Cosmopatriots

On Distant Belongings and Close Encounters

Editors Edwin Jurriëns
Jeroen de Kloet

THAMYRIS **INTERSECTING** PLACE, SEX AND RACE

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Cosmopatriots

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Mission Statement

Thamyris Intersecting: Place, Sex, and "Race"

Thamyris/Intersecting is a new series of edited volumes with a critical, interdisciplinary focus.

Thamyris/Intersecting's mission is to rigorously bring into encounter the crucial insights of black and ethnic studies, gender studies, and queer studies, and facilitate dialogue and confrontations between them. *Intersecting* shares this focus with *Thamyris*, the socially committed international journal which was established by Jan Best en Nanny de Vries, in 1994, out of which *Intersecting* has evolved. The sharpness and urgency of these issues is our point of departure, and our title reflects our decision to work on the cutting edge.

We envision these confrontations and dialogues through three recurring categories: place, sex, and race. To us they are three of the most decisive categories that order society, locate power, and inflict pain and/or pleasure. Gender and class will necessarily figure prominently in our engagement with the above. *Race*, for we will keep analyzing this ugly, much-debated concept, instead of turning to more civil concepts (ethnicity, culture) that do not address the full disgrace of racism. *Sex*, for sexuality has to be addressed as an always active social strategy of locating, controlling, and mobilizing people, and as an all-important, not necessarily obvious, cultural practice. And *place*, for we agree with other cultural analysts that this is a most productive framework for the analysis of situated identities and acts that allow us to move beyond narrow identitarian theories.

The title of the new book series points at what we, its editors, want to do: *think together*. Our series will not satisfy itself with merely demonstrating the complexity of our times, or with analyzing the shaping factors of that complexity. We know how to theorize the intertwining of, for example, sexuality and race, but pushing these intersections one step further is what we aim for: How can this complexity be understood in practice? That is, in concrete forms of political agency, and the efforts of self-reflexive, contextualized interpretation. How can different socially and theoretically relevant issues be *thought together*? And: how can scholars (of different backgrounds) and activists think together, and realize productive alliances in a radical, transnational community?

We invite proposals for edited volumes that take the issues that *Intersecting* addresses seriously. These contributions should combine an activist-oriented perspective with intellectual rigor and theoretical insights, interdisciplinary and transnational perspectives. The editors seek cultural criticism that is daring, invigorating and self-reflexive; that shares our commitment to thinking together. Contact us at intersecting@let.leidenuniv.nl.

…a certain idea of cosmopolitanism, <u>an other</u>, has not yet arrived, <u>perhaps</u>

- *If it has (<u>indeed</u>) arrived…*
- *… then, one has perhaps not recognised it.*

Jacques Derrida

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Introduction: Cosmopatriots: On Distant Belongings and Close Encounters

Jeroen de Kloet and
Edwin Jurriëns

Asian Crisis?

Since the last *fin de siècle,* the East and Southeast Asian region has undergone turbulent events and developments: regime changes, economic crises, natural disasters, terrorism attacks. Some of these experiences have directly affected peoples' notion of the nation-state – such as Hong Kong's "transfer," to use but one of the many euphemisms employed to describe that rainy Tuesday on 1 July 1997, from British back to Chinese hands; but also the 1998 fall of Suharto and subsequent calls for *Reformasi*, decentralization and regional autonomy in Indonesia. Although groups in society have expressed their disappointment or anger about their governments, this has not always – surprisingly perhaps – reduced their "patriotism," or love for their country. The Asian financial crisis at the end of the 1990s was paralleled by an increase, rather than a decrease, of different tropes of patriotism.

Perceptions have changed not only due to developments or events within the boundaries of the nation-state, such as tendencies towards regional autonomy (strengthening a love for the region rather than the nation), but also because of altered international configurations. For instance, under the influence of the highly increased globalization of trade, media and education, different groups in different Asian societies have become real or virtual travelers, engaging in multiple cultural experiences. The "cosmopolitanism" of these groups may and does feed into their patriotic belongings, and vice versa. This book will analyze mediated articulations of what we have coined "cosmopatriotism" in popular cultures and arts of East and Southeast Asia. But why, one may ask, did we opt for this neologism?

Cosmopatriotism in the age of intense globalization

With the perceived rise of global terrorism, which may well be interpreted as one of the symptoms of our risk society (Beck), or as a quite sinister manifestation of a profoundly networked world (Castells), the academic and social quest for ethical alternatives or answers has rapidly increased. Religious fundamentalism, vibrant nationalism and global terrorism are intricately embedded in processes of intense globalization. Over the past years, a more cosmopolitan take on our globalized world has been proposed as one possible answer to the crises we are facing today (Appiah; Beck; Nussbaum; Turner). In the words of Beck: "after communism and neoliberalism, the next big idea is needed – and this could be cosmopolitanism" (20–21). It is a term that can be traced back to the Cynics of the fourth century BC, where it signalled "a rejection of the conventional view that every civilized person belonged to a community among communities" (Appiah xiv). More than 200 years ago, Immanuel Kant, who, ironically, never left Königsberg himself, referred to cosmopolitanism as being a citizen of two worlds – *cosmos* and *polis* (Beck 18).

With Kant, the term became intrinsically associated with the Enlightenment, probably also adding to its potential imperialistic undertone, as the terms of condition for world citizenship seem to be set by the West. Consequently, as Van der Veer states, it is a trope of colonial and secular modernity: "Cosmopolitanism is the Western engagement with the rest of the world and that engagement is a colonial one, which simultaneously transcends the national boundaries and is tied to them" (10). Indeed, also today, the term evokes the image of the affluent world citizen, who in his (rather than her) Italian hand-made suit flies elegantly across the globe, attending business meetings or conferences, equally at home in Jakarta as in New York. In this view, the cosmopolitans are those who hold passports, have jobs and are fervent collectors of air miles. These are, indeed, mostly white men.

But, in our view, the term can and ought to be rescued from its elitist connotations. In his book "Cosmopolitanism – Ethics in a World of Strangers," Appiah forcefully argues for the ethical need, if not obligation, to feel responsible to strangers, one that necessitates us to operate from a logic of "universality plus difference" (151). In his lucid story, in which he points at the risks of cultural preservation and its underlying belief in purity and essence, a position that he shares with Sen, Appiah presents a deeply global, interconnected perspective on our contemporary world. It is relevant that Appiah writes of ethics, rather than idealism. The colonial and secular trope of cosmopolitanism may well be called an ideal, referring to an idealism, "in the sense of idealization, of valorization; but also in the sense of turning-into-an-idea" (Chow xxi). Yet, as Chow aptly remarks, history shows that idealism is always anchored in violence (xxii). The move from cosmopolitanism as an ideal towards an ethics of cosmopolitanism implies a move away from an authoritative moral discourse.

To paraphrase Chow once more:

to propose a kind of ethics after idealism is thus not to confirm the attainment of an entirely independent critical direction, but rather to put into practice a supplementing imperative – to follow, to supplement idealism doggedly with non-benevolent readings, in all the dangers that supplementarity entails. (xxii)

Yet, while Appiah points at the importance of acknowledging differences, and thus provides a space for the local and the national within the cosmopolitan, his sole focus on the ethics of cosmopolitanism runs the danger of reinstating its assumed opposition to patriotism. Martha Nussbaum strongly opposes patriotism to cosmopolitanism, devaluing the first for its narrow-mindedness while celebrating the latter for its ethical righteousness (Nussbaum). Also Ulrich Beck, in his plea for a methodological cosmopolitanism in the social sciences, seemingly falls into the trap of juxtaposing the national with the cosmopolitan when he writes that:

the national perspective is a monologic imagination, which excludes the otherness of the other. The cosmopolitan perspective is an alternative imagination, an imagination of alternative ways of life and rationalities, which include the otherness of the other. (23)

For Beck, the national is no longer the national, instead, it has to be rediscovered as the "internalised global" (23). But on observing the passionate intensity with which citizens relate to "their" country, one may wonder if this theoretical globalization of the local resonates with everyday realities. Rather than trying to insist on globalization – as indeed, at this juncture in time, the global is located within the local (Fabian 5) – it may prove more helpful to acknowledge and unpack the dialectics that exist between the local, the national, the regional and the global.

What, in the age of a new political order of globalization that has been so aptly described as one of Empire by Hardt and Negri (2000), remains of the nation-state? Already in 1927, Sun Yat-sen argued that nationalism is, in fact, the necessary basis of cosmopolitanism:

[Western colonial powers] are now advocating cosmopolitanism to inflame us, declaring that, as the civilization of the world advances and as mankind's vision enlarges, nationalism becomes too narrow, unsuited to the present age, and hence, that we should espouse cosmopolitanism…We must understand that cosmopolitanism grows out of nationalism; if we want to extend cosmopolitanism we must first establish strongly our own nationalism. If nationalism cannot become strong, cosmopolitanism certainly cannot prosper. (Cheah 30)

This is not to say that nationalism is without its dangers, both official nationalism that helps to legitimize the power of the nation-state's government, as well as unofficial nationalism that stirs up fierce popular sentiments, are strong forces of exclusion and aggression. But to juxtapose nationalism to cosmopolitanism ignores the intricate mutual dependencies between both structures of feeling.

Here we follow Van der Veer's assertion that "instead of perceiving cosmopolitanism and nationalism as alternatives, one should perhaps recognize them as the

poles in a dialectical relationship" (10). Beck, somehow contradicting his earlier assertion, also warns against this juxtaposition when he explains his concept of methodological cosmopolitanism, which

> *rejects the either-or principle and assembles the this-as-well-as-that principle – like "cosmopolitan patriots," patriots of two worlds. What the cosmologic signifies in its thinking and living in terms of inclusive oppositions (including nature into society etc.) and rejecting the logic of exclusive oppositions, which characterized methodological nationalism and first modernity sociology.* (Beck 19, italics his)

It may all boil down to a rather simple observation: we need roots in order to have wings (Beck 19). It is not a question of either roots or routes – to paraphrase Clifford – but more so of the balancing between both, if not their mutual cannibalization. Rather than searching for the truly globalized cosmopolitans, we are looking for the postcolonial, rooted cosmopolitans. Two terms reign when it comes to conceptualizing the roots: patriotism – which stands for love for the country – and nationalism – referring to respect for the state (Turner 49). Since our primary interest lies in the affective, passionate sense of belonging to a certain locale, we opted for patriotism in the book's title. But, in practice, throughout this volume, both terms – patriotism and nationalism – more often than not overlap profoundly.

So what, then, does this vague abstraction "a certain locale" mean? Is patriotism necessarily linked to the nation-state? According to Arjun Appadurai, "patriotism – like history – is unlikely to end, but its objects may be susceptible to transformation, in theory and practice" (416). Patriotism does not necessarily refer to the nation-state as its object of belonging, but can also point at either more specific locales, such as the Global City (Sassen), or more globalized spaces, such as "the queer nation" (Berlant and Freeman). This latter globalized or cosmopolitan trope of patriotism provides a more displaced logic of social organization – with its particular materializations in, for example, bars, cruising parks and dancing halls, coupled to a global imagery of cult icons, pop stars and role models, ranging from *The Sound of Music* and the *Eurovision Song Contest* to *Madonna* and the *Weather Girls* ("It's raining men!"). But also the queer nation has its specific, indeed national, articulations. Queer patriotism hence thrives on a double articulation, one related to locality, the other to sexuality. After all, being queer in Hong Kong remains profoundly different from being queer in Amsterdam. Kylie Minogue, for example, is both a global queer icon as well as an Australian national celebrity – and for that reason is being read and used differently by Australian queers then by, say, Dutch queers. But precisely such double articulations hold the potential, as the chapters in this book will show, to trouble a univocal, uncritical love for one's country. Cosmopatriotism thus refers to forms of patriotisms that go beyond the singular love for a locality, just as it moves beyond the, by now saturated, formula of hyphenation, such as Asian-American (Appadurai 413). Instead, it searches for the double articulation that is placed and displaced, territorialized and deterritorialized, at the same time.

To insist on the mutual relationship between patriotism and cosmopolitanism raises the urgent question of what kind of local belonging may feed into cosmopolitanism. A thin, playful and at most lukewarm belonging, one that is inherently critical and that resists a univocal celebration of the local, seems to come closest to our understanding of the patriotism within cosmopatriotism. To engage with "the Other" requires a certain distance from oneself, an ironic distance. According to Turner,

irony may only be possible once one already has an emotional commitment to a place. Patriotism, in this sense, may not only be compatible with irony, but its precondition. Irony may not be comfortable with hot nationalistic commitments, but patriotic love of country is compatible with both the capacity for ironic distance and regard for others. Perhaps irony without patriotism may be too cool or thin to provide for identification and involvement with place and with politics. (55)

But cosmopolitan citizenship will be characterized by predominantly cool loyalties and thin patterns of solidarities, though ones that are neither too cool nor too flimsy (Turner 59). Consequently, for Turner, "the principal component of cosmopolitan virtue is irony, because the understanding of other cultures is assisted by an intellectual distance of one's own national or local culture" (57). This arguably essentialist call for self-reflexivity does point, in our understanding, to the urgency to couple rather than de-couple patriotism to cosmopolitanism. It is our contention that art and popular culture, in particular, provide the ideal playground or stage for cosmopatriotism. Cosmopatriots are flexible citizens (Ong) who navigate – in some cases voluntarily, in other cases forced by circumstances – between their ironic loyalty to the state and their sense of longing for and belonging to the world. The mediaspace, being at once local and global, provides ample opportunity, as we hope to show in this volume, to unfold – that is: perform, construct and interrogate – contemporary cosmopatriotic articulations in East and Southeast Asian cultures.

It may come as no surprise that we are deeply inspired by the acclaimed volume of Cheah and Robins, *Cosmopolitics*: *Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation.* While we agree with, if not admire, the arguments presented in that volume, we aim, first, to insist on thinking and feeling simultaneously beyond and *within* the nation. Second, we will focus on art and popular culture, domains that, in our view, are crucial vehicles for scrutinizing contemporary Cosmopatriot structures of feeling. Our third choice, to focus on East and Southeast Asia only, adds to a relatively stronger empirical grounding of this volume.

Cosmopatriot sites: Sex, Space, Body and Race

The authors in this book provide reconceptualizations of cosmopolitanism, patriotism and globalization on the basis of the in-depth analysis of particular embodiments of cosmopatriotism in specific cultural contexts. They discuss such diverse cultural sites as Hong Kong, Indonesia, China, Singapore, the United States, South Korea and Australia,

and such diverse media as film, literature, the fine arts, radio, music, television and mobile phones. Their contributions show that the media, at both sides of the arbitrary divide between high art and popular culture, are crucial vehicles for the creation and expression of, or reflections upon, cosmopatriotism. At the same time, they demonstrate that the media obtain different shapes and fulfil different functions in different cultural spaces. In this way, the chapters do not just repeat, but bring alive and problematize theoretically informed debates that produced concepts such as "glocalization" (Robertson), and contribute to a new type of ethnography, which underscores the role of the media in contemporary reconfigurations of the relations between time, place and identity.

We have organized the chapters into four main categories, which represent cultural fields that have had impact on, and been affected by, mediations of cosmopatriotism. These fields are sex, space, body and race, each of which provides specific ways of mediating interactions between cosmopolitanism and patriotism, as the case studies will make clear. Our categorization is anything but solid; most chapters fit easily into more than one category. Nevertheless, we believe that certain chapters are more suitable for the exploration of a certain category than others, because of their specific emphasis or creative approach.

The chapters in the "sex" section address the assertion that cosmopolitanism is not synonymous with universalism, but "rooted" in time(s) and place(s), and that patriotism cannot be traced back to cultural essences, but depends on contemporary contextual circumstances. For instance, in her discussion of three recent Hong Kong films, Helen Hok-Sze Leung argues that the films represent a love for the harbor city that cannot be reduced to Chinese patriotism, but is, rather, similar to the queer-erotic feelings as depicted in the films, which embody

> *an affect that sustains bonds between people that are not premised on pre-established common identities, [but] arises out of our everyday dependence on each other, a need for mutual service in time of crisis, and a shared knowledge that the "future" may never arrive and that the spontaneous present provides the real basis on which community may be forged.* (30)

This type of love for Hong Kong also exemplifies a "rooted cosmopolitanism," as it is "borne not of detachment from places but from entangled roots that spring from multiple locations and temporalities" (32).

Tom Boellstorff explains that the patriotism of *lesbi* and *gay* Indonesians is not based on tradition either (in this case: the cultures of ethnic groups such as the Javanese and Balinese), but in a process in which they "dub" the "Western" sexual subject positions they are introduced to by the national and international mass media. In this dubbing process, the subject positions remain shaped by the international discourse, but are also filtered through an Indonesian nationalistic lens, as a result of which Indonesian *lesbi* and *gay* "imagine themselves as one national element in a global patchwork of lesbian and gay national subjectivities" (64).

Discussing "Chineseness" in Singapore, Song Hwee Lim demonstrates that the process of roots-searching itself is highly politicized and governed by capitalist imperatives. He proposes a queer reading of Singaporean Chineseness, which deconstructs roots-searching as an "anxiety of castration," or fear of the discontinuation of the officially propagated, single version of Chineseness. It allows for alternative versions of Chineseness by encouraging Singaporeans to be "rootless" and "unreproductive," and to "come out of the closet," no longer be ashamed, if they are not willing or not able to follow the official demand to speak Chinese and adhere to Confucianism.

The chapters on "space" in this volume provide concrete illustrations of how alternative physical or virtual environments shape alternative cosmopatriot subjectivities. In his essay, Yiu Fai Chow describes his dilemmas in "performing" his nationality in the context of the political hand-over of Hong Kong to China. Both as a student and as a songwriter, he has been faced with the problem of negotiating a tradition of *minzu gequ* popular songs, which express a Chinese nationalistic pride of "common descent, common destiny, common enemy" (101). With his song "Yellow People," Chow, now living in the Netherlands, attempted to create his own space and present his own story, which was supposed to include "more histories, more possibilities and ultimately, more me, instead of us" (101), although he could not foresee his intentions would become reversed in the further production process of the song.

Writing on developments in radio journalism of the late- and post-Suharto period in Indonesia, Edwin Jurriëns demonstrates that commercialism does not necessarily exclude the creation of cosmopatriot subject positions, and that these subject positions transcend distinctions between "high art" and "popular culture," as they can also be mediated through cheap and widely available mass media such as radio. He analyzes how commercial and community stations, partly basing their formats on the examples of international broadcasters, have enabled the reversal of roles in on-the-air communications, and allowed audiences to play a role in radio production and management. In this way, Indonesian radio creates a space for ordinary citizens that "lives up to, contradicts, alters or abuses the ideals of the Habermasian concept of the public sphere" (106).

Jeroen de Kloet focuses on artists working in three different localities: Beijing (hip-hop band Yin Tsang), New York (visual artist Xu Bing) and Hong Kong (movie director and actor Stephen Chow). Coming from different artistic and ethnic directions, and working with different media, these artists all negotiate interactions between cosmopolitanism and Chinesesness. According to De Kloet, these negotiations involve acts of cultural translation – similar to the "dubbing" practices described by Boellstorff – "in which both the assumed 'original' and its alleged 'copy' are being polluted" (135). These manifestations of "banal cosmopatriotism" contain ambiguities and ambivalences, but also open up "avenues to rethink (and poke fun at) Chineseness and its alleged others" (151) by resisting cultural essentialisms.

The contributions to the "body" section in this volume all discuss the human body as a specific site inscribed with the ongoing dialectics between patriotism and cosmopolitanism. In their photo essay, Stephen Epstein and Jon Dunbar present pictures of skinheads in South Korea. In the accompanying written essay, they explain how the Korean skinheads use the iconography of, and establish direct bonds with, skinheads elsewhere, but at the same time reverse and undermine part of the international skinhead ideology. For instance, what they take from "white power" music is "pride and attitude" (165), but not racist ideology.

Emma Baulch discusses an all-male rock band and a female pop singer from Indonesia, who have produced "self-images" in the form of video-clips and an autobiographical picture book, respectively. While the rock band's video clips present the body as "a corporeal index of authenticity," the female singer's autobiography uses the body "to register transformative desires" (192). Transformation and authenticity are both realized through consumerism, which has cosmopolitan, leveling effects "by assuming that one can consume one's way into, and become, the Other" (198), or: one's real self; quite similar to the way in which the Koreans described by Epstein and Dunbar appropriate international skinhead culture for patriotic purposes. At the same time, Baulch observes, however, that consumerism – in media consumption as well as media production – excludes people, as it introduces "taste regimes" which only the Indonesian middle class with its bourgeois privileges can live up to.

Michelle Antoinette discusses how two visual artists from Indonesia, Heri Dono and Mella Jaarsma, have been represented in international art exhibition spaces. In Mella Jaarsma's works in particular, the role of the body in negotiating processes of "deterritorialization" is accentuated. One of the works described by Antoinette consists of costumes made of animal skins, through which Jaarsma "urges us to consider how our encounters with strangers take place at the level of the body, as well as how skin performs a peculiar interplay of containing and exposing the subject" (218). Jaarsma also organized culinary performances, in which people were invited to digest different types of animal meats, thereby "consuming strangers" or "inhabiting the other" (223).

The three contributions under the caption of "race" recapture some of the main themes in the book, and illustrate that notions such as "Koreanness" and "Chineseness" can put high demands on what people consume and produce. Kyongwon Yoon argues that the way in which South Korean youth use mobile phone technology is determined to a large extent by *cheong,* which refers to a kind of affection and intimacy in relationships that is considered typically Korean. Yoon describes how the Korean youth, sometimes with nationalistic motives or in racist terms, deploy *cheong* to maintain "local boundaries" in their usage of mobile phone technology; in "humanizing" the technology; or in using the technology for extending relationship beyond the family. Thus the Korean case shows how a global technology is being reshaped in a local framework of ideological norms and imperatives.

Francis Maravillas argues that Chinese artists who have “gone South” and work in Australia are often haunted by “the specter of Chineseness” (255). This specter influences their choice of subject matter, style, technique and medium. At the same time, however, their works represent “cultural translations” in which the unique circumstances of each of the migratory trajectories of the artists is represented and reflected upon. These translations transform the notion of Chineseness by providing it with an “afterlife” that is similar to the cultural “dirt” analyzed by De Kloet.

Liwen Qin’s essay, finally, provides concrete examples of how Chinese artists participating in international exhibitions have to deal with, and are influenced by, the discourses of postcolonialism, anti-orientalism and nationalism as used by the art critics in their home country. Her account sums up some of the dominant ideological narratives that have also shaped the intersections between patriotism and cosmopolitanism encountered and undergone by other Asians in other contexts. She aptly asks the critics who have aimed “their vision and guns at internationally renowned artists,” whether they themselves have not adopted “the other’s vision” to look at themselves. (288–289).

Having compiled this collection of thought-provoking articles and essays, we believe that this question – about who is looking at whom with what kind of perspective or intention – needs to be asked over and over again in the analysis of any actor involved in any type of “cosmopatriotism,” although, by definition, the answer may never be free of ambiguities and uncertainties. In the closing essay of this volume, Rey Chow establishes a connection between cosmopatriotism and Said’s work on orientalism, and consequently pushes forward urgent questions of power, equality and global capitalism. With her, we share the wish that this volume may contribute to our understanding of contemporary articulations of cosmopatriotism, and their ethical and political implications, while at the same time provoking questions about the “discontents” of cosmopatriotism that remain to be answered.

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Let's Love Hong Kong: A Queer Look At Cosmopatriotism

Helen Hok-Sze Leung

ABSTRACT

This chapter draws on an analysis of three queer Hong Kong films: *Island tales, Maps of Sex and Love* and *Ho-Yuk: Let's Love Hong Kong*. They all represent an ambiguous yet strong love for the postcolonial city that cannot be reduced to Chinese patriotism, given their focus on cosmopolitan queer subjects and the underlying yet pervasive trope of the everyday and the mundane. In the context of dramatic and unstable political, economic and social upheavals that continue to haunt Hong Kong, the love for Hong Kong cannot be reduced to patriotism. At the same time, the cosmopolitan aspirations of the city produce rather than reduce social insecurity. The films studied in this chapter respond to the crisis, not by attempting to harmonize contradictions, but, instead, they explore more radical, creative and queer ways of living with each other. The terrain of erotic desire, as explored in the films, offers space for expressions of "rooted cosmopolitanism."

Introduction

Cosmopatriotism sells. The tactic is nowhere more apparent than in the current advertising campaign of the Hong Kong Tourism Board. Headlined with the slogan "Asia's World City," the campaign juxtaposes contrasting images to portray Hong Kong as a modern, fast-moving, global city that has, at the same time, sustained its roots in China's "five-thousand-year-old history." The numerous promotional videos, broadcast on television and posted on the Tourism Board's website, proffer two types of images: markers of global modernity like skyscrapers, the stock exchange, sophisticated technology, and busy urban professionals on the one hand, and markers of

local heritage such as tea ceremonies, temples, tai-chi masters, junks, and bird markets on the other. Hong Kong's self-image, as marketed by the Tourism Board, plays up its cosmopolitan belonging in the world while underscoring its cultural and historical ties to Chinese tradition. Yet, despite the promotional videos' flashy jump cuts that work so hard to invoke Hong Kong's vivacious movement between its globality and its locality, the city's recent political development and social mood cast a shadow of irony over these images. In the videos entitled "Tai Chi" and "Feng Shui," harmony and balance are celebrated as Chinese virtues. Such rhetoric of "harmony," however, has been used most frequently as an ideological justification for political capitulation to the Chinese state. For instance, after the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC) made the constitutionally dubious move in April of 2004 to "interpret" Hong Kong's Basic Law and flatly rejected the proposal for full direct elections in 2007–8, high-ranking Chinese officials repeatedly appealed to the "patriotism" and "understanding" of Hong Kong people, while touting the benefits of gradual and harmonious development of Hong Kong's political system. Dissent from pro-democracy groups was thus implicitly characterized as disruptive and unpatriotic. In another video entitled "Heritage," researcher Nevin Lam observes in an almost elegiac tone: "Hong Kong has moved so fast that we now only have museums to remind us of whence we came." While the video is meant to commend the efforts of Hong Kong's museums, it unwittingly betrays the grim reality of Hong Kong's urban overdevelopment, which has been rapidly eroding historic architecture, old neighborhoods and attendant ways of life. In an impassioned article entitled "Hong Kong, Where Are You Going?" that generated much debate at the end of 2004, when a controversial government proposal to develop an "international cultural district" in West Kowloon was the talk of the town, Taiwanese scholar Long Yingtai critiques the incessant drive in Hong Kong's urban planning to impose the aesthetic and values of Central (Hong Kong's financial district and richest area) throughout the city (A4). In this light, Hong Kong's cosmopolitanism has often served as a justification for a class-specific form of urbanization, at the expense of historical preservation. Finally, what is most ironic about the Tourism Board videos is that there are, in fact, serious contradictions in postcolonial Hong Kong: between its drive for "world city" status and its sense of self-identity; between long-term public interests and the interests of the business elite which also happens to be the dominant political force in the city; between the political constraints set by the Chinese state and the majority's yearning for full democracy and political autonomy. These contradictions are a source of sharp contention and no amount of *Tai Chi* or *Feng Shui* can harmonize them away. Yet, even amidst such tension, there is also a palpable sense of attachment amongst the populace to the city, a *love* of Hong Kong as a home, a place of shared memory and culture. The slogan "Love China. Love Hong Kong" (*Ai guo ai gang)*, which is being bandied about so much by politicians and businessmen alike, attempts to hijack

such sentiment for a coherent patriotic cause: so that "loving China" implies capitulation to Chinese demands while "loving Hong Kong" means a commitment to capitalist visions of free-market economic development and ceaseless urbanization. Yet, is such "cosmopatriotism" the only possible articulation of love for Hong Kong? The answer is an emphatic no. Even as happy tourists consume glossy images of Hong Kong without ironic reflections, pro-democracy activists, broadcasters, writers, filmmakers, artists and ordinary citizens are actively fighting to reconfigure the parameters of the debates and to express a different sentiment of love for their city. Instead of a manipulated harmonizing between cosmopolitanism and patriotism, these voices of dissent realign these sentiments and complicate the understanding of their significance for postcolonial Hong Kong.

In this article, I will explore such voices through the cinema, by analyzing three films from the margins of the once thriving but now ailing commercial film industry. Ironically, the death pangs of the commercial industry has diverted talents to the independent sector and may, in due course, lead to a rejuvenation of smaller, more experimental productions and the expansion of what has been termed the "I-generations" (Hong Kong Film Archive). Even though most independent productions are usually limited to very short theatrical runs, or confined to special screenings at the Arts Center and in film festivals at home and abroad, they also enjoy a potentially wider-reaching "afterlife" on VCD and DVD. Films about sexual and gender minorities, in particular, often continue to be disseminated amongst those minority communities long after their initial theatrical runs. For instance, Kit Hung's 2001 feature *I Am Not What You Want,* about the "first love" stories of two college-age boys, remained on the best-selling VCD chart of HMV for months after its film festival debut. The possibility of webcast and Internet downloads, especially for the distribution of micro-shorts, also signals the emergence of a new channel of reception. In the long run, distribution strategies that seek to nurture and extend this "afterlife," combined with increased access to affordable digital production technology, will likely result in more independent voices that are sustained not only by arts councils and film festivals, but also by an alternative audience, especially those in minority communities who hunger for representations that are rarely found in mainstream media. Thus, despite their admittedly limited reception in commercial theatres and film festivals, the films discussed in this paper retain the potential to reach a wider and more diverse audience in their continuing "afterlife."

Island Tales, Maps of Sex and Love, and *Ho-Yuk: Let's Love Hong Kong* are cinematic meditations on the predicament of postcolonial Hong Kong. All three films, I will argue, offer a provocative understanding of cosmopolitanism and express a love for Hong Kong that is not reducible to Chinese patriotism. Rather, such love can be understood as an affect rooted in memories and shared experiences of the familiar and the everyday, but unassimilated into ideological abstractions of communal categories such as "the Chinese nation." These films are also characterized by narrative

and visual experimentation, and an intellectualism that is rarely welcome in Hong Kong's mainstream cinema. At the same time, they show a preoccupation with queer bodies and relationships as they inhabit Hong Kong's cosmopolitan city space.

It is no accident that these films choose to explore cosmopolitan experiences through queer subjects. In recent history, the discourse of cosmopolitanism has repeatedly involved queer figures, most notably gay men. In an early critical rethinking of anthropology where he advocates for cosmopolitanism as "an ethos of macro-interdependencies," Paul Rabinow lists homosexuals amongst the figures that have historically been considered, for better or for worse, embodiments of cosmopolitanism (258). More recently, in Richard Florida's study of the rise of the "creative class," the "Gay Index" is used as a measurement of diversity, and urban gay spaces are understood as a cosmopolitan symbol of tolerance (255–58). Skeptical of such utopian pronouncements, Jon Binnie and Beverley Skeggs, in their study of Manchester's gay village, argue that "cosmopolitan gay space" has become a way to mask the class-specific consumption of space, which actually excludes non-middle-class and non-urban formation of queer subjectivities. More controversially, Joseph Massad criticizes the cultural imperialism of a universalist gay discourse (which he dubs the "Gay International") whose drive to impose an identitarian notion of homosexuality is threatening historically older and non-Western forms of queer practices. What these continuing debates suggest is that while cosmopolitanism has long been associated with queer subjects, there is no clear or fixed relation between sexual transgression, material oppression, and cosmopolitan ideals or experience. As the parameters of power negotiation shifts, so, too, does the alignment of these elements. In Hong Kong, the ongoing debates over queer sexuality have always involved references to both cosmopolitanism and patriotism. When controversy over a British proposal to decriminalize sodomy laws erupted during the mid-1980s, homophobic resistance was expressed as a form of anti-colonial patriotism. In the frantic discourse of moral panic at the time, homosexuality and AIDS were characterized as "Western imports" and the British move as a conspiracy to corrupt the traditional Chinese family. In response, activist Samshasha penned the now classic *A History of Chinese Homosexuality*, writing as "an angry Chinese" arguing that there had always been an ancient queer tradition in China, traces of which he documents in over five hundred pages (4). Reversing the logic of the homophobic arguments, Samshasha suggests that its is not homosexuality, but rather homophobic Christian values and a lack of tolerance towards sexual diversity, that were "imported" from the West. Samshasha's work was certainly provocative at the time, and the book contributed greatly to the shaping of a new critical discourse on sexuality. However, as the patriotic register of homophobic voices waned, accompanied by the rise of a queer movement that emphasizes its own "Chinese characteristics," Samshasha's work also undergoes a difference in emphasis. In the revised edition of the book, which came out in 1997, the year when Hong Kong's sovereignty was transferred from British

to Chinese hands, Samshasha refocuses his critique on the "implicit homophobia" of Chinese culture while exploring queerness as a cosmopolitan ideal that is rooted in a multiplicity of traditions around the globe. Many queer movements in the postcolonial worlds have to negotiate this delicate balancing act between sustaining a postcolonial critique of the West and avoiding an uncritical cultural nationalism. Discourses of cosmopolitanism often serve as the fulcrum for such balance.

In Chinese cinema, there has also been a sea change in the representation of queer subjects and their relation to the discourse of Chinese tradition on the one hand, and cosmopolitan experiences on the other. In his study of the "sad young men," a trope borrowed from Richard Dyer's work on Hollywood films during the 1950s and 1960s, Chris Berry suggests that the cinematic tradition of representing young gay men as the ultimate rebels and outsiders to the patriarchal Chinese family, has recently transformed into a new trend. Looking at films from Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong made in the late 1990s, Berry observes a new type of young gay man: no longer marked as "other" to the Chinese family, they have become lone figures in an alienating universe, with no ties to either the traditional family or to any kind of chosen families or gay communities. In contrast to earlier films where gay men exist as a challenge to, or problem of, notions of Chineseness, these more recent films do not understand queerness in opposition to being "Chinese." Rather, Berry suggests that these "sad young men" have become more general symbols of existential alienation, paradigmatic of postmodern urban living, and devoid of any sense of belonging or destination. Berry sees this phenomenon as Chinese cinema's latest attempt to define the "self" outside of the outmoded Confucian family and its attendant associations with nationalist discourse. Berry's example from Hong Kong cinema is *Happy Together,* in which the "isolated anomic individuals" of Lai Yiu-Fai and Ho Bo-Wing, on-again-off-again lovers, drift halfway across the globe, seemingly purposeless, and utterly dislocated from any markers of home (193–95). For me, these recent representations of gay men also signify a new kind of queer cosmopolitan. The two men in *Happy Together* hardly resemble the privileged, elite class of gay consumers that inhabit the "cosmopolitan gay space" of Florida's or Binnie and Skeggs' studies. Rather, they are disaffected transnational migrants hustling or working low-paid jobs for a living, adrift on a lonely journey without destination, yet still harboring an inexplicable attachment to Hong Kong. Bruce Robbins has argued that cosmopolitanism now has a new cast of characters: diverse figures who are at once privileged and dispossessed, both aspiring to an ideal and actually living it, with consciousness and sentiments that are universal as well as particular (1–2). For Robbins, cosmopolitanism is no longer only about detachment from nationalism, but rather about complex and multiple kinds of attachment, national and otherwise (3). Furthermore, the new queer cosmopolitans are embodied not only by gay men but also by queer women, transgender people, bisexuals and many other kinds of fluid erotic subjectivities. The queer subjects in the films I analyze below are cosmopolitans in this

more complicated sense. And, unlike the sad young men in Berry's analysis, they do not simply symbolize existential alienation. They are active agents making creative use of their alienating situations. Their cosmopolitan experiences, entangled with an intense love for Hong Kong, also signal thoughtful ways of surviving the city's most contradictory and contentious times.

Spontaneous Community: *Island Tales*

Loosely conceived as a sequel to Stanley Kwan's previous film *Hold You Tight, Island Tales* tells the story of one day in the lives of seven people who, following rumors about a deadly plague, find themselves being forcibly quarantined on Mayfly island, a fictional locale that is actually filmed on Lamma Island, one of Hong Kong's outlying islands. The Japanese photographer Marion has come to try out her new digital camera, accompanied by her close friend Sharon, a former refugee who is now living in the United States. Hon is a young porn star who has escaped to the island for a day of relaxation. Haruki writes for a Tokyo literary journal and has been recuperating from tuberculosis on the island. Mei-Ling, a Taiwanese woman, is waiting for her lover, an English bar-owner whom she has met at a party the night before, to return. The two local inhabitants are Aunt Mei, who is the Englishman's business partner, and Bo, a lonely gay man who owns a boarding house on the island. During the course of the night, Marion dies of a heart attack, and these strangers drift across the island and encounter each other, finally ending the evening in a spontaneous dance party at the bar. The quarantine is lifted the next day.

Showing an uncanny prescience about the SARS epidemic which, three years after the film's release, did turn Hong Kong into a city under siege by a plague, the film uses an allegorical situation to explore the dynamics of communal relations in a place where mobility – i.e. the ability to *leave* – is prized amongst its inhabitants. Early on in the film, the writer Haruki imagines a triangular relationship between three elements: "Boat, island, people … none exists independently of the other two. Together, they form an unbreakable triangle." This "unbreakable" relationship is momentarily broken when the quarantine is declared. One of the three interdependent elements – the boat, the element of movement, of escape as well as of return – is, for the moment, eliminated. What happens to the remaining elements? How does the absence of the boat affect the relationship between the island and the people? The triangular relationship of boat–island–people serves as a particularly resonant metaphor for the relationship between Hong Kong and its people. Much has been written about Hong Kong's historical role as a port city and the sense of transience this role inspires in the city's inhabitants. For instance, Akbar Abbas' well-known formulation of contemporary Hong Kong's "space of disappearance" derives from an analysis of the tension between the city's historical identification with transience and the demands of the postcolonial transition:

Hong Kong has up to quite recently been a city of transients. Much of the population was made up of refugees or expatriates who thought of Hong Kong as a temporary

stop, no matter how long they stayed. The sense of the temporary is very strong, even if it can be entirely counterfactual. The city is not so much a place as a space of transit. It has always been, and will perhaps always be, a port in the most literal sense – a doorway, a point in between – even though the nature of the port has changed …… For the port mentality, everything is provisional, ad hoc; everything floats – currencies, values, human relations. But such a mentality was only viable before anxieties over 1997, and before events at Tiananmen in 1989. Now faced with the uncomfortable possibility of an alien identity about to be imposed on it from China, Hong Kong is experiencing a kind of last-minute collective search for a more definite identity. (4)

Yet, at the same time that they provoke a search for a more definite identity, anxieties over 1997 *also* prompted a new wave of emigration out of Hong Kong during the late 1980s and early 1990s, creating a sizable class of what Aihwa Ong calls “flexible citizens” who shuttle back and forth between Hong Kong and cities like Vancouver, Toronto, and Sydney. What distinguishes this new breed of emigrants from their predecessors is their simultaneous demand for an escape route out of Hong Kong and refusal to leave Hong Kong definitively. This mentality is best illustrated by the logic behind the Hong Kong government’s encouraging attitude towards various immigration schemes proposed by countries like the United Kingdom and Singapore, which grant the right of abode without demanding the applicant to take up residency immediately. In a study of the new migration system, Ronald Sheldon describes the logic in this way:

The logic of these schemes was that, if people knew they had a fallback position and right of abode in another place, this would discourage them from emigrating now in search of foreign passports. These schemes were, in effect, de facto anti-immigration policies. (147)

In other words, people will not stay unless they know they can leave some time in the future. From another perspective, it also means that people who have moved abroad in order to acquire foreign passports do so with the prospect of returning in mind. Indeed, many that emigrated in the eighties did return with their foreign passports in hand during the early to mid-1990s, while maintaining close family and business ties in their destination countries. For these “flexible citizens,” their relation to Hong Kong is akin to the characters’ relation to Mayfly island: it is mediated by the boat, which serves as an escape route as well as a path of return. For this mobile cosmopolitan elite, the uppermost concern is with whether or not to leave Hong Kong at any given juncture. This concern was discussed at length by middle-class artists and professionals interviewed in Shu Kei’s *Sunless Days* (made in 1990 at the height of the emigration out-flux) and has persisted to the time when Ann Hui made *As Time Goes By* (in 1997 when many have left and come back). The palpable presence of a powerful elite whose foreign passports allow them the privilege of an “escape route” out of Hong Kong continues to have an effect on the city’s postcolonial milieu. The most dramatic example is the multi-billionaire businessman Li Ka-Shing, whose substantial assets

abroad and offspring with foreign citizenships have often led to speculation and fear that his family will simply pull out of Hong Kong, causing a considerable negative economic impact, if the climate ever turns unfavorable for his business interests. Immigration figures also continue to function as markers of confidence in the region. Figures released at the beginning of 2005 show a slight increase of two percent in emigration out of Hong Kong, after a steady decline since 1995, promptly causing tentative speculations on radio shows and newspaper columns about the relation of the figures to the impact of SARS, the persistent economic downturn, and general dissatisfaction with the current administration.

By taking away the element of the boat, *Island Tales* asks an intriguing question of Hong Kong's cosmopolitans: what if one is not able to leave, for reasons beyond one's expectations? As Marion remarks to Sharon when Sharon worries about missing the ferry: "The boat, the boat! There'll always be another boat!" Yet, unbeknown to her at the time, there will not be another boat for Marion, who will die of a heart attack shortly after making this remark. The film does not return to the pre-1997 obsession with the search for "belonging" or for some definite sense of a "Hong Kong identity." The motley crew on Mayfly Island is comprised of strangers, who, in Haruki's words, "have accidentally drifted into each other's territories." Once the option of leaving has been taken away, there is little else for the characters to do than to give in to spontaneous and accidental encounters. The philosophy behind such an impetus offers an alternative perspective on Hong Kong as a community. It does not presuppose the familiar ideologies of shared history, culture, language and so forth. It simply honors a principle of mutual service at a time of need. On that one chaotic evening on Mayfly island, the characters have abandoned themselves to what the political theorist William Corlett, in his formulation of a "community without unity," has theorized as "gift-giving":

To give ourselves to a practice with such intensity that our subjectivity becomes a function of the practice (instead of the other way around), is to give a gift. During gift-giving something mysterious takes over, the practice seems to determine the identities of the giver and the receiver. The gift charts its own destination … The gift is accidental, cannot be calculated, comes and goes, multiplies differences. (185)

Corlett's study attempts to balance on the theoretical tightrope between a deconstructive critique of identity on the one hand, and a communitarian understanding of ethics and mutual service on the other. His notion of an "accidental" community, forged by relations that are not predicated on a predetermined discourse of identity that would inevitably demand a suppression of difference, approximates the fable of community in *Island Tales*. The fable proposes to the cosmopolitans of post-1997 Hong Kong that they should abandon the pragmatic calculation of escape routes, not because they are bound to the city by a patriotic discourse of blood and nation, but because their own survival may unwittingly depend on the unpredictable relations they must forge with the strangers they may chance to encounter.

There is one important aspect of the various encounters in *Island Tales* that is not explicitly accounted for in Corlett's notion of community: the erotic element. Yet, the erotic is surely one of the most appropriate expressions of gift giving. In her study of bisexual eroticism, Marjorie Garber draws attention to the ways in which eroticism cannot be predicted or controlled according to the dictates of sexual identity (90). Eroticism is accidental, spontaneous, extravagant and without reassurance. It comes and goes without warning; it traverses unexpected terrain and across unlikely borders. Stanley Kwan's film is often at its queerest when erotic, rather than sexual, encounters take place. In his previous film *Hold You Tight*, for instance, sexuality is expressed primarily in heterosexual love scenes. By contrast, the erotic erupts in less obvious places, such as in the way the camera represents, in titillatingly slow panning shots, a man's sustained gaze at the near-naked body of his lover's husband at a swimming pool. As I have argued elsewhere, the intricate web of relations which drives the plot of *Hold You Tight* is propelled primarily by such queer erotics (Leung 440–42). Similarly, while there is not a single sex scene in *Island Tales*, the camera draws attention to an erotic energy that traverses the screen in unexpected ways. Moreover, since eroticism never results in sexual acts in the film, it remains in the zone of possibility and thus resists recuperation into the discourse of sexual identity. Viewers are trained by heteronormativity to decode the trajectory of a character's gaze according to their sexual orientation and mainstream cinema usually encourages such a habit, leaving little room for erotic ambiguity except in instances of comic misunderstanding. In *Island Tales*, such erotic "reassurance" is absent in a very striking way. Most of the important encounters that take place on the island – between Haruki and Hon, Sharon and Marion, Mei-Ling and Hon, and finally, Haruki and Marion – are erotically charged. For instance, in the seaside scene where Haruki encounters Hon for the first time, the camera directs Haruki's gaze at the muscular body of Hon, while it shows Hon's body moving confidently into intimate proximity with Haruki. In a scene after Marion's death, Sharon confesses that she wishes Marion had been her lover. This scene is filmed in blue filter, and (literally and figuratively) shows Sharon in a rare light. When the erotic erupts between a man and a woman, it is *also* steered in a queer direction. For instance, when the two most sexualized characters – Mei-Ling and Hon – lie together on the beach, thus creating some expectation of heterosexual intimacy, Mei-Ling touches Hon's face and gently addresses him as her dead brother. In the pan-ultimate scene where Haruki lies down next to Marion's corpse, a touch of necrophilic eroticism passes between Haruki and the serene body of the dead.

All of these encounters illuminate some deceptively trivial part of the characters' life that will help them through the evening's crisis. The erotic does not exist, as it often does in mainstream cinema, as a prelude to the sexual. It permeates all kinds of boundaries and brings strangers into each other's habitually guarded territories. It queers conventional demarcations between (differently aged, gendered and sexualized; living and dead)

bodies. In this film, the erotic signifies a potentiality – a zone of possibilities, the significance of which cannot yet be articulated. It calls for patience and a willingness to abandon oneself to accidental and spontaneous moments of giving. In this way, the film offers a provocative reconceptualization of cosmopolitanism, via the pathway of queer erotics, to express the love for a community without unity. Such love differs from patriotism and nationalist sentiment in important ways. It is an affect that sustains bonds between people that are not premised on pre-established common identities. Rather, it arises out of our everyday dependence on each other, a need for mutual service in time of crisis, and a shared knowledge that the "future" may never arrive and that the spontaneous present provides the real basis on which community may be forged.

Cosmopolitan Memory: *Maps of Sex and Love*

Like *Island Tales, Maps of Sex and Love* (hereafter *Maps*) is also primarily filmed on Lamma Island, where three young people drift into each other's path. Wei-Ming is a filmmaker who, after his mother's death and his father's confinement to a nursing home in Macau, has returned from New York to his family's first home on the island. Larry is a dancer who harbors secret guilt about an act of revenge he thought he inflicted on a high school teacher who had previously tried to "cure" him of his homosexuality. Mimi is looking after a friend's crafts shop on the island and hides her traumatic experience of mental illness. If Mayfly Island is an imaginary microcosm of Hong Kong, then Lamma Island here is, by contrast, a respite from the city and a place to recuperate memory. It is on the island that Wei-Ming recalls how his mother used to burn incense on the ancestral altar, and Mimi attempts a time-consuming recipe of a fish dish her mother used to cook for her, while Larry choreographs ballet to Cantonese opera music. To underscore the importance of such cultural memory, the film opens with an inscription of a poem by the most celebrated poet from the Tang Dynasty, Li Bai (701–762). At the same time, the soundtrack plays an equally famous tune from the Cantonese opera *Hu bu gui* ["Why Not Return?"]. This use of Tang poetry and Cantonese opera to invoke memory of lost tradition may come dangerously close to the way the Tourism Board videos exploit the imagery of Tai Chi and Feng Shui. *Maps*, however, does not juxtapose disappearing traditions with the modern city in cosmopatriotic harmony. Rather, the film provocatively portrays the cosmopolitan experience *as* an act of memory. Recalling the past, as all three characters will find out, propels them towards a surprising discovery of transnational interconnections, overlapping oppression, and intersecting complicity. Furthermore, as the title suggests, the film tries to "map" this journey of discovery across the terrain of sex and love. As the three friends negotiate their desire and affection for each other, they also negotiate their desire and affection for their city, its memory, and its future.

In the film's opening sequence, Wei-Ming takes the airport express into the city. The scenery courses through the screen as it would outside the moving train, giving

us a glimpse of the passages from the outlying Lantau island, where the airport is located, into the city. The new airport that opened in 1997, along with the Tsing-Ma Bridge through which the airport express travels, are the most prominent architectural markers of Hong Kong's postcolonial era. As Wei-Ming films himself talking into the camera, he asks: "People say this is the postcolonial era. How do we love this postcolonial Hong Kong? How do we protect its democracy and its laws?" Then, turning to the subject of new immigrants from Mainland China, Wei-Ming suddenly points his camera at what he calls "the most popular new immigrant in the future" and the camera cuts to Mickey Mouse, sitting on the train and waving playfully. Much later on in the film, this shot of Mickey will take on a different significance when a newsreel announces the huge Disney theme park project underway on Lantua Island. As Wei-Ming watches the news, we catch, in the background, snippets of an activist angrily asking how many jobs one tenth of the budget of the Disney project would create if it were used, instead, on the environmental preservation of Lantau Island. Thus, already in the short opening sequence and captured on Wei-Ming's film project, we are introduced to the twin forces of change in Hong Kong's postcolonial era: the city's rapid integration into the Chinese state and economy, symbolized by the daily influx of new immigrants from Mainland China, and Hong Kong's own complete integration into the global capitalist economy, symbolized by projects like the Disney theme park, which is threatening to urbanize the last of Hong Kong's countryside. What does it mean to love Hong Kong in such times? This is the question that Wei-Ming ponders, and that the film attempts to answer.

