng, "Translating Feminisms in China," *Gender & History* 18, no. 3 (2006): 468.

³² Ibid.

³³ Jinhua Dai, "Gender and Narration: Women in Contemporary Chinese Film," in *Cinema and Desire—Feminist Marxism and Cultural Politics in the Work of Dai Jinhua*, ed. Jing Wang and Tani E. Barlow (London: Verso, 2002), 99–150; and Yang, *Spaces of Their Own*.

³⁴ Lin Chun, "Whither Feminism: A Note on China," *Signs—Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 26, no. 4 (2001): 1281–6.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Tani E. Barlow, "Globalization, China, and International Feminism," *Signs—Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 26, no. 4 (2001): 1289.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271–313.

³⁹ See the work of Manuel Castells, in particular Volume II of his trilogy on the Network Society, *The Power of Identity*, for a way to analyze both symbolic and material inequalities around the globe.

⁴⁰ Wah-shan Chow, *Houzhimin tongzhi* (Postcolonial *tongzhi*) (Hong Kong: The Hong Kong Tongzhi Study Centre, 1997); and Bret Hinsch, *Passions of the Cut Sleeve—The Male Homosexual Tradition in China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990).

⁴¹ Chow, *Houzhimin tongzhi*, 322.

⁴² Ibid., 323.

⁴³ Chris Berry, Fran Martin, and Audrey Yue, eds, *Mobile Cultures: New Media and Queer Asia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Helen Hok-Sze Leung, *Undercurrents—Queer Culture and Postcolonial Hong Kong* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008); and Song-hwee Lim, *Celluloid Comrades: Representations of Male Homosexuality in Contemporary Chinese Cinemas* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006).

⁴⁴ Chris Berry, "Chris Berry Responds to Dennis Altman," *Australian Humanities Review*, no. 2 (1996), www.australianhumanitiesreview.org/emuse/Globalqueering/berry.html; see, for similar debates in Southeast Asia, Tom Boellstorff, "Dubbing Culture: Indonesian Gay and Lesbian Subjectivities and Ethnography in an Already Globalized World," *American Ethnologist* 30, no. 2 (2003): 225–42; and Peter A. Jackson, "Gay Adaptation, Tom-Dee Resistance and Kathoey Indifference: Thailand's Gender/Sex Minorities and the Episodic Allure of Queer English," in *Speaking in Queer Tongues—Globalization and Gay Language*, ed. William L. Leap and Tom Boellstorff (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 202–30.

⁴⁵ Day Wong, "Rethinking the Coming Home Alternative: Hybridization and Coming out Politics in Hong Kong's Anti-Homophobia Parades," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 8, no. 4 (2007): 600.

⁴⁶ Wei-cheng R. Chu and Fran Martin, "Editorial Introduction: Global Queer, Local Theories," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 8, no. 4 (2007): 483.

⁴⁷ Helen Hok-Sze Leung, "Archiving Queer Feelings in Hong Kong," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 8, no. 4 (2007): 559–71.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ See also Li Yinhe, *Tongxinglian yawenhua* (Subculture of homosexuality) (Beijing: China Today Press, 1998).

⁵⁰ Wei Wei, "'Wandering Men' No Longer Wander Around: The Production and Transformation of Local Homosexual Identities in Contemporary Chengdu, China," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 8, no. 4 (2007): 581.

⁵¹ See Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism—The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies* (London: Penguin, 2004); and Xiaomei Chen, *Occidentalism—Theory of Counter Discourse in Post-Mao China* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002).

⁵² Rey Chow, *Women and Chinese Modernity* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), xiii.

⁵³ Ibid., xv.

⁵⁴ Leung, "Archiving Queer Feelings in Hong Kong," 566; Matthew H. Sommer, "The Penetrated Male in Late Imperial China—Judicial Constructions and Social Stigma," *Modern China* 3, no. 2 (1997): 140–80; and Wong, "Rethinking the Coming Home Alternative," 603–6.

⁵⁵ Wong, "Rethinking the Coming Home Alternative," 606.

⁵⁶ Lim, "Queer Theory Goes Taiwan."

⁵⁷ Rey Chow, *Ethics after Idealism*, 9, italics in the original.

⁵⁸ Lim, *Celluloid Comrades*, 13, italics in the original.