Wei-Ming's film project is also intertwined with his own sexual landscape, which is precariously perched between his New York boyfriend, linked to him throughout the film only by phone and becoming increasingly distant, and Larry, whom he encounters by chance at a pier and later sleeps with in the sauna that Larry frequents. Unlike in Stanley Kwan's films, where cruising can evoke spontaneous connections and an eruption of intensity (Leung 441), the space of gay cruising in *Maps* is closer to the lonely space Lai Yiu-Fai experiences in Buenos Aires in *Happy Together*. *Maps* portrays the cruising scene as a marker of the city, fraught with distance and deception. For instance, Larry is in the habit of giving out fake phone numbers and Wei-Ming runs out during sexual encounters before conversations get too personal. In contrast, it is on Lamma Island, where Wei-Ming and Larry meet again, this time in the company of Mimi, that their relationship, both erotic and emotional, flourishes. As the three become closer, their traumatic memories also begin to intersect in interesting ways. In his youth, Larry confessed his homosexual impulse to a high school teacher whose response was to give him a bunch of rubber bands to put on his wrist, so he could inflict pain every time he felt such desire. Mimi has a history of mental problems and had a recent breakdown while travelling in Belgrade. While researching for a film project, Wei-Ming has come across rumors concerning the laundering of Nazi gold into Macau and he begins to question whether his father, who

worked as a goldsmith in Macau after World War II, might have handled such gold. In Ann Cvetkovich's pioneering study of trauma culture, she examines the interconnections between "private" traumas such as sexual abuse to "national" or "public" traumas such as experiences of war and catastrophe. More importantly, Cvetkovich suggests that trauma need not be understood in shaming and pathologized terms – as something to "get over" – but recognized as the creative ground from which many forms of queer cultures are forged. Furthermore, such cultural formations, in bringing trauma to the public sphere, are, in effect, transforming our very understanding of the "public" (16). By interweaving these three friends' memories, *Maps* intersects personal with historical trauma: Mimi's very private breakdown takes place in a city recently scarred by war; Wei-Ming's historical inquiry forces him to confront his personal relationship with his father; Larry's painful encounter with homophobia reminds Wei-Ming of the parallel fates of homosexuals and Jews during the Holocaust. As the friends' search for answers take them from Hong Kong to Macau, they also become aware of the parallels between the two former colonies. Recalling and telling their memories of trauma thus results in creating unexpected connections between the private and the public, between Europe and Asia, between sexual and racial oppressions. The three friends' past, woven together, has become a kind of cosmopolitan memory that sustains attachment through a knowledge of *interconnections* between places, peoples, and histories. Their intensified love for each other also exemplifies a cosmopolitan form of rootedness: borne not of detachment from places but from entangled roots that spring from multiple locations and temporalities. It is this kind of love that the film advocates for postcolonial Hong Kong and as an answer to its initial questions.

The queer potential of the film, however, is constrained by the film's blind spot in the form of the character of Mimi. Evans Chan, the film's writer and director, has acknowledged in an interview that feminist critics have found Mimi's relationship with the two men problematic, especially towards the end when she is "spurred on" by the men to befriend a Malay-Chinese performance artist, as though the triangle is becoming too unbalanced (Borsos). Chan's rebuttal is far from satisfactory: referring to the film's last shot, which shows Larry with a new companion and Mimi by herself, while viewing a video that Wei-Ming has sent from New York, Chan says he intended the scene to "suggest that [Mimi's] newfound relationship, which we saw earlier, may or may not be a stable one" (Borsos). Chan's explanation tries to appease feminist objections to Mimi's role becoming virtually an emotional transaction between men. From a queer perspective, however, even the scene Chan emphasizes remains problematic. The triangular friendship could have had enormous erotic potential, yet the film seems able only to imagine Mimi as a sexual outsider in the trio. In a scene where Mimi comes close to having a breakdown, she forces herself to witness her friends having sex with each other, while wondering on the voice-over how these two bodies whom she loves can lose themselves in each other with such abandon. Yet, why is Mimi only capable of apprehending desire in a

hetero/homosexual framework, with herself always taking on the role of outsider? If the friends' emotions and memories can intersect in such provocative ways, why can't their bodies and their desire? Where is the queer female subject, whether lesbian, bisexual, femme, fag hag, asexual …? The missed erotic potential of Mimi may be symptomatic of the tendency in *Maps* (and arguably queer cinema in general) to only eroticize gay male bodies. It is thus fitting that, one year after *Maps*' release, another independent production *Ho Yuk: Let's Love Hong Kong* (hereafter *Ho Yuk*) returns the spotlight to queer women and explores questions about postcolonial Hong Kong exclusively through their eyes.

Women On The Move: *Ho Yuk: Let's Love Hong Kong*

Ho Yuk is set in the not-too-distant future, when over-urbanization has shrunk and cluttered Hong Kong's cityscape while turning it into a hostile and lonely living environment. The cosmopolitan image of Hong Kong as a "world city" has, in this imaginary future, become an urban wasteland with no more potential for "development" except into cyber space. The film revolves around three women: Chan Kwok-Chan, a cyberporn actress who lives in cramped conditions with her mother; Zero, a Jill-of-all-trades who hustles numerous odd jobs by day and lives in an abandoned theater by night; and Nicole, a multi-lingual executive who conducts a global business but spends her free time worrying about the Feng Shui of her abode and masturbating to cyberporn. These women live in the interstitial spaces between technology, desire, commodity, and memory. It is uncertain if they are actively moving through the hyper-density of Hong Kong's urban jungle, or simply being carried along by the infamous speed of the city's rhythm of change. This ambivalence is already resonant in the film's title. *Yuk* [*yu*] – a verb in Cantonese meaning "to move" – is here colloquially used as an adjective to describe a perception of movement. The verb, which signifies an active will to move across space, is displaced by the adjective, which signifies a passive perception of movement around one's stagnant, non-moving self. Chan Kwok-Chan expresses this anxiety when she complains to her mother, after feeling an earthquake that is imperceptible except to those who stay perfectly still: "Why is it that I feel movement around me and yet I stay still, unmoving?" Such anxiety, however, is itself displaced by another, less explicit, shade of meaning in the title. The adverb *ho* [*hao*], meaning "very," can also be understood as an adjective meaning "fond of." *Ho yuk*, the anxious perception of movement can be playfully transformed into *ho yuk*, the fondness for movement. Thus, in contrast to Chan Kwok-Chan, Zero actively pursues her desire and livelihood with humor and playful enthusiasm. She does not feel the anxiety of movement around her but becomes, herself, a subject pleasurably on the move. Finally, the title echoes one other important element in the film. One of the opening shots draws our attention to the character *yuk* which is made up of two parts, each of which forms a character on its own: *nui* [*nu*] and *dzi* [*zi*].

Nui dzi put together signifies "women." *Ho Yuk* is about women's space: where women desire each other across the extremely difficult emotional and physical terrain of Hong Kong's urban life.

Living space is one of the most valuable and hyper-inflated commodities in Hong Kong. Owning a flat of one's own is the quintessential Hong Kong dream. While intense real estate speculation over the years has made millionaires of many middle-class homeowners, the collapse of the housing market after the Asian financial crisis in 1997 has left just as many in dire straits. For other more disenfranchised groups, home ownership remains a distant and elusive goal. *Ho Yuk* takes a poignant, satirical look at this predicament. Zero is a squatter in an abandoned movie theater, where she tries to maintain the illusion of a home, complete with house decorations and two cats, all in the space of a single theater seat. Chan Kwok-Chan lives with her parents in a one-room flat in a housing estate, where the family shares the same space for everything, from cooking, eating, watching television, to sleeping. Chan's dream is to earn enough money in the next decade to move into a bigger house with her mother. Her regular forays into the rental market highlight the squalid conditions of the city's living space. In the sugarcoated speech of the slick rental agent, any window that looks outside has a "view" and crumbling old buildings offer the most "feel." Yet, there is also a massive gap between the privileged and the disenfranchised. The foreign-educated young professional Nicole lives in a beautiful and spacious home, exactly the kind that Zero and Chan Kwok-Chan desire. Yet, Nicole abuses her living environment (at least in the eyes of the sleazy Feng Shui master) by enclosing a corner of her house in artificial obscurity, where she loses herself in cyberporn every night. She escapes into the same extended living space where many of Zero's fellow squatters seek pleasure. Thus, even though Nicole already occupies the commodified living space that Chan Kwok-Chan and Zero long for, she needs a habitat of a different kind. Cyberspace becomes another sort of real estate where exchange relations determine how and which bodies occupy what space.

Ironically, despite everyone's fervent longing for space, intimacy between people seems possible only when space is *closed up*. Nicole enjoys Chan Kwok-Chan's body every night across the distance of cyberspace. Chan Kwok-Chan would not allow herself to sleep with her favorite prostitute "for free" because she needs to be able to "own" her and ownership is not possible without an exchange relation and an emotional distance. Time and again, Zero and Chan Kwok-Chan find themselves looking at each other across a distance, never connecting. Intimacy seems to demand a closing of physical space, such as the time when Zero slides across the seat on the MTR to get close to Chan Kwok-Chan, or when Chan Kwok-Chan climbs down the bunk bed and crowds into the tiny lower bed to sleep closely next to her mother. The film thus projects a complicated and, at times, contradictory relationship between the desire for commodified space and the desire for sexual and emotional intimacy. The footage

of the giraffes, which always cross-cuts the scenes of suspended desire circulating between the three women, marks a mock-utopian place that transcends such contradictions. When the first giraffe sequence appears, the voice-over jokingly explains: "Do you know why giraffes reach up so high for food? It's because the less-evolved low-lives cannot reach up there to compete with them!" There is an interesting combination of self-mocking pathos and utopian longing in this simultaneously silly and romantic use of the images of the giraffes. They seem to imply that the problems of post-1997 Hong Kong have turned its inhabitants into less-evolved low-lives who are unable or unwilling to reach upward for a different kind of space and a different kind of human relation. In an attempt to make a connection with Chan Kwok-Chan, Zero flirtatiously compliments her on her exquisitely long neck that reminds Zero of a giraffe. Yet, at the end of the film, Chan Kwok-Chan rolls up the collar of her turtleneck sweater to cover her neck in front of Zero, still refusing to close the distance between them. The longed-for but ultimately unfulfilled union between the two women may be explained by the allegorical significance of their names. "Kwok-Chan" [*guochan*] literally means "national product," a name burdened with the demands and responsibilities of nationalist belonging and filiation. By contrast, the minimalist "Zero" signifies a kind of cosmopolitan freedom in which relations may be imagined without prior restraints. The film does not imagine an easy cosmopatriotic harmony between the two but rather keeps them tantalizingly apart in order to highlight both their connections and their contradictions.

In its exploration of the complexity of urban space, *Ho Yuk* also creates a different kind of cosmopolitan queer space, one that is not primarily defined by consumption and class-specific aesthetics. The film problematizes the commodified relation between people while it foregrounds and animates desire between women. Even as it critiques certain aspects of the porn industry, *Ho Yuk* does not neglect to show exuberant erotic scenes: from Nicole's masturbation to Chan Kwok-Chan's sexual encounters with the sex worker. At the same time, the portrayal of Chan Kwok-Chan and Zero is drawn very closely from the culture and style of TB (derived from "tomboy," a local slang and queer gender category specific to Hong Kong lesbians that approximates the notion of "butch" but is not entirely reducible to it). The two women's androgynous appearance sometimes draws mild hostility from strangers (as Zero experiences in the elevator) and at other times invites others to simply address and communicate with them as men (Chan Kwok Chan is called Mr. Chan by the motel attendant while Zero is treated as a boy by her various clients). Zero's karaoke rendition of William So's "My Woman" in the closing credits also shows a self-conscious TB appropriation of mainstream heterosexual culture. In a similar way, *Ho Yuk* has also appropriated the impersonally "big" stories of contemporary Hong Kong to retell them from the perspectives of queer women whose lives have, until now, been left out of the city's grand narratives.

Rooted Cosmopolitans

Y'know how I've called myself a "rootless cosmopolitan," equally homeless anywhere on the planet? I was wrong .... I finally understand why some Jews didn't leave Berlin right after Kristallnacht. (Spiegelman 4)

In his brilliant graphic book *In The Shadows of No Towers*, Art Spiegelman documents in newspaper-size comic panels a hapless "hero" (the artist's alter ego) hysterically stumbling through the streets of downtown New York on 11 September 2001. As "our hero" watches the "bones of the towers glow and shimmy in the sky" right before they fall, he is suddenly seized by the realization that, despite being an avowed cosmopolitan with no ties or allegiance to particular countries, he feels "a pang of affection for his familiar, vulnerable streets" (4). On the same page, a label "Rooted Cosmopolitan" is drawn with an arrow pointing to "our hero." Spiegelman's vivid depiction of 9/11 shows the tremendous impact traumatic experiences have on one's understanding of cosmopolitanism. At the same time, Spiegelman's work is also extremely critical of the "mindnumbing" flag-waving patriotism that, in his eyes, has hijacked the trauma for political ends (5). The newfound "rooted cosmopolitanism" of Spiegelman's hero is thus not exactly a form of cosmopatriotism, but, rather, a cosmopolitanism that honors attachments, not to the nation, but to those "familiar, vulnerable streets" of our everyday life. In other words, the love that patriotism has abstracted is here rematerialized as a much more personalized affection for locales and neighborhoods, for the familiar smells, sights and sounds of everyday experiences. In a similar way, the understanding of cosmopolitanism that I derive from the three films analyzed above (which is also rooted in traumatic experiences) expresses itself in a love for Hong Kong as a place of work, play, and memory – as our "familiar and vulnerable streets" that have been threatened with one crisis after another. In their introduction to *Between Home and World,* an anthology of essays on Hong Kong cinema, Esther M. K. Cheung and Chu Yiu-wai suggest that it is more useful to approach Hong Kong cinema not as a "national" or "quasi-national" cinema but rather as "crisis cinema." For Cheung and Chu, "crisis cinema" is characterized by "a dialectic of binary oppositions: despair and hope, threat and resolution, death and renewal," constituted not only by the event of the 1997 hand-over, but, more broadly, by the dramatic and unstable political, economic, and social upheavals that have continued to haunt Hong Kong after the postcolonial transition (xxix). I would like to suggest that the very notion of "cosmopatriotism," when discussed in the context of Hong Kong culture, must be understood in relation to such an idea of crisis. At this particular historical juncture, in the aftermath of the city's postcolonial transition, which Rey Chow provocatively characterizes as a passage "between colonizers" (151), the love for Hong Kong cannot be abstracted into a patriotic discourse of Chinese nationalism. At the same time, despite its self-image of financial success, the city's aspiration to be a cosmopolitan "world city" in the global capitalist

framework is leaving social devastation in its wake. The myriad contradictions that arise out of these conditions have resulted in problems as well as possibilities that are unique to Hong Kong and its inhabitants at a time of crisis. The films I discuss in this article respond to this crisis, not by attempting to harmonize or dilute these contradictions. Instead, they devise strategies for survival by imagining more radical and creative ways of living with each other. At the same time, they express a love for Hong Kong that involves more radical notions of community than the kind demanded (and constricted) by patriotism. Furthermore, the films articulate their visions through queer subjects who traverse across erotic and sexual boundaries that exceed the parameters laid down by the conventional discourse on sexual identity. In the films, the terrain of erotic desire, where borders are continually shifting and mutating but, at the same time, fiercely bound up with all kinds of intense connections and attachments, seems especially fitting for an expression of the "rooted cosmopolitanism" Spiegelman describes. Such an expression may also be the best answer to the injunction in the subtitle of Yau Ching's film: Let's Love Hong Kong!

A Note on Romanization: All Chinese (including Cantonese) names, titles and terms have been rendered parenthetically in *Pinyin*.

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Dubbing Culture: Indonesian *Gay* and *Lesbi* Subjectivities and Ethnography in an Already Globalized World

Tom Boellstorff

ABSTRACT

In this article I explore how Indonesians come to see themselves as *lesbi* or *gay* through fragmentary encounters with mainstream mass media (rather than lesbian and gay Westerners or Western lesbian and gay media). By placing this ethnographic material alongside a recent debate on the dubbing of foreign television programs into the Indonesian language, I develop a theoretical framework of "dubbing culture" to critically analyze globalizing processes.

Introduction

As the 20th century begins to recede into historical memory, "globalization" presents itself as a completed project: We appear to live in a world that is already globalized (Appadurai; Gibson-Graham; Hannerz; Miller). Even with this state of affairs, however, globalization is more than background noise. Although a certain academic fatigue has set in concerning globalization, these processes are shifting and intensifying and so demand our continuing attention. Ethnography has an important role to play in such a refocused analysis, for it can show how even the most apparently "remote" communities are caught up in globalizing processes in ways that impact subjectivities as well as social circumstances (e.g. Tsing).

Such are the foundational concerns of this article. In it, I bring an analysis of how Indonesians come to think of themselves as *lesbi* or *gay* through encounters with mass media, together with a late 1990s controversy over the dubbing of foreign television

shows and films into the Indonesian language, in order to develop a framework for rethinking ethnography in an already globalized world (to keep *gay* and *lesbi* distinct from the English terms *lesbian* and *gay,* I italicize them).[1] I call this framework *dubbing culture,* where *to dub* means, as the Oxford English Dictionary phrases it, "to provide an alternative sound track to (a film or television broadcast), especially a translation from a foreign language" (*Oxford English Dictionary,* second edition, volume four).

With regard to *lesbi* and *gay* Indonesians, my goal is to develop a theory that can account for a contingent, fractured, intermittent, yet powerfully influential relationship between globalization and subjectivities. Two additional requirements for such a theory are as follows. First, it must not mistake contingency for the absence of power; it must account for relations of domination. Second, such a theory must not render domination as determination; it must account for how *gay* and *lesbi* Indonesians transform this contingent relationship in unexpected ways.

More broadly, the framework of "dubbing culture" provides one way to conceptualize the relationship between persons and the cultural logics through which they come to occupy subject positions under contemporary globalizing processes. In particular, it does so without relying on biogenetic (and, arguably, heteronormative) metaphors like hybridity, creolization, and diaspora, which imply prior unities and originary points of dispersion. *Gay* and *lesbi* subjectivities do not originate in the "West" (they are not perceived as diasporic), nor are they a hybrid of "West" and "East"; they are distinctively Indonesian phenomena, formed through discourses of nation and sexual desire as well as a sense of linkage to distant but familiar Others.

Gibson-Graham, in a feminist critique of globalization narratives, notes their similarity to rape narratives: both present a masculinized entity (the rapist, global capitalism) as always already in a position of dominance and a feminized entity (the rape victim, the local) in a position of weakness. This is more than a metaphorical parallel: as narratives about relationality and transfer, stories of sexuality are stories of globalization and vice versa. Gibson-Graham hopes that "a queer perspective can help to unsettle the consonances and coherences of the narrative of global commodification" (144). In this spirit, I explore how "dubbing culture" might provide a way to understand globalization as susceptible to transformation. In queering globalization in this manner, I do not lose sight of the immense suffering and injustice it causes. Instead, I highlight that this suffering and injustice is caused not by a singular "globalization," but by a complex network of interlocking economic, political, and social forces that are not always in agreement or absolute dominance. In terms of the dubbing metaphor, we might say that the voice of globalization is powerful but that that voice does not "move" across the globe. Rather, it is dialogically reconstituted; it is in a constant state of "dubbing."

The framework of "dubbing culture" is crucially concerned with agency: it questions both deterministic theories that assume the hailing of persons through ideology and voluntaristic theories that assume persons voice and "negotiate" their subjectivities

vis-à-vis structures of power. As a result, it aims to provide a more processual and conjunctural understanding of subjectivity: it gives us a new way to think through the metaphorical construal of hegemonic cultural logics as discourses. To "dub" a discourse is neither to parrot it verbatim nor to compose an entirely new script. It is to hold together cultural logics without resolving them into a unitary whole.

In this article, I first develop the concept of dubbing culture through a close ethnographic analysis of *gay* and *lesbi* Indonesians. Indonesia, the fourth most populous nation on earth and home to more Muslims than any other country, is a useful site from which to investigate emergent modalities of globalization. As a result, this article addresses itself to scholars with interests in contemporary Southeast Asia. Second, this article speaks to literature on the internationalization of gay and lesbian subjectivities, suggesting that this literature sometimes overemphasizes politics and activism, assuming that such globalization primarily takes place through channels like sex tourism; the consumption of "Western" lesbian and gay media; and the travel of non-"Westerners" to the "West." Third, I see this analysis as a contribution to mass-media theory. In much the same way that print capitalism presents a general precondition for national imagined communities, but in a manner open to reinterpretation (Anderson), so contemporary mass media presents a general precondition for dubbing culture, but not in a deterministic sense. I thus examine ways in which mass-mediated messages that might appear totalizing (because of their association with powerful political–economic actors) are, in fact, susceptible to contingent transformation. Just as the dubbed television show in which "Sharon Stone speaks Indonesian" does not originate in the United States, so the *gay* and *lesbi* subject positions I examine are Indonesian, and not, strictly speaking, imported.[2] Yet just as the range of possibilities for a dubbed soundtrack is shaped by images originating elsewhere, so the persons who occupy subject positions that are dubbed in some fashion cannot choose their subjectivities just as they please. I move, then, from a literal, technical meaning of "dubbing" to a more speculative, analogical usage as a way to explore the relationship between social actors and the modes of subjectivation (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, volume 2*) by which such persons come to occupy subject positions.

Beyond these three audiences, however, the ultimate goal of this article is to speak at a broad level to the state of culture theory. Might it be that dubbing culture occurs in the context of globalizing processes not directly related to mass media, sexuality, or Southeast Asia? Indeed, at the end of this article I ask if the "dubbing of culture" Indonesians perform when they constitutively occupy the *gay* or *lesbi* subject position is all that different from the ethnographic project in an already globalized world. This article, then, has a reflexive (indeed, postreflexive) dimension. It asks if the ways in which much contemporary ethnography holds together, in tension, multiple cultural logics (like "the local" and "modernity") – in such a way that they are co-constitutive, not just juxtaposed – might not be productively interpreted in terms of dubbing culture.

Coming to *lesbi* or *gay* subjectivity

It is late morning in the city of Makassar (the regional capital of South Sulawesi province on the island of Sulawesi), and I am recording an interview with Hasan, a 32-year-old *gay* man I have known for many years. We are speaking about Hasan's youth, and he recalls his first sexual relationship as a young teenager, which took place with an older friend at school. At that point Hasan had never heard the word *gay*:

Hasan: *I didn't yet know. I was confused. Why, why were there people like that? What I mean is why were there men who wanted to kiss men? This got me thinking when I was at home. I thought: Why did my friend do that to me? What was going on? Was it just a sign, a sign of, what do you call it, just of friendship, I thought like that. I was still blind as to the existence of the gay world*.

Tom Boellstorff: *And to learn the term gay or about the gay world, how did that happen?*

H: *I knew later, when I was watching television. I saw on the "world news," there it showed a gay demonstration. And according to the information there … the people who were demonstrating, um, wanted the government to accept the marriage of men with men. And that made me confused. Why was it like that? That's when I was in high school [about two years after his first sexual experience with a man]*.

TB: *And when you saw that, about that gay demonstration, what was your reaction, your feelings?*

H: *I felt that an event like that could only happen outside; [that] in Indonesia there wasn't anything like that. I thought that maybe because we had a different state [negara], a culture [kebudayaan] that wasn't the same as [their] culture, so, maybe outside maybe it could be, and in Indonesia maybe it couldn't be, but, at that time I didn't think that there were people like that in Indonesia.*

Hasan here recounts a moment of recognition, one that later leads him to look for other *gay* men and eventually call himself *gay*. Through an encounter with mass media, he comes to knowledge of what he takes to be the concept "*gay*" and retrospectively interprets his same-sex relationships before acquiring this knowledge in terms of "blindness." Readers familiar with debates in queer studies over the internationalization of lesbian and gay subjectivities (e.g. Adam et al; Altman) might seize on the fact that Hasan saw a gay demonstration as evidence of activism driving this "globalization," but, in fact, this is the most unusual aspect of Hasan's narrative. Three other elements prove more typical in the Indonesian context: sexuality is tied to mass-mediated language; an outside way of being becomes intimate; and the border dividing *gay* culture from other cultures is national, not ethnic or local.

Since 1992, I have spent about two years conducting ethnographic research on Indonesian non-normative sexualities and genders, primarily in Surabaya (East Java), Bali, and Makassar (South Sulawesi). This research focuses on men and women who

term themselves *gay* or *lesbi*, or *warias* (better known by the derogatory term *banci*) – what I roughly term male transvestites – and on persons calling themselves *tombois* or *hunter*, who see themselves in some cases as masculine *lesbi* women and in other cases as men trapped in women's bodies (Boellstorff 2005, 2007).

Throughout my fieldwork, I have taken great pains to investigate how it is that Indonesians come to *lesbi* or *gay* subjectivity. The reason for this is that, unlike so-called traditional homosexual and transgendered subject positions or the *waria* subject position, *gay* and *lesbi* are not concepts with significant historical depth; they appear to have first arisen in Indonesia in the 1970s.[3] They are experienced as new, not something one learns from one's community, kin group, or religion. Sometimes, as in Hasan's case, same-sex activity has taken place before thinking of oneself as *gay* or *lesbi*; in other instances such activity only begins after thinking of oneself as *gay* or *lesbi*.

Once *gay* men and *lesbi* women have come to *gay* or *lesbi* subjectivity and begin having homosexual relationships founded in that subjectivity, they usually begin to participate in what they call the "*lesbi* world" or "*gay* world" *(dunia lesbi, dunia gay)*. These worlds are perceived to be nationwide, flourish primarily but not solely in urban areas, and are linked through travel, correspondence, and the informal publishing of small magazines. Later I describe some contours of these worlds, as well as the worlds of *warias* and "traditional" homosexualities and transgenderisms. For the purposes of this article, however, I focus on an early stage in the *lesbi* or *gay* life course, the process by which persons come to term themselves as *gay* or *lesbi* in the first place.

This process appears, on first consideration, an ethnographic mystery. Most Indonesians, unless they are quite upper class or have traveled to the "West," are unaware of the terms *lesbi* and *gay* or think the terms (and *homo*) are English names for *warias*. Even *gay* men and *lesbi* women who went to elementary school in the late 1980s or early 1990s recall the use in the schoolyard of terms primarily for *warias*, such as *banci*, but rarely *gay* or *lesbi*. No local culture, ethnic tradition *(adat)*, or religion sanctions *gay* or *lesbi* or even names them with any systematicity. How, then, do these subject positions take hold in the hearts of so many contemporary Indonesians?

A few Indonesians say that they first learned of the possibility of becoming *gay* or *lesbi* from friends (usually not *gay* or *lesbi* themselves). A few *gay* men say that they first knew that they could be *gay* after wandering into a public area frequented by *gay* men, and a few *gay* men and *lesbi* women say that they became aware of the subject positions after being seduced. It appears, however, that only a small fraction of Indonesians learn of the *gay* or *lesbi* subject positions through all of these routes to erotic knowledge combined.

Another possible avenue, is through small magazines that *gay* men and *lesbi* women have been informally publishing since the early 1980s. These magazines might play a conduit role, importing and transmitting "Western" concepts of sexuality. No interlocutors however, have ever cited these magazines as the means by which they came to think of

themselves as *lesbi* or *gay*. The primary reason for this is that Indonesians seem to access these magazines only after first occupying the *lesbi* or *gay* subject position (Boellstorff 2007, chapter 2).[4] It is also clear that *gay* and *lesbi* subject positions existed for several years prior to the appearance of the first *gay* publication in 1982. Despite impacting the subjectivities of those who read them, these magazines do not play a formative role. Although this may not remain the case in the future, particularly as greater press freedoms and increasing Internet access make the magazines more accessible, neither these magazines nor the other modes mentioned above explain how Indonesians have come to occupy the subject positions *lesbi* and *gay* to the present day.

For *gay* men and *lesbi* women, the element of Hasan's narrative with the greatest resonance is his description of a kind of "Aha!" moment when, during an encounter with *mainstream* print or electronic mass media, they come to think of themselves as *lesbi* or *gay*. Nearly 90 percent of my *gay* and *lesbi* interlocutors cite mainstream mass media as the means by which they first knew they could understand themselves through the concepts *"lesbi"* or *"gay."* This is true whether the individuals in question are from Java, Bali, Sulawesi, or other islands; whether they are Muslim, Christian, Hindu, or Buddhist; whether they are wealthy, middle class, or impoverished; whether they live in cities or rural areas; and whether they were born in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, or 1980s. Rarely is a cultural variable distributed so widely across such a diverse population. (In cases where peers tell *lesbi* or *gay* Indonesians of these terms, those peers apparently learn of the terms through mainstream mass media.)

The critical role of mainstream mass media in the lives of *lesbi* and *gay* Indonesians is all the more notable when we compare the life narratives of *lesbi* women and *gay* men with those of *warias*. I have *never* heard *warias* cite mass media as the means by which they first saw themselves as *warias*; as I discuss later, they learn of the *waria* subject position from their social environs – schoolkids on the playground, a cousin, or neighbor – but not from mass media. Hasan's narrative rehearses a common story of discovery that most *gay* and *lesbi* Indonesians see as pivotal in their lives, a moment they recall without hesitation, as in the case of the following Javanese Christian man in Surabaya:

In elementary school the only word was banci [waria]. For instance, a boy who walked or acted like a girl would get teased with the word banci. So I didn't know about the word gay until junior high. I heard it from books, magazines, television. And I wanted to know! I looked for information; if I saw that a magazine had an article about homos I'd be sure to read it. I knew then that a homo was a man who liked men. But I didn't know that homo meant gay at that time. So I tried to find out from books and things like that. I learned all of that stuff from the mass media … So having someone come and tell me "It's like this," that never happened. I learned it all through magazines and newspapers … And when I read those things, I knew that I was gay.

For this man "homo" is an impersonalized descriptive category, whereas *"gay"* is a framework for understanding the self's past motivations, immediate desires,

and visions of an unfolding future. Abdul, a Muslim man who grew up in a small town in Sulawesi, tells his story in the following interview excerpt:

TB: *When you were in your teenage years, did you already know the term gay?*

Abdul: *In my environment at that time, most people didn't yet know. But because I read a lot, read a lot of news, I already knew. I already knew that I was gay. Through reading I knew about the gay world …*

TB: *What kinds of magazines?*

A: *Gossip magazines, you know, they always talk about such-and-such a star and the rumors that the person is gay. So that broadened my concepts [wawasan], made me realize, "Oh, there are others like me."*

Because *lesbi* and *gay* representations mingle in these mass media, most *lesbi* women, like the following Balinese woman, also trace their subjectivities to encounters with mass media: "I didn't use the word *lesbi* because I didn't even know the term [when I was young]. I didn't hear about the word *lesbi* until about 1990, when I read it in a magazine. And right away, when I read about *lesbi* and what that meant, I thought to myself, 'That's me!' "

Consider the following narrative from Susie, a Muslim who terms herself a masculine *lesbi* woman *(hunter yang lesbi)*. Susie has been talking about sexual relations with other women in her early teenage years, and I ask her if she knew the terms *hunter* and *lesbi* at that point:

Susie: *I didn't know hunter yet, but I already knew lesbian, lesbi, I knew. I'd already – I'd already read it, don't you know?*

TB: *Read it where?*

S: *In magazines, through hanging out with friends who mentioned it, through means like that*.

Susie then talked about short articles in newspapers that would occasionally mention how women could have sex with women, concluding, "Through that I could know that I was *lesbi" (lewat itu saya bisa tahu bahwa saya itu lesbi)*. Indeed, the intertwining of *lesbi* and *gay* in mass media is so common that in at least one case a man who now calls himself *gay* termed himself *lesbi* for several years as a result of reading women's magazines, switching to *gay* only after reading a magazine "about historic English royalty … Richard someone."

The role of mass media is striking because to this day there is little coverage of openly *gay* Indonesian men or *lesbi* Indonesian women: what Indonesians usually encounter through mass media is gossip about Indonesian celebrities, but particularly gossip about "Western" celebrities and gay and lesbian "Westerners," real and

portrayed.[5] And what they see is not a one-hour special on "Homosexuality in the West"; rarely is it even the kind of demonstration described by Hasan. *Gay* and *lesbi* Indonesians typically speak of brief, intermittent coverage: a single fifteen-second item on Rock Hudson's AIDS diagnosis one night in the 1980s; an editorial about Al Pacino's role in the movie *Cruising*; a gossip column about Elton John or Melissa Etheridge; or a short review of *The Wedding Banquet* or *My Best Friend's Wedding* (two films that had homosexual characters).[6] Although some *lesbi* women and *gay* men actually see such films, either because the films make it onto Indonesian screens or, increasingly, are available on video or DVD, these Indonesians also stress the role of print media, particularly newspapers and women's magazines like *Kartini* and *Femina*. References to Indonesians engaging in homosexual acts or terming themselves *lesbi* or *gay* in some fashion occasionally appear in these media, but in most cases the references to homosexuality are negative – psychologists presenting homosexuality as a pathology, or disapproving gossip columns. Sporadic coverage of same-sex scandals and arrests dates back to the early 20th century. The earliest extensive study of contemporary Indonesian homosexuality to my knowledge, sociologist Amen Budiman's 1979 book *Lelaki Perindu Lelaki* (Men Who Yearn for Men), notes that:

In this decade [the 1970s] homosexuality has increasingly become an interesting issue for many segments of Indonesian society. Newspapers, both those published in the capital and in other areas, often present articles and news about homosexuality. In fact, Berita Buana Minggu in Jakarta has a special column, "Consultation with a Psychiatrist," which often answers the complaints of those who are homosexual and want to change their sexual orientation. It's the same way with pop magazines, which with increasing diligence produce articles about homosexuality, sometimes even filled with personal stories from homosexual people, complete with their photographs. (89–90)

Budiman later adds, "It is very interesting to note that homosexuals who originate in the lower classes often try to change their behavior by seeking advice from psychiatric or health columnists in our newspapers and magazines" (116). In the 1970s, however, and among my present-day interlocutors (a few of whom became *gay* or *lesbi* in the 1970s or earlier), many *lesbi* and *gay* Indonesians are not changing behavior but coming to occupy what they see as legitimate and even healthy sexualities through these same mass media. From their beginnings to the present, these media have "exposed" not a fully articulated discourse of homosexuality, but a series of incomplete and contradictory references, in translation, sometimes openly denigrating and hostile. It is not a transmission of self-understanding so much as a fractured set of cultural logics reconfigured within Indonesia. Yet from "translations" of this intermittent reportage come subjectivities by which myriad Indonesians live out their lives.

Gay and *lesbi* subject positions thus lead us to a specific sociological problem. Indonesians learn of the possibility of thinking of oneself as *gay* or *lesbi* through the

intermittent reception of messages from mass media. These messages do not intend to convey the possibility of a kind of selfhood. They are often denigrating and dismissive, but above all they are *fragmentary*. In the 1980s an Indonesian might encounter such reportage a few times a year at most, if an avid reader; in the 1990s it became more frequent but still was quite minimal given the universe of topics appearing in the mass media. The question, then, is how modes of subjectivation become established when the social field in which they arise establishes them neither as discourses nor reverse discourses. Indonesian mass media certainly do not intend to set forth the possibility of *gay* and *lesbi* subject positions, nor do the imported programs they frequently rebroadcast; in fact, they rarely take a *negative* stance on *gay* and *lesbi* subject positions. Yet it is these mass media that, in a very real sense, make *gay* and *lesbi* subjectivities possible, just as the national imagined communities that are so socially efficacious worldwide could not have existed before Gutenberg struck type to page.

Subjectivities and subject positions

Readers may have noticed three somewhat atypical dimensions to my analysis thus far. First, the term *identity* has not appeared in this article, and I speak instead of subjectivities and subject positions. Second, I treat Indonesia as a single ethnographic unit rather than segregating data from Java, Sulawesi, Bali, and elsewhere. Third, I do not segregate data by gender but bring together *gay* men and *lesbi* women as well as transgendered subjectivities like *waria/banci*. All of these methodological and theoretical moves relate to the concept of "dubbing culture." Addressing each in turn will foreclose some possible misunderstandings of this analysis and provide an opportunity to situate the narratives of Hasan, Susie, and the other interlocutors in a wider ethnographic context.

In this article I eschew the identity/behavior binarism in favor of a language of *subject positions* (extant social categories of selfhood) and *subjectivities* (the various senses of self – erotics, assumptions about one's life course, etc. – that apply when occupying a subject position, whether partially or completely, temporarily or permanently). As many scholars of sexuality have noted (e.g. Elliston), "identity" versus "behavior" is a false dichotomy: identity is not only simply a cognitive map but also a set of embodied practices, and behavior is always culturally mediated through self-narrative. As a result, focusing on subject positions and subjectivities turns attention to the total social fact of *gay* and *lesbi* selfhood. This is a basically Foucauldian framework that draws from the epistemological break between volumes one and two of *The History of Sexuality*, wherein Foucault shifted from an emphasis on "the formation of sciences" of sexuality and the "systems of power" inciting sexuality to "the practices by which individuals were led to focus their attention on themselves, to decipher, recognize, and acknowledge themselves as subjects of desire, bringing into

play between themselves a certain relationship that allows them to discover, in desire, the truth of their being" (*The History of Sexuality, volume two*, 4–5). This approach is attuned to the role of discourse in making subject positions intelligible historical and cultural possibilities, "an analysis of the 'games of truth,' the games of truth and error through which being is historically constituted as experience" (6–7), a framework that situates agency in specific discursive contexts.

I think of "subject position" as a rough translation of *jiwa*, which means "soul" in Indonesian but often has a collective meaning; *lesbi* women will sometimes say "*lesbi* have the same *jiwa*;" *warias* will say they "have the same *jiwa*"; or *lesbi* women and *gay* men will sometimes say they share a *jiwa*. I think of "subjectivity" as a rough translation of *pribadi* or *jatidiri*, both of which mean approximately "self-conception"; a *gay* man once distinguished *pribadi* from *jiwa* by saying that "every person possesses their own *pribadi*." *Identitas* has a much more experience-distant, bureaucratic ring for most Indonesians: One *gay* man defined *identitas* as "biodata: name, address, and so on" [*biodata: nama, alamat, dan sebagainya*].[7]

The Indonesian subject

This framework provides a useful place from which to consider the implications of treating Indonesia as an ethnographic unit for the case of the *lesbi* and *gay* subject positions. Subject positions are not always lexicalized, but, like any aspect of culture, they always have a history. They come into being at a certain period of time, which shapes them, and they also change through time for as long as they persist. Subject positions also always contain within them "spatial scales" (or "spatial fixes"; see Neil Brenner; Harvey). To be a "Yale student" has a different cultural logic of scale than to be a "New Yorker" or to be "Japanese." Additionally, the various subject positions through which we live at any point in time may not have isomorphic spatial scales: for instance, one's sense of self as a youth could be global, as a man local, and as a laborer national, all at the same time. Or, to be a youth could be both local and global at the same time, intersecting the two. As a result, three crucial issues in the ethnographic investigation of subject positions are (1) their historicity (that is, the way they are shaped by their embedded notions of their own history and what counts as history); (2) their spatial scales; and (3) how they intersect with other subject positions and the histories and spatial scales of those other subject positions.

In this regard, it may surprise readers unfamiliar with Indonesianist anthropology that the national imagined community has rarely represented a subject for ethnographic inquiry. Instead, anthropological research in the archipelago has been guided by what I term "ethnolocality" (see Boellstorff "Ethnolocality"). This mode of representation originated in the colonial encounter as a means of impeding the possibility of translocal spatial scales other than colonialism (in particular, nationalism and Islamic movements). As reified in the work of the Leiden school, "custom" (*adat*) was

understood to belong not to the Indies as a whole but to groups framed in terms of the equation of ethnonym with toponym, an equation whose persistence has been noted by many scholars (e.g. Keane 180). In this understanding (which can be emic as well as etic), culture is assumed to be the property of "the Balinese," "the Makassarese," "the Javanese," and so on. Under this formulation, Indonesia is a field of anthropological study, but not the "field" in which one does "fieldwork" (De Josselin de Jong). Although a large body of anthropological scholarship has productively denaturalized ethnolocality, at the level of epistemology it remains influential. Indonesianist scholarship now typically acknowledges that in the decades since Indonesian independence, a national culture has taken root – aided by the state-supported spread of the Indonesian language and commodity capitalism – but that national culture is often treated as a force impacting local culture rather than the possible location of a subject position in its own right. This issue is of particular importance in the post-Suharto era, when movements for regional autonomy and *adat* "revitalization" threaten to renaturalize ethnolocalized conceptions of self and society.

But if ethnolocality can be problematized, if a subject of Java can be regarded as a subject of "Java" (Pemberton), then can we dissolve the implicit scare quotes that prevent us from treating a subject of "Indonesia" as a *subject of Indonesia*? Can there be such as thing as Indonesian *adat*? Can there be an ethnography of Indonesians? Are "the village" (Breman), ethnolocality, and world religions like Islam and Christianity the only spatial scales shaping subject positions in contemporary Indonesia? Or could there be subject positions with spatial scales that are foundationally national, even if persons inhabiting such subject positions might consider themselves in terms of ethnolocality with respect to other aspects of their lives? Could one think of oneself, for instance, as "Madurese" with relation to conceptions of exchange, but "Indonesian" with relation to sexuality?

This ethnographic emphasis on locality is shaped by anthropology's emphasis on difference. In this tradition, difference is expected: unproblematic, obvious, and authentic. It asks nothing more than to be recorded, typologized, interpreted, and rhetorically deployed. Sameness, however, awakens disturbing contradictions. On the one hand, sameness is uninteresting: if you study the Other and they are the same as you are, what is there to say? Are they a proper Other at all? At the same time, there is discomfort: sameness cries out for explanation and modeling. It must have a reason: is it diffusion or convergent evolution? There is a sense that contamination has occurred and authenticity has been compromised. In an already globalized world, however, anthropologies of similitude and translocality can illuminate new transformations of ostensibly "Western" discourses.

It goes without saying that there will be differences between different islands and ethnic groups, just as there is always difference between households or neighborhoods.

At issue is the critical analytical moment when the ethnographer determines the boundaries of "the field" (Gupta and Ferguson), deciding at what point the threshold from similitude to difference has been crossed. This is a culturally located act, and, in the context of this act, this heuristic compromise, it seems methodologically sound to take into account our interlocutors' senses of inhabiting subject positions with translocal spatial scales. James Siegel, in his classic *Solo in the New Order*, names this compromise when he says, "I want to stress how various Java is. Whatever claims I make about it should be understood to refer to [the city of] Solo alone, relieving me of the tiresome duty to qualify my statements in every instance" (11). Although Siegel is certainly correct in pointing out the diversity of Java, the problem of spatial scale is not only one of overreaching but also of under-reaching. It appears unlikely that Indonesians in Solo, even if ethnically Javanese – living in a city where one main cruising area for *gay* men is known as "Manhattan" – "refer to Solo alone" in their own cultural worlds. What Siegel points out, here, is the ethnographer's tiresome duty of looking not only for solid data but also for a methodological and theoretical construction of the field site pitched as closely as possible to the cultural geographies of those whose lives the ethnographer seeks to interpret. Questions of the ethnography of translocality link to *gay* and *lesbi* subject positions on an epistemological level: in both cases a crucial element of the research is theorizing the threshold between similarity and difference. This will prove to be the central problematic of "dubbing culture."

To date, most studies that consider the possibility of national subject positions in Indonesia focus on mass media or literature (e.g. Heider). Although I foreground mass media in this article as well, mass media may simply represent the visible leading edge of a "superculture" that, as Hildred Geertz noted some time ago, includes the impoverished as well as the middle class and extends beyond urban centers in many cases (35). Sexuality and gender have been central elements of this national culture since its inception, and much contemporary work on women in Indonesia looks at the influence of the nation-state and, thus, at gendered subjectivities with a national spatial scale.[8] Looking at non-normative genders and sexualities can contribute to this body of work and will provide important clues to the operations of "dubbing culture."

Gender and sexual relationality

National transvestites

The most enduring "Western" stereotype regarding homosexuality and transgenderism in Indonesia (and Southeast Asia more generally) is that these regions are "tolerant." Although it is true that there have been – and in some cases, still are – socially recognized roles for male-to-female transgenders as well as widespread acceptance of secretive homosexual behavior, transgenderism and homosexuality are hardly valorized in contemporary Indonesian society. Although homosexuality and transgenderism usually escape official comment, if directly asked, most religious and state authorities

swiftly condemn transgenderism and homosexuality as sinful and incompatible with "Indonesian tradition."

Considerations of non-normative sexuality and gender in Indonesia sometimes focus on what I term "ethnolocalized homosexual or transvestite professional" (ETP) subject positions, such as *bissu* transvestite priests in South Sulawesi or the homosexual relationships between male actors and their male understudies in East Java known as *warok-gemblak* (Andaya Davies; Matthew Kennedy; Wilson). Although ETPs persist in some parts of contemporary Indonesia, I know of no cases where *gay* men and *lesbi* women see their subjectivities as an outgrowth of them (most appear to be unaware of their existence). This is not surprising, since ETPs are found only among some ethnic groups in Indonesia; are in most cases only for men and for only part of the life span; and are linked to *adat* ritual or performance. In fact, it is a misnomer to speak of ETPs as *sexualities*, as that term is understood in the "West," since they are, above all, professions, not categories of selfhood organized around sexual desire.[9]

Warias are far more familiar to Indonesians – *lesbi, gay*, or otherwise (Boellstorff 2007, chapter 3) *Warias* are better known to the Indonesian public by the rather derogatory terms *banci* or *béncong*, but themselves tend to prefer *waria*, an amalgam of *wanita* (female) and *pria* (male) coined in 1978. A succinct but inevitably incomplete definition of *warias* is "male transvestites." I use *transvestite* rather than *transgender* because most *warias* see themselves not as becoming female, but as men who (1) have the souls of women from birth, (2) dress as women much of the time, and (3) have sex with "normal" *(normal)* men. In contemporary Indonesia, *warias* are truly "national": *warias* can be from any ethnicity, religion, or part of the archipelago, including Papua and Aceh. Unlike the *gay* and *lesbi* subject positions, the national distribution of the *waria* subject position is really a colonial distribution; the subject position has significantly greater time depth than the *lesbi* and *gay* subject positions, dating to at least the mid–19th century and possibly earlier. *Warias* are much more visible than *gay* or *lesbi* Indonesians: many dress as women twenty-four hours a day, but even those who do not are readily identifiable because of their feminine appearance (coded through tweezed eyebrows, long hair, and movements and speech deemed effeminate). In any Indonesian city, and even in rural areas, you can encounter poorer *warias* on the street or in a park looking for sex work clients. Above all, you will find *warias* working at salons, and you would certainly hope to have a *waria* do the makeup and hairstyling for your daughter on her wedding day. It is this transformative power of *warias* to change the public appearances of others (in line with their ability to change their own public appearance) that is their *ilmu*, their great skill, in Indonesian society; and *warias* cite this as the reason they should be valued. *Warias* are part of the recognized social mosaic.

One consequence of this recognition is that, as noted earlier, *warias* do not come to that particular subjectivity through mass media as *lesbi* women and *gay* men typically do.

This does not mean, however, that *warias* are absent from mass media and other public forums. You can see them in television comedy shows and Bayer Aspirin commercials or performing at amusement parks and Independence Day celebrations. In all of these contexts, *warias* are construed as artful, skilled in beauty, *and* as silly, worthy targets of disdain. In other words, although *warias* are acknowledged elements of contemporary Indonesian society, it would be a mistake to take seriously the orientalist claim that there is tolerance in anything but the barest sense of the term. The "Western" liberal assumption that to be public and visible implies acceptance (a notion that the concept of "coming out" reapplies to sexual subjectivity) does not hold here. Although the parents of *warias* usually release such children from the imperative to marry (particularly if the *waria* works in a salon and contributes economically to the household), some are thrown out of the family. *Warias* have been held underwater by angry fathers until they have almost drowned, have been tormented, stabbed, and killed by street youths, and have died of AIDS on an island far from home, rejected by their own families. At the same time, many *warias* enjoy steady incomes and relative social acceptance, and in some respects their condition is better than that of transgenders, lesbians, or gay men in much of the "West."

All in all, then, it seems difficult to hold up Indonesia as a transgendered nirvana. Nonetheless, *warias* see themselves as a significant element of Indonesian national culture. Like *lesbi* women and *gay* men, they typically assume that others sharing their subject position can be found across Indonesia, but an important difference is that they have only a weak sense that people like them exist in other parts of the world. Indeed, they often ask me, "Are there *warias* in America?"

Gay and lesbi Indonesians

I have never been asked such a question by a *lesbi* or *gay* Indonesian; just as the modern Indonesian nation-state is assumed to be one unique element in a global network of nation-states, so there is a strong sense that the *gay* and *lesbi* subject positions are Indonesian phenomena linked to the global existence of persons with homosexual subjectivities (even if this is, in my experience, rarely phrased in terms of a movement). For these Indonesians, the pre-revelatory period of sexual subjectivity is usually experienced locally; the local is the social space of the not-yet *(belum) lesbi* or not-yet *gay*. What they describe when they encounter the concepts *lesbi* or *gay* through mass media, is a moment of recognition, a moment that involves a shift in sexualized spatial scale; it is not only that same-sex desire can be constituted as a subjectivity, but also that its spatial scale is translocal. The deictic "*That*'s me!" places the self in a dialogic relationship with a *distant but familiar other*.

On one level this spatial scale is national. One reason for this is that the mass media through which Indonesians come to *gay* or *lesbi* subjectivity employ the national Indonesian language (and not ethnolocalized languages like Javanese or Buginese) and emphasize themes of national unity and patriotism. A second reason is that, unlike ETPs,

the concepts *lesbi* and *gay* are seen as self-evidently incompatible with ethnolocality: no one learns what *lesbi* or *gay* means through "Makassarese culture" or "Javanese culture." *Gay* and *lesbi* persons thereby think of themselves as *Indonesians* with regard to their sexualities – to the point that they sometimes use nationalist metaphors of the archipelago concept *(wawasan nusantara)* to conceptualize their community (Boellstorff 2005). On a second level (unlike *warias*), *lesbi* and *gay* Indonesians see their subjectivities as linked to a transnational imagined community: they regard themselves as one "island" in a global archipelago of gay and lesbian persons, a constellation including places like Australia and Europe as well as Malaysia and Thailand. They do not regard themselves as a "rerun" of the "West"; they view themselves as different, but this difference is not seen to create a chasm of incommensurability.