⁵⁹ Chu and Martin, "Editorial Introduction," 484.

⁶⁰ Kuan-hsing Chen, *Qu diguo: Yazhou zuowei fangfa* (Towards de-imperialization: Asia as method) (Taipei: Xingren, 2006)

⁶¹ As Lim remarks, "It cannot be over-emphasised that Anglo-American representations are no less culturally specific than non-Anglo-American ones, and the persistent assumption of universality by the former, even within the confines of Anglo-American scholarship, is increasingly untenable in this globalised age." Lim, "Queer Theory Goes Taiwan," forthcoming.

⁶² Bourdieu and Wacquant, "On the Cunning of Imperialist Reason," 42.

⁶³ Ibid., 46.

⁶⁴ Chris Berry, "If China Can Say No, Can China Make Movies? Or, Do Movies Make China? Rethinking National Cinema and National Agency," *boundary2* 25, no. 3 (1998): 131.

⁶⁵ Harootunian, "Postcoloniality's Unconscious/Area Studies," 167. See also Laurie J. Sears, "Postcolonial Identities, Feminist Criticism, and Southeast Asian Studies," in *Knowing Southeast Asian Subjects*, ed. Charles Keynes, Vicente Rafael, and Laurie J. Sears (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2007), 35–74.

⁶⁶ For a wonderful example doing just that, see Ackbar Abbas and John Nguyet Erni, eds, *Internationalizing Cultural Studies—An Anthology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005).

⁶⁷ Arjun Appadurai, *Globalization and Area Studies: The Future of a False Opposition* (Amsterdam: Centre for Asian Studies, 2000), 14.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 15.

⁶⁹ Dirlik, *Global Modernity*, 120–1.

⁷⁰ See, among many others, the work of Evans, *Women and Sexuality in China*; and Gilmartin, Hershatter, Rofel, and White, eds, *Engendering China*.

⁷¹ Brownell and Wasserstrom, "Introduction," 24.

⁷² Hershatter, *Women in China's Long Twentieth Century*, 107.

⁷³ Leslie McCall, "The Complexity of Intersectionality," *Signs—Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30, no. 3 (2005): 1771–800.

⁷⁴ Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," in *Identities: Race, Class, Gender, and Nationality*, ed. Linda Alcoff and Eduardo Mendieta (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 191.

⁷⁵ McCall distinguishes three approaches that aim to manage the complexity produced by an intersectional analysis. The approaches differ in "how they understand and use analytical categories to explore the complexity of intersectionality in social life," McCall, "The Complexity of Intersectionality," 1773. The first approach is called *anticategorical* complexity and is driven by a continuous deconstruction of analytical categories. The second approach focuses on *intracategorical* complexity, which aims at thick descriptions of one group to reveal its heterogeneity. The third, *intercategorical*, approach focuses on differences and inequalities between groups, which requires the provisional use of categories.

⁷⁶ See Jeroen de Kloet, "Cosmopatriot Contaminations," in *Cosmopatriots—On Distant Belongings and Close Encounters*, ed. Jeroen de Kloet and Edwin Jurriens (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 133–54; and Song-hwee Lim, "Queering Chineseness: Searching for Roots and the Politics of Shame in (Post)Colonial Singapore," in *Cosmopatriots*, 75–92.

⁷⁷ Louisa Schein, "Gender and Internal Orientalism in China," *Modern China* 23, no. 1 (1997): 69–98.

⁷⁸ Van Schendel observes that India functions as the central court in South Asian studies. Scholars who study places such as Vietnam or Burma or borderlands such as Madagascar "may occasionally be invited to court, but they will never be included in the power elite." Willem van Schendel, "Geographies of Knowing, Geographies of Ignorance: Jumping Scale in Southeast Asia," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 20, no. 6 (2002): 651. A similar and increasingly evident case can be drawn up for mainland China and Japan in East Asian studies, and arguably in Asian studies.

⁷⁹ Weiming Tu, ed., *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994).

⁸⁰ Ien Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese—Living Between Asia and the West* (London: Routledge, 2001), 36.

⁸¹ Rey Chow, *The Age of the World Target—Self-Referentiality in War, Theory, and Comparative Work* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

⁸² See, for the idea of translation as a moment of pollution, de Kloet, "Cosmopatriot Contaminations."

⁸³ Cf. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe—Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

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