Based on my own fieldwork and that of other scholars, as well as the networks built by *lesbi* women and *gay* men, it seems clear that *gay* men and *lesbi* women can be found throughout Indonesia. Of course, this does not mean that they are found *everywhere* in Indonesia, but that they can be found both in major cities and in smaller towns and rural areas. Although some *lesbi* and *gay* Indonesians are wealthy and well educated, most are not, giving lie to the stereotype that gay men and lesbians outside the "West" are the product of wealth, decadence, or estrangement from tradition.[10] Indeed, if one common "Western" misconception about Indonesia (and Southeast Asia more generally) is that transgenders are always valued members of society, another misconception is that gay men and lesbian women are products of the executive, jet-setting classes. Here the cultural effects of globalization are thought to correlate with class in a linear fashion: the richer you are, the more you are affected by globalization, and thus the less authentic you are. The proletarian becomes the new indigene. As any Nike factory worker in Indonesia could tell you, however, class is poorly correlated with the degree to which someone is impacted by globalizing forces. And, indeed, most *gay* men and *lesbi* women in Indonesia are primarily lower class (ninety percent of my *gay* interlocutors make less than $60 a month), do not speak English, and have never traveled outside Indonesia. From the testimony of my interlocutors it appears that most have never met a "Westerner" before myself – gay, lesbian, or otherwise – particularly if they have never spent time in Bali or Jakarta. Like *warias*, many *gay* men work in salons, but because they are poorly visible to Indonesian society, they can also be found in other professions, from the highest levels of government to street sweepers. *Lesbi* women can also be found in a wide range of professions, but many are quite poor, particularly if they have a masculine appearance that renders them unfit for careers deemed women's work.

As noted earlier, most Indonesians still confuse the terms *gay* and *waria*, supposing that the former is an English rendition of the latter. *Gay* men and *warias* do not share this confusion, but they do see each other as sharing something: an attraction to men. Few *gay* men, however, speak of themselves as having a woman's soul.

Not all are effeminate; though many *gay* men *déndong*, or "do drag" for entertainment purposes, in the rare cases where *gay* men begin to dress like women all of the time, they consider themselves to have become *warias* (and are so regarded by other gay men).[11]

Like *gay* men, *lesbi* women can be found throughout Indonesia. In fact, there appears to have been greater mass-media coverage of *lesbi* women than *gay* men when these subject positions first entered public awareness in the early 1980s, but this is probably an artifact of the greater scrutiny placed on women's sexuality in Indonesia more generally. As in the case of *gay* men, *lesbi* women can come from any class position – since they usually come to *lesbi* subjectivity through mainstream mass media, as *gay* men do, it is not necessary that they be members of feminist organizations, have a high level of education, or live in the capital of Jakarta.

There are many other similarities between *lesbi* women and *gay* men. Both usually describe their desires in terms of a "desire for the same" *(suka sama suka)*. Another important similarity is that the *lesbi* and *gay* subject positions both have a national spatial scale. To this day *gay* slang (spoken by some *lesbi* women as well) is based only on Indonesian, the national language, not an ethnic language like Javanese or Balinese. I have never been able to discover a consistent geographical variation for *lesbi* or *gay* subjectivities: no place where there exists an ethnic or island-specific network (though there is a national network); no place where expectations about heterosexual marriage differ from other parts of the country; no place where coming to *lesbi* or *gay* subjectivity takes place primarily through kinship networks, international tourism (even in Bali), or some modality other than mainstream mass media. Note that this is not a proscriptive argument. There is no reason that an ethnic-specific *lesbi* or *gay* subject position ("Sudanese *lesbi*" or "Batak *gay*," for instance) might not emerge in the future: the point is that from the 1980s until the present this has not been the case, nor have *lesbi* and *gay* Indonesians perceived this as a problem.[12] That the *lesbi* and *gay* subject positions have this national spatial scale (and are shaped by state discourse) does not mean these Indonesians have a greater investment in the nation-state than other Indonesians; it does not imply patriotism any more than the shaping of "Western" homosexual subject positions by sexological and psychoanalytic discourse (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, volume 1*) means that these "Westerners" are enthusiasts of psychoanalysis. Similarities between *lesbi* and *gay* Indonesians can be understood not only because of widely distributed conceptions of gender complementarity that de-emphasize gendered difference (Shelly Errington), but also because *lesbi* and *gay* appear to have taken form in Indonesia more or less together, as gendered analogues, each implying the other and suggesting the (sometimes fulfilled) possibility of socializing between *lesbi* women and *gay* men.

A relational analysis, however, reveals differences between the *lesbi* and *gay* subject positions. Perhaps the most consequential of these is the relationship between

what we could call masculine and feminine *lesbi* women. As noted above, *gay* men sometimes act in an effeminate manner. The distinction between masculine and effeminate *gay* men, however, is not an organizing sexual principle – some *gay* men will say they prefer "manly" men *(laki-laki yang kebapakan)*, which can mean non-*gay* men, but this is seen to be a matter of personal taste and does not denote a category of person. In contrast, a distinction between masculine and feminine *lesbi* women is ubiquitous in Indonesia, and it is typically assumed that sexual relationships will be between masculine and feminine *lesbi*, not between two masculine or two feminine *lesbi*.

This state of affairs might seem to be an import from the "West," where a long tradition of butch/femme distinctions often plays an important role in lesbian communities (Halberstam; Kennedy and Davis), without a clear parallel in gay sexual norms. Indeed, some observers of *lesbi* Indonesians have characterized masculine and feminine *lesbi* women in terms of butch and femme (Wieringa). Although not an intended interpretation, this could be seen to imply that the *lesbi* subject position, complete with an internal butch/femme distinction, is globalizing from the "West" except insofar as individual *lesbi* women "resist."[13]

The key point, however, is that when *gay* took form in (not "globalized to") Indonesia, it did so in the context of the well-known *waria* subject position. The *gay* subject position thus came to structure "desire for the same" within the category of masculinity. Although *gay* men and *warias* are often friends, it is considered highly abnormal for them to have sex with each other, since *gay* men are understood to desire "the same" (i.e., other *gay* or normal men) and *warias* "real men" *(laki-laki normal/tulen/asli)*.

Crucially, however, no female analogue to *waria* existed at the time that *lesbi* took shape in Indonesia: masculine women and female-to-male transgenders certainly existed, but they were not publicly known as a category of person, as *warias* were. As a result, the subject position *lesbi* includes not only women attracted to women (of masculine or feminine gendering) but also persons born with women's bodies who feel themselves to have the soul of a man and strive to be considered social men. These persons, who usually call themselves *"tombois"* (also *hunter* in Sulawesi and parts of Java; *cowok* [male] in parts of Sumatra; or *sentul* in parts of Java), tend to dress as men twenty-four hours a day and engage in stereotypically male activities (Blackwood). Indeed, unless they speak, some are often mistaken for men on the street.

The consequences of this are manifold. First, like *lesbi* and *gay* (but unlike *waria/banci*), *tomboi* is understand to be a "foreign" concept that has been Indonesianized. *Tomboi* does not appear in a 1976 Indonesian dictionary (*lesbian* does, but *gay* is absent [Poerwadarminta 592]); by 1991, however, it appears with the definition "an active girl, full of adventuring like a boy." That *tomboi* was Indonesianized by this point is indicated by the fact that the term could already occur with the circumflex

ke-an to form the abstract noun *ketomboian*, "tomboi matters" (Salim and Salim 1630). These common Indonesian uses of *tomboi*, however, do not mark a minoritized sexual subject position, but indicate what is understood to be a temporary and benign characteristic in young girls.[14] The use of the term *tomboi* to label an adult sexual subject position builds from this understanding in a manner that has no parallel for the terms *waria, gay*, or *lesbi*. An important topic for future research will be to investigate how the *tomboi* subject position is "dubbed," both with relation to the "West" and to Indonesian popular culture, in a way that the *lesbi*, *gay*, and *waria* subject positions are not.

The most important consequence of this dual "dubbing" is that there is active debate among *tombois* as to whether they are a subcategory of *lesbi* – masculine *lesbi* (as Susie put it, a "hunter who is a lesbi" *[hunter yang lesbi]*) – or a separate transgendered subject position analogous to *waria*. For instance, the *tomboi* protagonist in the novel *Menguak Duniaku*, in the first of a series of pivotal encounters with mass media, reads about the first *waria* sex change operation (on Vivian Iskandar in 1973) and thinks to herself: "I wanted to tell my mother, my father, that I was the same as Vivian" (Prawirakusumah and Ramadhan 51).[15] This ambivalence regarding the *lesbi–tomboi* boundary does not appear to be localized to any one ethnic group or island: For instance, I have heard *tombois* and *lesbi* women in both Bali and Sulawesi state, "Not all *tombois* are *lesbi*, and not all *lesbi* women are *tombois*." The sense that *tomboi* and *lesbi* might be separate subject positions is complicated by the fact that, whereas *gay* men and *waria* rarely have sexual relationships, *tombois* and *lesbi* women are ideal sexual partners (although some *tombois* also have relationships with "real women" who, they often assume, will eventually leave them for men). The "desire for the same" that characterizes *gay* subjectivity is thus more fractured for *lesbi* women. This analysis shows how considering *tomboi* in relation to *waria, lesbi*, and *gay* provides a better understanding of the gendering of the *tomboi* subject position and its spatial scale than could be reached otherwise.[16]

The "problem" of dubbing

Eros and language mesh at every point. Intercourse and discourse, copula and copulation, are subclasses of the dominant fact of communication.… Sex is a profoundly semantic act … human sexuality and speech [together] generate … the process … whereby we have hammered out the notion of self and otherness. (George Steiner, After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation)

With this broader discussion of *lesbi* and *gay* life in mind, let us now return to the crucial role of mass media in Indonesians' coming to *lesbi* and *gay* subjectivity. The relationship between mass media and being Indonesian has a long history in the archipelago. From the late 19th century to the middle of the 20th century, print media played a central role in the formation of nationalism among the diverse and far-flung

peoples of the Dutch East Indies. Print media were also important in the establishment of Indonesian (a dialect of Malay formerly used as a *lingua franca* of trade) as the language of this new imagined community, a language that allowed for communication among a populace speaking over six hundred languages.[17]

In contrast to some other postcolonial states like India, imports now represent a substantial amount of cinematic and televised fare in Indonesia.[18] Although there is a long tradition of filmmaking in Indonesia, dating back to the early 20th century and, at some points, garnering nationwide audiences, in the late 1990s the Indonesian film industry generally produced only fifteen to twenty films per year, mostly low-budget erotic films that went directly to second-or third-run theaters (Ryanto 42).[19] By the late 1990s, each of Indonesia's five private television stations was importing approximately seven thousand shows per year, many of which originated in the United States (Republika 1996), and, beginning in the 1990s, dubbing became an increasingly popular way of presenting these broadcasts to Indonesian audiences (Lindsay).[20]

It was in the context of this rise in imported television that, in a joint news conference on 4 April 1996, one year after one of Indonesia's private television stations went national for the first time, Minister of Information, Harmoko, and Minister of Education and Culture, Wardiman Djojonegoro, announced that "foreign films on television should no longer be broadcast in their original language version with Indonesian summaries or subtitles but were to be dubbed into Indonesian" (Lindsay). This regulation on dubbing (*dubbing, sulih suara* [to substitute sound]) was to take effect by 16 August, in accordance with a soon-to-be-passed broadcasting law, which included the first set of broadcasting regulations to be issued in eighteen years. This bill, which had been debated in parliament for several months at that point, was to become one of the most contentious legal documents of the New Order's twilight years (the "New Order" refers to the thirty-year rule of Suharto, Indonesia's second president, which ended in 1998). The requirement that all programs be dubbed into Indonesian was greeted with little fanfare: as the public relations manager of station TPI noted, many of the programs imported each year by private television stations were already dubbed in response to viewer demand. Acquiescing to the state's long-standing goal of building nationalism through language planning, the public relations manager of station RCTI added that the requirement was "a good policy that will help build Indonesian skills in society" (Republika).

Within a month of the announcement, however, Aisyah Aminy, a spokesperson from the House of Representatives, suggested "this problem of dubbing is going to be discussed in more depth" (*Suara Pembuaran Daily*). Revealing dissent within the state apparatus, Aminy expressed concern that "at present, foreign films on television are not dubbed selectively and show many things that do not fit well with the culture of our people" (*Suara Pembuaran Daily*). The influential armed forces faction also weighed in

against the measure, but the House forged ahead, incorporating the dubbing requirement in its draft broadcast law of 6 December 1996.

What made the broadcasting bill such a topic of discussion was the way in which it was debated and revised, extraordinary even for the typically arcane machinations of the New Order bureaucracy. A first draft of the bill was completed by a legislative committee early in 1996 and sent to parliament for approval. As usual in the New Order, the bill had been essentially crafted by the president and even bore his initials (McBeth 24). In December 1996, the parliament duly rubber-stamped the bill, returning it to Suharto for his signature. After seven months, however, on 11 July 1997, Suharto dropped a bombshell: in an official letter, he refused to sign the draft broadcast law and returned it to parliament for revision, claiming that "several articles will be too difficult to implement from a technical standpoint" (Kompas; Suharto). This unconstitutional act was *the first time in national history* that a president refused to sign a draft law already passed by the House, a refusal made all the more perplexing by his approval of the original bill (Kompas). House debate on the president's proposed revisions began on 18 September 1997, and was marked by unusual (for the Suharto-era) interruptions from parliament members and heated argument over executive–legislative relations.

In the wake of the president's refusal, government sources gave conflicting accounts of the issues at stake. One issue, however, stood out above the others for its cultural, rather than directly economic, emphasis: the edict on dubbing. What was notable was the total reversal that occurred during parliamentary revisions: when the dust cleared in December 1997, Article 25 of the draft law, concerning dubbing, "had been completely reversed. All non-English language foreign films henceforth had to be dubbed into English, and all foreign films shown with Indonesian subtitles" (Lindsay). Why this sea-change? As one apologist later explained:

Dubbing can create gaps in family communication. It can ruin the self-image of family members as a result of adopting foreign values that are "Indonesianized" [diindonesiakan] … This can cause feelings of becoming "another person" to arise in family members, who are in actuality not foreigners … whenever Indonesians view television, films, or other broadcasts where the original language has been changed into our national language, those Indonesians will think that the performances in those media constitute a part of themselves. As if the culture behind those performances is also the culture of our people. [Ali 341–42, my translation, emphasis added]

In the end, the final version of the bill does, indeed, forbid dubbing most foreign programs into the Indonesian language. What is of interest for our purposes here, however, is the debate itself. Why, at this prescient moment in 1997 – as if foreshadowing the collapse of the New Order regime the following year – did translation become a focal point of political and cultural anxiety? What made the ability of Sharon Stone or Tom Cruise to "speak Indonesian" no longer a welcome opportunity

for fostering linguistic competency but, rather, a sinister force threatening the good citizen's ability to differentiate self from Other? Why, even with widespread discontent in many parts of the archipelago, was the state's fear suddenly re-centered, not on religious, regional, or ethnic affiliation overwhelming national loyalty, but on transnational affiliation superseding nationalism and rendering it secondary? And what might be the hidden linkages between this dubbing controversy and the crucial role mass media play in *gay* and *lesbi* subjectivities?

Dubbing culture

An error, a misreading initiates the modern history of our subject. Romance languages derive their terms for "translation" from traducere *because Leonardo Bruni misinterpreted a sentence in the Noctes of Aulus Gellius in which the Latin actually signifies "to introduce, to lead into." The point is trivial but symbolic. Often, in the records of translation, a fortunate misreading is the source of new life.* (George Steiner, After Babel: Aspects of Language in Translation)

We now have two problems centering on mass media. First problem: how do Indonesians come to see themselves as *gay* or *lesbi* through the fragmentary reception of mass-mediated messages? Second problem: why would the question of dubbing foreign television shows into the Indonesian language provoke one of the greatest constitutional crises in Indonesia's history? Both of these problems raise issues of translation and authenticity in an already globalized world. I suggest that we might address the first problem through the second. In effect, we can "dub" these two sets of social facts together and, in doing so, discover striking convergences and unexpected resonances.[21]

It was long after becoming aware of the link between mass media and *gay* and *lesbi* subjectivities that I learned of the dubbing controversy. I had been struggling with the question of *lesbi* and *gay* subjectivities for some time, without reaching a clear conclusion, particularly concerning questions of agency. Were *gay* and *lesbi* Indonesians simply mimicking the "West"; were they severed from their traditions once they occupied the subject positions *lesbi* or *gay*? After all, as I discuss elsewhere (Boellstorff 2005), *gay* and *lesbi* Indonesians tend to view themselves in terms of a consumerist life narrative where selfhood is an ongoing project developed through treating one's life as a kind of career. Alternatively, were these Indonesians queering global capitalism, subverting its heteronormativity and building a movement dedicated to human rights? Were they deploying the terms *lesbi* and *gay* tactically, as a veneer over a deeper indigenousness?

A notion of "dubbing culture" allowed me to move beyond this impasse of "puppets of globalization" versus "veneer over tradition." Through individual encounters with mass media – like reading one's mother's magazines or an advice column in the local newspaper, or viewing television coverage of a gay pride march in Australia – Indonesians construct subjectivities and communities. *Construct* is the wrong word;

it connotes a self who plans and consciously shapes something.[22] Better to say that these Indonesians "come to" *lesbi* and *gay* subjectivity through these entanglements with mass media; their constructive agency, and the *lesbi* and *gay* subject positions themselves, are constructed through the encounter. This is not a solely individual process; although the originary encounters with magazines or newspapers are typically solitary, as soon as the person begins to interact with other *lesbi*- or *gay*-identified Indonesians, he or she reworks these mass-mediated understandings of sexuality. Romance, for instance, is a crucial element of *lesbi* and *gay* subjectivities but rarely appears in media treatments of homosexuality.

A set of fragmented cultural elements from mass media are transformed in unexpected ways in the Indonesian context, transforming that context itself in the process. In other words, *lesbi* and *gay* Indonesians "dub" ostensibly "Western" sexual subjectivities. Like a dub, the fusion remains a juxtaposition; the seams show. "Speech" and "gesture" never perfectly match; being *lesbi* or *gay* and being Indonesian never perfectly match. For *lesbi* and *gay* Indonesians, as in "dubbing culture" more generally, this tension is irresolvable; there is no "real" version underneath, where everything fits. You can close your eyes and hear perfect speech or mute the sound and see perfect gesture, but no original unites the two in the dubbed production. This may not present the self with an unlivable contradiction, however, since, in dubbing, one is not invested in the originary but, rather, in the awkward fusion. Disjuncture is at the heart of the dub; there is no prior state of pure synchrony and no simple conversion to another way of being. Where translation is haunted by its inevitable failure, dubbing rejoices in the good-enough and the forever incomplete. Dubbing is not definitive, but heuristic, interpretative – like many understandings of the ethnographic project.

It is this dimension of dubbing that transcends the apparent dilemma of "puppets of globalization" versus "veneer over tradition." The idea of "dubbing culture" indicates that the root of the problem is the notion of authenticity itself, the colonialist paradigm that valorizes the "civilized" colonizer over the "traditional" colonized. In line with the observation that postcolonial nationalisms usually invert, rather than disavow, colonial categories of thought (Gupta 169), the Indonesian state simply flips the colonial binary, placing tradition over modernity as the ultimate justification for the nation. To the obvious problem of justifying a recently formed nation in terms of tradition, the Indonesian state (like all national states) has worked, ever since, to inculcate a sense of national culture *(kebudayaan nasional)*. This is built on the pillar of the Indonesian language and propagated via mass media. Through mass media, citizens are to come to recognize themselves as authentic Indonesians, carriers of an oxymoronic "national tradition" that will guide the body politic through the travails of modernity. By speaking in one voice – in Indonesian – a hierarchy of tradition over modernity can be sustained and reconciled with statehood.

“Dubbing” threatens this hierarchy: it is lateral, rhizomatic (Deleuze and Guattari), “a multiplicity that cannot be understood in terms of the traditional problems … of origins and genesis, or of deep structures” (Bogue 125). The authoritative voice is at odds with the visual presentation. “Dubbing culture” sets two elements side by side, blurred yet distinct. It is a performative act that, in linking persons to subject positions, creates subjectivities (Butler, *Gender Trouble*); but this “dubbing” link is *profoundly not one of suture*, a term originating in film studies regarding “the procedures by means of which cinematic texts confer subjectivity upon their viewers” (Silverman 195). In “dubbing culture,” subjectivity is constituted not through suture but collage. Yet this productively partial incorporation of the self into discourse is not a failed performance: in its iteration, its holding together of two ostensibly incompatible cultural logics without conflating them, a space for subjectivity appears.

The original television show or movie may pre-exist its Indonesian dub temporally, but to the interpreting audience neither voice nor image is prior. They happen together; neither dominates. Agamben, citing Benjamin’s concern with the relationship between quotation and the new “transmissibility of culture” made possible by mass media, notes that quotation “alienat[es] by force a fragment of the past … mak[ing] it lose its authentic power” (104). But “dubbing culture” (in a literal sense as well as the metaphorical sense I develop here) is more than just quotation; it adds a step, first alienating something but then reworking it in a new context. The power of the “dub” comes not from erasing authenticity but from inaugurating new authenticities not dependent on tradition or translation. It disrupts the apparent seamlessness of the pre-dubbed “original,” showing that it, too, is a dub, that its “traditions” are the product of social contexts with their own assumptions and inequalities.

The Indonesian authorities were keenly aware of these disruptive implications during the dubbing controversy. For decades, Indonesian had been the vehicle allowing Indonesians to speak with one voice. But now the possibility that Sharon Stone could “speak Indonesian” meant that this vehicle was spinning beyond state control – into the control of globalizing forces, but also into an interzone between languages and cultures, a zone with no controlling authority: “The Indonesian dubbing was so successful in making the language familiar that viewers lost any idea that it was strange for foreigners to speak Indonesian.… The language was too familiar, too much like real speech, too colloquial, and therefore the speech was too dangerous” (Lindsay).

The sudden shift during the dubbing controversy – from an insistence that *all* foreign television programs be dubbed into the Indonesian language to an insistence that *none* of them could be so dubbed – reveals a tectonic shift in the position of mass media in Indonesian society. For the first time, fear of this juxtaposition, of “Westerners” “speaking” the national tongue, tipped the scales against a historically-privileged concern with propagating Indonesian as national unifier. Now the ability of dubbing (and the Indonesian language itself) to explode the national imagined community – to show that

one can be Indonesian *and* translate ideas from outside – presented a danger greater than the potential benefit of drawing more sharply the nation's archipelagic edges.

"Dubbing culture," then, is about a new kind of cultural formation in an already globalized world, one for which the idiom of translation is no longer sufficient. It questions *the relationship between translation and belonging*, asserting that the binarisms of import/export and authentic/inauthentic are insufficient to explain how globalizing mass media play a role in *lesbi* and *gay* subject positions but do not determine them outright. For queer studies, the lesson here relates to understandings of lesbian or gay non-"Westerners" in terms of "rupture or continuity" (Altman) or "indigenous or Western import" (Jackson 186). Although tactically useful, such binarisms do not capture the possibility of subject positions with more nuanced and conjunctural relationships to the "West," ones that may stand outside usual definitions of identity politics.

In a metaphorical sense we might say that *lesbi* and *gay* Indonesians dub "Western" sexual subject positions: they overwrite the deterministic "voice of the West," yet they cannot compose any script they please; their *bricolage* remains shaped by a discourse originating in the "West" and filtered through a nationalistic lens. This process of dubbing allows *lesbi* and *gay* individuals to see themselves as part of a global community but also as authentically Indonesian. Unlike *warias*, they never ask, "Are there people like me outside Indonesia?" because it is already obvious – "built into" the dubbed subjectivities – that there are such people. These Indonesians imagine themselves as one national element in a global patchwork of lesbian and gay national subjectivities, and not through tradition, because *lesbi* and *gay* have a national spatial scale.

More broadly, "dubbing culture" as a metaphor speaks to the non-teleological, transformative dimensions of globalizing processes. It is useful for questioning the ability of globalizing mass media to project uniform ideologies. Although it is true that contemporary mass media have enormous power, it is crucial to emphasize that this power is not absolute; it can lead to unexpected results – like *lesbi* and *gay* subject positions themselves. The metaphorical use of "dubbing culture" provides a useful fleshing-out of theories linking ideological apparatuses with Althusser's thesis that "ideology interpellates individuals as subjects" (160–62). By this, Althusser meant that ideology forms the subject positions by which individuals come to represent their conditions of existence to themselves and to others. Althusser terms this function of ideology interpellation, or hailing, and illustrates it in terms of a person on the street responding to the hail "Hey, you there!" When the person turns around to respond to the hail, "he becomes a *subject*. Why? Because he has recognized that the hail was 'really' addressed to him" (Althusser 163). Many social theorists, particularly those interested in mass media, have found this a useful analytical starting point. The question most commonly posed to this framework by these theorists

concerns the issue of structure versus agency:

Although there would be no turning around without first having been hailed, neither would there be a turning around without some readiness to turn. But … how and why does the subject turn, anticipating the conferral of identity through the self-ascription of guilt? What kind of relation already binds these two such that the subject knows to turn, knows that something is to be gained from such a turn? (Butler, The Psychic Life of Power 107)

Part and parcel of this dilemma of agency is the question: how are we to explain the circumstance when people "recognize" something the ideology does not intend? Indonesian mass media never meant to create the conditions of possibility for national *gay* and *lesbi* subject positions. One way to address this problem might be through the dubbing culture concept, where what is recognized in the hail *is itself a product* of transformation. This does not entail compliance with state ideology. Yet neither does it imply a freewheeling, pre-social, liberal self-assembling of an identity from elements presented by mass media, independent of social context.

Gay and *lesbi* Indonesians often playfully employ the notion of authenticity *(asli)* – I have often heard *gay* men describe themselves as *asli gay*. In doing so, they implicitly challenge the state's monopoly on designating what will count as tradition in Indonesia. Authenticity is crucial for mass-media studies as well. For Benjamin, the very concept of authenticity is put under erasure by mass media. Because mass media depend on mechanical reproduction (no mass media circulate as a series of handcrafted originals) and for Benjamin "the presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity," it follows that "the whole sphere of authenticity is outside technical … reproducibility" (220). Benjamin sees the most significant aspect of this reproducibility to be that of movement: "Above all, [technical reproduction] enables the original to meet the beholder halfway … the cathedral leaves its locale to be received in the studio of a lover of art; the choral production, performed in an auditorium or in the open air, resounds in the drawing room" (220–21).

Gay and *lesbi* subjectivities are not moved from one place to another, as Benjamin saw mechanical reproduction, but are the dubbing of cultural logics in new ways. "Dubbing culture" is thus articulation in both senses of the term, an interaction of elements that remain distinct – like the image of speech and the dubbed voice – and also the "speaking" of a (dubbed) subjectivity.[23] This lets us "queery" globalization without posing either an oppositionally authentic "native" or globalization as simple movement.

"Dubbing culture" also speaks to conceptions of translation in the age of mechanical production. As Benjamin notes with reference to magazines, "For the first time, captions have become obligatory. And it is clear that they have an altogether different character than the title of a painting" (226). This is because captions are a guide to interpretation, juxtaposed to the work of art yet at a slight remove. They serve

as "signposts" that "demand a specific kind of approach; free-floating contemplation is not appropriate to them" (226). They are a mediation internal to mass media, a translation within.

Dubbing, far more than a subtitle, is a caption fused to the thing being described. It comes from the mouth of imagic characters, yet is never quite in synch. The moving lips never match the speech; the moment of fusion is always deferred, as dubbed voice, translation-never-quite-complete, bridges two sets of representations.[24] *Gay* and *lesbi* Indonesians dub culture as they live a subjectivity linked to people and places far away. They are completely Indonesian, but to be "completely Indonesian" requires thinking of one's position in a transnational world. In speaking of translation, Benjamin wrote that "unlike a work of literature, translation does not find itself in the center of the language forest but on the outside facing the wooded ridge; it calls into it without entering, aiming at that single spot where the echo is able to give, in its own language, the reverberation of the work in the alien one" (76). *Gay* and *lesbi* Indonesians have made of that echo subject positions that bespeak subjectivity and community even under conditions of oppression. They live in the echo, in the mass-mediated margin of incomplete translation, and find there authenticity, meaning, sex, friendship, and love.

Coda

As I noted at the beginning of this article, the concept of dubbing culture has a reflexive dimension for ethnography in an already globalized world. Indeed, to the extent we can consider translation a structuralist enterprise framing movement between languages and cultures in terms of grammar and meaning, many contemporary ethnographers engage in "dubbing culture" when they employ poststructuralist frameworks that question received understandings of the relationship among signifiers, and between signifiers and signifieds.

Additionally, "dubbing culture" need not be construed only in synchronic terms. There has been a striking retreat from the anthropology of postmodernity in recent years, perhaps induced by the lamentable vulgarization of "postmodern" from a specific theory of political economy, representation, and culture, to an epithet hurled at methodologies or writing strategies one finds difficult to apprehend. Yet what is the emerging anthropology of alternative modernities – of modernity without metanarrative (Lyotard) – if not an anthropology of postmodernity? And what is "dubbing culture" if not the anti-teleological mode of historicity that produces postmodern *bricolage*, *pastiche*, the more-than-juxtaposition and less-than-unification of pasts, presents, and futures?

Contemporary ethnography, then, can be said to be engaging in dubbing culture when it brings together parts and wholes, data and theory. *Lesbi* and *gay* Indonesians engage in dubbing culture as they come to sexual subjectivity; they show not that "authentic Indonesian tradition" is a lie but that this authenticity is processual,

constructed through active engagement with an unequal world. And if tradition and belonging are not given but constructed, they can be contested and transformed. The playing field is certainly not even – *lesbi* and *gay* Indonesians are not about to become fully accepted members of Indonesian society – but it is a playing field nonetheless, and there is space for change. Similarly, even in an already globalized world, non-“Western” cultures are not doomed to the status of reruns, even when confronted by “Western” hegemony.

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Notes

1. Although the term *lesbian* is sometimes used in Indonesian, *lesbi* is much more common and I use it here. The predominance of *lesbi* over *lesbian* is probably because of two factors: prototypical words in Indonesian have two syllables, and in Indonesian *–an* is a suffix. In this article I also place the term *West* in quotes to indicate that I view it not in geographic terms but as "a particular historical conjugation of place, power, and knowledge" (Gupta 36). All italicized interlocutor terms are Indonesian; in this article I follow standard Indonesian orthography except that the front unrounded vowel /é/ (spelled "e" in Indonesian, along with the schwa) is here written as "é" for clarity. All interlocutor names are pseudonyms. All translations are my own.

2. The television reference comes from the title of Dédé Oetomo's "When Sharon Stone Speaks Indonesian" (1997).

3. The appearance of the *lesbi* and *gay* subject positions in Indonesia in the 1970s is corroborated by a range of archival and oral historical data. In the 1988 novel *Menguak Duniaku: Kisah Sejati Kelainan Seksual* [Revealing My World: A True Story of Sexual Deviance], the protagonist (a woman who feels like a man but does not appear to know of terms like *tomboi*) discovers a magazine article that dates the public existence of the terms *lesbi* and *gay* to "1976, more or less" (Prawirakusumah and Ramadhan 481).

4. One reason for this may be that even the most popular of these magazines (*GAYa Nusantara*, published from Surabaya) has a monthly circulation of about four hundred in a nation of over two hundred million.

5. In recent years, the linguist and anthropologist Dédé Oetomo has gained some prominence in mainstream mass media, along with a handful of other *gay* men. *Lesbi* women appear much more rarely in mass media of their own accord: a 1997 edition of the television show *Buah Bibir* discussing lesbianism in Indonesia featured Oetomo as a speaker and a handful of *lesbi* discussants appearing with their faces blackened out.

6. Imported programs come from around the world – with many favorites from India, Latin America, and Japan. To my knowledge, however, concepts of *lesbi* and *gay* subjectivity seem to be formed exclusively with reference to programs whose original is in English and that originate, above all, from the United States, as these examples indicate. My thanks to Margaret J. Wiener for reminding me to clarify this point.

7. This is because of the linkage between *identitas* and state surveillance, not just the fact that it is a loanword. Loanwords can become experience-near concepts in Indonesia, as borne out not only by *lesbi* and *gay* but also by *Muslim, Kristen*, and even *Indonesia* (coined by a European in the 19th century).

8. This literature is too vast to list here; see, for instance, Brenner and many articles in Blackburn; Ong and Peletz; Sears; and Sen and Stivens.

9. Thanks to Kathyrn Robinson for helping me develop this point.

10. See Murray.

11. *Déndong* is a gay language transformation of standard Indonesian *dandan*, "put on makeup."

12. There are two primary reasons why I do not believe ethnic-specific *gay* or *lesbi* subject positions will emerge in the near future in Indonesia. First, the cultural dimensions of current moves toward regional autonomy have been predominantly expressed through conceptions of adat revitalization; that is, in terms of a return to tradition that may in some cases be seen to include ETPs, but certainly not *lesbi* or *gay* subject positions. Second, as noted earlier, subject positions are shaped by the historical circumstances during which they first took form, and since the *lesbi* and *gay* subject positions were formed during the New Order era, it seems likely they will retain national spatial scales and cultural logics for some time to come.

13. This might also be taken to imply a globalization earlier than the 1970s, since the butch/femme distinction dates to at least the early 20th century in the United States and elsewhere (Kennedy and Davis).

14. For instance, in a television commercial shown nationally in 2000, a mother comments on her favorite brand of laundry detergent as her young daughter is shown walking home from school, wearing a school uniform and also a Muslim *jilbab* (a "veil" that covers the head and hair but not the face). As the little girl runs home, getting dirt and chocolate ice cream on her jilbab, the mother opines, "My girl is a real *tomboi*."

15. Not only have both *tombois* and *warias* during my fieldwork described themselves in terms of gendered analogues, but *gay* men also have occasionally noted this relationship as well, as when the members of the "Indonesian Gay Society" claimed in their zine *New Jaka-Jaka* that *tombois* and *warias* weres "*biras* in regard to gender struggle"; *biras* is a kinship term referring to the relationship between two women marrying brothers or two men marrying sisters (IGS15).

16. For example, what might be the implications of the apparent fact that *tombois* "in West Sumatra" think their subjectivities through the Indonesian language (Blackwood), or that terms like *tomboi* are used elsewhere in Southeast Asia, whereas male to female trans-gender or transvestite terms do not transform "Western" terms (*waria* in Indonesia, but also *kathoey* in Thailand, *bantut* in the Philippines, and so on)?

17. See, for example, Anderson; Errington; Maier; Siegel.

18. See Mankekar.

19. The number of films and television shows produced has varied according to many factors, particularly the general state of the Indonesian economy and political conflict. See Heider; and Sen for detailed historical and contemporary accounts of Indonesian cinema (both works were published before the rise of private television in Indonesia). Heider (19) notes that the number of films produced yearly in Indonesia has ranged from zero (in 1946 and 1947, for instance) to over one hundred in 1977 and 1989. There have been encouraging signs of a renaissance in Indonesian cinema since 1998.

20. The five private stations are RCTI, SCTV, TPI, Anteve, and Indosiar. Estimates of the proportion of shows originating outside of Indonesia range from two-thirds (Wahyuni 116) from the United States to fifty percent from the United States and Europe combined (Groves 42).

21. This seems possible despite the fact that *lesbi* and *gay* Indonesians themselves tended not to take much notice of the dubbing controversy. I have never heard a *gay* or *lesbi* (or *waria*) Indonesian bring up the topic. When I have explicitly asked them about the controversy, *gay* and *lesbi* Indonesians both respond that they prefer subtitles to dubbing for the following reasons: (1) you can learn the original language, "even if it is just '*buenos días*' in Spanish," and (2) the dubbing "never follows the actor's lips exactly."

22. As does *negotiate;* these subjectivities are not negotiated in the sense that Maira speaks of an "identity dub" among South Asian Americans in the New York club scene. In that case, the institutional context is not mass media but clubbing, and the individuals involved appear to be vastly more wealthy, English speaking, and mobile than *gay* and *lesbi* Indonesians.

23. Here I use *articulation* in its English sense. The term originally entered social theory through Marx, but *Gliederung* has only the first of the two meanings noted above. The root word, *Glied*, means "limb" or "joint" but can also mean "penis" *(männliches Glied)*. Surely there is great potential in a psychoanalytic treatment that links the moment of speech to erection.

24. Lydia Liu notes that in studying how "a word, category, or discourse 'travels' from one language to another," we must "account for the vehicle of translation" and address "the condition of translation" itself (20–21, 26), a concern with a long history in anthropology as well (Asad).

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Queering Chineseness: Searching for Roots and the Politics of Shame in (Post)Colonial Singapore

Song Hwee Lim

Lim [Boon Keng] promoted the Chinese language and Confucianism studies so that the Straits Chinese would not be a people without roots.
(Lee Kuan Yew, quoted in Cheong 26)

Then, [Lim Boon Keng] found himself having to tell his lecturer [at the University of Edinburgh] that he could not translate some Chinese script when asked to do so. … [T]hat proved particularly shameful for the "very sensitive" young doctor-to-be.
(Lee Guan Kin, quoted in Cheong 26)

We unfortunately live among the Chinese [Zhongguoren], unlike the overseas Chinese [huaqiao] who, in their entire lifetime, could safely worship the sacred motherland from a suitable distance.
(Zhang Ailing [Eileen Chang] in Zhang 100)

ABSTRACT:

This chapter studies the rhetoric of roots-searching [*xungen*] and the politics of shame in (post)colonial Singapore. Via a study on the roots-searching school of literature in post-Mao China, and drawing upon the synonym of the Chinese word *gen* with the male genital, it argues that the project of constructing Chinese identity in Singapore is premised on the anxiety of castration, and shows that the shame/pride dyad opens up a queer reading on the notion of Chineseness in Singapore. By queering *gen* as a

non-reproductive organ, and by decoupling ethnic identity and language acquisition, it calls for new ways of conceptualizing and negotiating Chinese identities in postcolonial Singapore.

Introduction

In June 2004, two unrelated events offered an interesting juxtaposition within the politics of language and identity in contemporary Singapore. The Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew opened a Chinese-language conference entitled "National Boundaries and Cultural Configurations," held at the historically symbolic Nanyang Technological University to mark the tenth anniversary of its Center for Chinese Language and Culture. Explaining to the audience that it would be too troublesome to speak in both English and Mandarin, Lee chose to deliver his speech in what he termed as his "master language" – English – whilst the Chinese translation appeared as slides on the screen behind him. That weekend, three Caucasians were featured in a Chinese-language forum entitled "Angmoh like dat also can?", organized by The Tangent, a non-governmental group committed to promoting the use of the Chinese language for social and cultural discourse.[1] The Caucasians (an American, a Canadian and a French person) spoke fluently in Mandarin about their experiences of learning the Chinese language and of living in Singapore as Caucasians who could speak Mandarin. The title of the forum – that Caucasians could also speak Mandarin – points to a disjuncture between racial identity and language acquisition, a question that has plagued both the Singaporean political leaders and its populace for many decades since independence in 1965.[2]

On the surface, the two events seem to be a comment on the "mismatch" between language and race. However, for those with an anti-essentialist bent, Lee's designation of English as his master language is but a reflection of the British colonial legacy, and the three Caucasians' ability to speak Mandarin fluently merely highlights their privileged position in education. Rather, precisely because the relationship between language and racial identity shored up by these two examples might be otherwise regarded as an "inversion," it offers rich material for rethinking the issue of Chineseness, a project that has engaged scholars as diverse as Tu Wei-ming, Ien Ang, Allen Chun and Rey Chow. Using the above events as starting points, I wish to unpick, and in the process queer, some of the rhetorical devices embedded in the cultural discourse of language and identity in Singapore. Anchoring from a marginal position (Singapore, queer), this chapter hopes to provide a different answer to the question: "… to what extent do disenfranchised voices from the periphery offer alternative conceptions of identity or of 'Chineseness'?" (Chun 120).

In a provocatively titled essay, "Fuck Chineseness: On the Ambiguities of Ethnicity as Culture as Identity," Allen Chun suggests that the "factual substance of culture is … less important than the rhetorical forms it takes" because such discourses "rarely emanate

directly from *the* people themselves but are articulated by the state, intellectuals, and other vested interests, all of whom claim naturally to speak on behalf of 'society as a whole' " (115; emphasis in original). In what follows, I will examine the rhetoric of roots-searching (*xungen)*, often invoked as a metaphor for the (re)configuration of one's Chinese identity, via a study on the roots-searching school of literature in post-Mao China. As the Chinese word *gen* is synonymous with the male genital and often assumed to be reproductive as exemplified in a compound term *zisungen* (literally "offspring," "root/penis"), I argue that the obsession with roots-searching in the construction of Chinese identity in Singapore betrays an anxiety of castration. I will demonstrate, via the example of Lim Boon Keng (1869–1957) who was shamed into learning Chinese after his experience in Britain as a colonial subject, that as the shame/pride dyad occupies a central position in the epistemology of post-Stonewall gay identity, it opens up an opportunity for a queer reading on the notion of Chineseness in Singapore. By queering *gen* as a non-reproductive organ and by decoupling racial identity and language acquisition via a dismantling of the shame/pride dyad, I hope that new ways of conceptualizing and negotiating Chinese identities in postcolonial Singapore may become possible.

Dead Man Talking: A Colonial Tale for a Postcolonial Time

For those familiar with Lee Kuan Yew's longstanding thoughts on language acquisition, his June 2004 speech was as much *déjà vu* as it was *déjà disparu* which, in Ackbar Abbas' construction, is "the feeling that what is new and unique about the situation is always already gone, and we are left holding a handful of clichés, or a cluster of memories of what has never been" (25). That is to say, though Lee's speech on this occasion was supposedly new, his clichéd rhetoric about language mastery generated a sense of not just the familiar but rather the over-familiar.[3] Specifically, Lee chose on this occasion to resuscitate from popular memory a man from the dead. In the figure of Lim Boon Keng, Lee recounted a colonial tale for a postcolonial time.

Lim Boon Keng, the first Chinese in Singapore to be awarded the Queen's scholarship by the colonial government in 1887, graduated from the University of Edinburgh with first-class honors in medicine. He went on to become a revered doctor and community leader in Southeast Asia.[4] In his speech, Lee held Lim up as the epitome of an accomplished bicultural elite, highlighting the fact that "Lim promoted the Chinese language and Confucianism studies so that the Straits Chinese would not be a people *without roots*" (quoted in Cheong 26; emphasis added). Lee was, on this occasion, making a distinction between bilingualism, an educational policy pursued by his government since the late 1970s, and biculturalism, his new vision for a select group of students (a few hundred per cohort according to his estimates) to accomplish. The driving force behind this new vision is, as always in the case of Singapore, economic, this time brought about by the emerging global power that is China. As Lee claims in his speech, "Bilingualism gets us through the front door,

but it is only through biculturalism that we can reach deep inside China and work with them."

Amidst coverage of Lee's speech and special features on the historical figure of Lim Boon Keng in the local press, the resurgence of the rhetoric of roots-searching and the politics of shame in the reports hardly raised an eyebrow. Lee Guan Kin (Li Yuanjin), a scholar who has written a book and numerous articles on Lim, recounted to the press the three life experiences that drove Lim to rediscover his Chinese roots:

Firstly, at the University of Edinburgh, he found it hard to mingle meaningfully with scholars from mainland China because he could not speak, read or write his mother tongue.[5] *Then, he found himself having to tell his lecturer one day that he could not translate some Chinese scripts when asked to do so: … [T]hat proved particularly shameful for the "very sensitive" young doctor-to-be. Not long after, as he was walking on the streets of London, he saw a white man bullying a fellow Chinese. It was then, he later wrote, that a sense of kinship and nationalism welled up in him.* (quoted in Cheong 26)

"[R]esolved to connect with his cultural roots" (Lee Kuan Yew's speech), Lim started to learn Mandarin and Cantonese upon returning to Singapore in 1893, launched a Speak Mandarin Campaign, and from 1894 to 1911, led the Confucian revival movement in Singapore and Malaya. Between 1921 and 1937, he became vice-chancellor of Amoy (Xiamen) University in China where he clashed with Lu Xun, who described Lim as "a Chinese of British nationality who invokes Confucius whenever he opens his mouth" (Cheong 26). However, without having to open his mouth in June 2004, Lim managed to perform a ventriloquism of dead man talking via Lee Kuan Yew's invocation and Lee Guan Kin's explication. In this revived narrative about Lim, it was clear that learning and promoting the Chinese language and Confucianism was his way back to his roots.[6] What interests me here is not why Lim had been held up as the new model for biculturalism at this point in time in Singapore, but how a colonial figure could slide seemingly effortlessly into a postcolonial state without any historical hiccup.[7] More importantly, I am concerned with how the rhetoric of roots-searching and the politics of shame continue to function as major tropes in the discourse of identity, language, ethnicity and culture in Singapore. To begin this inquiry, we need to detour, or indeed "return," to the roots of Chineseness – China.

Roots-searching as (Trans)National Project

The rhetoric of roots-searching is not the sole property of overseas Chinese in Singapore.[8] In the mid-1980s, there emerged in China a movement of cultural roots-searching (*wenhua xungen*), of which the roots-searching school (*xungen pai*) of literature was one manifestation. While it is important to distinguish between the roles played by the respective states and intellectuals in the People's Republic of China and Singapore, a comparative study of the two mobilizations of the roots-searching metaphor is appropriate here because it not only serves to illuminate what the "roots"

in each instance stand for and where the search in each case leads to, but also because it highlights roots-searching as, to recall the title of the conference that occasioned Lee's speech, a cultural configuration transcending national boundaries. However, there is a fundamental conundrum in this (trans)national roots-searching project for its proponents in Singapore: why was there a need for roots-searching within China? Isn't China *the* root? How does one search for roots within a root?

The answer to these questions is unwittingly betrayed by the switch between the singular and plural forms of the word "root" in the last few lines – a linguistic practice which would have been avoided in its Chinese original. For the political elites who became proponents of roots-searching in Singapore, the root of Chineseness has almost always been constructed in the singular, simply (because rhetorically) as five thousand years of Chinese culture and usually with a decidedly Confucian characteristic. This construction, however, overlooks the historical linguistic hybridity in Singapore where a colonial legacy has left many English-educated Chinese Singaporeans (amongst whom Lee Kuan Yew and Lim Boon Keng) with a "mother tongue" or master language which is precisely not Chinese. It also creates an internal hierarchy within Chineseness in which Confucianism is privileged over Taoism or Buddhism and standard Mandarin-Chinese (known as *huayu* in Singapore) favored over regional languages such as Cantonese and Hokkien relegated to the status of dialects. While these cultural-cum-political campaigns to promote Chineseness and Confucianism had encountered resistance from a mainly English-speaking community (which transcends racial divides) and some alternative voices, the hegemony of political power in Singapore ensured that these campaigns also translated into educational and media policies (for example, the removal or dubbing over of Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong soap dramas on the television) as well as social practices and official ideology (government ministers struggling to learn Chinese). The campaigns were also welcomed, to a certain extent, by a Chinese-speaking community increasingly marginalized in an English-language dominated society where they suffered discrimination in employment and political representation.

By contrast, for artists and intellectuals in China, the issue of the root(s) of Chineseness is more complex. In her study on the roots-searching school of literature, Xueping Zhong notes that, for most PRC Chinese and many contemporary Chinese intellectuals, "traditional Chinese culture tends typically to mean mainly one thing: the negative remnants of Confucianism" (153). As many contemporary Chinese oppositional critics "insist on identifying the CCP [Chinese Communist Party] with the oppressive and conservative aspects of Confucianism," Zhong argues that the *xungen* writers were searching for alternative cultural roots by "turning to other versions of Chinese culture they believe to have been marginalized, repressed and twisted by the official or mainstream culture," such as their own versions of Taoism and many regional cultures rooted in rural China (154). While Zhong contends that this search

was predominantly male and its end result was to reify a Chineseness that became a new center (169), the two mobilizations of the metaphor of roots-searching – one singular and the other plural, one located overseas and the other at the "origin" – had led to different paths in the search for root(s).

In contradistinction to the alternative roots sought by the *xungen* writers, roots-searching in Singapore invariably led to Confucianism, both in the case of Lim Boon Keng about a century ago and in Lee Kuan Yew's latest master plan. Indeed, Singapore's recent brush with Confucianism was also in the 1980s when, "with explicit endorsement from [then] Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew" (E. Kuo 295), prominent neo-Confucianist scholars (including Tu Wei-ming) acted as consultants to the short-lived religious knowledge program which included Confucian ethics alongside Buddhist studies, Bible knowledge, Islamic religious knowledge, Hindu studies, and Sikh studies.[9] Divided roughly along ethnic lines (with the exception of Christianity) in multiracial Singapore, Confucianism was not only the sole secular component but also equated with Chineseness in this project.[10] The background to this project was a perceived moral crisis in Singapore in the late-1970s which led to the Report on Moral Education in 1979, a year that also saw the implementation of many national campaigns, including the Speak Mandarin Campaign. A compulsory religious knowledge course for all third and fourth year secondary school students (fifteen- to sixteen-year olds) was thought to be necessary because it was believed that Singaporean society "could not effectively resist such Western intrusion precisely because its people had lost their cultural bearings and become *rootless*" (E. Kuo 297; emphasis added).

Rather than seeing rootlessness as potentially pointing towards alternative forms of cultural identities and expressions, the strait-laced moralism of official ideology immediately attributed it to Western decadent values and prescribed Confucianism and Chineseness as the antidote by promoting the two campaigns simultaneously. Déjà vu and *déjà disparu* perhaps, but how does one account for the disjuncture between the fervent preservation of the Confucian root by political elites in Singapore and the insistent disavowal of the same by intellectuals in China?[11] I suggest the divide is not merely one between China and Singapore (that is, "homeland" and diaspora) but also a case of official orthodoxy versus intellectual resistance (or the lack thereof). It is noteworthy that among detractors of the Confucian movement of the 1980s in Singapore were many Chinese-educated Singaporeans who had been strongly influenced by the anti-Confucian sentiments of the May Fourth Movement tradition but who were "never outspoken in their criticism and, in the end, generally shifted to supporting the movement as a campaign to boost the status of Chinese culture and language in Singapore" (E. Kuo 303). Unlike some English-educated Chinese Singaporeans who voiced their objection to the campaigns and even threatened to emigrate, and different from many overseas Chinese communities deprived of the opportunities of a Chinese-language education in their diasporic host countries,

the Chinese-educated community in Singapore had witnessed a steady encroachment of their linguistic, cultural and political spaces since the country's independence, a process exacerbated in the late 1970s to the early 1980s. The impetus to preserve one's root(s), whether manifested as language, culture, ethics, education or identity, was so overwhelming among the Chinese-educated Singaporeans (many intellectuals included) that they would end up supporting a Confucian ideology otherwise regarded as "corrupt, feudalistic, and ultraconservative" (E. Kuo 303).

Indeed, in a decade that witnessed the closure of the Chinese-language Nanyang University and the nationalization of the school education system leading, in effect, to the demise of Chinese-language schools under Lee's government, it is little wonder that, for many Chinese intellectuals and organizations, "whether the movement was Confucian or not may have been secondary, for what was fundamentally important was that it served to promote Chinese culture, Chinese education, and hence Chinese identity.[12] Confucianism hence served as a symbol of collective Chinese identity" (E. Kuo 302). In her study on the intellectuals' response to changes in Chinese-language education in Singapore, Li Yuanjin describes the intellectuals' mentality as one of *baogen* – preserving or protecting the root. However, in supporting the governmental campaigns, a position borne out perhaps by marginalization and desperation, the intellectuals became inadvertently complicit in the statist program of enmeshing Confucianism with Chineseness. While the survival of Chinese language in the PRC is placed beyond doubt, and intellectuals were thereby at liberty to challenge a Confucian orthodoxy in their roots-searching efforts, the symbiotic relationship between Confucianism and the Chinese language in the Singaporean case intertwined the two into one gigantic root waiting to be preserved.

This is where I think a quote by Zhang Ailing (Eileen Chang) of more than half a century old is still clearly instructive today. In an essay entitled "Foreigners watching Peking opera and others" and speaking as a Chinese living in China, Zhang commented on the privilege of being an overseas Chinese because one could idealize China from a distance without having to taste its more unsavoury, immediate effects: "We unfortunately live among the Chinese [*Zhongguoren*], unlike the overseas Chinese [*huaqiao*] who, in their entire lifetime, could safely worship the sacred motherland from a suitable distance" (100).[13] The relationship between the overseas Chinese and the "motherland" is one that demands historicizing, as the changing roles of the overseas Chinese have been noted as being a result of

> *… an expansion of Chinese nationalism abroad that attempted to galvanize Chinese identity from what was once kin-centered, dialect groups into a radically new "imagined community" reeducated in standard Mandarin and the orthodox teachings of Chinese civilization. For Chinese who had not severed ties with their homeland, this new sense of identity could be seen as an extension of a primordial Chineseness.* (Chun 124)

This primordial Chineseness described by Chun characterizes many traits of Chinese-educated Singaporeans eager to preserve their roots, while Zhang's observation highlights the dual roles of time and space in one's imagination of, and relationship with, one's supposed motherland. In terms of space, for artists and intellectuals living on the motherland itself, the dominant culture (in this case Confucianism) is often too close for comfort and the oppositional instinct is to challenge its orthodoxy. For many overseas Chinese (including, if not especially, intellectuals), however, the fear of losing touch with one's culture, indeed of losing one's roots, becomes an overriding imperative; hence preservation, not opposition, is the call of the day, even if the culture preserved is dominant and repressive in both the motherland and the diasporic space. In terms of time, whilst the dominant culture in the motherland is variously challenged, overhauled, rejuvenated or displaced over time due to efforts by oppositional forces (for example, the momentum gained by artists and intellectuals in China from the end of the Cultural Revolution with projects such as the television series *The River Elegy*, the roots-searching literature, and debates on humanism and rewriting literary history, culminating in the call for democracy in the Tiananmen student movement, which ended in tragedy), the overseas Chinese, notwithstanding some dissenting voices, are more often than not wrapped in a time warp where culture hardly changes and preservation equates mummification.[14] As a result, the negative remnants of Confucianism associated with traditional culture for most PRC Chinese mutate into positive values to be preserved and exhorted in Singapore.

The Politics of Shame: On Not Speaking Chinese

In her book *On Not Speaking Chinese*, Ien Ang ("born in Indonesia but my ancestors were from China") attempts to stage her "Chineseness" in order to articulate "the notion of *precariousness* of identity which has preoccupied cultural studies for some time now" and to illuminate "the very difficulty of constructing a position from which I can speak as an (Overseas) Chinese, and therefore the *indeterminacy* of Chineseness as a signifier for identity" (29, 24; emphasis in original). For those acquainted with the discipline of cultural studies, the constructedness of identity has long been taken as a given. However, Ang recounts an incident where "a self-assured, Dutch, white, middle-class, Marxist leftist," on discovering that she does not speak Chinese, mildly joked, "What a fake Chinese you are!" (30). Ang's experience, hardly untypical for many South-East Asian and overseas Chinese, testifies to the power of essentialism that cannot be assumed to reside only among the so-called unenlightened. The sentiment underlying the Dutchman's comment could have easily been translated into the phrase: "shame on you!"

From Lim Boon Keng to Ien Ang, the politics of shame serves as a common device operating on the overseas Chinese. Lim's inability to translate some Chinese scripts in Edinburgh proved "particularly shameful" for him, while Ang describes how, in her

case, "'China' is presented as the cultural/geographical core in relation to which the westernized overseas Chinese is forced to take up a humble position, even a position of shame and inadequacy over her own 'impurity' " (32). As evidenced in Ang's example above, it is not just the Chinese in or from China who can inflict this shame on the overseas Chinese, but also non-Chinese who assume a moral high ground based on essentialized notions of ethnic/racial identities. In fact, one could argue that the latter are even better poised to inflict a deeper sense of shame, especially if they could also speak Chinese, for if "angmoh like dat also can," why not the overseas Chinese?[15]

Targeted at a non-Chinese-speaking overseas Chinese identity, the trope of shame finds its resonance in a gay identity whose epistemology has been predicated on the permanence of shame and the maintenance of the closet. Explicating on the queer performativity of an interpellation such as "shame on you," Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick suggests that shame "makes identity" and the two "remain in very dynamic relation to one another, at once deconstituting and foundational, because shame is both peculiarly contagious and peculiarly individuating" (5). As a result, "one of the things that anyone's character or personality *is*, is a record of the highly individual histories by which the fleeting emotion of shame has instituted far more durable, structural changes in one's relational and interpretive strategies toward both self and others" (Sedgwick 12–13; emphasis in original). If shame indeed structures one's strategies towards oneself and others, should the non-Chinese-speaking overseas Chinese remain in the closet and hide the fact that s/he does not speak Chinese or come out of the closet to challenge the very definition of Chineseness?

Writing on butch/femme identity, Sally R. Munt sees shame as "the psychic result of a shattered self which has been fucked by society" and notes that shame occurs "when we internalize an ideal we are not able to meet; we become *a*shamed, punishing ourselves, and projecting this onto others whom we include in our failure" (5, 6; emphasis in original).[16] It is clear that the lack of mastery of the Chinese language is or can be a source of shame precisely because it is held up as an ideal which not all overseas Chinese are able to meet, the result of which is a shattered self fucked by societies that impose this ideal. Coping strategies, however, can be drastically different. Ien Ang, for example, challenges the ontological premise of this shame and concludes that "if I am inescapably Chinese by *descent*, I am only sometimes Chinese by *consent*. When and how is a matter of politics" (36; emphasis in original). In the case of Lim Boon Keng, shame is at once individuating and contagious as he internalized as well as projected it onto other overseas Chinese who, like himself, had failed to learn Chinese. His search for roots via Chinese language and Confucianism was unequivocally motivated by and predicated on the politics of shame.

As a prominent proponent of Confucianism and the Chinese language, Lim was arguably the paradigmatic overseas roots-searching Chinese intellectual, whose anxiety

about his inability to speak Chinese still haunts Singapore today. At the Tangent forum where the three Caucasians provided a clear demonstration of effective bilingual language acquisition, members in the audience apparently had something else on their minds. Largely ignoring the speakers' candid accounts of their experiences of learning the Chinese language and their frustrations of living in Singapore as *angmohs* who could speak Mandarin, the first question (raised by a journalist from the Chinese daily) was to seek advice from the *angmohs* on a classic Singaporean problem: "How do you regard Singaporean Chinese? Especially those who are Chinese descendents and yet refuse to learn Chinese, and may even look down on his own culture, what is your opinion of these people?" (Poon 79). For the questioner, the fact that, for historical and other reasons, Mandarin has never been the mother tongue of many Singaporean Chinese was not considered, and the coupling of language acquisition and racial identity was assumed to be a dead knot.[17] The physical presence of the *angmohs*, rather than subverting the equation of language and race, functioned instead as a conduit through which the Chinese-educated Singaporean could point her or his finger at those refusing to learn the Chinese language: "shame on you."

Castrating the Root, Uprooting the Root

However, if the eradication of the shame of one's inability to speak Chinese hinges upon a process called roots-searching, perhaps one should first investigate what exactly is a root before one begins the search. In the Chinese language, besides the botanical root, *gen* also refers to the penis. Read metaphorically, the anxiety of losing one's roots is also a castration anxiety, a fear of extermination not just of oneself but, more importantly, of one's family line in the Confucianist tradition, and, by extension, of one's race/ethnicity. Roots are thus inextricably linked to a desire for immortality by reproduction – of both offspring and Chineseness. The ideology of posterity is, in the case of the Singaporean Chinese, premised upon the permanence of shame: shame if one does not reproduce biologically, and shame if one does not speak Chinese. However, if one's inability to speak Chinese is described as being rootless, does this rhetoric imply that one can also be unreproductive?

The anxiety of rootlessness and posterity among political elites and the Chinese-speaking community in Singapore has been brilliantly captured in the multilingual plays of the late Kuo Pao Kun (1939–2002), particularly in *Descendents of the Eunuch Admiral (Zheng He de houdai),* a dramatization based on Zheng He (1371–1433), the eunuch admiral sent by the Ming emperor to explore the seas in the fifteenth century.[18] In his play, Kuo accounts for the historical condition of the castrated Zheng He:

There are 999 rooms in the Imperial Palace in Beijing – big ones and small ones, a total of 999. Among the 999 rooms, so they say, there is this very special chamber in the Palace where, in the olden days, all the cut and dried penises of the eunuchs were kept … Yes, penises, all cut, fried and dried. The most interesting thing about this

chamber is that all the boxes of penises, or "treasure" or "baobei", as they called it, were not stacked or stored in the chamber. No, they were not stacked on any racks or locked in any cupboards. No, instead, they were all hung, or suspended, in the air from the ceiling. (40)

Zheng He is a problematic representation and representative of the Chinese nation. De-rooted, uprooted and well-hung, he is also, in Kuo's play, "nameless, sexless, rootless, homeless" (66). But the title of his play is paradoxical: how does a eunuch produce descendents? Moreover, as a Muslim of Hui ethnicity, if Zheng He were to search for his roots, it would be unlikely for him to end up in the Confucianist- and Han-oriented route favored by Singaporean Chinese such as Lim Boon Keng and Lee Kuan Yew. Kuo's mobilization of Zheng He as a signification for a rootless people inadvertently points to a different, albeit severed, root while highlighting "the cost to be paid for service to the state – in this case, an anachronistic and allegorized Chinese nation-state before that modern idea really existed – and to capitalism, allegorised in the play as 'markets'" (Wee and Lee 26–27).

"To market, to market" – this refrain from a nursery rhyme points to the economy underlying the rhetoric of Chineseness in Singapore. Recalling Lee Kuan Yew's call – driven by economic imperative – for the grooming of bicultural elites so that "we can *reach deep inside* China and work with them" (emphasis added), the coupling of the imagery of (market) penetration with the rhetoric of roots-searching (that is, metaphorically, searching for a penis in danger of being lost in the paranoia of castration anxiety) may have been unintentional but is nonetheless revealing. It is the same imperative which, in 1979, was behind the education policy that designated English as a first language, relegating all ethnic ones (Chinese, Malay, Tamil) to second-language status in Lee's Singapore. At a 1996 conference, Kuo's comments (168), entitled (suggestively for my purpose here) "Uprooted and Searching," reflect on this education policy: "Has any other majority population [Chinese in the Singaporean case] ever committed such an extraordinary act of voluntary uprooting, preferring to its own language (a major world language) one which its former coloniser forced upon it?"

Kuo could not have been unaware that, as colonial subjects, the *master* language of many English-educated political leaders of Lee's generation, regardless of their race/ethnicity, has always been – and will remain among future generations of political elites – English. Postcoloniality in Singapore does not typically entail the expurgation of the colonial master's language, and Singaporean Chinese are exhorted by their political leaders to search for their roots only when it makes economic sense. More remarkably, there seems to be no apparent contradiction for the island-state to be pursuing an English-language education system alongside campaigns to speak Mandarin and to promote Confucianism, even if the implementation of the former had been predicated on a violence towards the "mother tongues," a violence not unlike the one bestowed upon Zheng He, who was "violently set upon by the state

and cut off from a Muslim identity and future for the glorification of the Chinese state" (Wee and Lee 26).

In her reading of Kuo's plays, Wei-Wei Yeo uses Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's idea of the rhizome to argue for a new approach to identity in the Singaporean context. For Yeo, the rhizome system is an alternative framework that "allows the making of the multiple with its principles of connection, heterogeneity, multiplicity, and asignifying rupture" (20). In Yeo's reading, the title of Kuo's play, *Descendents of the Eunuch Admiral*, is a paradoxical lineage but is significant for it "demonstrates the rhizomatic condition of the relation, the recasting of genealogy in terms of rhizome, making roots irrelevant" (22). For Deleuze and Guattari,

Unlike the tree, the rhizome is not the object of reproduction … The rhizome is an antigenealogy … an acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system … defined solely by a circulation of states. What is at question in the rhizome is a relation to sexuality … that is totally different from the arborescent relation: all manner of "becomings". (21)

The rhizome not only points to a system that uproots the idea of roots altogether, but also to a subversive potential that is both unreproductive and anti-genealogy. A radical reading of Kuo's play would celebrate the state of castration and rootlessness, making roots irrelevant and with it the ideology of posterity. In this operation, the castration of roots renders any roots-searching efforts futile, and the form in which roots might take – uprooted, de-rooted – bears none of its Confucianist or Chinese characteristics. The state of rootlessness, alluded to in Kuo's play as "Departure is my arriving/Wandering is my residence" (66), is a refusal to be rooted in and defined by any one place.[19] Its economy of liminality and ambivalence finds a natural bedfellow in the figure of queer, which I deploy not as an essential identity category but as a strategy for unsettling orthodox and hegemonic constructions of identities. Queering Chineseness and the very notion of roots poses a direct challenge to the ideology of posterity and the rhetoric of roots-searching by reimagining the root as an organ that is unashamedly non-reproductive. In queering Chineseness, I would suggest, rather than feeling ashamed of being rootless and not speaking Chinese, one could embrace shame as it has its own "powerfully productive and powerfully social metamorphic possibilities" (Sedgwick 14).

Queering Chineseness: In Praise of Rootlessness and Shamelessness

The queerness of the term "shame" has been traced to the nineteenth century, when it stood for homosexuality itself, exemplified by Alfred Douglas's poem "In Praise of Shame" (1894), which includes the line "Of all sweet passions Shame is loveliest" (Munt 4, 231n7). Opposing it to guilt, Sedgwick suggests that shame is "a bad feeling that does not attach to what one does, but to what one is" (12). If shame is indeed an inextricable part of one's being – whether as a homosexual or a non-Chinese-speaking overseas Chinese – any effort to eradicate it can only achieve limited result.

As Lim Boon Keng's roots-searching example demonstrates he could only be *more* but arguably could never be regarded as "truly" Chinese. As the epistemological premise for post-Stonewall gay identity suggests, shame is the opposite face of pride, and the shame/pride dyad could also illuminate the mechanics underlying the construction of an overseas Chinese identity. Ruth Ho, a Malaysian writer, recounted in her memoir how she was reprimanded when she had no motivation to learn Chinese as a child: "But China was once the greatest and most cultured nation in the world! Weren't you proud to be Chinese? Wasn't that reason enough to study Chinese?" (quoted in Ang 33). However, what does it mean to be proud as a Chinese? Given that shame is what one is, rather than what one does, would it really be plausible for a previously non-Chinese-speaking overseas Chinese to come out of the closet of shame and claim a proud Chinese identity by acquiring knowledge of the language and culture through roots-searching?

In queering Chineseness through the shame/pride dyad, I am conscious of the fact that the metaphor of the closet does not operate on the same level for the gay identity and the overseas Chinese identity. While both may encounter situations whereby one's identity is put under scrutiny, it is clearly easier to conceal one's gay identity than one's (non-Chinese-speaking) Chinese identity. That is to say, for those non-Chinese-speaking overseas Chinese who have no interest in becoming a proud Chinese via roots-searching, there is nowhere to hide from the shame of the closet. More importantly, even for those who have managed to salvage a certain degree of Chineseness through their roots-searching efforts (such as Lim), the permanence of shame can never be fully erased by the proclamation of pride. Accounting for the hegemony of pride in the post-Stonewall era as a "strategic deployment against the pathological homo," Munt notes that pride is "predicated on the – sometimes conscious – denial of its own ostracized corollary, shame" (4). However, Sedgwick believes that strategies aimed at getting rid of individual or group shame – including the individuating pride of "Black is Beautiful" and gay pride – cannot work because the forms taken by shame are "integral to and residual in the processes by which identity itself is formed" and are thus "unavailable for effecting the work of purgation and deontological closure" (13). Reflecting on the reclaiming of the debased term "queer" for new identity construction, Judith Butler reminds us that "discourse has a history" (227) and any strategic use of identity categories is subject to the historicity of the term:

The expectation of self-determination that self-naming arouses is paradoxically contested by the historicity of the name itself: by the history of the usages that one never controlled, but that constrain the very usage that now emblematizes autonomy; by the future efforts to deploy the term against the grain of the current ones, and that will exceed the control of those who seek to set the course of the terms in the present. (228)

If, as both Sedgwick and Butler suggest, shame leaves a permanent mark on one's identity that cannot be eradicated by pride, does this not imply that all attempts at roots-searching are ultimately futile? In light of this, a closeted, non-Chinese-speaking overseas Chinese could come out precisely as such rather than attempting to *become* (because one cannot simply *be*) a proud Chinese through roots-searching. Conversely, s/he could embrace shame – or better, shamelessness – as a counter-strategy that highlights one's historical circumstances that have resulted in one's inability to speak Chinese rather than strenuously learning to do so. Unapologetically celebrating one's state of rootlessness and of not speaking Chinese, shamelessness places the emphasis on what one is rather than what one ought to be, and challenges essentialized constructions of identities that premise upon and reinstate the shame/pride dyad.

To borrow the poetic construction: of all Chineseness, rootlessness and shamelessness are loveliest. Ending his essay with the rhetorical questions – "Is Chineseness important? How can one not give a fuck?" – Chun's concern is how the language of postcoloniality "can be easily translated into a series of knee-jerk reactions" which include "ethnic nationalism, pan-national fundamentalism, supranationalism, cult fanaticism, and cultural creolization, all of which impinge on notions of identity" (138). I would add to Chun's list of unsavory forms of Chineseness an overlaying dimension that is the economic. Given the emergence of China as a global economic power, it would indeed be inexpedient for one to remain as a closeted, non-Chinese-speaking overseas Chinese, or to come out unashamedly as such. In postcolonial Singapore, the rhetoric of roots-searching and the politics of shame aim to interpellate social subjects who will voluntarily participate in the orgies of economic penetration and transnational Chineseness, an operation that simultaneously reinstates repressive Confucianist ideologies and erases historical linguistic violence. By queering the notion of Chineseness and celebrating rootlessness and shamelessness, new ways of conceptualizing and negotiating Chinese identities have become possible. Non-Chinese-speaking, uninterested in roots-searching, shameless in being unreproductive – these descendents of the eunuch will continue to pose the question of Chineseness as one of queerness, that is, a way of que(e)rying that challenges orthodoxy and refuses closure.

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Notes

1. The title of the forum was deliberately rendered in Singlish, the local version of English. "*Angmoh*" literally means "red hair," a Hokkien term for referring to Caucasians, usually derogatory, but in this case perhaps ironic. "Like dat [that] also can" loosely translates as "could also do that." For more on The Tangent, see its website <http://www.thetangent.org.sg> and eponymous journal.

2. Whilst "race" as a classificatory term has been largely called into question – and put in quotation marks – in scholarship, it retains currency in many political and popular discourses. For example, the Singapore census officially categorizes the population into Chinese, Malay, Indian and Other races, and it is in the context of "multiracial" Singapore that I use the term "race." I use the term "ethnicity" in other parts of the paper to refer to group membership based on identification with culture rather than notion of physical attributes. Ethnicity is also sometimes used interchangeably with race in this chapter, as it is not always possible to completely distinguish between the two. See Fenton; Guibernau and Rex; and Bulmer and Solomos.

3. One example is Lee's use of megabytes as a metaphor to illustrate his point during the question and answer session that "the average person can't master two languages" because, like computers, "if you use capacity to study one language, you have less brain capacity for other things" (quoted in Soh H4).

4. My account of Lim Boon Keng's biography here and below is culled mainly from reports in *The Straits Times* (Cheong, Ng, Soh), Lee's speech, and Kwok ("Lim").

5. It was perhaps a slip of the tongue that Chinese had been described as Lim's "mother tongue" when he clearly did not learn it from his mother who was a *nyonya* (the married female term for *peranakans*, a people of Chinese descent who settled in South-East Asia since the tenth century and who, by the nineteenth and twentieth century, hardly spoke any Chinese, that is, Mandarin). On the *peranakans*, see Ang 26–27, 47–48, 203n3. However, it must be noted that, according to Tan Chee-beng, the *peranakans* identify themselves as Chinese and as practising customs that are essentially Chinese in cultural outlook (quoted in Chun 123).

6. The similarity between Lim and Lee Kuan Yew's experience of Chineseness should not go unnoticed. Just as English is Lee's self-proclaimed master language, in the case of Lim, despite his best intentions and efforts, English remained his strongest language, evidenced by his "reliance on an interpreter when he gave a speech at Amoy University in 1926" (Kwok, "Lim" 203). Following Lim's example, Lee launched the Speak Mandarin Campaign in 1979, and suggested in 1982 that Confucian ethics be included as part of the moral education and religious knowledge program for secondary school students in Singapore (E. Kuo 297–98). Indeed, while Lim was called "the sage of Singapore" upon his death (Kwok, "Lim" 203), Lee was praised by his successor Goh Chok Tong as "a modern Confucius" (quoted in E. Kuo 394n34). On a comparison of the two Confucianism revival movements, see Li ("Xin Ma").

7. As Kwok Kian Woon ("Lee" 209) points out in his comparison of Lim Boon Keng and Lee Kuan Yew:

> *Lim lived at a time and in a political context in which it would not have been necessary to declare, as Lee did to refute any suggestion that Singapore might be a "Third China," that, having been born in Singapore and lived there for so long he had no links with China. Nor would Lim see any occasion to warn Singaporean Chinese against assertions of what has been labelled "Chinese chauvinism."*

8. For example, see Louie.

9. As Kwok ("Singapore" 216) observes, the Confucian ethics component "received a disproportionate amount of attention and resources," including the establishment of the Institute of East Asian Philosophies where Tu Wei-ming played an advisory role.

10. Lee Kuan Yew was apparently confident that "for most Chinese students, Confucianism not Buddhism will be what parents would prefer their children to study" (E. Kuo 392n8), a prediction that proved to be too optimistic: in 1989, only 17.8% of third-year secondary school students (practically all of them Chinese) chose Confucian ethics as their religious knowledge option, compared to 44.4% in Buddhist studies and 21.4% in Bible knowledge (E. Kuo 306). Nevertheless, as Eddie Kuo observes, "it was impossible to separate Confucianism and Chineseness in the perception of the general public, Chinese or otherwise" (304).

11. A parallel example is Lu Xun and Lim Boon Keng's differing attitudes towards Confucianism, which I do not have the space to go into here. See Li ("Lin Wenqing").

12. In official accounts, Nanyang University (Nanda) was "merged" with the University of Singapore to form the National University of Singapore in 1980, and, though reincarnated as Nanyang Technological Institute in 1981, then University in 1991, the issue of "renaming" the campus as Nanyang University remains a hotly debated one. Lee's 2004 speech at NTU was highly symbolic precisely for the historical background of the campus. The first and last questions of the question and answer session focussed on the issue of the renaming of the campus, on which Lee claimed the government had no particularly important stand ("*meiyou sheme zhongda de lichang*"; see "Li Zizheng"). A month later, Tony Tan, the deputy Prime Minister, announced that the renaming issue may have to be shelved for another ten years. For reports on Tan's announcement and the reaction of some alumni, see Pan "Nanda cheng dingjian zonghe daxue" and Pan "Nanda fuming wuqi."

13. Zhang's essay is collected in *Liuyan (Rumour)*, the first edition of which was published in 1944 in Shanghai. I cite from the 1984 Taipei edition.

14. As Kwok notes, for Chinese in China, "modernity came to be experienced from that time [mid-nineteenth century] on as a series of revolutions (most notably the ones that took place in 1911 and 1949) and as repeated assaults on, and rejections of, Chinese tradition (the May Fourth Movement in 1919 and the Cultural Revolution, 1966-76)." In contrast, the overseas Chinese for the most part "*bypassed* the Chinese revolution on the mainland" and "sidestepped the iconoclastic assaults on traditional culture on the mainland," which "enabled many Chinese overseas to sustain certain traditional forms of Chineseness … rejected as feudal and backward in China but which provided some cultural continuity as Chinese overseas faced the challenge of new environments" ("Being Chinese" 121; emphasis in original).

15. Following the Tangent forum in June 2004, the Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations organized, on 29 August 2004, a similar forum entitled "Stories of Non-Chinese in Love with Chinese Culture," featuring two Caucasians, two Indians and a Malay, all of whom spoke Mandarin at the forum. The currency of such events in Singapore is underlined by an article written by two Chinese secondary school students (aged 14) to the Chinese daily in which they claim that "when we heard them [the speakers] open their mouth to speak Mandarin, we felt a little ashamed [*cankui*]" (Su and Cai).

16. This psychic result is echoed by Lee Kuan Yew, who in 1984 said: "Only a Chinese Singaporean who cannot speak or read [Chinese], and who has been exposed to discomfiture or ridicule when abroad, will know how inadequate and how deprived he can feel. … I can state that its psychological value cannot be over-emphasized" (quoted in Kwok, "Lee" 209).

17. In certain quarters in Singapore (mainly elite, English-educated Chinese), the inability to speak Mandarin is not a source of shame but of pride, but this phenomenon demands another paper.

18. The play was first produced in Mandarin in Singapore by Kuo and in English in Singapore by Ong Keng Seng, both in 1995.

19. In Yeo's reading, the lines "evoke a sense of the rootless self-person that is affirmative rather than despairing of its suspension in the in-between" (22).

SPACE

Thamyris/Intersecting No. 16 (2007) 95–104

Descendants of the Dragon, Sing!

Yiu Fai Chow

ABSTRACT

This essay draws on the author's experience as a cultural consumer and cultural producer in the field of popular music in Hong Kong. Inspired by the author's earlier exposure to *minzu gequ*, the essay explores the complex relations between such nationalistic pop songs and the performances of identity, particularly in the context of the political hand-over of Hong Kong to Beijing. The author continues to reflect on his own entanglement with constructions of Chineseness when he, as a professional lyric writer, was asked to reproduce on similar nationalistic themes.

Orientation

Summer, 1980. During an orientation camp, I, together with hundreds of other University of Hong Kong freshmen, was presented with a choice violent enough to pitch affinity against affinity. We were asked: do you consider yourself Hong Konger or Chinese? After a ritualistic show of hands, the evening was ended with a collective singing of the campus hit of the year "Descendants of the Dragon" (*longde chuanren*) – "… Black eyes, black hair, yellow skin, forever, descendants of the dragon." While these emotional, almost confessional verses chanted the soundtrack for a decade that was to see the conclusion of the Sino-British Talks and the preparation for the political hand-over of Hong Kong, I was transported to a stage where, for the first time in my life, I was summoned to perform my nationality. It was not enough for me to have black eyes, black hair and yellow skin, I must say it, sing it, perform it.

Songs like "Descendants of the Dragon" are not unique in the pop music tradition of Hong Kong: from the anthem-, heroic-sounding songs, generally known as "*minzu gequ*"

(loosely translated as nationalistic songs), in the 1970s and 1980s, to what I would call the neo-*minzu gequ* reinvented in trendier R&B or rap songs during the turn of the century, such music never fails to unnerve me in its tendency to privilege a particular performance of Chineseness by excluding the marginal; be they foreign (mostly imperialistic) enemies or domestic dissidents. This is, in short, the predicament in which I am situated when I, as a professional lyric writer, am commissioned to work on projects that would force me to walk onto the grandiosely dangerous stadium of *minzu gequ*. Should I take a bow and go? Or, is it possible to masquerade in a line or two and intervene in my own manner?

Local Tongue and the Loss of a Voice

There is something uncanny about singing that is powerful enough to conjure, construct and confirm a sense of place and time, of identity and destiny. I would always remember how my first attendance at an all-white Christmas service in a Dutch town, how my tittering sensation of being absolutely out of place, was constantly soothed by the familiar sounds of the carols I used to sing decades ago during my school days in Hong Kong. My spatial oddity was making instant friends with my temporal familiarity. When I grew up in the 1960s and 1970s, English songs dominated in Hong Kong. Aside from all the pop music I could tune to, I was served a daily diet of school anthems and Christian hymns, all in English, to be rounded up by "God Save the Queen," a compulsory song to mark the end of the day's television broadcast. That was when local television would still black out during the small hours. Slowly, we opened up our ears to Taiwanese hits, ushering in a localization process that finally ensured the cultural and market space for Hong Kong pop and a whole new genre defined by its locality and its local tongue: Cantopop.

The localization of pop in Hong Kong was intrinsically political, but never really politicized – until the wave of *minzu gequ* swept over the city by the end of 1970s, precisely when its political certainty as a British colony evaporated almost overnight. For the second time in my life, I was wondering how I was supposed to fill in the nationality blank: the word "Chinese" sounded as unlikely as "British." But for quite a substantial number of young contemporaries of my time, they seemed more ready to declare their new allegiance loud and clear. Or was it actually old discontent? It was during such first moments of transition, of a sudden loss of a voice to articulate ourselves amidst the sovereignty negotiations between two nations, that the city's young men and women started to sing songs like "Descendants of the Dragon." And I was thrust into the allegiance dilemma: do I consider myself Hong Konger or Chinese? There was not enough time for me to ask the orientation team leaders more questions. The freshmen of that university year, in a movingly collective voice, articulated and thereby defined ourselves in the following way:

In the ancient Orient, there is a dragon
Its name is China
In the ancient Orient, there are a people

They are all descendants of the dragon
Growing up in its giant footsteps
I have become a descendant of the dragon
Black eyes, black hair, yellow skin
Forever, descendants of the dragon
In a quiet night a century ago
On the eve of frantic upheavals
Sound of cannons and guns shattered
Only a timid sword to fight enemies from everywhere
The sound of cannons and guns continued
For years and years
Giant dragon, giant dragon, rub your eyes open
Forever, rub your eyes open
(Hou Dejian [music and lyrics], "Descendants of the Dragon" 1980)[1]

Were we singing in a grand European-style hall or somewhere in the lawn with campfires? I am not sure. I do not even recall if I joined in the singing. I am always surprised at how some people could be so sure about so much, even their memories and histories. The claim to a common descent, common destiny and common enemy reiterates itself in many other popular *minzu gequ* of that time, strangely, mostly from Taiwan. I have always wondered why. If Hong Kong needed such songs to accompany its city dwellers during their lonely journey to a weird political experiment – from a crown colony to a special administrative region under a communist regime – what grammar guided the Taiwanese sentiments into utterances like "I am Chinese"?

Silence is not cowardice, tolerance is not indifference
The traditional Confucian thoughts will guide our footsteps
Eight years of bitter resistance against the invaders testified to our tough race
Until the very last moment, we wouldn't easily declare war
When I could bear no more, I would step forward
I will always remember, to unify China, to restore our territories
Wherever I was born, I am Chinese
Wherever I am, I swear I will die a Chinese ghost
(Liu Jiachang [music and lyrics], "I am Chinese" [*woshi zhongguoren*] 1982)

This very last line, even the moment I jotted it down, once again gave me the creeps. I could not help but look over my shoulders to see if all the Chinese ghosts surviving all the years of Chinese history would be right there, behind me, watching. I think they are. And the scariest moment is when they conflate into a monolithic Ghost powerful

enough to embody the Chinese Race, to dictate who is Chinese and who is not. It is no longer the Chinese becoming ghosts, but rather the ghosts becoming the Chinese. The Confucian tradition, the resistance against a foreign enemy, the unification, the steadfastness – what a bizarre act of exorcism it is, to expel all the non-conformist, the non-national, the non-committal in order to create a willing Chinese Ghost. Even more bizarre is the power of such a clean, simple story to provoke people to perform their Chineseness. As recently as 2005, tens of thousands of Chinese took to the streets to demonstrate against the Japanese who were alleged to twist history to their advantages. Similar demonstrations were organized in Hong Kong. When a veteran democracy activist took advantage of the occasion to urge the Beijing regime to respect its own history, he was jeered from the podium. He was definitely not the brave Chinese according to the following *minzu gequ*, the first in Cantonese as far as I could remember:

> *My beautiful hometown was tarnished, my picturesque lake was saddened*
> *Take a look at the Chinese land, a spirit of righteousness is rising*
> *I vow to turn my suffering into anger*
> *Be a brave Chinese, use your hot blood to resist the enemy*
> *March forward, march forward*
> *Tens of thousands of us become one, fearless of difficulties, dissipating darkness*
> *Be a brave Chinese, use your hot blood to wake up the Chinese Ghost*
> *Tens of thousands of us become one, fearless of difficulties, dissipating darkness*
> (Gu Jiahui [music] and Huang Jian [lyrics], "Be a Brave Chinese" [*yonggan de zhongguoren*] 1984)

Become one: such a tempting formula. For two lovers, for the entire race. And for the Hong Kong at the time of imminent changes, we willed ourselves to be brave, to be Chinese, to become one with not only tens of thousands, but billions of those who at least looked like us. Like in any intimate relationship, to become one is not at all easy. It invokes a logic of empowerment by conjuring up an enemy, the other, be it the Japanese during the Second World War, or the colonizers since the imperialistic encroachments. It also necessarily invokes a submission on the part of us alien to the whole, the part of the city alien to the country, the part of the future alien to the past. Perhaps the bravery is to chop this alienation off to fit in, and the hot blood one can use is probably shed in such acts of self-mutilation. For many people in Hong Kong, there was no other choice but to emigrate and opt for other nationalities. The rest of the city drove on with this powerful "Formula One" to swerve through twists and turns of the Sino-British negotiations. Until 4 June 1989.

Global Ideology and the Birth of Pride

The demonstrations and the subsequent suppression shattered a dream into thousands of questions. What does it mean to be a brave Chinese? What is Chinese? What have the Chinese done to fellow Chinese? Who are the enemies? What does it mean to resist an enemy? Confusion always undermines claims, whether to common descent, common destiny or a common enemy. For a long time, our questionable national identity had to reinvent itself into a more global and increasingly indisputable ideology – market economy. And, somehow, the economic growth in China became a true miracle, not so much in the sense of creating a better material present and future, but more in its power to construct the historical past. The suppression might have been a necessary step, after all. In 1997, when Hong Kong was handed over to Beijing, local pop star Andy Lau scored a new hit with a new *minzu gequ*, simply called "Chinese":

> *Same tears, same pain*
> *The sufferings we had stayed in our hearts*
> *Same blood, same race*
> *The dream we will have awaits our exploration*
> *Hand in hand, you and me, keep our chins up, march on*
> *Let the world know we are Chinese*
> (Chen Yaochuan [music] and Li Anxiu [lyrics], "Chinese" [*zhongguoren*] 1997)

Bearing themes typically *minzu gequ*, "Chinese", however, demonstrates a newfound pride, which requires less a common enemy than a global audience. Let the world know we are Chinese. In Taiwan, the American-born Leehom Wang made it even more specific: let the Americans know we are Chinese. With two decades in between, Leehom remixed and personalized the anthem-like "Descendants of the Dragon" into a Hip Hop number telling his family's diasporic story. To the original lyrics he added:

> *In a quiet night many many years ago*
> *Our family moved to New York*
> *Fire continues to burn wild in our hearts*
> *Longing for home every day, every night*
> *Growing up in someone else's country*
> *I have become a descendant of the dragon*
> *Giant dragon, giant dragon, rub your eyes open*
> *Forever, rub your eyes open*
> (Leehom Wang, "Descendants of the Dragon" 2000)

Another Taiwan-based idol, Jay Chou, chooses another black genre, R&B, to create his neo-*minzu gequ*. In the following song, Jay borrows the signature weapon of the

Figure 1 Leehom Wang, photo by Huang Haoliang

first global Chinese star, Bruce Lee, and joins in Lee's (in)famous fighting sprees against imperialistic abuses. However, while Lee would normally have to endure numerous foreign blows until he would finally knock the villains out, Jay sings his victory, his reversal of historical fortunes, in a much more self-assured manner. The new Chinese pride seems to be quite blood free.

What are you doing? Huh! What are you doing? Huh!
I have unleashed my energy flows
What are you doing? Huh! What are you doing? Huh!
The plaque calling us "The Sick Men of East Asia"
What are you doing? Huh! What are you doing? Huh!
Is crashed by my single kick
Use your double truncation stick now! Huh huh ha hee!
Use your double truncation stick now! Huh huh ha hee!
(Jay Chou [music] and Fang Wenshan [lyrics], "Double Truncation Stick" [*shuangjiegun*] 2001)

The Sick Men of East Asia, the nickname imperialistic powers used to ridicule the Chinese under Qing Dynasty, are no longer sick; instead, they are alive and, literally or not, kicking. This pride against the former enemies is quite understandable, given the centuries of economic exploitation and cultural marginalization by foreign powers. But pride hardly ever comes without its darker sister, prejudice. If they ever claimed they were better, now is the time that we claim that we are. Reversal of the same uncanny logic – emotionally cathartic, perhaps, but intrinsically dangerous, not only in claiming that we are better, but also in claiming "we are." Let the world know we are Chinese. And I still recall the night when I raised my hand to the identity question: Chinese or Hong Konger. It just did not feel right to be in the minority, to be stripped of the power to define by myself what is a Chinese. Just as eagerly as we wanted to join the University, we wanted to be part of a grand narrative called China. I understood that the singing of "Descendants of the Dragon" was everybody's performance to be Chinese. What intrigues me, even now, is the surety: why do we also perform that we know so sure what or who Chinese are?

Old Genre and How Else?

And of course, for me, the fundamentally intriguing question remains: how else? When the producer of Nicolas Tse, a Hong Kong-based idol, asked me to write the lyrics of a new song about being Chinese, I immediately placed myself in *as well as* against the tradition of *minzu* and neo-*minzu gequ*. I could have said no. But I could not resist the temptation, or challenge, to try the "how else." I knew that I could not shed off the obligatory imagery, the obligatory narrative of common descent, common destiny, and common enemy. Nor could I ignore China's newfound place and pride in the world. The lyrics, I reckoned, had to address such sentiments in order to be affective and effective. What I tried was to inject more – more histories, more possibilities and ultimately more "me," instead of "us." The first draft was submitted to the authorities for approval, a common practice in Mainland China, to ensure that the song, and the CD that contains it, would have no difficulty in getting released. And

then I realized the paradox of censorship: good censors are worse than bad censors. All my references to encroachment from within, in the shape of past tyrants, for instance, needed to be rewritten. Luckily enough, for me, that was all I was required to amend to arrive at this end result – "Yellow People":

Is it from the tidal waves that swept through 5,000 miles
Or the wall that awaits reconstruction?
History fades into all the yellow
Condensing into the setting sun, on my back
Is it from the sweat that dripped through 5,000 years
Or the legendary Tang Dynasty?
Jianghu stirs up all the yellow
Waiting for me to give it a name, and a shape
Yellow people, walk on earth
Stick out a new chest
Yellow people, walk on earth
The world knows that I am not the same
More chaos, more courage

Figure 2 Nicolas Tse in the music video of "Yellow people." Courtesy of Emperor Entertainment (Hong Kong) Limited

The more the world changes, the more adventurous I become
With nothing, I go everywhere
After 5,000 years it's finally my turn to step onto the stage
Never a wound that doesn't heal
Always power
The land shows up all the yellow
With a toughness very oriental
More chaos, more courage
Leaving behind my own kind of yellow
With nothing, but a yellow sky
Watching how I become a real man
(Nicolas Tse/Sun Weiming [music] and Yiu Fai Chow [lyrics], "Yellow People" [*huangzhongren*] 2004)[2]

It is finally my turn to step onto the stage, to perform in my own way what Chinese is. I thought. The CD I received, with the track in which I thought I had injected more. It was contained in a box wrapped in black satin embroidered with a green dragon flying typically amidst stylized clouds. Even more surprising was the rap added and delivered by Nicolas:

Everywhere in the world you will see a yellow face
Red blood flows in 1.3 billion people
You say it's my fury
I say it's my attitude
Fearless, marching forward
Are only us, the Chinese
(Nicolas Tse, "Yellow People" 2004)

Only us, the Chinese. Poor me.

Notes:

1. All the song titles appear in English translations with *pinyin* in brackets. Translations of song titles and lyrics are mine.

2. "Yellow People" also became the theme song of a martial arts television drama series broadcast nationwide in 2005.

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The Cosmopatriotism of Indonesia's Radio-Active Public Sphere

Edwin Jurriëns

ABSTRACT

This article demonstrates how Indonesian radio (radio news agencies, community radio and commercial talk-back radio) since the fall of Suharto has lived up to, contradicted, altered or abused the ideals of Habermas's concept of the public sphere. It focuses on activities that can be roughly divided into the following three categories: 1. Activities that represent the ideals of a Habermasian public sphere; 2. Activities that include alternative "public" strategies; 3. Activities that are controversial with regard to the public interests they claim to defend. The "publicness" as expressed in Indonesian radio gives shape to specific manifestations and interrelations between cosmopolitanism and patriotism, which transcend the boundaries between society and the state, the commercial and the public, and the local and the national or the international.

Introduction

This chapter is based on the premise that Indonesian private radio constitutes a public sphere – or rather: an amalgam of public spheres – in which mutual relationships between patriotism and cosmopolitanism are envisaged and explored. In Indonesia, society's ambition of reclaiming the public sphere was arguably the most important factor that led to the end of Suharto's totalitarian New Order regime, which had lasted over thirty years (1967–1998), and the initiation of the project of social, political and economic reform known as Reformasi.

In the late 1990s, the most visible and persistent social actors calling for Reformasi were the students, while audio-visual media such as radio, the Internet, VCDs and television provided the necessary channels for expressing and distributing their call. The urge for reform was strengthened by the economic crisis that had hit Indonesia and the rest of South East Asia severely since mid-1997. After Suharto stepped down in 1998, the audio-visual media remained a central institutional pillar on which Indonesia's public sphere under reform is based.

In this article, I will focus on activities developed by Indonesian radio institutions since the fall of Suharto that can be roughly divided into the following three categories: 1. Activities that represent the ideals of a Habermasian public sphere; 2. Activities that include alternative "public" strategies; 3. Activities that are controversial with regard to the public interests they are supposed to defend. The first category includes the institutional organization and programs of the radio news agencies KBR 68H and Internews; the second category comprises community radio and talk shows and off-the-air activities of commercial stations; and the third category the programs and concepts of Radio Mora, a commercial station with a mixed format of news, legal issues and entertainment. This is a rough division, made for the sake of the argument, as there is much overlap between the constituents of the different categories.

In the first paragraph, I will give an explanation of my working concept of the public sphere, which is mainly based on Craig Calhoun's reading of Jürgen Habermas's bourgeois public sphere and Adam Seligman's idea of civil society, and explore the interrelations between civil society, the public sphere and the mass media. In the second paragraph I will focus on one of the decisive factors in the development of late- and post-Suharto Indonesian radio: the segmentation of the media market. I will describe segmentation as a symptom of (over)specialization in (post)bourgeois society and mass culture, but also argue that, in spite of the commercial goals it serves, segmentation does not exclude "publicness" or public values in Indonesian radio. The next four paragraphs contain case studies about the Indonesian radio news agencies, community radio and commercial talk-back radio that illustrate how Indonesian radio lives up to, contradicts, alters or abuses the ideals of the Habermasian concept of the public sphere. In the final paragraph I will summarize the findings and show how the "publicness" as expressed in Indonesian radio gives shape to specific manifestations and interrelations between cosmopolitanism and patriotism, which transcend the boundaries between society and the state, the commercial and the public, and the local and the national or international.

At first glance, it may be problematic to see how Habermas' ideas, being based on models of European societies in the 17th and 18th centuries, could apply to Indonesia in the 20th and 21st centuries. I consider Habermas' theory purely as a heuristic tool, however, which, especially because it is based on models from other

worlds and other times, can put Indonesian Reformasi and the practices and ideas of people involved in Indonesian radio journalism in an alternative, thought-provoking perspective. Simultaneously, the Indonesian examples may help to re-interpret and further develop the original ideas. In general, I believe that conceptual tools can be applied to a rich variety of contexts, as long as their origins and usage are explained and accounted for.

At the same time, this is not to deny that in Indonesian intellectual circles, concepts such as "public sphere" and "civil society" also have their own histories as concepts per se, some of which can be traced back directly to the sources used for the interpretative framework of this chapter. For instance, Indonesian scholars affiliated to Universitas Indonesia's Communications Department, which is located in the Depok suburb of Jakarta, developed a "Depok School" of thought about *penyiaran publik* (public broadcasting) (Gazali 55) on the analogy of the "Frankfurter Schule" and Habermasian thought about media and the public sphere. In their written articles, the scholars make explicit references to Calhoun's interpretation of Habermas's work as one of the main sources for their idea of the public sphere (e.g. Hidayat 15–16). The ways in which Indonesian scholars refer to "civil society" include, amongst others, *civil society* (the English expression), *masyarakat sipil* (*sipil* is the Indonesian transcription of "civil," *masyarakat* means "society"), *masyarakat warga/kewargaan* (citizens' society) and *masyarakat madani* (*madani* is derived from *madina* ["city"], an Arabic equivalent of Latin "civil." However, for Muslims, *madani* also bears connotations with "Madina," the city where the Prophet Muhammad established the first Islamic state and constitution) (Wolters 139–40).

Having identified that these terms, concepts and theories have traveled to Indonesia, I do not have the aim with this chapter to analyze all their different connotations, meanings and contexts. Instead, I will rely on my Habermasian working definition – which, in its interpretation by Craig Calhoun, is very similar to the concept used by the Depok people and other Indonesian scholars, practitioners and activists in the field of broadcasting – to interpret what is happening in terms of more general practices and ideas of "publicness" in Indonesian radio broadcasting of the Reformasi period. I will also narrow the discussion down to how different aspects of this specific case of Indonesian radio broadcasting with its specific institutions, practitioners, genres and program content challenge Habermas's pioneering work, rather than re-summarizing the numerous debates "in the West" in which his work has been criticized or modified previously.

Civil society, the bourgeois public sphere and the mass media

My Habermasian working concept of "public sphere" presupposes intersections between the public and the private as well as the civil and the state-related. In Seligman's terms, this type of public sphere can be considered "a sphere of civil society

(or civil life) beyond the state and yet transcending purely individual existence" (Seligman 9). Civil society here encompasses social identity and activity that is not directly controlled by the state and goes beyond the intimate sphere of family life (Seligman 122). It has both private and public aspects, as it depends on the participation of individuals in collective life. The very "privacy" of these individuals guarantees that the collective identity and activity developed goes beyond the state, and is "civil," indeed. Thus "public sphere" refers to the public aspect of a civil society of individuals, who belong to the private realm themselves:

The public space of interaction in civil society is a public space only insofar as it is distinguished from these social actors who enter it as private individuals. Where there is no private sphere, there is, concomitantly, no public one: both must exist in dialectic unity for sense to be made of either one. (Seligman 5)

At the same time, the public sphere can only be conceptualized in its full sense when the state is constituted as an impersonal locus of authority (Calhoun 8). In democracies, the state guarantees the possibility of public life with a more personal face beyond the state itself by institutionalizing, respecting and stimulating citizenship, or "the values of membership and participation in collective life" (Seligman 101). This type of citizenship goes further than simply the exercise of individual or civil rights, but includes an element of shared solidarity (Seligman 118).

Habermas, tracing the roots of contemporary notions of the public sphere to 18th century Europe, which saw the rise of the modern state, capitalist economic activity and bourgeois society, identifies public discourse or communicative action as a crucial factor in coordinating the public sphere and achieving a mutually agreed consensus among citizens (Calhoun 6, 16). This type of discourse-based, bourgeois public sphere involves a public that is inclusive in principle, revolves around rational argument, relies on institutional bases, and covers topics related to state and other authorities (Calhoun 12–13):

By "public sphere" we mean first of all a domain of our social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed. Access to the public sphere is open in principle to all citizens .... It is no accident that these concepts of the public sphere and public opinion were not formed until the eighteenth century. It was then that one learned to distinguish between opinion and public opinion, or <u>opinion publique</u>*. Public opinion, in terms of its very idea, can be formed only if a public that engages in rational discussion exists. Public discussions that are institutionally protected and that take, with critical intent, the exercise of political authority as their theme have not existed since time immemorial – they developed only in a specific phase of bourgeois society, and only by virtue of a specific constellation of interests could they be incorporated into the order of the bourgeois constitutional state.* (Habermas, <u>On Society and Politics</u> 231–2)

One of the foundations of this European bourgeois public sphere was capitalism, which completed the privatization of civil society by allowing people free control of

property and production (Calhoun 15). Two other foundations were the free provision of information and education, which enabled the public to arrive at a considered, rather than merely a common, opinion (Calhoun 14). Property ownership, access to information and education developed into criteria for admission to the institutional bases of the public sphere, including meeting places such as coffee houses (England), salons (France) and table societies (Germany), and print media and literary products such as journals of opinion, novels and theatre plays (Calhoun 12–13).

According to Habermas, these criteria for admission did not necessarily diminish the public sphere's representativeness of civil society as a whole:

However exclusive the public might be in any given instance, it could never close itself off entirely and become consolidated as a clique; for it always understood and found itself immersed within a more inclusive public of all private people, persons who – insofar as they were propertied and educated – as readers, listeners, and spectators could avail themselves via the market of the objects that were subject to discussion. (Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere 37; cited in Calhoun 13)

According to Habermas, the foundations of the public sphere in the contemporary Western world have become undermined through a "refeudalization" of society (Habermas, *On Society and Politics* 236). Refeudalization can be attributed to the fact that state and society, once distinct, become interlocked, with private organizations assuming public power on the one hand, and the state penetrating the private realm on the other. As a consequence, the public sphere is no longer a space in which private citizens engage in rational debate in the interest of all, but rather an arena in which special interest groups attempt to increase the prestige of their own positions and legislators stage displays for their constituents (Calhoun 21, 26). The parties with power in this transformed public sphere see their interests best served through negotiated compromise rather than critical debate and the notion of a general interest:

With the interlocking of the public and private domains, not only do political agencies take over certain functions in the sphere of commodity exchange and social labor; societal powers also take over political functions. This leads to a kind of "refeudalization" of the public sphere. Large-scale organizations strive for political compromises with the state and with one another, behind closed doors if possible; but at the same time they have to secure at least plebiscitarian approval from the mass of the population through the deployment of a staged form of publicity. (Habermas, On Society and Politics 235–6)

Another aspect of the refeudalization of society is the "externalization of the inner life," which implies that citizens have reduced the private sphere to the family, and have withdrawn from "their socially controlled roles as property owners into the purely 'personal' ones of their noncommittal use of leisure time" (Habermas, *The Structural*

Transformation of the Public Sphere 152; cited in Calhoun 22). As a consequence, rational public discourse has been replaced by more passive culture consumption on the one hand and an apolitical sociability on the other. As Calhoun rightly observes, Habermas's account here follows the tradition of the critique of mass culture in which earlier members of the Frankfurt School played a prominent role (Calhoun 22–23).

According to Habermas, the culture of passive consumption and apolitical sociability has been partly created and reinforced by the modern, audio-visual mass media such as radio, film and television. These new institutions of public discourse have a far greater immediacy than the print media and generate a bond with the audience that can be described as a "secondary realm of intimacy" (Calhoun 24). States and corporate actors use this immediacy to persuade the audience, by turning politicians into media stars, stage displays – rather than institutionalize real forums – of rational-critical debate, and instill motivations in the audience that respond to the needs of those states and corporate actors (Calhoun 24–26). At the same time, the media immediacy is used to implement the false consciousness in the audience that it constitutes a group of critically-reflecting private citizens that contributes responsibly to public opinion rather than a group of media consumers that is merely being persuaded and manipulated through those media (Calhoun 25).

Habermas's account of the bourgeois public sphere has disclosed and analyzed issues that are at the heart of problems in contemporary democracies. It has proven to be extremely productive and influential, although it has also yielded criticism and controversy. A central point of criticism is that the modern media are not necessarily as uniform and anti-democratic as Habermas suggests, and that alternative, democratic media strategies do exist (Calhoun 33). In the following paragraphs I will focus on concrete examples of such alternative media strategies, which originate from the Indonesian radio landscape of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, and the way they give shape to complex interactions between patriotism and cosmopolitanism. These examples also put Habermas's implicit assumption that there must be one public sphere for each state (Calhoun 37) into a critical perspective.

Consumer culture, segmentation, Indonesia

The Indonesian media-based public sphere is a complex one, especially when it is taken into account that many of the media institutions also pursue commercial aims and/or have ties with international media and NGOs. This raises questions about how these institutions maintain or cross the borders between the public and the private, the local and the global, and civil society and the state, and to what extent they contribute to the "refeudalization of society" and the "externalization of inner life," or prevent these processes from happening. I will address these questions here and in the following paragraphs by means of an exploration of the organization of post-Suharto private radio.

In line with global developments in the field of the media, the central force behind the structure of the contemporary Indonesian private radio landscape is the phenomenon of segmentation. Segmentation means that stations attempt to distinguish themselves from their competitors by specializing in particular broadcast content and a distinct broadcast style. In this way they try to attract specific parts of the audience, whose needs and interests are partly shaped by the individual radio stations themselves.

The segmentation of Indonesian radio already existed during the 1930s, the period of the so-called "Eastern" radio stations or *radio ketimoeran*, private stations monitored by Dutch colonial rule that catered to an autochthonous market (Lindsay 109; Sen and Hill 81). Segmentation greatly increased since the 1980s, when stations began to broadcast on FM and had to fight for a profitable share of the overcrowded market (Samuel 305; Lindsay 118–19; Jurriëns, *Cultural Travel and Migrancy* 58–59). Nowadays Indonesia numbers over one thousand officially registered private stations, focussing on such diverse, segment-classifying themes as pop music, regional culture, news, religion, humor, youth culture, jazz, women's affairs and business.

According to Habermas, this kind of segmentation – as a typical manifestation of the consumption orientation of mass culture – is partly responsible for the disintegration of the public sphere. Being designed to please various tastes, individual products of segmentation would reflect fragmentation rather than diversification, and undermine the formation of a mass-based solidarity that is the result of critical discussion and capable of reaching the whole of the public (Livingstone and Lunt 27; Calhoun 25). Moreover, media segmentation would represent and contribute to the segmentation of society in a broader sense, manifested in the transformation of the once intimate relationship between cultural producers and consumers:

The sounding board of an educated stratum tutored in the public use of reason has been shattered; the public is split apart into minorities of specialists who put their reason to use nonpublicly and the great mass of consumers whose receptiveness is public but uncritical. (Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere 175; cited in Calhoun 26).

Seligman, following Max Weber, stresses that this transformation is actually a negative and paradoxical consequence of the very success of the public sphere, in particular the wide-spread implementation and dissemination of the idea of the use of reason: "By bringing ever increasing realms of life into the realm of Reason, it also denuded them of any value (especially ethical value) beyond that instrumental calculus of means-end relationship" (128). It is this "disenchantment of the world" that has left us with "specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart" (Seligman 128).

Both from theoretical and empirical points of view, it can be argued that the segmentation of the media and society at large is not only negative and disruptive,

though, but does also provide alternative, positive contributions to public life. My case studies of Indonesian private radio will show that certain manifestations of mass culture contain rational-critical debate and address society as a whole, for instance.[1]

This exposure of the more favorable aspects of segmentation cannot be isolated from a critical examination of the bourgeois public sphere as identified by Habermas. In line with Seligman's comments on the role of reason, amongst others, it will lead to a re-interpretation of the public sphere and to counter-arguments that say, paradoxically, that rational-critical debate or the capability to address the whole of society are not necessary requirements for media such as Indonesian private radio to be able to facilitate and improve public life (Calhoun 36–39). In short, I will show that certain media can and do live up to the standards of the (idealized) bourgeois public sphere, in spite of them being manifestations of mass culture, while at the same time I will argue that the concept of the (bourgeois) public sphere needs revision in the light of new developments in the media and society at large.

In the following paragraphs, I will analyze the Indonesian case-studies on the basis of several aspects that can be related to Habermas's notions of the public sphere, including financial structure, institutional structure, journalism concepts, broadcast genres, broadcast content, audience segment, producer-audience interaction and scope. I will not examine each case on each of these points, but rather present a particular case as a telling example of one or several aspects. Thus the radio news agencies will be mainly examined on the basis of their financial/institutional structure and journalism concepts; the community stations on institutional structure and scope; and the commercial interactive stations on broadcast content and producer-audience interaction. In conclusion a summary will be provided of how the total result of the analyses of all these individual cases puts the Habermasian interpretative framework into a new perspective.

Radio news agencies and the bourgeois public sphere

I will start my analysis with the radio institutions KBR 68H (Kantor Berita Radio 68H or Radio News Office 68H) and Internews Indonesia. Both can be considered radio news agencies, as they produce programs for radio stations and do not broadcast themselves. They make use of CDs, the Internet and satellite technology in order to transmit the programs to their clients, mainly commercial radio stations. Their programs include news bulletins, features, documentaries and talk shows about topical events. Apart from producing programs, they also organize courses about broadcast journalism and provide equipment or funding to private radio stations.

KBR 68H and Internews Indonesia, which are both located in Jakarta (KBR 68H at Utan Kayu street no. 68H), came into being in 1999 and 1998, respectively. They made use of the enhanced freedom of speech and more liberal legislation with regard to the media in the early period of Reformasi in order to create and secure

their position in the field of Indonesian news provision. A crucial development in this respect was the Ministerial Decree issued by Yunus Yosfiah, then Minister of Information, which made an official end to the monopoly of state broadcaster RRI (Radio Republik Indonesia) on news production and allowed private radio institutions to create their own information programs. This new legislation stimulated a number of commercial radio stations not just to produce news programs, but also to profile themselves as news stations (Samuel 318; Sen 585). They wanted to provide an alternative sound and point of view to the government propaganda of RRI and believed that news could be commercially beneficial in creating or attracting a specific segment of the population.

While the reach of those commercial stations is generally restricted to a city, town or village and its surroundings, the news agencies KBR 68H and Internews Indonesia are able to cover almost the whole of Indonesia by distributing their products to regional radio stations. With this cover area they have become serious competitors of RRI, the only Indonesian radio broadcasting organization with a nation-wide scope. Both KBR 68H and Internews Indonesia, as non-profit organizations, have formulated their activities in contrast with the activities of state RRI and commercial stations. The type of journalism that they want to promote is independent journalism and the type of interest they want to serve is the public interest, as becomes clear from the following statement from the KBR 68H website:

Internet and satellite are only tools. What matters are the people behind these technologies. Radio 68H relies on professional journalists, who really understand the function of journalism. We are here to serve the public interest and to satisfy their right to information. Amidst the euphoria of freedom, we are aware of the importance of clear, honest and clarifying information. Our journalists are trained to develop an independent attitude, refusing to submit to [state] power or financial interests.[2] *(http://news.radio68h.com/profile.php)*

This discourse is the discourse of reformation, used by people who seek a definitive break with Indonesia's totalitarian past and attempt to guide the process of reform itself.[3] At the same time it represents or repeats the discourse of international NGOs, in particular their discourse on civil society and the public sphere. This is not surprising when it is taken into account that KBR 68H was founded with funding from The Asia Foundation, the Media Development Loan Fund and the Dutch Embassy. Since January 2000, the agency still covered 40 percent of its costs with funding from these international organizations, while it covered the remaining 60 percent with income from commercial activities.

Internews Indonesia was founded as part of the United States non-profit organization Internews Network. The Network has 20 offices worldwide and is funded by organizations such as USAID (the United States Agency for International Development), the Dutch Government, the United States Information Agency, the Ford

Foundation and Rockefeller Financial Services. According to its website, Internews Network supports "independent media in emerging democracies." It assists these emerging democracies in developing "innovative television and radio programming and internet content" and in using the media "to reduce conflict within and between countries" (http://www.internews.org/about/about.htm).

The Internews Network – also active in the states of the former Soviet Union and other conflict areas or former conflict areas such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Israel, Palestine, Timor Loro Sae and Iran – thus promotes a mixture of what in the literature on journalism is called "independent journalism" and "peace journalism." Since the fall of Suharto, both concepts have also been taught to Indonesian journalists via journalism courses and handbooks that have been made available all over Indonesia by both international and national journalism organizations, which felt that there was no opportunity or time to waste.[4]

While KBR 68H and Internews Indonesia responded to the turmoil of local political and social events, their role can only be fully understood in the spectrum of regional, national and global forces. KBR 68H, for instance, has not only received donations from foreign institutions, but is also an institutional part of a community formed by internationally trained, "cosmopolitan" or "cosmo-patriotic" Indonesian journalists, artists and intellectuals who call themselves Komunitas Utan Kayu (Utan Kayu Community). Apart from the radio news agency, they run the radio station Radio 68H, the discussion, training and publishing center ISAI (Institut Studi Arus Informasi or "Institute for the Studies on Free Flow of Information"), the art gallery Galeri Lontar, the theatre group Teater Utan Kayu (TUK) and the bookshop Toko Buku Utan Kayu, all located at Utan Kayu Street 68H.

Central figure of this community is the journalist, essayist and poet Goenawan Mohamad, who decided to buy four shops at Utan Kayu Street in order to create a place where journalists and artists could meet. This was in 1994, after Tempo, Indonesia's best-known news weekly of which Goenawan was the editor-in-chief, was banned by the Suharto regime because of its critical content. Journalists previously involved in the weekly used the formal structure of the Utan Kayu Community as an undercover for continuing journalistic work according to the old Tempo standards. Tempo even re-appeared in an electronic version on the Internet, a medium that escaped the censorship of the New Order regime.

The Utan Kayu complex and community revive memories of the infrastructure and ambience of the 18th century coffee houses, salons and table societies as identified by Habermas. At the center of the complex there is a *warung* or small restaurant where Indonesian and foreign journalists, artists, intellectuals and scholars come together in order to participate in rational-critical debate about socio-cultural topics such as journalism, art, literature, politics, religion and class, while having coffee or eating a meal. The conclusions or consensus reached during these and other

discussions are disseminated to society through radio broadcasts, current affairs magazines, literature, theatre plays, paintings, sculptures, journalism courses, handbooks, interviews, public speeches and other media.

In 2001, KBR 68H produced and transmitted fifteen programs daily, consisting of twelve News Updates (Kabar Baru, or “New Message”); two news bulletins (Buletin Pagi and Buletin Sore, or “Morning Bulletin” and “Afternoon Bulletin,” respectively); and one special feature program, including features about politics (Perspektif Baru, or “A New Perspective”); law (Reformasi Hukum, or “Law Reform”); art and culture (Apresiasi, or “Appreciation”); human rights (Hak Asasi Manusia, or “Human Rights”); economy (Obrolon Ekonomi, or “Talk about Economy”); the environment (Bumi Kita, or “Our Earth”) and regional autonomy (Daerah Bicara, or “The Region Talks”). Internews Indonesia produces similar programs: from 1999 until 2001 they had weekly features about topical socio-political issues (Kilas Balik, or “Flashback”); gender issues and the position of women in society (Jurnal Perempuan, or “Women’s Journal”); and marginalized groups in society (Mata Hati, or “The Mind’s Eye”). In 2001, they started the production of three new programs, about the environment (Sahabat Alam, or “Friends of Nature”); public affairs (Suara Bangsaku, or “The Voice of My Nation”); and health (Sehat Indonesiaku, or “My Healthy Indonesia”).

As indicated by the their titles, the programs all address themes that are considered to be of high and immediate importance to the Indonesian public struggling with the challenges of Reformasi, such as law reform, regional autonomy and human rights. At the same time, the themes and ways of discussion transcend the Indonesian situation and the borders of the Indonesian nation-state, as they are also derived from and applicable to situations and nation-states elsewhere. To some extent they are the idiom of an international civil society and public sphere as envisioned by international NGOs. In that sense, KBR 68H and Internews Indonesia contradict Habermas’s implicit claim that each public sphere is exclusively linked to only one nation. This does not prevent the program makers from projecting their own kind of patriotism – as represented in programs such as The Voice of My Nation (Suara Bangsaku) and My Healthy Indonesia (Sehat Indonesiaku), which confirm the boundaries of the nation-state and stress the unity-in-diversity of Indonesia. However, this is a new type of patriotism, which is inspired and fuelled by global or cosmopolitan experiences, and replaces the nationalist rhetoric of the New Order.

The programs also provide counter-evidence to the claim that mass culture and segmentation would always lead to the “internalization of inner-life,” or passive consumerism, and the “refeudalization of society.” The programs do live up to the expectations of the bourgeois public sphere to the extent that they represent a consensus that is the result of both off-the-air and on-the-air rational debate among intellectuals, and, potentially, represents and reaches the whole of society. In 2001, KBR 68H had a network of more than 200 radio stations that made use of its programs, while

Internews Indonesia distributed its products to more than 50 radio partners nationwide. KBR 68H also enables the exchange of information from different regions in Indonesia, by broadcasting programs produced by commercial regional radio stations that are part of their network, thus enabling listeners in Manado, North Sulawesi, to receive news that was produced by a radio station in Aceh, and listeners in Aceh to receive news from a radio station in Bandung, West Java (Santoso, personal communication, 18 October 2001). This type of information-sharing constitutes a serious challenge to the regional branches of RRI, which was the only national network of regional stations that was permitted during the New Order.

While KBR 68H and Internews Indonesia reach large parts of the Indonesian population, the direct influence by the listeners on the activities of the two news agencies is restricted. The two news agencies could be criticized on the same grounds as the bourgeois public sphere has been criticized, namely that accessibility is restricted to people with the appropriate educational background or social network. In most cases, KBR 68H and Internews Indonesia distribute news and features that have been produced by professional journalists or experts in a particular field and contain the discourse of specialists. In that sense, the radio stations that relay the programs confront their audiences with finalized products and consensuses reached by others.

KBR 68H does provide interactive services, in which the listeners of a regional station that relays the KBR 68H talk show can phone in to the studio in Jakarta and have their opinions broadcast all over the archipelago. These opportunities are restricted, though, as, most of the time, the conversation is held between the host and the expert(s).[5] A number of managers and hosts of regional stations declared that their listeners at times felt that the KBR 68H and Internews Indonesia information is controlled by or centered on Jakarta, the traditional center of power in Indonesia, and does not always fit comfortably with the format and content of their favorite, regional, radio station. The same listeners perceive the Utan Kayu Community as an elite society of intellectuals, inaccessible and separated or isolated from the rest of Indonesian society.[6]

Community radio, accessibility and the reversal of roles[7]

While the activities of KBR 68H and Internews Indonesia have been labeled by some listeners as creating or strengthening the separation of specialist knowledge from the life-world, two other developments that have come to the fore in the late New Order period and early Reformasi were intended to bring producers and consumers closer together, or even reverse their roles. The first is community radio; the second, talk-back shows by regional commercial radio stations. Both types of radio address the issue of the accessibility and representativeness of the mass media – as a main constituent of the public sphere – as well as the accessibility and representativeness of the public sphere itself.

Community radio constitutes an alternative to both government radio and commercial radio, mirroring and contributing to the role of the public sphere as a "Third Way" in-between and transcending the interests of state and business (Howell and Pearce 65–68). It is known as radio "about, for and by the people," which indicates that the listeners themselves bear responsibility for ownership, management and production (Fraser and Estrada 6). In that sense, community radio goes one step further than the efforts by KBR 68H and Internews Indonesia in resisting the possible refeudalization of society by the government or the unbridled promotion of consumerism by commercial media and other companies. The scope of community stations is small, though, usually restricted to a village or one or several neighborhoods in a city or town. This means that community radio cannot claim to represent society "as a whole" and may serve and be dominated by the specific interests of – part of – a local community. On the other hand, community radio has the potential of providing a voice to people and special interest groups that have been excluded from the mainstream media.

In Indonesia, two types of community radio can be found, "regular" community radio and campus radio. Regular community radio is about, for and by people whose mutual social relationships are determined by the fact that they live in the same geographic or administrative area or share the same professional background. The managers, producers and target audiences of campus radio are university students or students from other tertiary educational institutions. In spite of their limited cover areas and small communities, both types of community radio – as concepts as well as practices – are not strictly local affairs, as they have precedents in other countries and entertain links with national and international organizations. For instance, many Indonesian community stations receive educational or financial support from international organizations such as UNESCO and The Ford Foundation.[8]

An example of how community radio presents itself in Indonesia in continuing to reflect the international NGO idiom on "small" and "democratic" media is the brochure of the campus radio station Swaragama. Swaragama (an abbreviation for Swara Gadjah Mada, or The Voice of Gadjah Mada) is the students' radio of the prestigious Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, which began its production and broadcasting activities in September 1999. Although Swaragama received an official commercial status in February 2000, it continued to present itself as a "public" alternative to both government and profit-oriented media, by fostering an image of rebellion, idealism and creativity:

Two previous radio categories in Indonesia, that is: government radio and commercial broadcast radio, remain insufficient in answering all the hopes and idealism of the public. The various movements and "guerrilla" factions of the academic community that struggle for the presence of a third radio option have proven this. The fact that radio clubs have often been confronted with ups and downs because of limited resources, or

because of the thickness of the bureaucratic wall, actually enhanced their militancy in organizing their movements. Some people define this alternative category as: social radio, campus radio, community radio, etc. Radio Swara Gadjah Mada is back again with its identity as "campus-based radio," making use of the current corridor for developing a vision about radio that is paired with the idealism of education and democratization.[9] (Swaragama brochure 2001)

Swaragama's anti-establishment messages – as reflected in the use of words such as "movement" (*pergerakan*), "guerrilla" and "militancy" – more than voicing real struggle or ideals, seem to represent a nostalgia for student activism, and to support a carefully constructed commercial image. Nevertheless, the quote also shows Swaragama's awareness of the character and possibilities of public radio and its potential in mediating processes in contemporary Indonesian society, such as Reformasi, regional autonomy and the improvement of the education system. The "guerrilla" of community radio, as envisioned by Swaragama, embodies a new type of patriotism as well, which is realized on a local "grass-roots" level, inspired by international examples and serving a national cause.

The efficiency of the medium of radio in mobilizing a community outside of the realm of government and commerce is illustrated by the case of the community station Angkringan (Javanese for "The Food-Vendor's Place," a place were people come together in order to eat and talk), which was founded by the inhabitants of the Timbulharjo village, Central Java, in 2000. Before they founded the radio station, the Timbulharjo people already had a community magazine, also called Angkringan. However, the disadvantage of the magazine was that people had to spend money in order to purchase it and be literate in order to understand it. The Angkringan radio programs, on the other hand, were free, had an oral character and could report about events and respond to people's reactions more frequently and efficiently than the printed medium (Nasir 2–3).

In line with the predicament of community radio, Angkringan makes use of cheap and simple production and broadcasting equipment, and covers its operational costs by selling coupons for requesting songs and sending on-the-air greetings to its community members. This working strategy, in combination with the oral character of the medium, enables every member of the community, in principle, to take part in the ownership, management and production of a radio station, and thus to participate and be represented in public life as institutionalized by the mass media.

At the same time this enhanced access and in some cases immediate representation raises questions about the themes and nature of the discussions in the media and the public sphere. In other words, is the accessibility of a radio station only a matter of the quantity of listeners that can participate in the production of programs and other aspects of the station, or does it also have impact on the quality and style of on-the-air discourse? In the next paragraph I will examine the case of Indonesian

commercial talk-back radio in order to give an indication of the extent to which talk-back radio leads to rational-critical debate and consensus, or to possible other strategies of representing civil society in the public sphere.

Talk-back radio and the oppositional public sphere

The phenomenon of the reversal of the roles of producer and consumer did not only occur in the case of community or semi-community stations such as Angkringan and Swaragama, respectively, but also in the case of commercial stations that broadcast interactive talk shows. The advantage of these commercial stations over community radio is that they have a larger reach and potentially represent more people and groups in society.

The majority of the talk-back programs are concrete examples of "the externalization of inner life," in which listeners exhibit aspects of their private life, while participating in activities such as requesting songs and sending greetings to members of an audience of overhearers. Many of these examples can be considered instances of "phatic performance," which are not always as trivial as they seem. For instance, Ben Arps, linking the concept of "phatic performance" to the sending of personal messages on air in Banyuwangi, East Java, has argued that this type of activity serves important social goals, as it enables interaction between radio listeners, provides the participants with the pleasure of being heard or overheard, and creates or confirms social networks (Arps).

However, there has also been a steady growth of talk-back radio that is of a shared public interest not only because of the social functions it serves, but also because of the social issues it *represents*. The broadcast content of this latter type of talk-back radio includes current affairs, art and culture, health and sexuality, the environment, religion, law and regional autonomy. In this chapter, I do not further explore the potentially subversive aspects of "phatic performance," but rather focus on this "content-based" talk-back radio, as it is closer to Habermas's model of rational debate.

Before the fall of Suharto, commercial radio used the "content-based" talk show in order to circumvent prohibitions on the production of news and still be able to provide the audience with useful, non-governmental, information on topical matters (Samuel 308 and Sen 580–2). The more liberal legislation of the early Reformasi period has meant an extra stimulus for commercial stations to produce talk shows on current affairs and other news programs, or to decide to profile themselves as news stations. Nowadays, with slogans such as "Information From You and For You" (Informasi Dari Anda, Untuk Anda), commercial news stations involve the audience in the legal activity of producing news, in order to reduce production costs and compensate for the lack of professional radio journalists as well as to make the news and information relevant to local or regional circumstances.[10]

Talk shows on commercial radio usually involve the three parties of the host, the expert and the listener – often backed-up by a team of journalists, editors and gatekeepers – who during their conversations sometimes undergo a reversal of roles, in which the listener becomes host or expert; the expert listener or host; and the host expert or listener. In order not to let this process run out of control and to check and maintain the reliability of the information provided, stations have set up systems of journalistic self-training and self-disciplining. These systems for on-the-air behavior have been a crucial element in the early stage of the development of Indonesian radio journalism and have also set the rules for part of the post-Suharto public sphere.

Radio Global FM in Tabanan, Bali, is an example of a commercial news station that organizes talk shows in which the audience can comment on current affairs as well as the format of the shows themselves.[11] The evolution of the radio station's slogans illustrates how the managers, hosts and listeners believe that mutual cooperation may further develop the format of talk-back radio, increase the standard of Indonesian radio journalism and eventually improve the quality of Balinese society. In this way they give expression to a type of patriotism that is regionally rather than nationally oriented, although hosts and listeners also discuss matters of national and international interest in their on-the-air conversations.

Since its birth in 1999, Global FM has featured the Balinese motto "Don't Be Unwilling to Talk" (De Koh Ngomong). The motto encouraged listeners to talk on the air and give their opinions about topics discussed in Global FM broadcasts and society at large. At the beginning, the listeners, apparently caught up in the spirit of Reformasi, reacted *en masse*. The slogan almost died of its own success, though, as both the radio hosts and the audience were not satisfied with the way in which discussions took place. Often, a listener would not listen to the arguments of other participants or the host, and would get angry, yelling at other participants or not letting them talk at all. Both the hosts and the listener-participants felt the urge for the development and nurturing of an "ethics" for talking on the air.

After a testing period of several months, Global FM began to combine the initial motto with slogans such as "There are Moments to Listen, Moments to Speak, and Moments to Act" (Saatnya Mendengar, Saatnya Bicara, Saatnya Berdaya [Indonesian]) and "Improve your Talk" (Melahang Ngomong [Balinese]). These slogans, advertised on the air and in newspapers and magazines, clearly reflect the ambition of the Global FM producers and listeners to improve the performance of the participants in on-the-air discussions and the quality of the genre as such. They teach the participants to give space to the opinions of others ("There are Moments to listen"), to decide on the appropriate moment for expressing their own opinion ("There are Moments to Speak") and to speak in a clear and decent manner ("Improve your Talk").

The interactivity paradigm establishes strong disciplinary links between "Acting" ("There are Moments to Act") and talking and listening, and defines social activity as

being embedded in discursive interaction or as constituting a result of it. It summons listeners to be careful in assessing when and how to synthesize talking and listening – combining their own arguments and the arguments of others – and when and how to draw conclusions, make decisions, or actually leave the discussion to prepare for action in a particular social field.

This process of training and disciplining may always leave certain people out of discursive interaction, but it does not necessarily make the on-the-air talk less democratic than unmediated discourse, which is also embedded in a network of implicit or explicit social rules and power relations. In the case of Global FM, at least the participants in the talk shows are aware, or made aware, of the existence of discursive rules, while the rules themselves are created by mutual consent between the producers and the audience, who have in mind the common goal of making discursive interaction as accessible as possible, by preventing single individuals or groups from aggressively dominating or disrupting discussions. The urge for (self-)discipline must therefore not be seen as a nostalgia for the imposed government control on public discourse during the New Order, but as a logical reaction against the discursive and also physical violence of elements in society that abuse the relative freedom of the Reformasi period.

Another means by which Global FM underlines the strong link between radio talk and civil society, apart from their interactivity paradigm, are the annual elections of the ten most prominent listener-participants. These listeners are not awarded the title of "Best Listeners" or something similarly plain and simple, but "Social Empowerment Personalities" (in Indonesian: Tokoh Pemberdayaan Masyarakat), indicating that the way they perform during, and possibly outside of, Global FM broadcasts can make a positive difference to Balinese society. By being awarded the title of "Tokoh" ("prominent person," usually in art, culture, politics), these listeners also gain social status, at least among the listeners of Global FM. This is a title not many of the awarded listeners could easily have received in "normal" society, simply because of their low educational background or lack of financial means. In general, Global FM attracts listeners from many different social backgrounds, although it formally targets at a middle-class audience.

Every year on May 30th, the station's anniversary, Global FM publishes a magazine in which ten awarded listeners are listed, described and interviewed. These interviews are a rich source of information about the popularity and accessibility of Global FM, the rules of radio discourse, the process of becoming a radio personality, gender issues, intimidation by other listeners or officials, off-the-air organization among listeners, intermediality and other issues. The lists of the winning listeners for 2001 and 2002 consisted of persons with educational backgrounds ranging from junior high school to university and included housewives, teachers, taxi drivers, traders and government officials. These lists are representative of the audience's strong diversity in profession and social or economic status.

Most of the awarded listeners had first listened to the talk shows and other programs for some time before actively participating in interactive discussions. They had to learn how to speak in public and how to adapt themselves to radio speech in general and the discursive behavior of the hosts and other listeners in particular. For them, being on the air was an exercise in controlling their emotions, distinguishing between minor and major problems, identifying and respecting other people as well as introducing and developing their own identities (Global FM brochures 2001 and 2002). The following quote from an interview with the trader Kadek Mako, one of the 2001 "Social Empowerment Personalities," illustrates several of these aspects of interactive radio communications:

From the beginning, I was against injustice. I often read the magazines Forum and Tempo, which covered injustice in Indonesia. Eventually I became incited [to know] where I could ignite my ideas and pour out my feelings. In fact, before this medium of Global, there were no other media in which I could speak out loud. That means that I only talked among friends. Eventually there was the medium of Global. I listened to it several times, and there were several billboards of radio Global put up along the roadside. The first time I tried to enter was in Warung Global. If I am not mistaken it was Mr Hendra who responded that time, while I was speaking my sentences with a trembling voice, because I was not used to talking on the radio.… About talking on the radio, I believe that some Global companions who join the talk for the first time can be coarse. Nevertheless, there is a process whereby people adjust themselves by entering the talk at Global several times. When I just entered, I was expressing things too vulgarly myself. After several months, I thought to myself why I did it that way, why did I not say things in a refined but effective way? For instance, conflicts among Global companions can best be finished in private, that is, among the two of them. Otherwise we would be talking about reform and democracy without being able to implement those things. We also have to leave aside [self-]interests when we enter Global. Party concerns or job interests, for instance. It is our priority to voice the aspirations of the people. (Global FM brochure 17)[12]

Kadek Mako's own experience of participating in talk-back radio clearly mirrors the development of Radio Global's interactivity concept as reflected in the use of different slogans over different periods of time. Kadek Mako was "willing to talk" from the very beginning, but had to "improve his talk" and learn that there were "moments to listen" and "moments to speak" and, for that matter, "moments to act."

His concepts of ideal discursive and social behavior resonate aspects of the Habermasian bourgeois public sphere: people are not supposed to express their own interests, but "the aspirations of the people" (*aspirasi masyarakat*), and conflicts should be restricted to the private sphere. However, the activities and ideals of Radio Global and other Indonesian interactive radio share characteristics with an alternative, so-called "oppositional" public sphere as well (Livingstone and Lunt 32).

According to Livingstone and Lunt, the oppositional public sphere – unlike the bourgeois public sphere – emphasizes and makes public the potentially conflict-ridden *process* rather than *product* of discursive opinion formation:

In Habermas's theory, one gets the impression of politics as a complex, emergent process where discussion, debates and negotiations take place in private (in families, committee rooms and the meetings of special interest groups) only coming to the light of critical exposure when they have been formulated clearly and in controlled forms of debate. Participatory programming brings public exposure earlier in this process. Ideas and opinions don't have to be "well formed" before they can be expressed. (Livingstone and Lunt 24)

Radio Global's interactive talk show Global Terkini ("Global Latest News") is a concrete example of how Global FM puts into practice motto's like "Don't be Unwilling to Talk" and "Improve your Talk" as well as an alternative or "oppositional" vision on people's participation in public life. This program is accessible to anyone with a radio and a phone, thereby facilitating the participation and representation of a major part of the community. Topics for discussion, the course of debate and possible conclusions are not drafted beforehand or merely represented, as the program offers listeners the opportunity to provide their own topics for discussion and perform the roles of expert and host themselves. The host, on the other hand, often simply acts as a moderator or overhearer, but – almost unavoidably – retains a steering role in narrowing-down the discussion on a central topic, or trying to reach a consensus or conclusion.

In the program, the listeners and the host both give meta-discursive comments on themes of discussion, styles of speech and the effectiveness of talking, thereby stressing the process rather than the outcome of debate. They underscore that this process includes mutual links between "listening," 'speaking" and "acting" – as represented in Global's third motto "There are Moments to Listen, Moments to Speak, and Moments to Act" – and transcends the distinction between "radio" and "real life," or on- and off-the-air manifestations of people and events.

The fact that this type of Indonesian interactive radio stresses the process rather than product of discursive opinion formation can be seen as an expression of the euphoria of freedom of speech and information in the era of Reformasi as well as a sign of the early stage of the development of Indonesian radio journalism. Although it may not always be the result of deliberate concepts and actions like in Global FM's case, this alternative type of public opinion formation certainly caters to some of the disadvantages of the conventional public sphere, such as its restricted accessibility and its distancing of specialist knowledge from the life world.

Talk-back radio and the refeudalization of the public sphere?

The cases of RRI during the New Order and community radio and Global FM during the early Reformasi, show that "publicness" does not necessarily refer to media with

government support and protection, or excludes commercial and community media. In fact, they point out that publicness is a value rather than a media category, and that only detailed case studies can make it clear whether a station can live up to public values or not, irrespective of the media category to which it belongs.

While in the case of Radio Global – and also other interactive commercial radio stations such as Suara Surabaya in Surabaya, Radio Unisi in Yogyakarta, and Radio Mara in Bandung – commercialism does not seem to contradict public values, other commercial stations may be more controversial with regard to the claims of publicness they make. In order to give a more balanced picture of the Indonesian late New Order/early Reformasi radio landscape, and also to put the idea of the public sphere in a different context, in this paragraph I will pay attention to one controversial station; Radio Mora in Bandung. Mora's controversy revolves around the question of whether the station serves the public cause indeed, or merely stages displays of publicness for the benefit of its own commercial interests.

Radio Mora received an official broadcasting license in 1999, after the abolishment of the Ministry of Information. The radio station had already made trial broadcasts from 1985 until 1987, but failed to receive official recognition by the New Order broadcasting authorities, because of its information-oriented format (Taye Tayudin Dj., personal communication, 27 September 2001). Radio Mora has created a unique segment of the Indonesian radio market by combining current affairs with information and advice on legal issues. This has been a successful formula, as both items are in high demand in the context of the social and political reform in contemporary Indonesia.

By choosing the name of Mora and focusing on the format of news and information, Radio Mora aroused the anger of another commercial news station in Bandung – Radio Mara – who had run their name and format since the late 1960s, long before Mora did. According to the people from Mara, Mora attempted to benefit from Mara's long history and good reputation in the field of information production in a dishonorable manner (Layla S. Mirza, Head of Mara; personal communication 28 September 2001). The people from Mora claim, however, that Mora is just an abbreviation of the name of its owner, *Mo*nang Sa*ra*gih, and that they have a different approach in presenting news than Mara, which does not have the in-house expertise in legal issues.

Most of Radio Mora's program hosts, on the other hand, are lawyers. Monang Saragih is also a lawyer, who, next to the radio station, owns his own lawyer's office. It is the close cooperation between Saragih's two businesses – which are even located at the same physical spot – that raises questions about the sincerity of the information and advice provided by Mora. Do the Mora hosts serve the private and public interest of the listeners, or do they rather attempt to instill motivations in them for making use of the commercial services of Saragih's lawyer's office? A description of Mora's programs and the interaction between hosts and listeners will show that there is no univocal answer to this question.

From Monday until Saturday, each day at the same times, Mora broadcasts the same seven programs. Three of these programs are about legal issues and one about current affairs. Mora's remaining three programs contain light infotainment about regional culture and religion, while the Sunday broadcasting schedule predominantly consists of popular music. The radio station also organizes off-the-air activities, such as seminars about law and broadcasting courses for law students.

The current affairs program is Somasi ("Injunction," also an abbreviation for Sorotan Masalah dan Situasi [Clarifications of Problems and Situations]), broadcast twice an hour, with local news about politics, economy, social affairs and culture from Mora's own reporters in Bandung and surroundings. The radio station only broadcasts national or international news when it is of direct importance to the local situation, such as news about the fall of an Indonesian president or international terrorist attacks. The crew of Mora considers radio to be a local medium and believes it is unrealistic to try and compete with national and international news media. In interactive programs, hosts and listeners often also show a "patriotic" regional pride and concern about Bandung and West Java.

The three programs about legal issues are Saksi, Kasasi and Mora Interaktif, each of them with a talk show format. Saksi ("Witness," also an abbreviation for Saran Komentar dan Informasi ["Suggestions for Comments and Information"]) is a talk show in which listeners can request legal advice. In Kasasi ("Cassation," also an abbreviation for Kasus dari Sana-Sini ["Cases from Everywhere"]), cases from Saragih's lawyer's office are discussed. In Mora Interaktif, listeners have interactive discussions with experts in the studio about legal issues as well as topics of a more general – social, political or religious – nature.

A major challenge for Mora's hosts during these programs is to translate legal problems into a language that suits the medium of radio. This means that messages have to be short and attractive, but still cover the essence of a topic. The hosts also need to know Sundanese, the mother tongue of many listeners in Bandung. Those hosts of Mora who are not lawyers themselves obtain regular training from either law practitioners or lecturers from the Law Department of Padjadjaran University in Bandung (Taye Tayudin, Program manager Mora, personal communication, 27 September 2001).

During broadcasts, Mora's hosts do seem to put their expertise in the service of the general interest, by providing the listeners with legal advice, explanations about new government legislation and information about legal aspects of other public issues, such as the violation of human rights. Often listeners request information about legal matters they are confronted with in their daily lives, such as how to request an identity card or birth certificate. Listeners do not have to pay for the on-the-air advice by Mora's host, but they do have to pay for legal assistance by Monang Saragih's lawyer's office (Radio Mora brochure 2001).

As the Mora hosts receive money for every case they are able to hand over to the lawyer's office, they never enter the debates about law and legal issues completely unbiased or without self-interest. During talk shows, hosts also discuss cases that have already been handled by the lawyer's office. Although the radio station literally presents itself as a "public" station, it is clear that, under the veneer of its "publicness," it serves predominantly as a popular communications channel for attracting new clients and advertisers, and promoting and expanding Saragih's law business.

The Mora audience, and the Bandung population at large, is not unaware of the ambiguous nature of the radio station. For instance, in August 2003, hundreds of employees of the ailing Indonesian aircraft maker Dirgantara were on the streets of Bandung heading towards Radio Mora. During the demonstration, the angry crowd even broke some windows of the radio station. The employees of Dirgantara, who were in a legal conflict with the company's management, accused Mora of biased news reporting. They claimed Mora favored the management's case, especially after Monang Saragih was appointed the management's legal defender (Suara Pembaruan, 14 August 2003). They felt betrayed, as Saragih and his radio station were initially thought to favor their case. During the demonstration, the employees were shouting that "Radio Mora was no longer defending the small people" (Kompas, 14 August 2003).

The cosmopatriotism of Indonesia's radio-active public sphere

The case-studies of KBR 68H, Internews Indonesia, Swaragama, Angkringan and Radio Global prove that Indonesian radio institutions, each in their own manner, address and promote public values. The non-profit news agencies, being part of or supported by international NGOs, stress values that are closely related to the bourgeois public sphere, such as rational debate and consensus. The community radio stations, on the other hand, attempt to make up for some of the disadvantages of the bourgeois nature of their publicness, such as restricted accessibility and the separation of specialist knowledge from the life-world. Although the scope of community radio is restricted – thereby raising questions about the extent to which they represent society at large – they do represent groups that have been underrepresented in the mainstream media.

Commercial stations focussing on the segment of news provision usually have a larger scope. Some of them use interactive talk-shows on current affairs as a means to close the gap between producers and consumers, although the reversal of roles does not go as far as in the case of community radio, where the listeners become not only the participants or producers of programs, but also the managers and owners of a radio station.

The interactive talk shows on commercial radio and also community radio often share characteristics with the oppositional public sphere rather than the bourgeois

public sphere, as they stress the process instead of the outcome of debate. This means that Indonesian radio of the late New Order and early Reformasi not only contradicts the Habermasian assumption that the mass media are unsuitable for creating or representing the public cause, but also provides alternative models for the way in which publicness is expressed and experienced.

Each of the radio categories discussed – non-profit, community-based or commercial – also give expression to different types of patriotism. KBR 68H and Internews Indonesia confirm the conceptual boundaries of the Indonesian nation-state through their nation-wide coverage and exchange system of regional programs, which are established both by satellite and Internet technology. Community stations such as Angkringan create and confirm self-awareness and pride among small-scale communities in the Indonesian villages and the neighborhoods of cities and towns. A commercial station such as Radio Global is a player on the level of a provincial capital and its surroundings and stresses regional identity and concerns.

What distinguishes these types of patriotism from each other is less the differences in scope than the differences in nature, though. The fact that certain types of radio have indeed functioned as public spheres in late- or post-Suharto Indonesia implies that their concomitant types of patriotism, unlike "official" patriotic discourses, are not directly government constructed or controlled, but created and expressed by media communities residing in-between society and the state.

At the same time, these media communities also reside in-between the "local" and the "extra-local," as a result of the goals and attitudes of the radio stations they are attached to. The way in which a local audience is structured as a "media segment," for instance, may link it to an audience elsewhere, categorized as a similar segment, but located in another socio-political context. Thus the patriotic identity of different audiences can be based on similar principles, even if these audiences have never been in direct contact with each other.

Mass communications and segmentation also lead to direct, but often "virtual," contacts between producers and listeners in different socio-political contexts, thereby turning these producers and listeners into "(virtual) travellers" (Jurriëns, *Cultural Travel and Migrancy*) and "(virtual) cosmopolitans" or "(virtual) cosmopatriots" (that is, cosmopolitanism-inspired patriots). These contacts become manifest in, or are channeled through, the news and information relays from other countries or regions on local radio, the collaboration between the Indonesian news agencies and community stations with international NGOs, or the comments of listeners on international affairs in commercial talk-back radio. These examples are all illustrations of the fact the public sphere can be simultaneously informed by the regional, the national and the international, as well as transcend the divisions between the three categories.

Bruce Robbins has argued that if mass communications are not restricted to administrative borders, it would be inconsistent to assume that the process of imagining a

sense of community – which is dependent on mass communications – would be limited to any borders itself:

If people can get as emotional as [Benedict] Anderson says they do about relations with fellow nationals they never see face-to-face, then now that print-capitalism has become electronic- and digital-capitalism, and now that this system is so clearly transnational, it would be strange if people did not get emotional in much the same way, if not necessarily to the same degree, about others who are not fellow nationals, people bound to them by some transnational sort of fellowship. (Robbins 7)

Just as popular media, including radio, enhance accessibility to and participation in the public sphere, they also enable greater parts of the population to undergo cosmopolitan experiences. In that sense, "something has happened to cosmopolitanism" (Robbins 1). Basing himself on Paul Rabinow, Robbins explains that cosmopolitanism used to be applied, "often venomously," to certain groups – including Christians, aristocrats, merchants, Jews, homosexuals and intellectuals – that had the financial or educational capital either to travel or to receive guests, goods or information from elsewhere. "Now it [cosmopolitanism] is attributed, more charitably, to North Atlantic merchant sailors, Caribbean au pairs in the United States, Egyptian guest workers in Iraq, Japanese women who take gaijin lovers" (Robbins 1). To this list could be added the KBR 68H news bulletin producers in Jakarta, the manager-listeners of Radio Angkringan in Timbulharjo, Central Java, and the participants in the topical affairs talk shows of Radio Global, Bali.

What remains is the question of whether the-media-segment-as-public-sphere can function as a real space for the expression of solidarity and the general interest, or becomes co-opted or "refeudalized" by the media institution that brought it into being. As the case of Radio Mora showed, public interests and commercial interests sometimes become inextricably intertwined in the mass media. Many talk-shows that allow for the requesting of songs and sending greetings to family and relatives could also be considered mere "externalizations of inner life," not serving the interest of a larger community. Similarly, non-profit organizations can become hijacked by the agenda of international governments or NGOs, and community radio may be used merely to represent the chauvinistic ideals of a minority group.

However, what differentiates institutions such as KBR 68H, Internews Indonesia, Radio Angkringan and Radio Global from less favorable cases is, if not their interactivity as such, their accountability and self-reflection on the role of the media. KBR 68H and Internews Indonesia do not only produce news and information, but also create programs and organize workshops about journalism and the media, in order to enhance the "media literacy" (*melek media*, in Indonesian) of audiences. Both in the case of community stations such as Angkringan and talk-shows on commercial radio such as Global FM's Global Terkini, audiences can not only participate in discussions on topical issues, but also criticize or alter the format of the programs themselves.

Through its slogans and competition for social empowerment personalities, Global FM asks listeners not only to hold politicians and corporate businessmen responsible for their deeds – in itself a great achievement of late New Order and post-Suharto radio – but also to demand the radio station's crew and the listeners themselves to be accountable for their on-the-air behavior. It is precisely these attempts at accountability, transparency and self-awareness that I consider being concrete manifestations of the spirit of Indonesian Reformasi.

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Notes

1. I am aware that the "externalization of inner life" as manifested in the pleasure of producing, receiving or interacting with media in certain cases can serve important social goals, or even subvert or redefine existing political and social structures. However, this is not the direction in which I want to lead my analysis. See my discussion of "phatic perfomance" later in this chapter (119).

2. Internet, satelit, hanyalah alat. Mereka yang di belakang teknologi itulah yang menentukan. Radio 68H didukung oleh para jurnalis profesional, yang mengerti betul fungsi jurnalisme. Kami ada untuk melayani kepentingan publik, memenuhi hak mereka akan informasi. Di tengah euforia kebebasan, kami menyadari pentingnya informasi yang jelas, jujur, menjernihkan perkara. Jurnalis kami telah terlatih untuk mengembangkan sikap independen. Menolak tunduk pada kekuasaan ataupun kepentingan modal.

3. A striking aspect of their statement is that they term the satellite a mere tool. During the Suharto regime, the introduction of domestic satellite technology (1976) was a highly prestigious project meant to serve the equally prestigious project of nation building (see Kitley 46–63). The people involved in KBR 68H, true to their ideals of Reformasi, are more interested in how such projects can serve the interests of the public.

4. An example is the Indonesian NGO Lembaga Studi Pers dan Pembangunan (LSSP, or Institute for Press and Development Studies), which has organized training courses and published a series of journalism handbooks in cooperation with The Asia Foundation and USAID Jakarta (Darpan A. Winangun, LSPP Publishing Manager; personal communication 10 October 2001). The book series includes titles such as *Peace Journalism: How to Conduct It?* (*Jurnalisme Damai: Bagaimana Melakukannya?*; 2001); *Multicultural Conflicts: A Guide for Journalists* (*Konflik Multikultur: Panduan bagi Journalis*; 2000) and *The Convention for the Abolition of Every Form of Discrimination against Women: A Reporting Guide for Journalists* (*Konvensi tentang Penghapusan Segala Bentuk Diskriminasi terhadap Perempuan: Panduan Meliput bagi Jurnalis*; 1999).

5. Thus, apart from the fact that certain listeners cannot connect with KBR 68H's on-the-air

discourse because of their different social or educational background, there are also material and economic constraints on participation: the time for listeners to call in is limited, and they have to be able to bear the telephone costs for on-the-air participation. These factors make it more difficult especially for lower-educated listeners from outside of Jakarta to have their voice represented.

6. This view was expressed by Yusirwan Yusuf, Head of Suara Padang, Padang (personal communication 19 August 2002) and Kecuk Sahana, Production Manager of Unisi, Yogyakarta (personal communication 30 August 2001), amongst others.

7. This paragraph is partly based on my article "Radio Komunitas di Indonesia: 'New Brechtian Theatre' di Era Reformasi?" (*Jurnal Antropologi Indonesia* 72, September-December 2003).

8. UNESCO organized an influential seminar on community radio in Jakarta and Yogyakarta in September 2001 and, in the same period, also distributed its own handbook on community radio (Fraser and Estrada 2001) to stations all over Indonesia. Since 2000, The Ford Foundation has financially supported community radio projects of the Indonesian NGO Combine (http://www.combine.or.id/projects.html).

9. Dua kategori radio yang pernah ada di Indonesia yaitu radio pemerintah dan radio siaran swasta terbukti belum memadai untuk memenuhi seluruh harapan dan idealisme publik. Pergerakan dan gerilya civitas akademika dalam memperjuangkan keberadaan radio ketiga membuktikannya. Meskipun sering dilanda gelombang pasang surut baik karena terbatasnya sumber daya ataupun disebabkan oleh tebalnya tembok birokrasi, hal itu justru menjadi pelecut militansi klub-klub radio ini dalam melakukan pergerakannya. Ada yang mendefinisikan kategori alternatif itu adalah: radio social, radio kampus, radio community, dan lain-lain. Memanfaatkan koridor yang ada, untuk membangun visi tentang radio dengan idealisme pendidikan dan demokratisasi, Radio Swara Gadjah Mada hadir kembali dengan identitas sebagai "radio berbasis kampus."

10. This slogan has been used by Radio El Shinta and Jakarta News FM, both located in Jakarta.

11. The information on Radio Global FM is based on my paper "Radio Awards and the Contestation of History" presented at two consecutive workshops on the theme "Media and the Making of History in Post-Suharto Indonesia," Leiden University, in 2003 and 2004.

12. Saya dari dulu anti dengan ketidakadilan. Saya sering membaca majalah Forum dan Tempo yang memuat ketidakadilan di Indonesia. Akhirnya saya tergelitik, di mana bisa mencetuskan ide dan menuangkan perasaan saya. Kebetulan sebelum ada media Global ini, di media-media yang lain tidak bisa bicara lantang. Artinya saya hanya bicara dengan teman sekitar. Akhirnya ada media Global. Beberapa kali saya mendengarkan dan ada beberapa billboard radio Global yang terpampang di jalan. Saya coba masuk pertama kali di Warung Global. Waktu itu kalau tidak salah diterima pak Hendra, dengan kalimat yang gemetaran karena tidak biasa ngomong di radio.... Soal bicara di radio, menurut saya kalau kawan Global pertama kali ikut bicara mungkin ada yang kasar. Namun demikian itu proses pembelajaran diri dengan beberapa kali masuk ke Global. Saya sendiri ketika baru masuk terlalu vulgar menyatakan sesuatu. Setelah beberapa bulan saya introspeksi diri kenapa demikian, mengapa tidak mengatakan secara halus tapi mengena? Umpama kalau ada pertentangan di antara kawan Global sebaiknya diselesaikan secara person artinya berdua. Agar tidak kita bicara reformasi dan demokrasi ternyata kita tidak bisa mempraktekkannya. Selain itu kita masuk Global harus menanggalkan kepentingan. Misalnya masalah partai atau kepentingan jabatan. Kita utamakan untuk menyuarakan aspirasi masyarakat.

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Cosmopatriot Contaminations

Jeroen de Kloet

ABSTRACT

This article explores how Beijing Hip Hop collective Yin Tsang, visual artist Xu Bing and filmmaker Stephen Chow employ different tactics to negotiate between cosmopolitanism and patriotism. All are involved in a translation of a wide range of cultural forms, a translation that involves a betrayal and pollution of culture – be it music, language or cinema. It is argued that by reading globalization as a moment of cultural pollution, one may subvert any longing for cultural essentialism and nationalism. The strange bastard Cosmopatriotism provides an entry point to explore the possibilities of impurity.

Industrial Anger

The electronic hardcore of digital musician Feng Jiangzhou, former vocalist of the Beijing underground band The Fly, expresses an impatient and industrial form of anger. Impatient, given the speed of the rhythm that feels like the pulse of a heart in the midst of a marathon. Industrial, as a range of dissonant noises and a highly transformed voice evoke the feeling of steel factories and of oil drilling machines. In the accompanying video clip, the repetitive beats are juxtaposed with a troupe of Red Guards, who are marching from the right to the left on the screen, caught in an endless loop. The characters *jinse xiyang jinse xiaobian* (Golden Sunset Golden Urine) establish a link between the Great Helmsman Mao, whose Red Guards move across the screen, and urine.

Apart from framing his music as political critique, I would like to read Feng's appropriation of digital hardcore as an act of sonic cosmopolitanism. The generic affiliation creates a cosmopolitan link between Beijing and, primarily, London and Berlin – the perceived centers of digital hardcore. To read this appropriation, or translation, as yet another case of localization runs the danger of getting trapped in a local versus global

Figure 1 Still from MTV Feng Jiangzhou, by Xiao Xue.

dichotomy, and conflating this dichotomy with a "West versus Rest" dualism, hence once again reinstating the West as the center. By reading it as an act of translation, I hope to bring to the forefront how cultural globalization involves a betrayal and pollution of culture. In times of resurgent nationalism such cultural contamination may work as an important counterforce. In this chapter I aim to explore the ways in which contemporary Chinese art and popular culture contaminate both cosmopolitan as well as patriotic be/longings.

I will focus on a Hip Hop band from Beijing, Yin Tsang, who struggles with the ideology of "Keeping It Real" and the related demands of localization. The second case, on the work of Xu Bing, based in New York since 1990, presents a self-conscious visual artist who explicitly interrogates and contests the longing for cultural purity, be it Chinese or Western. The third case, the Hong Kong movie *Kung Fu Hustle* by Stephen Chow, presents an eclectic play with cultural identities. These artists present three different ways to negotiate between cosmopolitanism and patriotism; the first is a case of cultural struggle, the second of cultural criticism, whereas the last pokes fun at any possible culturalism. All these artists, like Feng Jiangzhou, inscribe a sense of Chineseness into cosmopolitanism as much as they inscribe a sense of cosmopolitanism into Chineseness. The resulting proliferation of what I would like to call banal cosmopatriot cultural forms represents a polluted, dirty and contaminated form of cultural be/longings that resist cultural essentialisms.

Cultural Pollution

Inspired by Rey Chow's reading of Walter Benjamin's essay "On translation" in her book *Primitive Passions* (1995), in conjunction with Mary Douglas' by now classic book *Purity and Danger,* I conceptualize cultural globalization as a moment of translation in which both the assumed "original" and its alleged "copy" are being polluted. When reading cultural globalization as the flow of cultural forms, genres, formats, and so on, over time and place – flows that pass through a combination of mediascapes, finanscapes, ideoscapes, technoscapes and ethnoscapes (Appadurai), it is possible to think of a moment and place of departure (imagined as the "original") and a moment and place of arrival (imagined as the "copy"). I need to stress that these moments are as imaginary and constructed as they are contested: following Foucault (79), when we would embark upon a "true" genealogy of the "origin" of, for example, Hip Hop, the streets of the Bronx signify just one moment of a much longer and profoundly bifurcated history of Hip Hop. However, it is equally important that in public discourse and in the imagination of a global Hip Hop community, the streets of the Bronx *do* signify the origin of Hip Hop.

This begs the empirical question: what happens when a cultural form travels from that particular imagined locality (the Bronx) and that particular time (the end of the 1970s) to China? In other words, what happens when an assumed Western cultural form is being translated towards China? When employing the notion of translation I wish to include both the assumed "origin" as well as the alleged "copy" in the analysis. Drawing on Walter Benjamin, Rey Chow warns us against the danger of reifying the origin as the real, most truthful source when analyzing cultural translations. Translation not only refers, etymologically, to tradition, it also refers to betrayal (Chow, *Primitive Passions* 182). To insist on interpreting Chinese rock as translation is to insist on the question of betrayal and, in my interpretation, pollution.

This requires, however, further reflection on the relationship between the alleged original and its translation. "It is assumed that the value of translation is derived solely from the 'original,' which is the authenticator of itself and of its subsequent versions" (Chow, *Primitive Passions* 184). Inspired by Benjamin's essay on translation, Chow argues, instead, for an interpretation of translation as "primarily a process of *putting together* (…) a real translation is not only that which translates word by word but also that which translates literally, depthlessly, naively" (185–6).

Consequently, translations may produce meanings that remain invisible or unspeakable in the "original." "Translation is a process in which the 'native' [here: 'Western Hip Hop'] should let the foreign affect, or infect, itself, and vice versa" (*Primitive Passions* 189). The native is infected by the foreign, just like the foreign is infected by the native – thereby polluting the "origin" that has never been pure in itself. A translation consequently transforms and infects, contaminates, as it were – rather than copies – an already and necessarily impure original. In the words of

Benjamin: "a translation touches the original lightly and only at the infinitely small point of the sense, thereupon pursuing its own course according to the laws of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic flux" (Benjamin 81; see also Maravillas and Boellstorff in this volume).

This idea of translation thus involves a betrayal of both the "origin" and the "foreign." In other words, it pollutes neat and tidy categories that structure reality. This leads me to the work of anthropologist Mary Douglas who, in her book *Purity and Danger,* explains how societies are structured around specific notions of dirt and cleanliness. A proliferation of dirt is unsettling as it is disruptive of the moral order of society (Tavener 63–85), or, as Douglas writes, "dirt offends against order" (2). This makes an analysis of the dirt that emerges all the more urgent in the act of sonic translation:

We should now force ourselves to focus on dirt. Defined in this way it appears as a residual category, rejected from our normal schemes of classifications. In trying to focus on it we run against our strongest mental habit. For it seems that whatever we perceive is organized into patterns for which we, the perceivers, are largely responsible.… Uncomfortable facts which refuse to be fitted in, we find ourselves ignoring or distorting so that they do not disturb these established assumptions.… But it is not always an unpleasant experience to confront ambiguity. There is a whole gradient in which laughter, revulsion, and shock belong at different points and intensities. The experience can be stimulating.… Aesthetic pleasure arises from the perceiving of inarticulate forms. (Douglas 45–46)

In using the notion of pollution to grasp the translation of cultural forms towards different cultural contexts, I wish to point to the ambiguities and ambivalences occurring in acts of cultural translation. Whereas the established social orders described by Douglas juxtapose purity with danger, thereby stressing the danger in impurity and pollution, I wish to stress *the danger that lies within purity*. A danger that I, for example, see in the rise of Chinese nationalism over the past decade, a time when, under the guidance of the Chinese Communist Party, "we the people" was pointedly replaced by "we Chinese." The underlying uncritical celebration of a certain pure, unpolluted idea of Chineseness (it is telling that the CCP has launched several campaigns against spiritual pollution from the West) runs the danger of excluding the impure other, for example ethnic or sexual minorities, but also the non-Chinese speaking overseas Chinese (see Lim in this volume).

By using words like impurity, dirt and pollution, I run the danger of getting trapped into their negative connotations. In Appiah's essay titled *The Case for Contamination,* he argues that "living cultures do not, in any case, evolve from purity into contamination; change is more a gradual transformation from one mixture to a new mixture.… [Contamination] is an evocative term. When people speak for an ideal of cultural purity… I find myself drawn to contamination as the name for a counterideal" (online). My choice for similar terms is driven by parallel concerns: a wish to counter pure longings, coupled

to a desire to employ terms that disturb, rather than comfort. I hope they will not operate as the constitutive outside of purity and authenticity, but, instead, as possible ways to rethink culture in a time of globalization. A rethinking that couples the debunking of purity and authenticity with a cautious celebration of the pleasures of translation.

Banal Cosmopatriotism

Having discussed and hopefully explained the noun in this chapter's title, it is time to move on to a brief discussion of my take on the adjective – which also forms the title of this book. As explained in the introduction to this book, cosmopolitanism and patriotism are often more akin than we may expect. According to Billig, everyday life is saturated with a range of expressions of what he calls banal nationalism. These are, to him, the "ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced. It is argued that these habits are not removed from everyday life, as some supporters have supposed. Daily, the nation is indicated, or 'flagged,' in the lives of its citizenry. Nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition" (6). In my view, there seems to be no convincing ground for applying this term to the West alone, as Billig does, as the term is equally applicable in an Asian context. Examples Billig uses are, among others, the unwaved flags that occupy our streets, the rhetoric of politicians, and the newspapers that address their readers as members of a nation, in particular on its sport pages.

We can extend the articulation of the national to other mediated expression as well, such as the daily weather forecast, which can be read as a performance of the boundaries of the nation state (Morley 428). Following Morley, it seems safe to assume that processes of reterritorialization are a response to processes of deterritorialization, and that these have propelled the proliferation of expressions of banal nationalism. However, given the context of what we may call intense globalization, such expressions are, in my view, often profoundly ambiguous or, to stick to the terminology I wish to pursue here, polluted. And this brings me back to the idea of translation: under the current forces of intense globalization, the production of locality, be it in the past, present or future, implicates a moment of translation. Or, to quote Abbas, "the local is *already a translation,* …so that the question of the local cannot be separated from the question of cultural translation itself" (12, italics his).

Beck claims that we are being confronted in our everyday lives with a range of banal cosmopolitan expressions, ranging from (the often too easily used example of) food to dance music. According to him, in banal cosmopolitanism, "everyday nationalism is circumvented and undermined and we experience ourselves integrated into global processes and phenomena" (12). Yet, how tenable is such a juxtaposition of cosmopolitanism and nationalism? Are they indeed mutually exclusive? Does one subvert the other? I wonder. It is my contention that both often do come together in different forms of popular culture and art (Regev). For example, in the Hip Hop of

Hong Kong collective Lazymuthafucka, the genre itself connotes cosmopolitanism, whereas in the song *1127,* they celebrate Bruce Lee as a role model for Hong Kong youth, which is an articulation of patriotism.[1] By celebrating cosmopolitanism we run the danger of ignoring the possible positive aspects of nationalism or patriotism. Rather than aiming at an uncritical celebration of cosmopolitanism, be it in its banal or its elite forms, I hope to highlight the intricate and polluted ways in which patriotism and cosmopolitanism conflate.

Beck also acknowledges the cosmopolitan *within* the national when he writes that "a cosmopolitan social theory and social science ask about the complicated accommodations, alliances and creative contradictions between the nation-state and mobile capital, between the hidden cosmopolitanization of nation-state societies and national identities and institutions, between cosmopolitanism and nationalism" (26). To tease out the ambiguities of both patriotism (that I deliberately confuse here with nationalism) and cosmopolitanism in a "Chinese" context, and to analyze the workings of processes of cultural pollution in a time of intense globalization, I therefore want to zoom in on cultural expressions that, in my view, can be considered both contaminated and cosmopatriotic. Yin Tsang's Hip Hop provides a first case in point.

Yin Tsang: On the art of keeping it unreal

The band members of Yin Tsang are keen to sinify their sound and words. Yet, as I will argue, their attempt to indigenize or localize Hip Hop is profoundly ambivalent and contradictory. In my reading, the Chinese Hip Hop of Yin Tsang renders both the idea of Chineseness as well the genre of Hip Hop highly problematic, contested and above all, polluted.

Yin Tsang consists of four members – all male – and released its first album in 2004 under Scream Records. Their album was released at a moment when Hip Hop finally gained momentum in the mainland; in the same year, another Hip Hop group, Sketch Krime, released its album, as did the Beijing collective Kungfoo. I deliberately use the word *finally,* since Hip Hop has made a relatively late entry into the mainland, in particular when compared to rock music, as it only started to gain popularity after 2000. According to a report in Channel V magazine, "If the youth of the 80s were obsessed with heavy metal, the youth of the 90s with punk, then from end 90s up to the present moment, it is Hip Hop that dominates the aesthetics and even life attitudes of contemporary youth. They wear Hip Hop clothes, they choose Hip Hop records, and they spend every weekend at Hip Hop parties" (Anonymous: 100–1). Indicative of the popularity of Hip Hop over recent years is the use of the sounds in commercials by, for example, McDonalds.

When interpreting the emergence of Hip Hop in China as a moment of cultural translation, we can trace different aspects of pollution of both assumed original and its alleged Chinese copy. Hip Hop has its perceived origin in the Bronx of New York, an

origin that is moreover quintessentially ethnic. In China's Hip Hop culture, foreigners play a conspicuous role. Only one out of Yin Tsang's four members is Chinese: MC Webber is a Beijing resident, two members are white Americans, one is an overseas Chinese from Canada.[2] However, all of the Yin Tsang band members seem eager to perform a Chinese identity by using a Chinese name and by rapping in Chinese. The lyrics of Yin Tsang clearly focus on everyday life in Beijing. The Chinese lyrics of Yin Tsang obscure whether this concerns a "foreign" view or "inside" view. The drive to localization is clear in several songs of Yin Tsang; that carry titles such as "Welcome to Beijing," "Beijing Bad Boy," "S.A.R.S." and "Yellow Road." In their song "S.A.R.S.," Yin Tsang reflects upon the days that the virus controlled Beijing, as they rap:

Frequently wash you hands. Wear a mask, stay away from me, wear gloves, stay physically fit, don't use your hands to touch your face, I have come to invade, call me SARS, I was born in Guangzhou, in that climate I developed a vicious demeanor, who would have guessed, that it would go this far, little old me could make everyone so scared.

The reflection upon everyday life in Beijing localizes the sound of Hip Hop, along with the language of the lyrics. There are further possible signs of localization, like the absence of the ethnic articulation. In China it does not make much sense for Han Chinese to rap about ethnic discrimination (it is remarkable that, until now, the ethnic pull of the rock culture as discussed in Baranovitch does not exist for Hip Hop), nor about the problems of drug use. Gangstarap – with its references to violence in urban ghettos – is strikingly absent in Chinese Hip Hop culture, just as the sexism and materialism of Western Hip Hop is far less conspicuous. Consequently, the choice of topics in Chinese Hip Hop is more mundane, linked more closely to the banalities of everyday life, rather than to street life in the ghettos.

The absence of the ethnic articulation, in particular, could endanger the requested authenticity of Chinese Hip Hop. Those active in the Hip Hop scene often blame the culture for its inauthenticity. Hip Hop is more fashion than anything else in China, they claim. Urban magazines present the latest images in fashion, the new bands from the United States along with images of graffiti in Guangzhou. Compared to Japan and South Korea, China's Hip Hop culture is still considered to be minimal, but its size is increasing rapidly. A large part of the culture represents a fashion statement more than a "real" Hip Hop identity. In the words of editor Himm Wong from *Urban Magazine*: "It's hard to say now, because most Chinese youth are just seeking the superficial kind of culture, and real people, those who study the spirit of Hip Hop, are quite few." The underlying ideology expressed here is crucial in global Hip Hop culture: the insistence to be and remain real, despite and because your authenticity risks being compromised by the forces of, for example, money. When I asked DJ Webber from Yin Tsang how he related to the ideology of "Keeping It Real," he replied:

…. it's related to technique and art. You have to combine the kind of techniques others can't master with the kind of art others don't understand. Then you will get

something new and a sense of – how should I put it? – just keep on doing it, like me, I would create 100 songs and then choose the very best one out of the 100. What is real? What is fake? Basically it's very individual….if you want to keep it real, it's very difficult. Keep on trying, just keep on trying…. (Personal conversation, June 21, 2004)

In its marketing of Yin Tsang, record company Scream refers to the ideology of "Keeping it Real" when they write on their website (www.scream-records.net/):

Fronted by Chinese Hip Hop national champion MC Webber, the group are [sic] insistent on staying loyal to the roots of the genre in the face of what group member Josh Hefferman called, "the McDonaldization of Hip Hop." (…) Looking ahead, the group hopes to further the education of Chinese towards "true" Hip Hop.

It is quite ironic, to use an understatement, that an American rapper claims to teach the Chinese an allegedly American cultural form ("true" Hip Hop) in order to resist McDonaldization. And this irony points to the pollution taking place here on several levels. First, the composition of bands like Yin Tsang, with the strong presence of "foreigners," pollutes any attempt to "truly" localize Hip Hop. The US members may signify a "pure" Hip Hop culture, as they come from the imagined homeland of Hip Hop, but, at the same time, they are sabotaging any attempt to make "real" *Chinese* Hip Hop. Articulations of what Forman terms, in the context of East Coast versus West Coast rap, *the extreme local,* such as references to everyday life in Beijing, are polluted by the inclusion of the non-local in the making and performance of Chinese Hip Hop. In the case of Chinese Hip Hop, the American band members may well be read as signifiers of *the extreme global*. Hip Hop can be considered a deeply cosmopolitan cultural text, its cosmopolitanism both stimulating *and* resisting the localizing urge. This makes a pure signification simply impossible: Hip Hop is bound to be read as a modern, "Western" lifestyle, no matter how eagerly its styles are being localized or indigenized.

Parallel to a pollution of Chineseness, we can also trace an equally important pollution of Hip Hop ideology. The appropriation of Hip Hop by the affluent urban middle class of China is equally indicative of the polluted twist Chinese give to Hip Hop ideology – it challenges the assumed link between Hip Hop and lower class, just like the link between ethnicity and Hip Hop is disrupted in a Chinese context. Condry (169) observes the same for Japanese Hip Hop, which has never been part of a street culture, but, instead, was appropriated by hip middle class youngsters in search for yet another trend. The decoupling of Hip Hop from class and ethnicity; the absence of the ghetto or the "hood;" as well as the erasure of sexism and ostentatious performances of materialism (for a critique on these aspects of Hip Hop, see Gilroy); proves that Hip Hop can be very different from what it is today depending on the dominant imagination.

I am risking stereotyping Hip Hop, since the dominant imagination, which is, in turn, complicated by manifold manifestations much more diverse and often beyond the stereotypical gold chains and near-naked women we know from 50 Cents, just like Eminem, among others, has also contributed to the decoupling of Hip Hop from

ethnicity. Yet, the intensity with which Chinese Hip Hop reifies and yet pollutes dominant Hip Hop stereotypes does challenge Hip Hop ideology and its insistence on Keeping It Real. The proliferation of dirt in Chinese Hip Hop caused by the decouplings discussed, can be read as an art of Keeping It Unreal – thereby challenging the hegemonic discourse on Keeping It Real. Chinese Hip Hoppers are like banal cosmopatriots, yet their appropriations of the cosmopolitan sounds and images of Hip Hop are saturated with ambivalence and ambiguity – polluting both the assumed origin and the alleged copy of Hip Hop.

Xu Bing: Strategic Unmeaning

Born in 1955 into an intellectual Beijing family – his father was a history professor at Beijing University, his mother worked in the department of library sciences – Xu Bing's youth was spent in a very turbulent China. He underwent Mao's simplification of the Chinese language – a simplification that was deemed necessary to ensure a higher literacy rate. However, for Xu Bing, who had just learned the classic Chinese characters, this change proved profoundly confusing. He recalls:

My generation, however, was irreparably affected by the campaign to simplify characters. This remolding of my earliest memories – the promulgation of new character after new character, the abandonment of old characters that I had already mastered, the transformation of new characters and their eventual demise, the revival of old characters – shadowed my earliest education and left me confused about the fundamental conceptions of culture. (in Erickson 14)

Particularly in a Chinese context, where its language is often claimed to embody the essence of what constitutes Chinese culture, Mao's language policy must have left indelible marks on a whole generation. It explains the pivotal role language plays in the works of Xu Bing. After having spent the years between 1974 and 1977 in the countryside for the "re-education" program in Mao's Cultural Revolution, Xu Bing embarked upon his art studies at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, where he earned his master's degree in 1987. Xu Bing stayed and became a teacher at the Academy, where he inspired many students who would become part of the Chinese avant-garde in the 1990s. Xu Bing's works in the 1980s resonated with the "culture fever" that swept across the country, during which intellectuals and artists were involved in a critical debate on Chinese culture and displayed an eagerness to link up with the rest of the world (Li 311–43; Zhang 93–113). The 1989 demonstrations and their subsequent bloody suppression pushed the critical spirit back into its bottle to be replaced by a spirit of economic progress, rather than political and cultural change. At this point, Xu Bing's works, complicated by his involvement with the student movement, became increasingly problematic and therefore marginalized in China. In 1990, Xu Bing decided to accept an invitation by the University of Wisconsin-Madison and immigrated to the United States. He is currently based in New York.

The confusion Xu Bing writes about when reflecting on the introduction of simplified characters may well be read as a moment of cultural pollution, and the literacy campaign of Mao itself a moment of translation: a moment during which the old character system – embodying the old, Confucian and traditional China, is translated towards the new, revolutionary and communist China with its simplified characters. The erasure of tradition and the inscription of the revolutionary illustrate the constructedness and malleability of both language and culture. Xu Bing has pushed this theme further by profoundly polluting language, as becomes clear when we look at three of his works: *Book from the Sky (1989), A Case Study of Transference* (1994) and *Square Word Calligraphy* (1999). In these works, Xu Bing has pushed Mao's linguistic project to the extreme, stripping off the meaning attached to (Chinese) characters and (English) words, thereby producing a linguistic field of unmeaning, to apply a term introduced by Van Crevel (Crevel, "Who Needs Form?").

For his *Book from the Sky* (see figure 2), Xu Bing has developed his own Chinese characters. Walls, the floor and curtains that are hanging from the ceiling, all are printed with

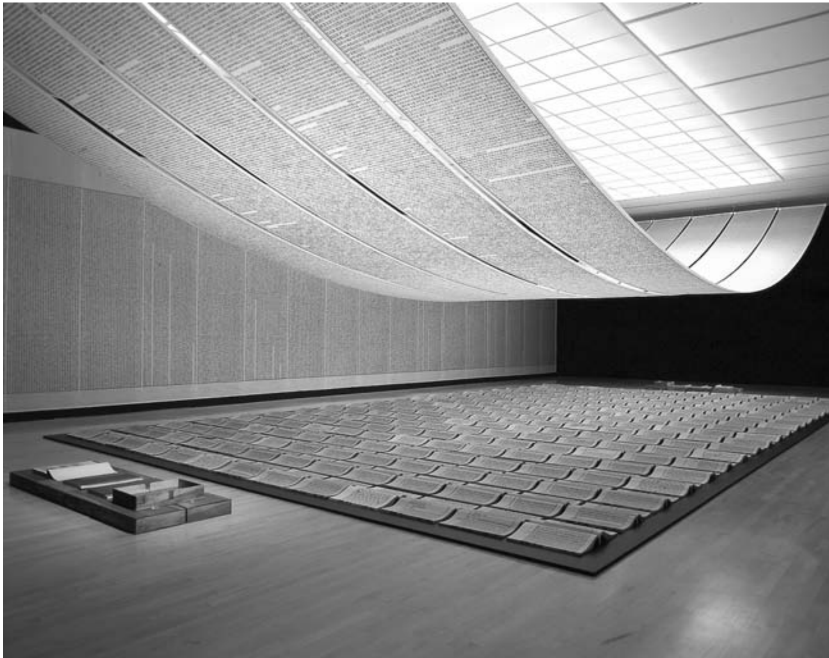

Figure 2 "Book from the Sky" (1997–1991), hand printed books, ceiling and wall scrolls from false letter blocks, installation view at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada, 1998. Copyright by Xu Bing.

what at first sight appears to be traditional Chinese calligraphy. For most Western viewers it will be just that: they enter a dreamlike room saturated with Chineseness, characters signifying China's assumed long history. Chinese viewers may, at first, feel the same, until they carefully examine the characters and discover that they are all invented, these are "fake" characters, devoid of meaning. Whereas Mao simplified Chinese characters in his desire to transform Chinese culture into a new communist utopia, Xu Bing simply erases all meaning inscribed into Chinese characters, what is left are signs that operate as floating signifiers. Xu Bing translates the real into the unreal, thereby betraying and polluting the Chineseness inscribed into the alleged original. The work can be read as a strategic performance of what Van Crevel describes as unmeaning – privileging form over content. Van Crevel (140–41) employs the notion of unmeaning for his analysis of Chinese poetry, and argues that rhythm is a crucial and often underestimated component of poetry – a rhythm that has direct affective access to the body. In Xu Bing's case, I will argue that, rather than sound, the visual aspect – devoid of fixed meaning – propels the direct affective response. The moment the spectator realizes that the visual does not match any existing linguistic system, the initial affective response will be followed by a moment of cognitive puzzlement.

Despite the neat and tidy presentation of the *Book from the Sky* (Xu Bing had made woodcuts so as to be able to reprint his characters as precisely as possible) the result is anything but neat and tidy. What emerge are profoundly polluted Chinese characters that interrogate any desire for meaning. More so, they interrogate the contention that calligraphy is an art form which "traditionally demands a reading knowledge of at least seven different Chinese scripts, a seasoned acquaintance with historically revered authors, and knowledge of famous Chinese calligraphers and their aesthetic accomplishments" (Chattopadhyay 6). The dirt that emerges challenges such essentializing longings; lays bare the arbitrariness of the alleged tradition of calligraphy; and subverts the danger that lies within purity. The piece, instead, confronts the audience with the aesthetic pleasure of a calligraphy of unmeaning.

No wonder that the work received harsh criticisms in China in the early 1990s. Yang Chengyin, a Central Academy professor remarked that "If I am asked to evaluate the *Book from the Sky,* I can only say that it gathers together the formalistic, abstract, subjective, irrational, anti-art, anti-traditional … qualities of the Chinese New Wave of Fine Arts, and pushes the New Wave to a ridiculous impasse" (in Erickson 41). Xu Bing's friend and art critic Feng Boyi quoted a fellow artist accusing Xu Bing of coming "under the spell of foreign thoughts and [he] abandoned the principle of 'art for the people' so as to earn the praise of many people both in his country and abroad. No one can understand his *Book from the Sky* and it has no meaning" (in Erickson 41). Ironically, it is precisely the latter critique that, I believe, Xu Bing wished to provoke. As Erickson (51) explains, "A clear link seemed to exist between his meaningless characters and the meaningless texts that had swamped the Cultural Revolution landscape. There was

a link, too, with more recent meaningless official publications." Yet, although unmeaning may be close to meaningless, it is not quite the same: a deconstruction of meaning is not meaningless. The linguistic space of unmeaning that unfolds in Xu Bing's works represents a third space, "which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (Bhabha 55).

In his later works, Xu Bing further pursues his creative endeavor to disrupt and pollute cultural purity. Whereas in *Book from the Sky* the pollution created by Xu Bing's act of translation involves only Chinese characters, in his provocative performance piece *A Case Study of Transference,* Xu Bing directly links "the West" (signified by fake English vocabulary) to "the East" (signified by the fake Chinese characters we already know from his earlier work) (see figure 3). What we see in this piece are two pigs, though another rendition involves a pig and a model of a human being. Fake English words cover the male pig, whereas the female pig's skin is printed with fake Chinese characters. The choice of animal renders the work quite literally more polluted, more dirty – as if Xu Bing wishes to emphasize the pollution that already takes place when he translates real English and real Chinese into unreal English and unreal Chinese. During the performance, the audience watches the pigs mating, a spectacle that proved to be both embarrassing and disturbing. This embarrassment added an extra layer to the piece, signifying the anxiety of human beings over their own animal nature and sexuality (Erickson 62). The implied critique on globalization – the West fucks the East in this work – is, to me, not the most intriguing aspect of the work. Rather than the distribution of sexual roles, it is the pollution caused by the act of translation – resulting in linguistic unmeaning – in conjunction with the choice of animals and the uncomfortable viewing experience that gives an edge to the piece. The performance disrupts cultural essentialisms and invites the audience to question not only what constitutes cultural difference, but subsequently also the assumed boundary between culture and nature.

In the final work that I would like to discuss, *New English Calligraphy,* Xu Bing continues to confront his audience with the arbitrariness of ideological processes of signification. In this work, he does not invent a fake language; instead, he transforms English words into what at first sight looks like Chinese calligraphy (see figure 4). In doing so, he again questions alleged cultural differences, by showing how representation techniques that, in popular discourse, are considered quintessentially Chinese, can also be translated towards a Western context, thereby polluting both the assumed origin (apparently neither calligraphy nor the aesthetics of Chinese characters are unique) as well as the copy (rendering alternative representations of the Roman alphabet possible). The basic idea of his new English calligraphy is to turn the gallery into a classroom. Xu Bing explains: "The audience can try to learn these words by following

Figure 3 “A Case Study of Transference” (1994), performance with pigs printed with false text and books, Han Mo Art Center, Beijing, China. Copyright by Xu Bing.

Figure 4 “Square Word Calligraphy: Nothing Gold Can Stay” (2002), ink on paper. Copyright by Xu Bing.

the ‘Elementary New English Calligraphy Instruction Video’. When people try to recognize and write these words, they begin a process of having to forcefully and constantly readjust their ingrained thinking. During this process of readjustment, and transformation, their former concepts are powerfully replaced and attacked” (in Lin 291).

In his oeuvre, Xu Bing continues to interrogate prevailing notions and imaginations of cultural essence and cultural difference, his works go against the grains of, or betray, any longing for cultural purity. Instead, Xu Bing confronts us with the inherent ambiguities and ambivalences of culture and cultural difference. As Xiaoping Lin observes, Xu Bing “critiques Eastern and Western cultures not as ‘universal values’ but as absurd illusions” (Lin 290). His work confronts us with the arbitrary connection between culture and meaning, and forces us to interrogate the ideological implications, since these absurd illusions do produce even more absurd but real nationalisms. His aesthetic pollutions of cultural essences are visual spectacles that quite deliberately defamiliarize the familiar.

Stephen Chow: Slapstick Nostalgia

When we move from New York to Hong Kong, we encounter quite a different cultural setting, in which the colonial processes of cultural pollution has long been playing a pivotal role. As Rey Chow observes, “were we indeed to follow the ‘quest’ and ‘root’ motifs, no ‘Chinese’ city would have greater reason for existentialist angst than Hong Kong. (…) the history of modern Hong Kong could always be written as some form of quest for a ‘Chinese’ identity that was preempted and made impossible from the beginning, and most significantly by its inerasable colonial ‘taint’” (*Ethics after Idealism* 163). The quest for identity in Hong Kong is bound to remain unsuccessful, even in the decade before the 1997 hand-over, when the city was desperately searching for an identity while being

on the verge of disappearance (Abbas). Yet, as the work of Stephen Chow shows, the impossibility of identity is not quite the same as the absence of identity.

One of the first, if not the first, Hong Kong icons that reached global fame is Kung Fu star Bruce Lee. Almost three decades after this, Hong Kong stars Jackie Chan and Stephen Chow are in many ways the inversion of Bruce Lee: they are clumsy, funny and feminine, and, as one could argue, cater to certain orientalist stereotypes of Asian masculinity.[3] What they do share with Bruce Lee, however, is that they are very much signifiers of Hongkong-ness (rather or more than Chineseness), thereby defeating a reading that portrays them as sole signifiers of Western orientalism. Yet, as my analysis of Stephen Chow's *Kung Fu Hustle* will show, the fervent production of the local in the movie (Srinivas; see also Appadurai; as explained earlier, I view the local itself already as a product of cultural translation) comes with strong articulations of the cosmopolitan; hence my labeling of the movie as a form of banal cosmopatriotism.

Kung Fu Hustle is Chow's second international success, following on his 2001 hit *Shaolin Soccer*. In Hong Kong, Chow has gained a reputation over the past decades and is generally considered one of the most prominent local cultural icons. As Srinivas (289–95) argues, part of his appeal comes from his Hong Kong-ness, exemplified by his oeuvre, often inaccessible to outsiders, and his refusal to move away from Hong Kong. Chow himself claims that his latest blockbuster is a tribute to the Hong Kong Kung Fu films he watched extensively when he was a poor kid living in one of the public housing estates of Hong Kong. The discourse of his own life story exemplifies what can be termed the Hong Kong dream: coming from a poor background, he has turned himself by perseverance and hard work into a star. His movies often attest to his background by foregrounding the heroicness of the poor people and portraying the rich as inherently corrupted.

Let me first quote the story of the movie from its website (http://www.kungfuhustle.co.uk/):

Set amid the chaos of pre-revolutionary China, small time chief, Sing, aspires to be one of the sophisticated and ruthless Axe Gang whose underworld activities overshadow the city. Stumbling across a crowded apartment complex aptly known as "Pig Sty Alley," Sing attempts to extort money from one of the ordinary locals, but the neighbours are not what they appear. Sing's comical attempts at intimidation inadvertently attract the Axe Gang into a fray, setting off a chain of events that brings the two disparate worlds face-to-face. As the inhabitants of the Pig Sty fight for their lives, the ensuing clash of Kung Fu titans unearths some legendary martial art masters. Sing, despite his futile attempts, lacks the soul of a killer, and must face his own mortality in order to discover the true nature of the Kung Fu master.

What strikes me in this summary is the conspicuous absence of Hong Kong, the place is simply referred to as a city in pre-revolutionary China. This erasure is indicative of the earlier mentioned preempted, impossible identity of Hong Kong. The locality in *Kung Fu*

Hustle is particularly relevant: the community of poor people lives in a compound called *Zhu long cheng zai* (Pig Sty Alley), a sly reference to the Kowloon walled city of Hong Kong, *Jiu long cheng zai,* which was a notorious no-man's land, caught between a political and legal dispute between the mainland Chinese and the British administration in pre-hand-over Hong Kong. It is a place generally remembered as the most chaotic, anarchistic and romantic place in the history of Hong Kong. This piece of no-man's land is also a perfect symbol of Hong Kong's being perpetually in-between Britishness and Chineseness – a disposition that, after the hand-over, has slipped towards being in-between a non-defined Western-ness and Chineseness. The pollution of Hong Kong identity finds another visual expression in the clothing styles of the two gangs: the Crocodile Gang is made up of Mandarin-speaking, "traditional" Chinese costumed Northerners, and is being kicked out by the Cantonese-speaking Axe Gang, consisting of Southerners that wear formal Western suits, at times even with formal Western hats.

Rey Chow refers to this disposition as follows: "What is unique to Hong Kong, however, is precisely an in-betweenness and an awareness of impure origins, or origins as impure" (*Ethics after Idealism* 157). Hong Kong can thus be considered the material embodiment of an act of post-colonial translation; it signifies the polluted, the impure and the culturally ambivalent. *Kung Fu Hustle* is saturated with references to that impure longing that we may coin as Hong Kongness. Let me single out three of them. First, the three hidden Kong Fu masters that live in the compound work as a coolie, a tailor and a congee seller – professions that all carry a sense of Hong Kongness. Second, the evocation of old Hong Kong comes back in many images, like the manual beating of a cotton blanket, the water ration due to severe draughts (a reference to Hong Kong in the 1960s), old-fashioned shops that no longer exist, old-fashioned posters, comic strips in a barber's stall – they all convey a strong nostalgic longing for that impure sense of Hong Kongness. Third, in a flashback the younger Sing is being cheated to buy a manual on "Palm Kung Fu," a reference to a classic Kung Fu film that almost every kid in Hong Kong has watched.

The latter example is just one out of many: *Kung Fu Hustle* may well be termed an intertextual minefield. The references to both Hong Kong's cinematic past as well as to Western Hollywood cinema abound. The references directly and intimately draw the viewer into the text. As Srinivas argues: in Kungfu Hustle there is a "production of a particular intimate star-spectator relationship that furthers the sense of ownership of these films" (294). To name but a few references to Hollywood cinema: many fight scenes are spectacularly *Matrix*-like, and the Axe Gang members, all clad in black suits, are reminiscent of the multiple Mr Smiths in *The Matrix*. On the other hand, *Kung Fu Hustle's* action choreographer Yuen Wo Ping was also responsible for the choreography of *The Matrix* (as well as Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* and Tarrantino's *Kill Bill I* and *II*), which both explains and complicates the intertextiality: a Hong Kong production incorporates references to Hollywood, and these references refer back to

Hong Kong Kung Fu aesthetics. *Kung Fu Hustle* is like an intertextual hall of mirrors, where the search for origins has become utterly futile, where one translation follows the other, propelling an eruption of dirt that renounces any longing for cultural essence. In one of the opening scenes, the Axe Gang starts dancing as if they were playing in a musical, intercepted by black and white images characteristic of detective films. In another scene, Sing's lips, bitten by a snake, blow up to inhuman proportions, while later he jumps high into the sky; both are references to *The Hulk* (and in particular its cinematic adaptation by Ang Lee). When the Kung Fu masters are attacked by *guzheng* musicians (a Chinese string instrument), monsters that we know from *The Mummy* emerge from the instrument.

Amidst this intertextual minefield, a field that seduces the audience into a performance of one's cultural capital and affluence, a strong undercurrent of nostalgia evokes images of a Hong Kong that has never been and will never be. Drawing on Rey Chow, Helen Hok-sze Leung argues that "nostalgia is not simply a yearning for the past as though it were a definite, knowable object. Rather, nostalgia involves 'a sensitivity to the movements of temporality.' Understood in these terms, a nostalgic subject is someone who sits on the fence of time" (430). The nostalgic imagery in *Kung Fu Hustle* points at the passing of time, at the colonization and re-colonization of Hong Kong, at a sense of loss of that which has never been there in the first place. What remains are the floating signifiers of Hong Kongness like Bruce Lee. In the apotheosis of the movie, Sing (in a reference to, once again, *The Matrix*) shoots up to the sky to prepare for his final battle with the enemy "The Beast." He returns to the beast with the unbeatable Palm Style Kungfu. His white shirt breaks open, posing only with dark Chinese pants, half-naked, typical of Bruce Lee's image. Here it seems like Bruce Lee is brought back to life – gone are the earlier mentioned orientalist debunkings of Chinese masculinity, what we see is an attempt to recuperate a sense of Hong Kongness. The Beast realizes that he is bound to lose the battle. When Sing asks him if he would like to learn the Palm Style, the beast acknowledges his defeat. Sing's generosity refers to the Confucian ideal that the truly virtuous has no enemies.

And so Bruce Lee meets Confucius at the end of the movie. It is a meeting that evokes a nostalgic longing for Hong Kongness, a longing bound to remain unfulfilled. An impossible, preempted longing, fraught with dirt and pollution, since Hong Kong itself is the product of cultural translation. The words in the previous two sentences are, indeed, rather theatrical. I write of unfulfilled longings, impossible longings, preempted longings, as well as of dirt and pollution, of nostalgia. What has remained untouched until now, is the humor that runs through all the melancholy that the other words may have evoked. The viewer is captured by carnavalesque laughter, one that celebrates rather than mourns the impossibility of the Hong Kong identity, one that pokes fun at all possible essentialisms that are currently *so en vogue* in Chinese culture. To further appropriate Bakhtin, I see *Kung Fu Hustle* opening up the heteroglossia of everyday

life, challenging the authoritative discourses of both Chineseness and postcolonialism by joyfully celebrating that strange anomaly Hong Kong, that city with 5000 minus 4850 years of history, that city that was born again in 1997, that city that will remain forever adrift.

Conclusion

My journey, from the art of Keeping It Unreal of Yin Tsang; via the strategic unmeaning in the art works of Xu Bing; to the slapstick nostalgia of *Kung Fu Hustle*; has, I hope, been illustrative for the spatial and cultural ambivalences inherent in contemporary art and popular culture. Although my focus has been on "Chinese" art and popular culture, conceptually I hope that my juggling with terms like translation, pollution and betrayal, in conjunction with banal cosmopatriotism, will prove useful in other cultural contexts as well. Whereas Beck places banal cosmopolitanism *vis-à-vis* banal nationalism – and clearly favors the first – I have argued that, often, they come together. To understand this strange bastard cosmopatriotism, I have used the idea of translation, an idea that inspires me, following Benjamin and Chow, to think of cultural forms in terms of pollution and betrayal. In a time when nationalisms of all kinds reign high – among which, a Chinese nationalism that legitimizes the Communist Party – and when popular discourse is drenched with dramatized accounts of assumed clashes of civilizations, it becomes a pressing matter to point at the dangers that lie within purity. And, subsequently, to cautiously explore the possibilities of impurity, and I deliberately write cautiously here, so as to remain alert and aware of the ambivalences and contradictions that also lie within polluted cultural forms.

My analysis of Hip Hop group Yin Tsang shows that even when one aspires to sinification, one is joyfully haunted by cultural pollution. An American rapping in Chinese so as to help Beijing musicians resist McDonaldization – this mission alone hints at betrayal. I have shown how the decoupling of Hip Hop from class and ethnicity challenges dominant Hip Hop ideology, just like the involvement of foreigners, the multilingual lyrics and the cosmopolitanism intrinsic to Hip Hop culture all challenge the Chineseness of Chinese Hip Hop. Xu Bing prefers to disrupt rather than construct Chineseness in his work. He deliberately and forcefully debunks any essentialist longing. In his oeuvre, he literally screws around with language and its alleged intricate link to cultural essences. In *Kung Fu Hustle,* filmmaker Stephen Chow embarks upon a phantasmagoric cinematic play ridden with intertextual references over time and space. A Hong Kong street gang starts dancing as if they were in *Singin' in the Rain,* while fight scenes bring to mind *The Matrix,* the Hollywood blockbuster that, itself, is heavily informed by alleged "Hong Kong Kung Fu aesthetics." At the same time, the *mis-en-scene,* the plot, as well as the characters, all bring back nostalgic memories of a pre-hand-over Hong Kong. The movie portrays anything *but* a clash of civilizations. In an intertextual carnavalesque spectacle, *Kung Fu Hustle* shows how the nostalgic

coupling of cosmopolitanism to patriotism may not only pollute and betray any longing for cultural essences; it may also open up avenues to rethink (and poke fun at) Chineseness and its alleged Others. Such a rethinking would necessarily lead to issues of memory and nostalgia, as well as to mediations on longing and belonging. Despite the inherent ambivalences, in our current times of pure longings, it becomes necessary to insist on reading culture as an act of translation and to acknowledge, if not celebrate, the importance of dirt and cultural impurity.

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Notes

1. The chorus of the songs runs: “We had Bruce Lee teach us we are not the disease of Asia. Though having yellow skin, we can still be ourselves. Do not follow, copy, and be like the other. Do not look down upon ourselves…. The spirit of Bruce Lee will never die and the Chinese will never forget that” (from www.wikipedia.org).

2. Sketch Krime, a MC who moved from Yunnan to Beijing, works with four 4 MCs from France, Britain, Japan and the United States. The mixture of nationalities is negotiated in different ways: the guest MCs on Sketch Krime’s CD rap in English, French (*Beijing, mon territoire!*) and Japanese.

3. Along the same line, the fame of American Idols star Wiliam Hung deserves further analysis. His image as a nerdish, bookish (he is a student of civil engineering at UC Berkeley) and anything but sexy Chinese singer, one who sings notoriously false, is indicative of a highly problematic Western gaze on Chinese masculinity – one hinting at the lack thereof. Interestingly, Hung strikes me as if he *deliberately* acts upon prevailing images that depict Asian men as such, also making it possible to read his performance as indicative of the productive empowering force of stereotypes, as discussed by Rey Chow (*The Protestant Ethnic and the Spirit of Capitalism*). Also see his website: www.williamhung.net.

BODY	

Thamyris/Intersecting No. 16 (2007) 157–176

Skinheads of Korea, Tigers of the East

Stephen Epstein and
Jon Dunbar

ABSTRACT

This photo-essay presents a journey into the musical underground of Seoul. It explores the intersections of patriotism, globalization, and cosmopolitanism in the Korean punk scene. Skinheads oscillate between reclusive nationalism and a more encompassing global outlook. Rather than resolving the ideological contradiction implied, in their music, lyrics as well as their provocative poses they refuse to be contained by a singular ideology. Instead, their self-respect is built on being both part of a global history of a youth subculture as well as on being Korean.

Introduction

We begin with an unreservedly evaluative comment: RUX is a great band. Tight, melodic, passionate and energetic, their live shows rarely fail to ignite audiences. Led by the charismatic Won Jong-hee (Wôn Chông-hûi), RUX have been stalwarts of the Korean punk scene almost since its inception; as a slogan declares on the entry page to their website (http://skunklabel.com/rux/), they have been "since 1996, Proud and Loud Korean Punks." How, then, to reconcile this declaration of ethnic pride, set beside an image of the *t'aegûkki* (the South Korean flag), with the text that follows, which reads "fuck korea, fuck anarchy, fuck comunism [sic], fuck liberty, fuck all authority and fuck you all"? For RUX, no cognitive dissonance seems to inhere in combining disdain, however ironized, for all -isms (including patriotism), with a celebration of Korean identity.

In accounts of the Korean punk scene elsewhere, Epstein (2000, 2001, 2006) has examined how nationalism intertwines with the oppositional stance offered by punk, considering, e.g., the use of the title "Our Nation" for the first set of punk compilations

Figure 1

to emerge from Korea's pioneering indie label Drug, and the term "Chosôn Punk," which draws on a traditional name for Korea, to describe the music of their bands. For a fuller analysis of the potentially oxymoronic *mélange* of anti-authoritarianism and nationalism in Korean punk, we direct readers there. In the following photo essay that explores the intersections of patriotism, globalization, and cosmopolitanism in the Korean punk scene, we focus on local skinheads, for they embody a particularly dynamic set of contradictions and tensions.

For out-and-out patriotic – even jingoistic – pride within the Korean punk scene, one hardly need look farther than hardcore skinhead band *Samch'ông Kyoyukdae* (Samch'ông Education Camp), who often go simply by the English name Samchung. Their song "Fight Till Death," offers an aggressively nationalistic call to action:

Wake up the time has come
It's time to stand up
Open your eyes, remember the past
Don't forget what they did to us
We will not hide our anger no more
Let's show them what we can do
Burn their flag, kill those bitches
Send them back to their land full of shit

References to historical grievance, territorial boundaries, patriotic symbols and, above all, a collective, if ambiguous, "them" (The United States? Japan?) and "us," point up the nationalist subject matter. The song yokes together the fury of punk, an international form that has only recently entered Korea, with far more deeply rooted sentiments.

Members of *Samchung* espouse right-wing politics and their support for the 2004 attempt by conservatives from the Grand National Party and members of the Millennium Democratic Party to impeach President Roh Moo Hyun, whose progressive politics had found favor with the younger generation, alienated and angered other punks.

Samch'ông Kyoyukdae take their name from a notorious 1980s re-education camp (read prison) for intellectuals, communists, the poor and underachievers, and gangsters. Presumably the band members, who have sold T-shirts with a design mimicking official varsity wear, casting themselves and their fans as prisoners, intend the name ironically as an anti-establishment statement, and their compatriots regularly interpret it thus. Nonetheless, Boram, the band's bass player, has said that he idolizes right-wing icons Ronald Reagan and Charlton Heston, and that, given North Korea's politics, South Korea should abolish left-wing parties and books.

Hardcore punk readily accommodates expressions of anger, but its political direction is scarcely predetermined.

Korean assertiveness become even clearer in the lyrics of popular skinhead band, *Hyôlmaeng* (Blood Pledge), whose song *Tongbangûi horangi* (Tigers of the East) unambiguously declares a passionate nationalism:

The bitter invasions suffered for centuries
The freedom that has been suppressed for centuries
We won't endure it anymore
We won't just hide it anymore

Figure 2

Don't forget!
The claws of the starving tiger
Don't forget!
The teeth of the starving tiger

The history distorted for centuries
The dignity trampled for centuries
We won't endure it anymore
We won't just hide it anymore

Do you see it?
The majestic splendor of the tiger

Figure 3

Do you hear it?
The resounding roar of the tiger
Do you feel it?
The true spirit of the tiger
Carve it in your memory
We are the tigers of the East

Hyôlmaeng here call on the common representation of the Korean peninsula's shape as a tiger (clearly preferring the version that depicts Korea as a leaping tiger with its claws dug into the Asian mainland), as they combine resentment over past injustice with pride in Korea's growing geopolitical might.

The reference to the distortion of history suggests the ongoing controversy over Japanese textbooks and implies that at least one intended adversarial target of the song is Japan. And yet, the apparent hostility here soon runs up against a set of cosmopolitan contradictions. Yee Jonghyuk [Yi Chong-hyôk] of *Hyôlmaeng* and his bandmates, as seen in their lyrics, are among the most nationalistic of local skinheads, but treat foreign skinheads courteously.

Moreover, Yee's fluency in Japanese and close connections to Japanese skinhead brethren in the face of popular anti-Japanese sentiment (including perhaps his own?) reflect a desire to form global alliances on the basis of skinhead identity – albeit an identity that itself draws at times on a xenophobic nationalism. Yee himself practices a philosophy akin to that of Skinhead Samurai Spirit (SSS), Japan's oldest skinhead group, whose reputation for nationalism has evolved into a symbol for skinhead pride.[1]

Despite the history of antagonism between Korea and Japan, punks and skinheads from the two countries have developed alliances and friendships, traveling back and forth and scheduling joint festivals. Among all punk subgenres, the closest international cooperation exists, in fact, with skinheads overseas. A June 2004 Korea/Japan Oi! festival held in Seoul featured seven Japanese skinhead bands, and in July participating Korean groups paid a visit in return to Japan, where punk has a longer history than in Korea and foreign bands play more frequently. Royal Shamrock, for example, pictured in figure 6,

Figure 4

have been heavily influenced by Boston's beloved Celtic punk band the Dropkick Murphys, and are seen here engaged in a show of solidarity with their Korean counterparts.

Perhaps the most striking example of the extent to which punks form allegiances based on subcultural, rather than national, identities, however, can be seen in a performance by No Brain, one of Korea's most enduring punk groups, at the 2001 Fuji Rock Festival in Japan: in an action that embroiled them in controversy, the band burned the Japanese imperial flag on stage during a raucous version of the Korean national anthem. Nonetheless, their largely local audience applauded the action, regarding it as an internationally punk anti-imperialist, rather than a nationalist Korean and specifically anti-Japanese, gesture.[2]

Overall, as the above examples suggest, attitudes among Korean skinheads oscillate between reclusive nationalism and a more encompassing global outlook. Examples can be multiplied: one skinhead, for example, says that although he dislikes foreigners and their influence in Korea, he makes an exception for foreign skinheads; another rants about getting all foreigners out of the country to a foreigner he treats kindly. These xenophobic assertions naturally call to mind the most notorious aspect of skinhead culture as perceived in the public eye at an international level: associations with racism. Many Westerners assume, on the basis of such sensationalist films as *American History X* and *Romper Stomper,* that all skinheads are white supremacists. Nonetheless, skinhead identity is highly contested worldwide, and competing versions of skinhead history and

Figure 5

Figure 6

the meaning of being a skinhead are handed down within its community. If Korean skinheads exist, the subculture would seem *ipso facto* to have a wider appeal or, at the very least, the capacity to be reinterpreted and transformed in different contexts.

How, then, do the racist connotations of skinheads play themselves out on the Korean peninsula, where they lead very quickly to paradox – all the more so, since several bands acknowledge that they have been influenced by “white power” music? Samchung’s Boram, for example, who attended university in Boston and befriended local skinheads, has acted as a conduit for “white power” releases to be heard by those in the Korean scene. Although he says that the skinheads whom he met overseas were either non- or anti-racist, and despite his own patriotism, he also claims to have ordered CDs from Resistance Records, America’s most notorious white supremacist label (and successfully, at that).

Popular among many Korean skinheads is Rock Against Communism (RAC), a movement that originated in Britain. Led by infamous white power band Skrewdriver, they organized shows and demonstrations against the rival anti-Nazi musical organization, Rock Against Racism. To many Korean skinheads, the anti-communism heralded in the RAC’s name may look attractive, but the original movement had little to do with fighting communism in spite of its title. The RAC acronym itself has come to represent the subgenre of music created by racist punks, and in their reception of RAC bands, Korean skinheads have attempted to separate music and political views.

Figure 7

Nonetheless, the members of Samchung and *Hyôlmaeng* insist that RAC was composed not of white supremacists, but of patriots whose movement can be localized anywhere in the world, in spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary in the case of prominent RAC bands such as Skrewdriver. Yee Jonghyuk of *Hyôlmaeng* has even made a collection of Asian RAC music for his own entertainment.

Recently the Crowpunks website, run by a member of crust-punk label Chaos Class, issued a public denunciation against the presence of racist skinheads in Korea, an accusation apparently leveled at *Hyôlmaeng* and Samchung, whose members cite Skrewdriver as an influence on their website.[3] Such an accusation, however, would seem unfair: although many Korean skinheads enjoy Skrewdriver's music for its anthemic spirit and passion, none ally themselves with neo-Nazi skinheads or principles. Yee Jonghyuk willingly acknowledges that his band is heavily influenced by the emotional intensity of white power bands, but draws the line at its lyrical content: "I don't believe in any of that bullshit." What skinheads like him take from such music is pride and attitude, but not ideology.

An unspoken set of precepts dictates skinhead fashion and iconography, although it can vary from location to location and again raises the issue of the reinterpretation of global subcultural influences in surprising ways as a means of expressing local patriotic feeling. A recent controversy emerged when a new Korean band, taking a cue from British Oi band Resistance 77, chose to name themselves Resistance 88.

The number 88, however, has particular resonance in skinhead circles, because it functions as a symbol of white supremacy: eight corresponds to "H," the eighth letter of the alphabet, and thus 88 can be read as signifying "HH" or "Heil Hitler." The number appears in the names of such racist bands as America's Chaos 88 and Warfare 88, Legion 88 from France, War 88 from Germany, and Konkwista 88 from Poland. For Resistance 88, on the other hand, the number 88 had an entirely different resonance, as it does generally in Korea, because of its associations with the '88 Seoul Olympics. Far from being an assertion of allegiance with white power groups, the number was intended to express Korean national pride. Nonetheless, many Korean skinheads, being scholars of skinhead history, are aware of how their actions

Figure 8

might be perceived by the outside world. Yee Jonghyuk voiced his objection to the number and urged the band to drop it. Although skinheads enjoy white power music on one level, they despise it on another: the members of the rechristened Resistance themselves now express disgust at the number.

Interestingly, although in this case Korean skinheads have prioritized the international meaning of the number rather than its local relevance, they have overlooked the potentially problematic bricolage in their assumption of red or white laces and braces (suspenders). Among skinheads, red bootlaces or braces are generally seen as symbolizing that one has "shed blood for the white race." In Korea, however, virtually the entire country cloaked itself in red during the 2002 World Cup to show support for its team, the Red Devils, and red has come to suggest nationalist pride (itself an astonishing transformation from its earlier hated associations with communism). The color's local connotations thus make red laces or braces common at punk shows, whereas the same attire might well invite a beating in a North American city. The color white, likewise, shares supremacist connotations in many places, but not in Korea.

Although Nazi iconography has not been unknown in Seoul, it is absent from the skinhead scene, where resentment toward the Nazi swastika exists.[4] Rumor has it that a group of younger punks once came to flagship punk club Skunk Hell wearing Nazi paraphernalia, but were ridiculed and chased away, never to return. An important force within the global skinhead scene is the SHARP (Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice) movement, whose members came together to combat racist skinheads and offer the public an alternative, more positive account of skinhead history.

Figure 9

Although SHARP stickers are regularly found on guitars, amps and walls, SHARP has neither power as such in Korea, nor actual SHARP skinheads, in part because incidents such as that involving the punks in Nazi garb are almost unheard of. The punk scene itself is, overall, remarkably open and inclusive, and foreigners – including American soldiers, provided they act appropriately and respectfully – are welcomed and not shunned.

What, ultimately, do skinhead and punk identities offer to those who assume them in relationship to their self-understanding as global and Korean citizens? The subcultural capital to be assumed by becoming a local skinhead allows for the expression of pride as both a member of a group with a history of youth solidarity (often working-class) *and* as a Korean. This dual sense of self-respect finds its most striking encapsulation in the slogan of a shirt widely worn within the scene: many skinheads own black and yellow "skinhead Warrior Korea 2003" shirts, designed and put out by members of *Hyôlmaeng* and *Konggyôkdae* (Attacking Forces) to herald the opening of a skinhead website on a popular Korean portal.

Some non-skinheads don them as well, seemingly as a status symbol or statement of allegiance.

These shirts are more frequently seen, in fact, than typical international skinhead attire (leather boots, tight jeans, braces or suspenders, polo shirts, and scally caps).

Figure 10

Figure 11

Although several local skinheads possess such items, few dress in this regalia with any frequency, claiming to be secure enough in their skinhead identity not to need special clothes as a badge.

In conclusion, it is worth noting the extent to which Korean skinhead style also resembles that of the military in its fondness for cropped hair, leather boots, and flight jackets. Many local skinheads prefer camouflage pants to the jeans or Sta-Prest trousers one might find in scenes elsewhere.

Figure 12

The requirement that all Korean males serve in the army for over two years has created numerous problems within the punk scene, as bands continually change their line-ups to replace members who go off to do their service. When Won Jonghee enlisted in the army in November 1999, his band RUX went on hiatus. The skinhead image's compatibility with military service, in fact, may have allowed Won a non-mainstream identity to draw upon that could ease the psychological hardship of service: when on leave, he chose to dress as a skinhead.

Figure 13

Nonetheless, his sentiments about compulsory military service, as seen in the English-language title track of the 1999 EP CD *I Gatta Go* [sic] (SKCD-003), resonate clearly with expectations of an anti-institutional, anti-patriotic punk ethos:

> *….But now what? I'm 20*
> *And I live in this fuckin' country…*

Figure 14

I gatta go to the fuckin' army
I don't really think that it's fare
For me to be a soldier like this
Why should I be? What did this
Fuckin' country do for me?
Oh…I don't really wanna go
Oh…Sorry but I gatta go
Communism? Democratism?
Capitalistic economy?
I don't know these…what the fuck
I'm still hungry anyway
My duty? My fuckin' duty
A shabby civilians freekin' duty?
Fuck them all who made that law?
I just wanna be with my happy band

But is this the full story of Korean punk and skinhead attitudes towards military service? RUX is certainly capable of expressions of Korean pride such as that to be found on their website, as seen above, and in, for example, their transformation of Cock Sparrer's "England Belongs to Me" into "Corea Belongs to Me." Crying Nut, the most

popular band to have arisen out of the punk scene in Korea has recently performed in a show entitled "Observe What Should Be Observed" in an indirect criticism of those who evade mandatory military service. In relation to this concert, "Shin Hong-sok, the group's manager, told *The Korea Times* that the Crying Nut members, who think that defending one's nation is an honorable duty, will return after the 26-month service to resume their music career."[5] Perhaps such compliant patriotism is not unexpected coming from a band that turned its back on its punk roots long ago and is perceived by many in the scene as a sellout.

More puzzling, though, is Masturbation's "Positive Man," a jagged, emo-esque track off the Skunk Label's "We Are the Punx in Korea!" compilation which raises questions about whether punks espouse patriotic attachments:

> *At age twenty-one, in the flower of my youth*
> *I lifted the stock of a gun for my country*
> *Who can avoid it, the duty of national defense?*
> *Even though tears of blood may fall, I will go*
> *Will I enjoy that suffering that is hard to bear?*
> *We all live under the honor of defending the country*
> *Clad in regimental colors from head to toe*

Figure 15

My parents and siblings trust me and sleep easy
Harsh suffering digging into my bones
Thirst racking my throat
No matter what anyone says, I'm a man
Waiting every day for my discharge

Some lines of this track are, in fact, lifted directly from a well-known military song *Chinjja sanai* (Real Man), and the liner notes in the booklet accompanying the CD contain a collage of photos that include shots of smiling band members (or friends) in military uniform. Beneath this they write, "we're pursuing a new genre called '*minjok* punk' (the 'people' or 'race'; J. *minzoku* C. *minzu*). Some people say that we're top comedians, but we don't know why." The temptation, especially for those familiar with punk music in the West, is to assume an anti-institutional, anarchic bias. Surely the song lyrics are meant with sardonic irony, and the remark is a jibe at "Chosôn Punk." Yet, as we have seen, Korean punks and skinheads can surprise with their unquestionable bursts of nationalist pride. Irony? The question remains open.

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Notes

1. <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/jmurphy/-JPT3500file/JPT.Projectfile/Jpt/Skinhead.html>.

2. See Paul Eckert, “No Brain a bunch of punks with conscience.” *Japan Today,* 12 August 2001. Available online at <www.japantoday.com/gidx/-news52939.html>.

3. Ironically, the Chaos Class label itself has displayed ethnic prejudices of its own and come out against Japanese touring bands and sometimes boycotts their shows.

4. A bar in Shinchon that initially went by the name of the “Third Reich” attracted not only Western media attention and protest, but imitators. Nonetheless, what one finds here is not ideological but fashion statements (See Don MacIntyre’s *Time* magazine article. “They Dressed Well,” available at <http://premium.-europe.cnn.com/ASIANOW/time/magazine/2000/0605/southkorea.trouble.html>) Nazi flags can be found in Korean military surplus stores, and Nazi swastika shirts may sit for sale in markets side by side with Sid Vicious shirts, both icons almost completely stripped of their symbolism.

5. “Crying Nut says goodbye, for now,” on <www.times.hankooki.com/lpage/culture/200212/kt2002120417080611700.htm>.

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Cosmopatriotism in Indonesian Pop Music Imagings

Emma Baulch

ABSTRACT

In this article, cosmopatriotism is seen to describe an effect of transnational capitalism's need to "settle down" in particular localities. The self-imaging of female singer Krisdayanti and punk band Superman is Dead serve as agentive forces in the working out of novel, post-New Order modernities. The body, in particular, is an important site to inscribe a sense of authenticity and social mobility, as well as to work out a sense of post-Suharto Indonesian-ness.

Introduction

This essay expresses my interest in the intriguing identity politics to which the coincidence of New Order demise and media deregulation have given rise. I am particularly impressed by the implications for imaging practices of concomitant booms in advertising and the production and consumption of Indonesian rock/pop, both of which reach their peak with the dawning of the new century. These imaging practices are historically significant because they perform ruptures within the discourses of Indonesian-ness associated with the New Order. As such, they join a more generalized bourgeois identity quest, which finds expression in other realms of cultural productions too, such as Indonesian film and literature.

When I first started going to Jakarta to undertake research for this project, I was struck by the number of luxury shopping malls. Malls formed an important part of my research because people usually suggested them as meeting points for conducting interviews. As well as surrounded by intrusive noise, these meetings were notable for

the expense incurred for a mere bottle of water, a cup of tea, and such, at the global chains at which they inevitably proceeded. In these busy, well-frequented malls, one gained no sense of an economy in crisis – only one in which a sizable group seemed increasingly capable of consuming, for such malls continue to mushroom. The cultural producers – music video producers, recording label executives, advertising executives and musicians – who graciously helped me conduct my field work, formed part of this eagerly consuming, mall-going mass. Many of them had foreign degrees, and education serves as key symbolic capital in the process of bourgeois identity construction I have mentioned. They seemed to have little trouble securing jobs when they returned home from wherever they had been studying (usually Australia, less commonly the United States). At the same time, though, whilst seemingly buffered from poverty, the malls exude a sense of insecurity, for vast income disparities cannot be hidden in Jakarta. Among the people who helped me by sharing their knowledge, views and ideas, this sense of insecurity was expressed through frequent reference to *kampungan* – which connotes a country hick-like status and is always negatively employed – as a trope from which they distinguished themselves.

In the late-1990s, Ariel Heryanto published an article in which he documented the emergence of a new bourgeois hegemony that was beginning to eclipse a dominant Othering of rich people as inherently un-Indonesian. He shows how, over the course of the 1990s, when a "new rich" ideal emerged, by which bourgeois-ness came to be associated with new values that challenged negative stereotypes of the rich upheld in the official version of the national identity (Heryanto, "The Years of Living Luxuriously"). I have found this article useful in thinking about how and why the idea of being both Indonesian and wealthy became naturalized towards the end of the New Order. Elsewhere, I have written of how such bourgeois cultural politics found mediatic articulation in images of rock/pop fandom which, due to the coincidence of the regime demise; media deregulation; the expansion of the Indonesian middle class; and the rise of consumerism as a virtue; underwent a significant change in the late-1990s. The bourgeoisification of media images of pop/rock fandom intersected with developments in the US industry at which formerly distinct rock/pop categories were conflated following the immense popularization of alternative music. Similar rock/pop rapprochements became evident around the mid-1990s in Indonesia when, contrasting with the dominant New Order depictions of rock fandom as masculine, lower class and menacing, rock fandom was drawn into newly idealized consumerist, hedonistic practices celebrations of individualism and attempts to naturalize wealth and privilege. This changing image is evident in novel media constructions of rock fandom which emerged in 1996 following an alternative music festival in Jakarta (Baulch, "Alternative Music and Mediation" and "Creating a Scene").[1]

Notably, the image of consumeristic and hedonistic youth to emerge in media constructions of rock concerts in the latter part of the 1990s provided a striking contrast

to the official ideal of patriotic youth. Traditionally, Indonesian state ideologies have idealized the role of youth in the anti-colonial struggle.[2] Throughout much of the New Order period, the dominance of this ideal endured in a highly regulated media environment. It was not until the late-1980s, for example, that the government introduced policies enabling foreign recording companies to distribute their products in Indonesia, and the New Order system of print media regulation provided a disincentive to many of those who may otherwise have been eager to establish new publications. Most importantly, however, up until the mid-1990s, the advertisement-free, state-run Televisi Republik Indonesia (TVRI) remained the only television station, and in the shadow it cast over the (ostensibly) all-too-blinding light of consumer desire, the ideal Indonesian subject was constituted. By contrast, in the deregulated media environment that has evolved since the early 1990s, the ideal Indonesian subject is now constituted through exposure to media constructions that promote and celebrate consumer desire.

Media deregulation was, then, a late-New Order phenomenon, and a policy firmly associated with Suharto. Moreover, the fact that the four private television stations established in the newly deregulated environment were all owned by members of his family may render contentious my claim that the increasingly idealized consumerism that emerged out of this environment can be described as a quest for post-New Order subjectivities. Indeed, policies that Suharto introduced eased idealizations of consumerism and hedonism. It is also true that these qualities aptly describe the public identities of various members of the Suharto family in the late-New Order period. However, images of the ideal Indonesian subject in official ideology remained constant, and struggled to compete with so-called "global" discourses of identity to the very end. In the final decade of the New Order, the ascendancy of consumerism and the free-for-all border crossing it promotes intersected with discourses of universal human rights invoked by growing movements opposed to Suharto. Both growing political opposition and the increasing valorization of consumerism may be understood as instances of cultural and political pressure from a burgeoning middle class – both offered moral alternatives to New Order ideology. The instances of imagery discussed herein present consumerism as a virtue and clearly locate their respective moralities in a post-Suharto context, suggesting that a quest for such alternatives continues to date.

The question that emerges for the current study, then, is how, in this globalized media environment in which multinational media firms now play key roles, is a discourse of "Indonesian-ness" being woven into an ideology of global consumerism? These interweavings may be less straightforward than terms like hybridization, syncretization or localization would suggest, since what constitutes valid "Indonesian-ness" is being so intensely reviewed in the context of the recent political changes generally described as "transition." In what follows, then, I refrain from characterizing cosmopatriotism as such. Rather, I attempt to evoke this state more obliquely; that is, by referring to some cases which may be revealing of some facets of cosmopatriotism.

Below, I will show how cosmopatriotism may be seen to describe an effect of transnational capitalism's need to "settle down" in particular localities. This settling down produces spaces of middleness, and creates aspirational identities and practices which reify the myth of consumer sovereignty by idealizing images and narratives of individuality. In the first section of the essay, I contend that the establishment of MTV Indonesia has helped to create such spaces of middleness, which promote an aspirational consumerism. As such, this section of the essay explores the way in which the emergence of cosmopatriotic identities and practices implicate multinational media firms, such as MTV Indonesia.

But I also argue, in the essay, that cosmopatriotism must be more than simply an upshot of the to-ing and fro-ing between abstraction and concretion that is inherent in the way in which capitalism generates value for goods. As I have intimated in the above account of the simultaneity of political and mediatic changes in Indonesia in the 1990s, cosmopatriotic imaging practices may also be seen as part of a broader quest for new definitions of Indonesian-ness that have emerged in the context of New Order demise. In the second part of the essay, I present two examples of pop/rock artists' self-imagings – those of a female soloist, Krisdayanti, and those of a three-piece punk band, Superman is Dead. My aim is to explore how such imagings serve as agentive forces in the working out of novel, post-New Order modernities. Specifically, I show how they serve as realms of surface play in which mutable, changeable bodies index an eagerness to rupture with formerly dominant identity discourses associated with the New Order and, at the same time, to simultaneously construct and identify with a "global" realm. However, I also show how the images give voice to more stable identity discourses by which people signal their allegiance to spaces and histories established as "local." They pivot around such stabilities in their quests for novel post-New Order bourgeois identities, and, as such, serve as realms where cosmopatriotism – in this context characterized by the inquiring, ambivalent mode that colors both Krisdayanti's and Superman is Dead's imagings – is concocted.

Middle-ness at MTV Indonesia

In 1995, Indonesian audiences began to watch MTV on a newly established private television station, ANteve, which allotted between five and six hours of daily programming to the Singapore-based MTV Asia, launched in the same year.[3] The Singapore-based outfit occasionally sent production teams to Indonesia, but did not program shows dedicated exclusively to the Indonesian market until 1999. In 1999, MTV established a local Indonesian studio at ANteve, and began airing a daily six-hour service. In 2002, MTV Indonesia (hereon MTVI) negotiated a deal with Bimantara-Citra owned Global TV to run a twenty-four hour service on terrestrial feed to five cities on Java (Jakarta, Surabaya, Semarang, Yogya, Bandung) as well as to Medan

and North Sumatera. By 2004, in comparison to its earlier, MTV Asia incarnation, MTVI had considerably increased the percentage of local product in its overall music video content, and lived up well to the network's motto "think globally, act locally."

In his book on advertising and consumerism in India, Mazzarella (2003) contends that that contemporary cultural politics is riddled with global-local translation projects. Institutions of consumer capitalism, in his view, are most adept at such translations. He avers that "these institutions – marketing and advertising agencies, commercial mass media, and all the auxiliary services that accompany them – are perhaps the most efficient contemporary practitioners of a skill that no-one can afford to ignore: the ability to move fluently between the local and the global…" (Mazzarella 18). In his respective studies of advertisements for mobile phone service providers and condoms, Mazzarella shows how, in justifying their "hinge" positions in this translation process local elite cultural producers (specifically advertising executives) reproduce imagined dualisms between globalizing capital and local cultural difference.[4] In what follows, I try to show how Mazzarella's argument that the work of consumer capitalism is (global-local) translation may apply to MTVI. Specifically, I refer to the MTVI 2004 VJ Hunt to argue that MTVI's imagings of middleness are products of such labors of translation, and therefore also uphold the imagined global-local dualisms from which the notion of cosmopatriotism is born.

In its efforts to cultivate a "locally relevant" identity for the global MTV brand, MTVI has devised two terms of address, which are oft repeated throughout the daily programming. In their scripted banter, VJs and guest presenters alike frequently address the viewers as *anak nongkrong*, literally, "kids hanging out." Since the noun *tongkrongan* refers to a regular hangout, naming the audience in this way conjoins young viewers (*anak*) to regularly hang out at MTVI, which affords them access to a (virtual) community of youths, including VJs and musicians, who also hang out there. In addition to the *anak nongkrong* term of address, MTVI also airs what are referred to as "local station ids" (station identifications) which establish the channel as "*Gue banget*!" (literally "Very me!"). This branding, like the *anak nongkrong* terms of address, is also reinforced through repetition, for MTVI's daily programming is peppered with such station ids in which local and international artists assure viewers that MTV is, indeed, "*gue banget*!"

In early 2004, MTVI started promoting its third VJ (video jockey) Hunt, which was to take place in 8 cities (Jakarta, Surabaya, Yogyakarta, Bandung, Palembang, Medan and Makassar) over the month of May. Viewers aged between fifteen and twenty-four were urged to send in video applications, or turn up at one of the listed locations on a corresponding date. On the specified dates, VJ hopefuls apparently flocked to the mall in the regional centre where the event was being held. The VJ Hunt was an off-air event that took instead place over a total of sixteen days – two days for each city. Over those two days, on the basis of their performance in a casting booth, contestants

were selected to present their acts on stage before the hordes. Footage of these events, hosted by VJs Cathy and Fikri, constituted an on-air event, for it was presented as short news segments which punctuated the programming flow, and dubbed the VJ Hunt Roadshow.

The VJ Hunt Roadshow offers a more detailed picture of how MTV imagine the *anak nongkrong*, and brings MTVI's role in naturalizing "middleness" into view. The Roadshow was presented as short spots from mall events in each of the eight cities, and thrown into the programming mix over the month of May. Each spot opened with VJ Cathy or VJ Fikri surrounded by a throng of fifteen to twenty-four year olds milling around in the pit of the mall, awaiting their turn to audition in the casting booth. Raising their voices above the fray, VJs assure viewers that the event is *seru banget* ("really going off"). To illustrate this point, the camera pans a space packed tight with beaming youths. Cathy or Fikri then make their way to the casting booth queue to vox pop contestants on what they have prepared for their audition, to which practicing in the mirror, watching a whole lot of MTV, and wearing an impressive outfit were common replies. Here, *gue banget* is not coterminous with spontaneity but, rather, with its absence. *Gue banget* must be schooled and practiced, and skills in mimicry pave the way to MTVI's individuality.

In this way, then MTV's VJ Hunt presents its audience to its audience – the homogeneous youth nation. When the camera turned on the *anak nongkrong* around the country, that is, it showed no geographic nor linguistic variation but, rather, a series of malls which bound anxious VJ hopefuls. The VJ Hunt's emplacement in the mall is suggestive of the fact that producers imagine their audience to occupy the social space of upper middleness that such malls symbolize. Such inferences are shored up by MTVI's market research department's claims that 78% of the station's viewers belong to the "Golongan ABC" (ABC group). Indeed, the music industry generally addresses itself to this section of the population, and when asked about their fan base, musicians most often pointed to the Golongan ABC, described as the "upper middle segment."

However, the homogeneous middleness of MTVI's imagined audience and the mimicry required of the *anak nongkrong* is seemingly tempered, or obscured, by frequent idealizations of individuality throughout the programming flow. The most obvious example of such idealisation is provided by the aforementioned tagline, "*Gue banget!*" Individuality also emerges as a new virtue among contestants in the channel's 2004 VJ Hunt, many of whom try to convince the panel of judges to select them by claiming as their life philosophy, "Be Yourself".

The discourses of individualism that emerge in MTVI's VJ Hunt would be wrongly characterized as resistance to global capitalism's (or, more specifically, the network's) perceived imperialistic tendencies, for they intersect with the embodying work of commodification and feed into the myth of consumer sovereignty. Indeed, maintaining

established dualisms between globalizing capital and local cultural difference *is* the work of consumer capitalism, which attempts to create desire for commodities by setting them in "concrete" local settings. The familiar nuances of these settings help shore up the myth of consumer sovereignty, "making it look as if the world according to marketing is merely a reflection of the deepest and truest needs of the people to whom it is addressed" (Mazzarella 18). In Indonesia, since the "father-state" introduced media deregulation policies and relinquished its protection of its "children-subjects," the idea that sovereign consumers comprise the Indonesian citizenry has become increasingly prevalent. In addition to MTVI's *gue banget* tagline, the below-described advertisement also provides an excellent example of the use of the first person singular as a corporeal index of a peculiarly Indonesian consumer sovereignty.

A television advertisement for a cigarette called U Mild opens with an image of a short, plain looking man with a leery grin strutting into a lively party with a beautiful and willowy woman on his arm. The image is accompanied by the following voice-over: "For some, success means having a supermodel for a girlfriend". The next set of images is a montage of still snaps of the same man in various famous European locations, accompanied by the voice-over: "For some, success means traveling overseas". We then see a good looking, young, just-so-disheveled young man in faded jeans and tee shirt trying to push start his old Citroen down a hill, and to the voice over: "But for me, success means being able to start my classic car." The ad then concludes with the tagline (which appears in image and accompanying voiceover alike) "U are U."

This is not to suggest that every instance of the idealization of individuality should be seen as the work of global capitalism and its need to maintain a myth of consumer sovereignty, for there are also other things at work. To begin with, the idea of sovereignty, which rests upon idealizations of the autonomous individual, seems compromised by the fact that this new Indonesian "I" is constituted by series of media images. Allow me to elaborate. In the opening to this essay, I described the Jakarta malls I frequented as replete with a class tension due to patrons' ongoing struggles to seek modernities that distinguish them from those of the *kampungan* "hicks." Just as I began to recognize *kampungan* as an important orienting trope in bourgeois regimes of distinction, so did I start encouraging people to share their views on what might be said to constitute *kampungan*. Various responses led me to surmise that, among the elite cultural producers with whom I chatted, more so than with geographical origins and rural-urban divides, the notion of *kampungan* is increasingly bound up with they ways in which people imagine patterns of media consumption. It is from such imaginings that bourgeois cultural producers derive a politics of distinction. When urged to recount their processes of cultural production, cultural producers inevitably default to such politics of distinction.

Allow me to elaborate further still. *Kampungan* finds official, polite expression in marketing parlance, which categorizes Indonesian people according to their perceived

capacity to consume. These categories span from "A" – the highest income earners, to "F," the lowest. Notably, such categorizations necessarily link capacity to consume with musical and television viewing habits, for the only media audience research company, AC Nielsen, employs the same categories in their descriptions of viewing patterns, as do radio stations, recording labels, music magazines and MTVI in their attempts to sell their audiences to potential sponsors. Hence, ABC, identified as "university students and above," are commonly cited by most industry players as their target audiences, and they speak of DEF (Indonesian people who do not have university degrees) as if they are a minority.

In interviews, those involved in production at MTVI scarcely hesitated to express such politics of distinction. For example, in response to my question of to whom, in his view, the ABC segment refer, Dimas Djayadiningrat, one of those music video directors most frequently employed by recording companies, commented thus:

The majority of Indonesian television viewers belong to the "C" group. "D" are the really stupid ones. "C" are middle to lower middle… I don't know exactly but I think of them as lower middle. "B" are Jakarta-dwelling university students. "C" are university students from other places. Maybe I don't have accurate information, but that's how I see it. The "A" group is luxurious, "A plus" is very luxurious. "D" is very underclass – those who watch the "Tuyul Mbak Yul" series, it's really bad, but people watch it and it rates highly – this never ceases to amaze me. (Dimas Djayadiningrat, Interview)

Djayadiningrat's above-cited comment raises two points about the cultural significance of the emergence of ABC in Indonesian lexicons. Firstly, that the ABCD regime is governed by modes of media consumption. Secondly, it reveals how invoking the ABC can itself be part of a politics of distinction. In his attempt to explain who the ABC segment are, he distinguishes himself from "D" and below, who are "stupid" and watch "bad" television shows. A media-generated "I" emerges from Dimas Djayadingrat's above-cited comment in which he identifies his class allegiances through reference to his "discerning" television habits. In this way, he draws attention to the ways in which the ABC regime epitomizes a classic Appaduraian mediascape in which subject formation is increasingly bound up with, indeed defined by, the life-scripts that image-centered media generate.[5]

Mediascapes such as the Indonesian pop/rock industry cannot simply reflect or amplify "underlying" social structure or aspirations. Below, I shall attempt to show how Krisdayanti's and Superman is Dead's imagings serve to naturalize (a novel) consumerism and a peculiarly Indonesian middleness in the interests of transnational capitalism. But I also argue that, as well as simply to the ideology of global consumerism that multinational media firms necessarily reproduce, these imagings also provide space for voicing the profound uncertainties that touch Indonesian peoples' lives at this particularly significant historical juncture. Specifically, I shall explore how media images serve as mirrors to which people look for reflection upon the kinds of true,

virtuous and moral selves that might be deemed fit for a new, post-Suharto Indonesia. It is significant in this regard, that the image of the mirror as a key tool in mastering novel discourses emerged above, in MTVI VJ Hunt participants' accounts of how they prepared for their auditions of *gue banget*-style individuality. Mirrors also pop up in Superman is Dead's and Krisdayanti's dramatized biographies.

The use of the mirror as a metaphor to describe pop musicians' self-imagings may be seen to uphold the idea that images can only reflect a "deeper" social reality. But more than simply reflect a broader, received "truth," mirror-gazing prompts gnarly and deep-seated questions of authenticity. My use of the mirror as a metaphor to describe Krisdayanti's and Superman is Dead's imagings is meant to highlight their role as sites of narrativity, and to stress that such imagings may be understood as identity quests in and of themselves, and do not simply reflect such quests which take place elsewhere, beyond the image.

The identity quests of which I write here proceed by way of a to-ing and fro-ing between, on the one hand, "surfacist" (Pinney) strategies which challenge established notions of the Indonesian essence through celebrations of the body's mutability and, on the other, allegiance to established ideas of home and indigeneity. Whilst celebrations of the body's mutability are necessarily inclusive and therefore embrace cosmopolitanism, fond renditions of indigeneity are expressive of an exclusive, patriotic bent. Such to-ing and fro-ing is akin to Mazzarella's accounts of the translation projects that riddle contemporary cultural politics. Drawing on Chakrabarty, he suggests that this is the stuff from which the value of the commodity form is generated:

On one level, the process of commodification requires a suppression of embodied idiosyncrasies and local conjunctures – the particularity of use value is in this sense subordinated to the generality of exchange value. On another level, however, commodification needs the concretion and tangibility of objects and people – a "corporeal index" of sorts (Povinelli) – to lend credibility and desirability to its abstract claims.

Chakrabarty is highly aware of this generative aspect of the "gap" at the heart of the commodity form. … [T]he very attractiveness of consumer commodities in some sense arises out of their uncanny ability to reify completely the materials upon which they draw. Otherwise, he remarks, "there would be no room for enjoyment in the rule of capital, no play of desires, no seduction of the commodity" (Chakrabarty, n.d., 28). The vulnerability of the commodity form, in other words, is also its greatest strength, its means of generating value. (20)

In this light, Krisdayanti and Superman is Dead may be seen to provide the corporeal indexes for an ideology of global consumerism. Indeed, like those of MTVI, Krisdayanti's and Superman is Dead's imagings also default to a homogeneous middleness and assumptions of bourgeois privilege in their prescriptions of (local) individuality. These examples of "embodiment," that is, may be seen to be desirable for

their valorizations of the bourgeois body shy away from the mundane. But as I shall argue below, Krisdayanti's and Superman is Dead's imagings are not just corporeal indexes, and are more like mirrors, which prompt authenticity quests. As such, they are reminiscent of Indonesian imageries described by other scholars, such as Spyer, who writes of Ambonese pictures which are "integral to history making rather than simply illustrations of something more important happening elsewhere" (13) and Strassler, whose study shows how Javanese popular photographs can be world creating, and not just world duplicating.

Surfacism and authenticity

In her ethnographic study of popular photography in post-colonial Java, Strassler sets out to challenge anthropology's anti-visual bias, and tendency to view images as epiphenomenal. Rather, she describes the Javanese visual economy as kaleideoscopic; at once mapping and making "Indonesia":

In mediating between broad currents of discourse and more particular concerns, popular photographs record and produce the longings of postcoloniality: nostalgia for rural idylls and "tradition", desire for the trappings of modernity and affluence, dreams of historical agency and hopes for political authenticity. Participation in the shared visual idioms and practices in which these longings find form constitutes a crucial means by which people come to belong to the community that calls itself – however tenuously and uneasily – Indonesia. (Strassler 4)

Strassler refers to this visual economy as a "refracted archive" – a term which underscores her insistence that "[p]hotography needs to be examined on its own terms in ways that leave room to explore its internal heterogeneity and the unpredictable possibilities that inhere in the particular instances of its use" (18). Such heterogeneity may be seen in the way the various photographic genres she presents give rise to various regimes of seeing, and produce various effects. Photographs of political demonstrations, for example, rely for their efficacy on the photographs' claims to evidentiary transparency, whilst highly staged studio portraits pay little heed to this legacy and stress rather the ludic possibilities of this genre. These studio portraits, she argues, display attention to surface in a way that defies the distinction between exteriority and interiority in Euro-American writings on photography, yet fall into line with a Javanese epistemology of surface appearances, which delight in theatricality and role play. Through their frequent use of backdrops and strive to mobilize fluid identities which resist oppressive colonial identifications in their celebrations of surface, these Javanese portraits recall the surfacism Pinney describes. In a comparative essay, he contends that popular photography in India and West Africa exemplify vernacular modernism, for by resorting to surfacism they display a distaste of totalizing schemata and Western perspectivalism that has been so central to representational practices particular to Euromodernity.

Eschewing colonial strategies of depth and indexicality, a widely dispersed "vernacular modernism" has emerged that stresses the texture of the surface of the image and the possibilities it presents for cultural reinvention. In Central Indian popular practice, photography is prized not so much for its ability to produce indexical traces, but rather as a creative transformational space that permits its subjects to "come out better." The nature of this Indian practice resonates closely with popular West African and other postcolonial practices that deploy what Arjun Appadurai has termed the "subaltern backdrop" and mobilize fluid identities within a ludic idiom. (Pinney 13)

Superman is Dead's self imagings also display such celebrations, which stress the body's mutability and its capacity to escape oppressive emplacements. But different from the portraits to which both Strassler and Pinney refer, Superman is Dead's very fixation on surface appearances may be seen to engage, rather than to elide, a discourse of authenticity. These fixations, that is, index certain authentic modes of media consumption.

Superman is Dead formed in 1996 and played a pivotal role in an emerging Balinese punk/alternative scene by establishing a regular Saturday night punk jam in Kuta. In 1997, they became the first Balinese punk band to produce independently an album of original songs. Later, the band pioneered a deal with the Jakarta-based major recording label, Sony Music Entertainment Indonesia, and became the first Balinese band to "go national." This they did in 2003, shortly after employing Rudolf Dethu as their manager. Dethu had recently established a clothing label, Suicide Glam, which he describes as street wear in the glam punkabilly style. Although Superman is Dead have no formal agreement with Dethu to wear his clothes on stage, they often do so, and their shiny, glossy image is most commonly understood as akin to that of Suicide Glam. In the current discussion, the punk glam scene refers to the confluence of the Suicide Glam "glam punkabilly" look with the Balinese punk scene that centers on Superman is Dead.

In the introduction to this essay, I discussed how contemporary, post-Suharto youth ideals valorize hedonism and rupture with the more humorless and formerly dominant ideals of patriotic, educated youth that were part of New Order legitimization. Such rupture is manifest in Superman is Dead's and Krisdayanti's biographical self-depictions which situate the individual, rather than the student activist mass, as a prime history-making agent. Moreover, biographies also help naturalize new virtues such as individuality, self-determination and autonomy by obscuring their class connotations. Such obscurings and attempts to naturalize wealth are evident in Dethu's description of his and Superman is Dead's highly orchestrated and expensive dress style as expressive of an authentic and instinctive individuality.

We try to stick to our beliefs: existence, individuality, being who you are. The Suicide Glam image is that "you would die for being fashionable in a rock 'n roll way, you don't care

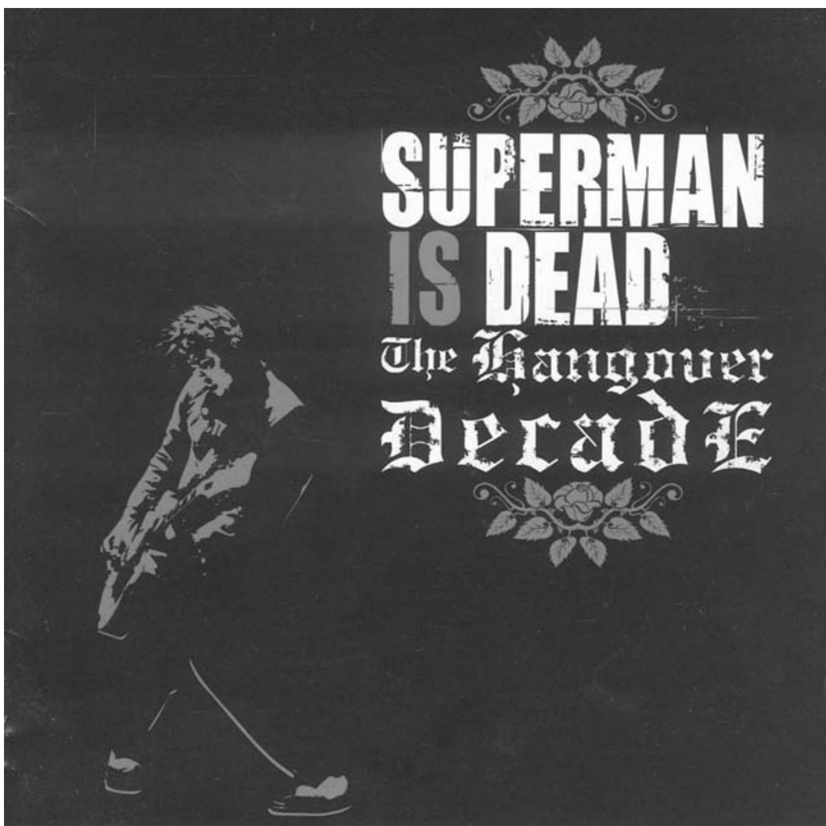

Figure 1 A picture of the band's lead vocalist and guitarist, Bobby, on cover the Superman is Dead's second album with Sony, *The Hangover Decade*, highlights in pink the way light reflects from the surface of his body.

what people say." We don't try to cultivate an exclusive, rock 'n roll irreverence, it's just who we are… (Rudolf Dethu, manager of Balinese punk band, Superman is Dead, Interview)

Superman is Dead's interest in employing glossy body surfaces as a strategy of identification is impossible to separate out from other aspects of the band's authenticity discourse, which rests upon their claims to be the first Balinese band to secure a major recording deal in a "self determined" fashion in which they retained their "artistic integrity," their "individuality." On their website and in interviews, Superman is Dead make much of their claim to be the only Indonesian band to have negotiated a major label deal that allows them to produce albums on which most of the songs have English lyrics. Sony had originally stipulated that 70% of the songs to be included on their first album with the label, *Kuta Rock City*, be in Indonesian. Superman is Dead rejected this stipulation before signing the contract and threatened to quit

the negotiations. Sony then retracted the clause, and 70% of the albums' tracks remained in English.

There are two things to say about Superman is Dead's authenticity discourse. Firstly, it assumes knowledge of English and access to the kinds of money required to buy Suicide Glam couture. Secondly, the importance of the Sony deal to Superman is Dead's authenticity suggests that modes of media production are key to their strategies of identification. This is shored up by other aspects of the band's disciplinarian media strategy, which Sarah Forbes, Dethu's partner on Glam Punkkabilly Inferno, the outfit that manages Superman is Dead, characterized as "being picky about gossip shows because they are so Old Indonesia" (Interview, 20 January, 2005). In a contribution to the Superman is Dead website, Dethu elaborates on this disciplinarian strategy thus:

SID employs a kind of self-censorship to make sure we don"t get overexposed. Indeed, SID is not the kind of band that really gets into the whole celebrity circus. You hardly ever see SID on tv, right? That's because we like it that way (unless the tv show happens to be in line with SID's artistic vision). Even if we had millions of offers to appear, we would still try to minimalise our exposure. It's the same with the print media. We are selective, and only want to work with certain magazines. Also with our live performance schedule. We don't want to perform live too often in one city and prefer to go and perform in areas where we have never before played a gig. All this is so that SID doesn't get overexposed. (www.supermanisdead.net)

The confluence of assumptions of privilege with hierarchical formulations of media consumption/production, as evident in Superman is Dead's authenticity discourse, echoes other such discernments among producers at MTVI. Above, I touched on how, in their descriptions of production processes, Dimas Djayadiningrat and Hendra Tanasputra (see note 5) invoked the historical past and lower classes as significant Others. Similarly conflated Others – "old" Indonesia and "undiscerning" modes of media production/consumption – emerge in Superman is Dead's authenticities. In both cases, individuality serves as a register of bourgeois distinction, which is considered, weighed up and measured according to modes of media production/consumption. Such regimes are, therefore, heavily mediatized, and often seem highly narcissistic as people strive to recover their essence by gazing at the way light plays upon the surfaces of their bodies.

Surfaces emerge as a striking feature of Superman is Dead's self-imagings. To begin with, the glossy, shiny, Suicide Glam "glam punkabilly" look requires a certain attention to the way light reflects off the surface of the body. Such attention is exaggerated in the visuals on the sleeve of the band's most recent album, *The Hangover Decade* (*The Hangover Decade* (see Figure 1). These visuals depict contrasts in how shadow and light fall upon the performing bodies of Superman is Dead's three members. But the best example of all is provided by the music video for "*Punk Hari Ini*"

Figure 2 Krisdayanti features in an advertisement for Exoticon contact lenses. Source: Endah, 2003.

(Punk Today), the title track from the first album to result from the band's deal with Sony. There are two main themes to this video's attention to surface. Firstly, it displays a concern with the mutability of the surface of the body. Secondly, it foregrounds an interest in enabling these mutable surfaces to traverse more stable, identifiably local surfaces – an interest, that is, in melding mobility with emplacement. The first theme emerges in close ups of various accessories that intersperse the video's main plotline, which follows one of the band's gigs in the Kuta-based Twice Bar that is owned by the band's drummer, Jerink. The camera frequently cuts

away from shots of them performing before a surging mosh pit, to focus on the details of various punters' and band members' bodies – their tee shirts, their earrings, their jewelry, their tattoos.

The second theme pertaining to the video's interest in surfaces emerges in three separate scenes, all shot in black and white, which take place outside the main plot of the gig at the bar. These scenes depict the band members and their sizable gang of friends gliding over various surfaces around the clearly identifiable Kuta Beach, a well-known tourist area in Bali where the band hang out. In one such scene, they are skateboarding on the esplanade that fronts the famous beach. In another, they rip up the sand with their dirt bikes. And in yet another, they ride surfboards down the face of Kuta's renowned break.

Such settings may seem conducive of inclusiveness and cosmopolitianism, for Kuta serves as a kind of Balinese fringe, where foreign tourists come together with people from all over Bali. Indeed, the video of "Punk Hari Ini" features Westerners as models, bouncers and punters in the mosh. But such seeming inclusiveness is offset by Superman is Dead's authenticity discourse, which assumes a certain capacity to consume skateboards, surfboards, dirt bikes and Suicide Glam tee shirts. Similarly, hierarchical taste regimes which cancel out the "free-for-allness" that celebrations of the body's mutability infer, are cancelled out by the hierarchical taste regimes in which such celebrations exist, and can also be found in Krisdayanti's life story as told to Albertheine Endah, entitled 1001 KD. The book is a large, lavish format in hardback that consists of 200 pages of photographs of the various styles that have characterized the singer's career.

The first chapter of the book, entitled "Career and I," provides the main plot line from which subsequent chapters are hung. It charts Krisdayanti's course from her humble beginnings in the East Javanese village of Batu, where her divorcee mother worked running a small catering business. In the early 1980s, she and her older sister began entering, and consistently winning, local singing competitions. On the advice of a relative, and in the interests of the girls' careers, the family moved to Jakarta in 1983, where Krisdayanti's mother got work in a salon, washing people's hair and selling home-made cakes to clients of the salon. Both Krisdayanti and her older sister continued singing. They both joined singing groups and began participating in, and winning, competitive singing festivals. In 1989, at age fourteen, Krisdayanti secured her first recording deal, although the album that resulted from it was not successful. In 1991 she was a finalist in a cover-girl competition organized by a local teen magazine, *Gadis*. In 1992, she won the prestigious, Asia-wide singing competition, Asia Bagus. In 1995, she signed to Warner Music, with whom her first album, *Terserah* ("Up to You"), sold an astounding 700,000 copies.

Different from Superman is Dead's self-imagings, in which the body serves as a corporeal index of authenticity, Krisdayanti's autobiography provides a shining example

Figure 3 Krisdayanti performs before a portrait of R.A. Kartini.
Source: Endah, 2003.

of the use of the surface of the body to register transformative desires, and optimistically infers consumption/consumerism as a practice capable of bringing about change in people. Allow me to present two images from the book, which provide a fitting accompaniment to the book's title, suggestive of Krisdayanti's 1001 manifestations. The first is an advertisement for a brand of contact lens, Exoticon (see Figure 2 above). The Exoticon advertisement celebrates the ease with which one can appear to change one's ethnic affiliation, for it tells us that a modern, exotic (European) look can be effected with the blink of an eye. This undermines the ideological basis for notions of essential Indonesian-ness and promotes an inclusive cosmopolitanism.

Global consumerism (in the form of buying and selling contact lenses), the advertisement tells us, cancels out the essentialist assumptions of "local difference."

The second set of images occupy a center-page spread in the book, and pictorially document the rags to riches linear narrative recounted in the body of the text. Like the Exoticon advertisement, this series also promotes the body's mutability, but is more nuanced with the idea of bodily transformation being a disciplinarian, rather than a hedonistic, project. When coupled with the written accounts of Krisdayanti's life, this series gives readers a sense of the schooling required to effect a desired modernity. This schooling begins with a kind of mimicry, reminiscent of that practiced by contestants in the MTV VJ Hunt when they prepared for their auditions by watching a lot of MTV and rehearsing in the mirror. Similar mimicry emerges in Krisdayanti's account of how, when in school, she approximated an expensive and fashionable watch with her own home-grown style:

When I entered my teens, my interest in pretty clothes of course began to grow. I became aware of trends. I began to understand that if I wore clothes that were thought of as "in," people would think of me as someone with an "up to date" style.

In this regard, I was lucky to have been blessed with a certain flexibility. I didn't need to have a lot of money to be able to take part in the trends.... When I was in senior high school, a kind of giant watch with a big face was all the rage.... One of its special features was its colourful band. They cost a lot of money. Only rich kids could afford to wear them.

Of course, I wanted to have one too, but I didn't have enough money. After some hard thinking, I came upon an idea. I tied colourful wool around my watchband, and made it look like a really unique and interesting watch. Do you know what happened then? My style watch became the new trend at that school, and kids started turning up with colourful wool wound around their watch bands. (Endah 55)

This account suggests a DIY doctrine in which Krisdayanti's modern aesthetics are cheaper and therefore more accessible – cosmopolitan indeed – than those modeled by members of Superman is Dead. However, once viewed in the context of the autobiography as a whole, the place of such DIY doctrines within broader taste hierarchies becomes clear. In the written text, too, as in the above-mentioned rags to riches series of images, Krisdayanti's modernity infers a linear narrative that culminates in her success and capacity to treat herself to designer clothes:

As my career progressed, my luck began to flow. The first brand-name garment I bought was a Prada skirt. It cost nine million rupiah. And even that was a sale price, the original price was tens of millions of rupiah. How happy I was to wear that skirt for the first time! Then I started to be able to afford to buy designer clothes to wear on stage. Jean Paul Gaultier, Donna Karan and Dolce and Gabbana are some of the designers I like. Recently, I've started to collect Dior, Lanvin, Fendi, Hermes, Valentino and Versace. And of course I'm a great fan of all the top Indonesian designers. (Endah 55)

In short, her autobiography appears to infer a claim that existential issues can be inscribed upon surfaces of the body. In it, she portrays her existence as a pleasurable and sensual bathing in images of herself, including advertising images of herself. The book contains five chapters, entitled respectively: "Career and I," "Fashion and I," "Beauty and I," "Family and I," "Myself and I." The final chapter, "Myself and I," opens with two consecutive multiple exposure photographs which make it look as if KD is gazing into a mirror. If the autobiography as a whole suggests "I am because I am photographed," then the coming together of these mirror images with the chapter entitled "Myself and I" seems to say "I am all surface."

Superman is Dead also display a keen interest in matters of surface, as discussed. But at first glance, Superman is Dead's corporeal and media strategies would seem vastly different from those of Krisdayanti. Firstly, as mentioned, they make use of tactility and surface as registers of authenticity, not transformative desires. This authenticity claim is based on a rejection of the kinds of bathing in media images of themselves that Krisdayanti positively embraces. By contrast, as evident in Dethu's above-cited contribution to the Superman is Dead website, the band claim that by refraining from appearing in advertisements, and from bathing in media images of themselves in the manner of Krisdayanti, they chart a self-determined existence.

But these seemingly contradictory tendencies may be part of one and the same thing. Leichty has found similar contradictions to be thematic to the Nepali magazine *Teens*. The tensions inherent to *Teens*, Leichty contends, are typical of consumer forces in "modern societies" which seek to amplify people's insecurities in the interests of nurturing desire. The to-ing and fro-ing between aspirations to self-realization and transformative desires, then, is consumerism at work.

[A theme of Teens] is the tension between messages that fashion is about personal style and expresses characteristics unique to the presumably unchanging essence of the individual and messages describing the constant changes in hemlines, collars, patterns, and other aspects of what it means to be young, confident and "in". (Leichty 221–22)

In this light, then, the differences between Superman is Dead's aspirations to self realization and Krisdayanti's transformative desires may be seen to exemplify the to-ing and fro-ing that is inherent in the ways in which consumerist hegemonies are maintained. But I resist this as the sole interpretation of these imagings, and posit that such ambivalence may also be understood as expressive of an eagerness for reflection among Indonesian bourgeois in a new and rapidly unfolding political climate. This eagerness for reflection may be found in the striking recurrence of mirrors in both Krisdayanti's and Superman is Dead's self-imagings. Above, I have mentioned how a chapter in Krisdayanti's autobiography entitled "Myself and I" opens with two consecutive images of Krisdayanti gazing into a mirror. Mirrors emerge in Superman

is Dead's imagings, too. The video for the song "Kuta Rock City," for example, opens with an image of Jerink standing before a mirror and applying eyeliner. Jerink also happens to compare one of his rare contributions to the band's website to an image of himself shooting a mirror of himself:

Dear brothers and sisters, lovers and haters, after almost a few years I've never share my thoughts 'bout my oh-so-infamous band in this very website, now finally I came up w/this. Just like a loaded gun pointed at the dusty mirror. Hate me or love me after you read this.... go ahead, cool kats. Here we go... (www.supermanisdead.net)

To-ing and fro-ing between a quest for transformation and one for authenticity does not just emerge in comparisons between Krisdayanti's and Superman is Dead's biographies, but also within each of these self-imagings. I have already discussed how the surfacism that is inherent to both, and which facilitates cosmopolitanism and inclusion, is tempered by its emplacement in local Indonesian bourgeois strategies of distinction which are exclusionary, and resist global consumerism's leveling mythologies. Moreover, as well as in bourgeois regimes of distinction, Krisdayanti and Superman is Dead both seek emplacement in historical and spatial certainties. These emplacements fix a cosmopatriotic politics onto the body by marrying an obsession with tactility and mutable surfaces with more stable historical and spatial contexts.

Emplacement

At first glance, Krisdayanti's rags-to-riches narrative seems marked by an absence of questioning and of self-doubt. It seems marked, that is, by a certainty about her desire to transform herself, and a very-much-at-easeness about the point at which she has arrived. For example, a full yellow-tinted, right hand page in the opening chapter, "Career and I," is dedicated to the following quote, which is presented in a multi-colored font of various sizes: "Often, while I am singing, I ask myself 'Is this real? Aren't I just a poor kid from Batu?'" (Endah 17). She appears to answer this question on a subsequent page in a quote that is pulled from the text, enlarged, and run across the top of the page. It reads: "Had I had a well-to-do kind of childhood, I probably wouldn't have felt the urge to better myself and become the Krisdayanti I am now" (Endah 22).

Notably absent in Krisdayanti's biography is a chapter entitled "Religion and I" or "Islam and I." This is unusual, for it is common for Indonesian (Muslim) pop stars to make much of their faith and alleged piety, by which they seek to root their public images in certain Indonesian discourses of Orientalness: a global identity that is Other to Euromodernity. Krisdayanti also seems eager to tame the radical mutability of her body and her penchant for a Eurasian aesthetic, but through reference to a discourse of femininity that resounds with New Order ideology, rather than to one of Islam. Such domestications appear in an image of the singer performing before a

portrait of Raden Ajeng Kartini – a young Javanese woman who gained fame in colonial society at the dawn of the 20th century for her letters to some Dutch intellectuals in which she expressed emancipatory aspirations for Javanese women (see Figure 3 above). Peculiar to the new Order interpretation of her legacy is the emergence of the figure of Kartini as an icon of a particular kind of femininity, which idealizes attention to domestic chores and skills at bodily adornment. Clearly, Krisdayanti identifies herself with this New Order interpretation. Across the bottom of the page on which she appears performing before Kartini's portrait runs the following quote: "Adorning oneself is proof of women's power" (Endah).

Other references to established discourses of femininity also temper the possibilities for change that her consumerism infers, such as those to her complete and utter dedication to her fans, which emplace the attention Krisdayanti pays to her body. Her body, that is, is not expressive of individual growth nor of selfhood, but rather of selflessness, for she only dresses up to satisfy the needs of her fans. Discourses of wifehood and motherhood further constrain the freedoms she may be afforded by her immense capacity to consume, and form a central part of the autobiography. A whole chapter is accorded to her accounts of family life, and photographic evidence of her dedication to her family. Here, she appears to reveal, albeit somewhat obliquely, that she is deeply troubled by the fact that she earns more than her husband. The chapter opens with a full page dedicated to the following statement: "It's not easy being a woman who is the main income earner of the family. The most difficult thing is convincing others around you that there is nothing wrong with that." But Krisdayanti appears to think that there *is* something wrong with it, for, throughout the chapter, in written and pictorial form, she strives to convince her readers that, after all, her husband, Anang, is boss and when at home she does as he tells her. Here, the plot line of her life appears to settle into a place of stability where self-doubt and frustration (at having to obey her husband) are notable for their absence. The chapter also includes page-length testimonials of other famous people, who attest to Krisdayanti's selflessness. One such person, Rakhee Punjabee, is cited thus: "People assume that being a diva means you forget your family. But that's not the case with Krisdayanti…. She has never forgotten that over and above her position as a megastar, she will always be, first and foremost, a wife and a mother."

Like that of Krisdayanti, Superman is Dead's interest in tinkering with body surfaces also pivot around more stable identifications. Unlike Krisdayanti's stable femininity however, their stabilities do not condemn them to domesticity. Common to all of their self-imagings is an association with Kuta, cast as both an ideal border zone and a transnational and transethnic wonderland. In this way, they draw on historical depictions of Kuta as such, and make use of this stereotype in their attempts to challenge Balinese essentialism and to open the notion of Balineseness up to more cosmopolitan definitions.[6] For example, in his attempt to conjure the global nuances of

the Kuta-based Twice Bar, owned by the band's drummer, Jerink, and where Superman is Dead hang out, Dethu recovers and reassigns the national motto, Bhineka Tunggal Ika ("Unity in Diversity"):

Have you ever heard of the saying melting pot? That's exactly what it's like at Twice/Suicide Glam in Poppies Lane 2 where we hang out and where not only people from all over Indonesia, but people from all over the world, gather. If SID were Xenophobic, we couldn't possibly hang out at a place that is so "United in Diversity" [Bhineka Tunggal Ika]. (www.supermanisdead.net)

Superman is Dead's idealizations of Kuta also infer their dramatized indifference towards Jakarta, and draw on a long history of center-periphery dynamics between Jakarta and Bali, always shifting and in flux. These dynamics oscillate between, on the one hand, a kind of Balinese victimology in which Jakarta's flow towards the province is understood as imperialism and, on the other, a Balinese validation of Jakarta's presence as evidence of Bali's ascendancy in the relationship. Currently in the punk glam scene, the relationship is constructed in the manner of the latter. For example, Dethu reiterated the importance of locale to both the Suicide Glam and SID image when he told me that "we like to be part of the mainstream, but we don't follow what happens in Jakarta" (Dethu, Interview).

Such indifference towards, and sense of power over, Jakarta, links SID and the Suicide Glam "look" – the celebration of gloss and surface – to regimes of discernment and emplacement which they claim as part of their attempt to chart a pioneering and self-determined journey through "mainstream" media institutions. This journey is, in turn, meant as an authentic expression of individuality and their true Balinese selves. Imagings of these meldings – between authentic individuality and the Balinese (non-Jakarta) self – emerge forcefully in Superman is Dead's music videos, most of which are set in and around the Twice Bar, and differentiate the surfacism of Superman is Dead's imagings from that practiced by Indian and West African photographers, described by Pinney ("Notes from the Surface of the Image" 202–3). That is, the Indian and West African photographers Pinney describes make use of a "ludic idiom" which releases their subjects from imprisoning historical certainties by depicting the body as a mutable and mobile surface against a temporary backdrop. Superman is Dead's self-imagings also celebrate the tactile, textured surfaces of their bodies, but do not attempt to elide their geographic origins through use of temporary backdrops. Rather, they celebrate such origins, and associate them with their inherently cosmopolitan authenticity.

Both Krisdayanti's and Superman is Dead's self-imagings, then, do not just serve as realms of rupture, uncertainty and changeability, but also as realms in which pre-existing discursive certainties are negotiated: sometimes taken on, sometimes rejected. As such, they are best described as pivots that cling to certain stable, established identity discourses while playing around with others. However, unlike Krisdayanti's embrace of

her femininity, which appears to condemn her to obeying her husband, Superman is Dead's Balinese-ness does not appear to imprison them, but rather affords them mobility, hence highlights the gendered qualities of these cosmopatriotisms.[7]

Conclusion

This essay has described how ideological shifts in Indonesia in recent years are related to media deregulation and regime change, and have yielded new modes of subject formation. Specifically, I have tried to show how consumerism has emerged as an overwhelming ideology and practice by which people participate in the nation-state. The ascent of consumerism as a dominant ideology marks a rupture with official New Order discourses which Othered wealth, and forces a kind of cosmopolitanism: consumerism has leveling implications which defy essentialism by assuming that one can consume one's way into, and become, the Other. It necessarily acknowledges cosmopolitanism and gives rise to heterogeneous, fragmented imagings of the Indonesian citizenry. At the same time, in order to maintain hegemonic status, the ideology of consumerism must adopt modes of address that assume the homogeneous "middleness" of this newly-defined Indonesian citizenry. Such assumptions counteract consumerism's leveling mythologies by introducing taste regimes, by which access to bourgeois privileges are cast as "normal" and "natural." As I have tried to show in the course of this essay, such taste regimes emerge in practices of media consumption and production which have become key to new modes of subject formation. That is, not only do media consumers define themselves and their place in the society in terms of which television programs they watch, but media producers also happened to use their self-imagings like mirrors in their quests to discover their truly transformed, or self-realized, bourgeois selves.

Ferry discusses how consumerism manifests, and impacts upon processes of gender-making, in a China also marked by ideological shifts. These shifts are associated with Deng Xiaoping's social reforms and the emergence of a commodity economy, and implicate a global network of media companies as well as the Chinese State in the repackaging of the female body. Such contexts bear witness to the deployment of mediatic figures of the past, giving rise to nostalgia, which serves to "aid in the construction of young (urban) female identities in China today" (Ferry 277). Specifically, Ferry presents the case of the re-employment in contemporary China of images of the 1930s New Woman, now reified as an icon of progressive modernity. The re-idealization of this figure, she argues, not only affirms the salience of capitalist ideologies in modern China, but also responds to people's need to resolve a kind of mass identity crisis that results from the relatively recent (re)ascendance of such ideologies.

Ferry compares her example to Ma's discussion of how an advertisement for the Hong Kong Bank, which depicted the rags to riches life story of a Hong Kong Everyman,

provoked nostalgia for Hong Kong's bygone days. Indeed, like Ferry, Ma pursues an interest in exploring how such nostalgic constructions not only help to reproduce consumerist ideologies, but also feed into peoples' enthusiasm for a past that infers a cultural unity – an enthusiasm which, in the case Ma presents, escalated around the time of Hong Kong's hand-over to the mainland. He poses the following questions to aid him in his pursuit:

If there is no strong nationalism to activate an identity conferring history, where does the nostalgic desire for a historical rootedness evolve from? Does the urge derive from within the community, which has been granted a sociocultural space under non-interventive politics by both Britain and China? Can transnational capitalism be a source of discursive energy for constructing a highly localized historical narrative for very contextualized consumption? (Ma 133)

Both the ideological juncture and mediatic environment in which Krisdayanti and Superman is Dead have emerged, approximate the Chinese contexts that both Ferry and Ma describe – comparisons which make Indonesia's bourgeois identity quest look more like a transnational phenomenon. Due to similar historical circumstances taking place in a number of Asian nation-states (regime shifts coupled with a deregulation of the media environment and considerable expansion of mediatic space), "cosmopatriotism" may be seen as a regional phenomenon, beneath the aegis of which identity ruminations more specific to each locale take place.

However, Superman is Dead's and Krisdayanti's self-imagings do not give voice to the kinds of nostalgia that riddle contemporary identity formations in Hong Kong and China. Rather, both seem to look steadfastly forward – a perspective compounded by their "surfacism," which pay attention not only to bodily adornments per se, but to how such adornments appear in a particular light, i.e., that of the media. Such attention to light stresses the very ephemeral nature of identity, and hence undermines the essentialist assumptions inherent to (formerly dominant) New Order formulations of Indonesianness.

Such ephemerality is rooted, however, in spaces and historical figures that emerge as marked stereotypes in local discourses: Kartini/femininity/domesticity; Kuta/margins/freezone. Above, I have noted how such emplacements are gendered. Superman is Dead's identifications with Kuta appear to afford them much freedom to redefine dominant formulations of Balinese-ness. But Krisdayanti's identifications with wifehood and motherhood appear to leave little room for redefinitions of formerly dominant notions of femininity. These gendered aspects also reveal how Krisdayanti's and Superman is Dead's self-imagings are not subsumed by global consumerism's leveling mythologies, and reveal that there are other things at work. That is, the to-ings and fro-ings between both Krisdayanti's and Superman is Dead's penchants for mutability, on the one hand, and certain racinations, on the other, do not just serve as evidence of consumerism's methods of generating desire for commodities. Both are

more than mere commodities, nor are they straightforwardly expressive or reflective of underlying social structures or aspirations. Rather, they serve as reflexive realms in which new subjectivities, indeed, new modernities, deemed to be in line with post-Suharto Indonesian-ness, are worked out. As such, these media may be understood as documents of narrativity, and expressive of a desire for pop/rock images to serve as mirrors in which bourgeois cultural producers seek to find to find their true selves on the surface of the image.

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Notes

1. This festival was among the first international concerts to be held since riots took place at a Metallica concert in 1993. The local-"international" stage-sharing at it spawned patriotic pride in the local alternative music scene which had emerged in the wake of the deregulation (and globalization) of the Indonesian recording industry, and the event served as a pivotal moment in the mediation of youth ideals.

2. As subsequently narrated by the New Order regime, this ideal is rooted in the foundation of a proto-nationalist student organization, *Boedi Oetomo*, and the part accorded to that organization in the imagining of the archipelagic nation (see Heryanto, "The Student Movement"; Aspinall). Not only have "students been an important category of political actor in Indonesia since the very beginnings of the ideas of nationhood and nationalism" (Aspinall), but they have also had a founding role in the modeling of state-sanctioned youth ideals. The most prominent stereotype of Indonesian youth has its genesis in the patriotism of a privileged, educated class.

3. In 1995, MTV had already established separate feeds for India and the Mandarin speaking world respectively. Both MTV India and MTV Mandarin, produced in Taiwan and serving Singaporean, Hong Kong and Taiwanese audiences, were uplinked from Singapore, as was MTV Asia which fed Indonesian, Philippine, Malaysia and Thai markets. Each of these "markets," as MTV executives refer to them, now boasts its own, locally-produced MTV.

4. Notably, similar "hinges" were sought to develop an Indonesian identity for MTV. Creative Director at MTVI, Leslie Decker, revealed that MTVI's "localness" is defined by the nationalities of productions staff in her descriptions of how and why MTV "went local":

We are are a global company but we like to be local in terms of our reach…. For us it is important to be seen as local and we are local if you look at the majority of our staff here…. You need to take into consideration the local, because MTV is seen sometimes as salacious and too sexy… we try to tame it down…. Anything that is anti-religious or if it's too violent and during Ramadhan we can't show people eating at certain times of the day, we abide by the existing rules. (Leslie Decker, Interview)

5. Not only did various music industry actors identify themselves as antithetical to *kampungan*, but also to the corrupt excesses of the New Order regime. Moreover, these Others, the lower class and the historical past, were often conflated in their depictions. For example, in response to my question about how he selects which music videos to air, Hendra Tanasputra, head programmer at MTV Indonesia, assured me that he does not accept bribes for programming video clips even though some *dangdut* artists' managers producers had attempted to bribe him, and reminded me that the staff at MTVI were all educated people. Tanasputra thus implicitly identifies *dangdut* artists as somehow "uneducated," and intimates the genre's *kampungan* associations. By stressing his "educated" immunity to attempts to bribe him, he also links his middle-classness with a dissociation from the insidious corruption associated with the New Order regime.

6. In the late-1980s, Balinese reggae enthusiasts hung out at Bruna bar which, due to its location at Kuta Beach, was deemed to be cut loose from the tourism industry-generated local demands for "cultural preservation." There, these reggae enthusiasts made use of Bruna's perceived marginal location to improvise on specifically Balinese reggae identities. A decade later, in the late-1990s, Balinese punks also gravitated towards Kuta for similar reasons. The punks' idealizations of Kuta's border zone qualities are voiced in "Kuta Rock City," the title track from Superman is Dead's first album with Sony Music, also entitled *Kuta Rock City*. The refrain of the song runs thus:

In Kuta Rock City, where the evil dance
Kuta Rock City, where the hero dies
Kuta Rock City, where's all my cash?
Kuta Rock City, please don't break my heart again!

7. I have already described the way in which band members are depicted in the "Punk Hari

Ini" video gliding over the surfaces of the locale. Others of the band's videos depict similarly emplaced mobilities. The video clip for "Muka Tebal" (Thick Face) – the title track on the band's second album with Sony, *The Hangover Decade* – sets the song to a story about the three band members, who are introduced at the beginning of the clip as characters set in place undergoing their separate, daily, mundane activities in the busy narrow backstreets of Kuta. The camera then cuts between each members' separate journey through these back streets to the Twice Bar, where they are to play. During this journey, much attention is paid to their movements over the textured street. Similarly, the video for another song on the same album, "Rock and Roll Band," depicts the band as a cast of characters that tour Kuta's streets in their car.

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Deterritorializing Aesthetics: International Art and its New Cosmopolitanisms, from an Indonesian Perspective

Michelle Antoinette

Art will be able to set a kind of common base of knowledge–a new global standard. One effect might be that the Asian artist will become as widely known as, for example, Picasso is now.
(International Asian Art Curator, Fumio Nanjo)

… a real global world is yet to be invented. We are currently on the midground of such an endless invention, and a truly global art is a step forward in the long march.
(International Asian Art Curator, Hou Hanru)

ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the contemporary art practice of two “Indonesian” artists who form part of a new class of international, (hyper)mobile “cosmopolitan” artists: Heri Dono and Mella Jaarsma. Representing the Indonesian contemporary art scene, both artists have traveled frequently on the international art circuit with their work featuring in a number of international exhibitions since the 1990s. It is argued that the increased global mobility and interactions experienced by these Indonesian artists situates them and their art within a distinctive cosmopolitan milieu of contemporary international art practice which, at the same time, offers alternative definitions of Indonesian space, place and subjectivity. Significantly, the fact that one artist is a “native” to Indonesia and the other a “foreigner” – whose heritage relates to the former Dutch colonial power – is highlighted, in order to demonstrate how the artists’ respective cosmopolitan practices are rooted in and distinguished by different cultural histories and relationships, to Indonesia and to the world.

Introduction

Since the 1990s, Asian avant-garde artists and their art have acquired unprecedented international exposure together with a renewed capacity for multiple, fluid and shifting patterns of cross-cultural movement across a variety of spaces, including virtual space. In this context, questions of locality have occupied a continuing importance for the representation of Asian art in contemporary international art exhibitions, particularly as new patterns of transnational movement – and their attendant "deterritorializations" – encourage a revaluation of inter/national forms of exhibition representation. As Gupta and Ferguson have remarked, the forces of globalization have conditioned a world in which "identities are increasingly coming to be, if not wholly deterritorialized, at least differently deterritorialized" (9). One result of these shifting identities is the potential disruption of conventional representations of artists and their art through bounded notions of place and culture, especially of the nation. Increasing attention has been drawn to the multivalent cultural positionings of the international artist, which complicate any neat links to race, nation, ethnicity, and homeland. Factors such as economic positioning, technological access, education, gender, sexuality, class, religion, and others, interrupt the essentialist contours of culture and, moreover, connect artists from one locale to another. In this context, new cosmopolitanisms have emerged which signify both national *and* universal affiliations in art production and its reception.

Underpinning this are the influences of globalization and, more specifically, the new patterns of intensified movement that artists undergo for their art. Artists are now exposed to a multitude of cultural experiences due to their resettlement in other countries and/or their constant movements from one city to the next, as well through their exposure to global influences from-a-distance. Noting this, exhibition curators have added more nuanced terms for artists of international experience including "diaspora" artists; artists that "cross borders"; artists of "transcultural" experience; "nomadic" artists; and more.[1] Terms such as nomadism, migration, mobility, immigration, diaspora, hybridity, and syncretism have, in various ways, come to be regularly associated with the new interconnected but also dis-connected patterns of being under globalization. Moreover, new conditions of migration have also reconfigured colonial relationships and, more specifically, the cultural position of artists within and across postcolonial contexts.

Through the impact of globalization on Asian contemporary art and the coinciding rise of interest in it, a cosmopolitan circuit of Asian art, artists and curators has been created. In this paper I examine the contemporary visual arts practice of two established and internationally exhibiting "Indonesian" artists who form part of this new class of hyper-mobile, "cosmopolitan" artists: Heri Dono and Mella Jaarsma. Both artists have been frequent travelers in the international art circuit since the 1990s and their practice has often been posited in exhibitions as representative of the Indonesian

contemporary art scene. They have both featured in a number of international exhibitions over recent decades and are often selected by both Asian and European curators for major shows. Within the Indonesian art scene, both are regarded as established artists, well-known locally and holding a privileged position as leading international artists who represent Indonesian avant-garde art. Dono was born in Java and continues to live and work there between his travels for art. And certainly, while he has developed a significant international reputation and may be seen to engage in an aesthetic that is in line with trends in contemporary international avant-garde art practice, his art making has, nonetheless, also often been connected to the everyday life and aesthetics of various communities in his home-country of Indonesia. Jaarsma was born in the Netherlands and has been resident in Java since 1984. Since the development of her art in Indonesia, she has become recognized internationally for her elaborate and, often, intricate fabrications of *jilbab*-like "second skins" that also serve as a medium for cross-cultural encounters. Moreover, Jaarsma is the co-director of *Cemeti*, a major contemporary international art gallery in Yogyakarta that has held a central role in fostering and promoting Indonesian contemporary art. By comparatively exploring these artists' practice, I seek to show how their art offers alternative representational scripts for rethinking the relationship of "Indonesian" space, place and subjectivity. In particular, I highlight a major point of difference between these two artists – one a "native" to Indonesia, and the other a "foreigner" whose heritage relates to the former Dutch colonial power in Indonesia – in order to show how contemporary cosmopolitanisms are variously rooted in different historical, socio-cultural, and political experiences. Moreover, I wish to explore how notions of Indonesian belonging are being reconstituted under present conditions of cosmopolitanism in postcolonial, globalized contexts. In considering such issues in this discussion, I turn to various interconnected and sometimes conflicting sources, namely the discourse of the artworks of these two artists and what they reveal as cultural texts; the respective artists' own statements and reflections concerning their art practice; Indonesian art discourses; and the discourses of the international avant-garde art scene.

Significantly, my application of the term "cosmopolitan" to describe contemporary international artists such as Dono and Jaarsma is rare in the contemporary art world, and, furthermore, might seem peculiarly odd to apply to a context such as Indonesia.[2] More often than not, the term "cosmopolitanism" has been applied to describe the kind of lifestyle that is associated with a thriving modern-day metropolis such as New York, Paris, and London. These days, however, Asian locales such as Tokyo, Shanghai, Hong Kong and even the city-state of Singapore cannot be ignored for their cosmopolitan characteristics.[3] However, rarely is Indonesia or an Indonesian artist described as cosmopolitan; a "patriot" yes, but seldom "cosmopolitan". In my use of the term, I wish to take advantage of new conceptions of cosmopolitanism that acknowledge the existence of cosmopolitanisms outside of Europe, and that extend

beyond the discipline of Western philosophy to include forms of cosmopolitan art practice in Asia. As Pollock *et al*. argue, "What the new archives, geographies, and practices of different historical cosmopolitanisms might reveal is … that cosmopolitanism is not a circle created by culture diffused from a centre, but instead, that centers are everywhere and circumferences nowhere" (12). Moreover, as Robbins asserts, "Like nations, cosmopolitanisms are now plural and particular" (2). In this sense, the Indonesian aesthetic cosmopolitanisms I discuss might also be considered as new forms of what Clifford describes as "discrepant cosmopolitanisms" (108).

Unlike terms such as "diaspora," I have found recent theories of "cosmopolitanism" to be illuminating and useful for thinking through these different but commonly situated life conditions for contemporary artists of global experience. Not withstanding the many-sided perspectives on what constitutes cosmopolitanism, I have found its application to be especially useful in describing those artists who move from one international exhibition to another and continue to return, however brief, to "a place of origin" or a place they call "home." In this context, alternative "cosmopolitan" forms of art expression and subjectivity emerge based on the multi-spatial, mobile and/or temporal experiences of performing trans/local belonging and trans/local art. Consequently, the "expansion of the meaning of home involves the creation of a new imagined home and community, that of the globe itself" (Ahmed 85). Importantly, these changes in spatial and cultural identifications call into question what it means to be a "patriotic" and/or "international" artist in a globalized art milieu, and one in which an increasing number of diaspora artists, such as Jaarsma, make Asia their home and vice-versa. From this perspective, I take cosmopolitanism to be not an uncomplicated universalist view of world citizenship that is posited as the binary opposite of patriotism. Rather, I argue that localized expressions of Indonesia/Asia are made dynamic by adopting a more fluid *and* grounded notion of cosmopolitanism that simultaneously encompasses both worldly and more localized lived experiences. Moreover, cosmopolitanisms are acknowledged as plural and particular, "actually existing" (Malcolmson) and located, against a detached transculturalism with pretences to universalism. In this, the local is always necessarily a regional/national/global nexus.

Notably, the type of cosmopolitanism I employ in discussing elite avant-garde artists such as Dono and Jaarsma is in keeping with the forms of "high culture" traditionally associated with cosmopolitan practice. As Chaney remarks, "A cosmopolitan avant-garde has not only survived [the onslaught of popular culture] but also prospered in the sense of enjoying the privileges of celebrity status and concomitant financial reward" (157). This might be contrasted to Beck's concept of "banal cosmopolitanisms" that describes *everyday, popular* practices of cosmopolitanism (19). As I will discuss in relation to Dono and Jaarsma, "Asian" avant-garde artists are no exception to the elite practices of cosmopolitanism to be found at the level of international

avant-garde art practice – especially when we consider their privileged education, class, economic and urban status within both their Asian and international, metropolitan spheres of circulation.

Importantly, increased global mobility has not automatically exempted artists from the allure, responsibilities, or effects of nationhood; for transnationality, especially of diasporic cultures, has not necessarily interrupted allegiance to the nation-state, nor essentialist identifications.[4] Nor has it automatically situated artists "at edges" or "on borders."[5] Indeed, the nation has actually been *reinforced* in international survey exhibitions, as issues of nationalism and "Asian-ness" continue to buttress the representation of Asian art, both in art historical discourse and within the curatorial design of international art exhibitions. There is no doubt, however, that Asian artists have also been affected by the universalizing effects of contemporary globalization. Many theorists have discussed the globalization of culture that occurs as people, art and information circulate in new global flows of communication, distribution and access from various centers around the world.[6] In the field of art practice, the effects of globalization are especially manifest in the proliferation of international biennial and triennial "blockbuster" exhibitions and the increased transits of artists and artworks. As a consequence of these new global processes, "… artists are becoming professional foreign travelers and, unlike many of their compatriots, are able to legitimize their journeys with official invitations. They are expected and welcomed abroad" (Institut für Auslandbeziehungen [IFA]). International art industries have created a particular world space for international artists in which a form of "global nomadic citizenship" is performed by artists, not by their practice of art within nation-states, but by "mov[ing] through space and across national borders" to pursue their art (Ahmed 85). Recognizing the trans/local geographies that are navigated in these movements, some have even gone so far as to define the particular kind of art that is produced within these new conditions as a "nomad aesthetic" or "global art" (Combinatoria).[7] Contemporary Asian artists have been no exception to these processes, experiencing greater human mobility through their international travels for art, and their art reaching wider international audiences.

"A Border Crosser with Good Ballast": The Consummate "Hybrid" Artist, Heri Dono.[8]

You see Heri Dono everywhere. (Philippine artist Alfredo Aquilizan, on fellow contemporary artist Heri Dono)[9]

Among other pre-eminent Asian artists invited for the fourth Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT2002) was popular Indonesian artist, Heri Dono. APT2002 sought to reflect on the maturation of contemporary art of the Asia-Pacific since the inception of the Asia-Pacific Triennial exhibitions in 1993. Dono had featured in both the first and third APTs; his inclusion in the fourth was an acknowledgement of his

international success and an affirmation of his established reputation as an Asian contemporary artist. Among other works that Dono presented in 2002 was his installation *Angels Caught in a Trap* (2002), which visitors encountered in the entrance hall of the gallery. It recalled his earlier *Flying Angels [Bidadari]* (1996) and the installation-performance piece *Fake Human Being* (1999). In all three works, a series of mechanized winged dolls resembling angels forms the focus of the piece, each angel suspended from the ceiling. As their fragile wings flap and whir, the multiples of angels appear to fly gracefully though the air. No ordinary angels, the delicate, human-like heads of these *wayang* puppet-like dolls don helmets, their little dangling feet wear pointed red boots, gender is denoted by the presence or absence of a penis attachment, and the rudimentary, heart-like mechanisms embedded in their chests propel their movement.

The angels have become an emblematic symbol for Dono, and seem an apt visual metaphor for the type of cosmopolitan art practice and more mobile life experiences that his prolific international art career has afforded him. Moreover, they visualize the kind of cosmopolitan life that Beck describes as a condition of "having 'roots' and 'wings' at the same time" (19). In this respect, Dono remarks, "I am an Indonesian, but I am also a person who lives in an international world. So I belong to the world. In art I feel I am a mediator, because art is not just concerned with the concept of beauty, but is also meant to raise the consciousness of others" (Polansky). Based in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, Heri Dono has become a distinguished international artist that has participated regularly in various art exhibitions over the world in the last fifteen years. In Indonesia, his steadfast rise to an impressive international prominence has been acknowledged in the affectionate title of "Donosaurus" (Wiyanto and Wardani). It was in his childhood, however, that the character of the angel captured his imagination in the stories he was told. Since then, angels have symbolized, for him, the freedom to dream and imagine. Says Dono, "Without imagination, life would be very dull. Angels are free to fly wherever they want" (Webb).

Like his angels, Dono has experienced a newfound freedom since his rise to fame on the international art scene. It is interesting to note, however, that Dono's international travels only began in 1990, when he left Indonesia for the first time for an exhibition in Switzerland at the Völkerkunde Museum. Since then, he has participated in numerous overseas artist residencies and exhibitions abroad – including in Holland, Germany, Japan, Australia, England, and New Zealand. In this sense, there is a direct correlation that may be traced between Dono's increased global mobility and his transnational art practice. In particular, he demonstrates the privileged mobility and global access of contemporary international artists and, therefore, a form of elite cosmopolitanism. Relating this freedom to the kinds of motifs of mobility that Dono engages with in his art, Indonesian art historian Astri Wright comments:

Heri Dono is also one of the most free [sic] individuals I know, inside and outside of the contemporary Indonesian art world. With this, I mean freedom from constrictions

while at the same time, being centred and morally/ethically informed by a philosophy all of his own. This is what allows him both freedom and connections across conventional categories and boundaries. Heri's freedom from being tied down in his personal and professional life-style, vis-à-vis both tradition and the machinations of contemporary art institutions, is evident also in his art. If his figures are not flying, in any number of contortionist positions, their sitting or walking is not bound or hampered by gravity. Feet – whether of the mythological lion-yak beast Heri calls a Barong in "The King who is Scared of the Approaching Barong" (2000) or the spiked boots in "Flower Diplomacy" (2000), barely even touch the ground. (87–88)

Importantly, the freedom Wright alludes to also suggests that Dono has not simply acquired an independence from the bounds of his home community in Indonesia towards a free-floating international existence. Rather, his freedom relates to a more expansive and flexible approach to his art and life practice that provides access to locally *and* globally rooted influences and experiences. In this sense, he exemplifies Robbins' idea of cosmopolitanism as "a reality of (re)attachment, multiple attachment, or attachment at a distance … Habitation that is complex and multiple [but] … does not cease to be a mode of belonging" (3). Recalling the title of Clifford's well-known work *Routes* – suggestive not only of "roots" (arboreal and/or cultural) and "routes" (as pathways), but also of the verb to "rout" – Dono's movements and attachments may be likened to Clifford's notion of an identity that is about "dwelling-in-travel" (7–8).

While Dono continues to exhibit internationally, he also remains deeply engaged in the everyday life of his home community in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, continuing to return there between his travels and maintaining grass-roots connections with artists, intellectuals, activists, friends, and general members of the local community. In particular, Dono often involves the everyday people of his hometown (such as mechanics, gravediggers, children, electricians, and *wayang* performers) in forms of collaborative art practice, from production of the work through to reception. Moreover, he also draws on local cultural forms, traditions, and beliefs in his work.

Dono's form of "discrepant cosmopolitan" art practice is evidenced, for example, in his collaboration with people from a village in Yogyakarta in the performance of *Kuda Binal [Wild Horses]* (1992).[10] Based on a traditional Indonesian horse-dance trance *(Jaran Kepang)*, Dono's contemporary interpretation took place just outside the Sultan's palace complex and incorporated visual devices from both Indonesian folk-dance theatre and contemporary "performance art" practice. More specifically, it involved an evening fire-dance in which ten dancers (instead of traditional puppets) wore strange-looking teargas masks on their heads and underwear over their trousers. The dancers – children, housewives and *becak* drivers from Kleben, a *kampong* in Yogyakarta – "straddled constructions with the heads of horses, humans and other animals" (Sumartono 35). Accompanying the dancers' movements was contemporary music by Indonesian instrumentalist, Joseph Praba.

In traditional trance rituals of *kuda lumping*, people come to assume animal-like states as, for instance, snakes, pigs, monkeys, or horses. Dono's take on this ritual involves an appropriation of elements of traditional mythology which upholds the sacredness of animals, to comment on the hypocrisy of contemporary Indonesian society in which the destruction of the natural environment and endangered animal species occurs as a result of human greed. Interestingly, forms of traditional trance dancing were considered taboo under the Suharto government. When Suharto's New Order took over in 1965, Indonesians were forced to adopt an official religion. Moreover, with its traditional animist spiritual associations, trance dancing represented an anomaly to the earlier Sukarno government's nation-building agenda, and in particular, to its state-defined version of civil religion based on the state philosophy of *Pancasila*.[11] Borrowing from Geertz, the sort of "Neo-Javanist" revivalism that Dono participates in suggests "an attempt to revitalize traditional Javanese beliefs and expressive forms, to return them to public favor by demonstrating their continued relevance to the contemporary world" (80).[12] This revivalism runs counter to the effects of "Pancasilaism" which, as Geertz argues, was intended to "muffle particularistic cultural expressions, to thin them out in favor of a generalized moralism of a developmentalist, pan-Indonesian sort" (80). Dono's reminder of local animist traditions is also, therefore, a critical reminder of particular Javanese cultural histories prior to the establishment of a state-driven, prescriptive, modernist national culture.

In his crossings of local and global experience, Dono's hybrid art practice provides for an examination of a new breed of *cosmopolitan* contemporary artist, poised somewhere between worldly and homely interests, universal but by no means postnational in their artistic inspirations and motivations. Previously, cosmopolitanism referred exclusively to ideas and experiences of universality and an elitist sense of free-floating "detachment from the bonds, commitments, and affiliations that constrain ordinary nation-bound lives" (Robbins 1). However, recent social theorists have called for more complex and diverse notions of cosmopolitanism that might take into account the blurring boundaries between national and transnational affiliations in lieu of intensified forms of contemporary globalization.[13] This includes the cultural and geographic boundaries traversed and maintained by contemporary artists such as Dono, whose cultural allegiances, influences and experiences in art and life are recognizably *plural and particular* in their outlook and attachment and, therefore, complicate any easy categorization of their art.

As well as the border crossings of geography that Dono performs as he moves around the world for his art, there are the crossings he makes as he melds and shifts between ideas, forms and media in his actual art practice. While Dono's art communicates easily with most audiences worldwide, finding correlation with the formal and stylistic qualities in international formulas of contemporary art, there remain significant locally embedded connections, motivations and materials in his art; he often

takes on the task of acquainting himself with Javanese rituals, customs, beliefs, practices, and people as part of his art process and inspiration. In this vein, some have even gone so far as to argue that Dono continues the chain of a localized, Southeast Asian installation and performance art practice which precedes their emergence in contemporary, international avant-garde art practice.[14] However, Dono gives an indication of his own perspective regarding notions of cultural synthesis and purity when he says:

I am not worried about Javanese culture disappearing because of the influence of Western culture … In my opinion it is not possible for a culture to fade or disappear, as long as there are people who are actively creating. If there are no such people, why then, the culture is already dead!" (Wright 87–88)

Dono's remarks here also point to his own "cosmopolitan" interventions into local cultural practice, as well as the always-changing character of the local in relation to external influences. Interestingly, the hybrid economy of cultural symbols and artistic modes that Dono employs provides for varying reception of his works across different contexts of art reception. For instance, while an Indonesian audience might interpret Dono's art as a subversion of local cultural symbols, Western audiences might simply reify essentialist images of Indonesia in their translations of his work.

The kind of "organic hybridities"[15] (Bakhtin) and convergences of influence and form that Dono alludes to explains his particular style of "appropriation" in art. A consummate hybrid in art and life, Dono explains his many influences and attitudes regarding his sources of artistic inspiration in the following:

… this is culture we have to share. I don't want to claim things, and say that other people cannot express themselves through this style. It belongs to everyone. It's like Balinese sculpture … when I was a student in art school, I saw many European painters, like Paul Klee, Miro, Picasso, Kandinsky. So in the medium [of painting] I was influenced I guess. But at the same time I also did research about wayang beber [Javanese wayang stories on painted scrolls] … and also lukisan kaca [reverse glass painting, typically from Cirebon, in north west Java] … (Polansky)

Dono's perspective on culture is worth reflecting on in relation to Stuart Hall's formulations of cultural identity as *production*. For Hall, cultural identity is a dynamic process that constantly shifts in meaning in relation to its social, political, and cultural contexts. This production of cultural identity is perhaps nowhere more obvious than in the making of visual forms of material cultural production that are fine art, literature, and film. As with Dono's art practice, identity is presented in these art forms, not as an already accomplished truth, but as something *in process* or *production*. Hence, identity comes to be defined within representation itself, rather than outside of it (Hall 222–37). As such, there can be no assumption of an authoritative "original" culture. Moreover, the sort of hybrid process Dono engages in his art is also "determined by specific historical formations and cultural repertoires of enunciation" (Papastergiadis 189). This includes the constitution of cultural identity through processes of artistic

and social collaboration, in which Dono's position as artist is achieved in relation to his Indonesian and international communities of belonging.

Well acquainted with the forms and ideas of modernist art since his time at the Institute of the Arts (ISI) in Yogyakarta, Dono has also become fluent in the art of *wayang kulit* – traditional Indonesian shadow plays – following his apprenticeship with the renowned shadow puppet master Sukasman. Like the multi-media forms that are undertaken in *wayang kulit*, Dono is a cross-disciplinary artist engaging in painting, sculpture, music, and performance. And certainly there is a theatrical sensibility that we find in Dono's work, whether in his moving and audible "cinematic sculpture" or his forays into performance and puppetry. Moreover, there is also a certain blend of tragic comedy, political satire, and playful humor that is characteristic of Javanese *wayang*, that also comes through in Dono's art. For instance, cartoonish *wayang*-like authority figures point deadly guns in paintings such as *Dialog with a Pistol* (1998) and *Flower Diplomacy* (2000), and the serious idiocies of political repression are evident in installations such as *Political Clowns* (1999), *Magician Who Never Killed* (2000) and *Superman Still Learning How to Wear Underwear* (2000).

In recent years, Dono has turned more directly to issues of international politics, particularly after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. At the 50th Venice Biennale of 2003, Dono presented the installation entitled *Trojan Horse* (2003) as part of the "Zones of Urgency" exhibition, curated by Hou Hanru. Importantly, Dono's inclusion in the Biennale was separate from the Indonesian pavilion suggesting his transnational status.[16] *Trojan Horse* comprised a painting and gigantic shadow puppet in the form of a horse. Depicted in the painting are prominent international political figures such as a diminutive former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein; and the towering alliance of United States President George Bush in the form of "Superman" and Prime Minister Tony Blair as "Badman"; while an airplane blazes in the skies above.

Significantly, there also appears a shift here in the choice of subject matter for Dono. *Trojan Horse* evinces an apparent turn to issues of world politics in Dono's art which were not so prevalent in his oeuvre prior to the fall of the New Order regime. Read against his other, more localized works with their references to Indonesian socio-political issues, *Trojan Horse* becomes a marker for a loss of local political resistance as regular subject matter for Dono's art and, instead, reveals a differently focused attention to socio-political issues of international relevance. This shift might reflect Dono's now more familiar *habitus* of international art practice. It also reinforces Dono's established international reputation by the time of his participation in the Venice Biennale – itself, a recurring exhibition that presents the work of established international artists. Interestingly, in the Indonesian pavilion, more localized socio-political issues were addressed in works by artists including Dadang Christanto and Arahmaiani, who presented works under the theme of "Paradise Lost: Mourning the World," commemorating the Bali Bombings of 2002.

Dono is acutely aware of the economic and ideological disparities among people as he travels between Indonesia and other countries, and, for this reason, is often critical in his art of the ill effects of modernization and the destructive technologies that it has produced. He points to the discord between the natural and constructed worlds and, by contrast, attempts to create an ecology of inspirations, forms, and outcomes in his art practice, from production through to reception. In doing so, he disregards old art-historical divides between high and low art, purity of forms and ideas, and leans, instead, towards a postmodern high-art aesthetic of purposeful ambivalence. For instance, in works such as *Gamelan of Rumour* (1992-93), *Ceremony of the Soul* (1995), *Fermentation of Mind* (1994), *Flying Angels* (1996), and *Watching the Marginal People* (2000), Dono employs low-tech mechanical technologies to create kinetic installations of material and symphonic energies. In the installation *Gamelan of Rumour*, for instance, the sounds of Javanese musical instruments are played electronically by an invisible gamelan orchestra. This electronic gamelan is presented in the form of several electronic sound devices propped on low wooden blocks, each connected by wire to a central power station. Their scattered placement and low-level dimensions echo the configurations of a traditional gamelan orchestra, but, unlike the identifiable members of the gamelan, the musicians behind these sounds remain faceless. Accountability for noise is difficult to identify, much like everyday rumors in public life and, in particular, those that are a result of "anonymous" actions within bureaucracies.

In his use of electronic and mechanical apparatus, Dono is described as "a low-tech magician" bringing to life the unwanted junk stuff of Yogyakartan rubbish tips and roadsides in buzzing, whirling, and humming audio-visual installations. Commenting on the processes of recycling that are common to Yogyakarta, Dono points to the resourcefulness that underlies his own work and that of the everyday practices of reappropriation in his Yogyakartan community:

You can find thousands of small radio shops in Yogyakarta repairing used transistor radios. After [being] repaired these radios [are] sold cheaply … The used radio business is a culture. The mechanics recycle goods that were thrown away. They make a device out of invaluable things that could spread information among the grassroots and also provide entertainment. (Supangkat 60)

Dono's "low-tech magician" skills were taken to dramatic effect in his performance-installation piece *Animal Journey* (1997), presented at the Harima Sounding Sphere Festival. For this project, Dono built on his earlier explorations of sound in works such as *Gamelan of Rumour* and *Ceremony of the Soul*. The piece comprised twenty-five bicycles turned into instruments of sound. More specifically, a tape recorder was attached to each bicycle with the sounds of various Indonesian animals pre-recorded on tape. By pedaling each bicycle, riders activated the different animal sounds and, depending on the speed at which they pedaled, the animal sounds were either slowed down or quickened. Alongside the installation, a performance was also

orchestrated in which five bicycles were positioned in one of five lanes in a circular racetrack. Once the "conductor" of the performance gave a signal, the animal sounds were heard as performers began pedaling around the track. At one point in the track, performers were requested to don animal masks and then continue on their way. Pointing to the inspiration behind this project, Dono explained, "Everyday in Yogya, I use a bicycle, and I go everywhere with it. This makes me think of people, especially the people in Harima [Japan] because Harima is a 'technopolis,' a new city. I wanted to remind them that the bicycle is still important" (Campbell). Certainly, while Dono's desire is to remind others of Indonesian socio-economic and technological conditions, it is worth noting that the bicycle is just as important in technologically advanced and modern localities such as Amsterdam.

Like other works of Dono, *Animal Journey* becomes a reminder of the everyday technologies and means of transport, which define the lives of those living in developing countries such as Indonesia. However, there is also a reminder of the destruction of nature, including animal life, on the march to modernization. Misinterpretation and misuse of advanced technologies has seen an increase in pollution and the marginalization, if not total elimination, of natural habitats. The bicycle and the animal face similar kinds of extinction in the race to modernity. Reflecting a traditional modernist-romantic critique on the destructive effects of technology, Dono remarks, "In the modernization process, the bicycle has no place to go; it's dangerous because of motorbikes and cars. For the animals it is the same: there is no space for them" (Binder and Haupt). Hence, for Dono, the (re-)animation of bicycle into animal is in line with his beliefs on the soul and spirit to be found in all things. Dono believes "everything has a soul" and through his art processes of recycling and reincarnation in particular, there is a plea for realizing the connectedness of things in the world. It was Dono's childhood fascination with Western cartoons which led him to imagine the likeness between the world of cartoon animation and that of animistic spirits, finding links between animation and animism: "In my mind the cartoon world is similar to an animistic world where everything has soul, spirit and feelings. In this kind of world, communication has no barriers" (Supangkat 101).

To label Dono's work as either Indonesian or Western, or even an uncomplicated synthesis of both, is a simplification and an injustice to the philosophy and ethics that underlie his art and life practice. Nor is his art exemplary of a kind of essential cosmopolitanism.[17] Rather, Dono's art expresses the perpetual condition of social change and transition, of art process and continuity. There is a sense of becoming that belies the traces of an origin or final destination. However, there is also no doubt that Dono now represents an elite group of Asian artists who have been accorded disproportionate representation in purported "survey" exhibitions. As Joan Kee remarks, "one discerns the implicit formation of an overclass of Asian artists monopolizing a finite amount of critical visibility" (603–4).

For many of his Indonesian contemporaries, Dono has come to represent such an "overclass." "The realm of the transnational is still largely inaccessible to all but a small, well-funded minority, despite the idealism embedded," as Kee points out, "in curatorial premises like 'global mobility' or 'hybridity'" (604). Despite his reputation of transnational privilege, Heri Dono remains one of the most warm-spirited, "down-to-earth" people I have ever come to know. This irony, for me, only adds to remembering the hybrid possibilities for being an actually existing cosmopolitan artist and the humanity that might persist in the most celebrated and high-flying of international artists.

Within transnational movements, notions of home and belonging become constituted in different ways. While the constant border-crossings of contemporary international artists might be perceived as a state of "homelessness,"[18] the reality is that the transnational space of the art world may also come to be constituted as another kind of home for many of these artists, with their regular international travels, travel-spots and acquaintances. Moreover, for diaspora artists, distance from the home country might actually serve to strengthen homely ties. Drawing from her real-life circumstances of migration to and resettlement in Indonesia, the art practice of Dutch-born Indonesian artist, Mella Jaarsma, reveals the nuances and complexities of such movements. As I discuss in the next section, her art often provokes a questioning of cultural authenticity at the skin surface.

Exchanging Skins: the art of Mella Jaarsma

Dari mana? Mau ke mana? Asli mana? Where are you from? Where are you going? Where are you from originally? So goes the customary Indonesian call to travelers passing through the Indonesian archipelago, also adopted as the title for one of the most celebrated Orientalist paintings by French modernist artist Paul Gauguin.[19] It is an appeal that suggests a presumed trajectory of movement and cultural shift as a traveler, and, moreover, evokes an encounter of unfamiliarity between two strangers: one, a foreigner, and the other a native. Hence, it is also a proposal from one stranger to another to overcome the distance between them – of cultures and life histories – now that their bodily proximity makes them at least physically intimate strangers.

Encountering embodied otherness during experiences of travel and migration has been a key theme motivating the art of Mella Jaarsma ever since her own move to Indonesia. Born in the Netherlands, Jaarsma has been resident in Java since 1984 and has become recognized internationally for her elaborate and, often, intricate fabrications of "second skins." Adopting the motif of skin, she has created numerous bodily coverings which resemble the *jilbab* – the traditional robe worn by Muslim girls that hides everything but the eyes.[20] These skins have been made from a variety of materials including natural animal and plant skins as well as artificial skins, where the choice of material often relates to specific cultural identities and contexts.[21] She says,

We wear a second skin every day that indicates, for instance, our membership of specific groups in our cultural, social and religious surroundings. Wearing a veil, covering the body and face, on one hand can be seen as a dress code that signifies the group to which we belong. On the other hand, it conceals identity much in the way camouflage does. In both cases, it is about giving up individuality and personal identity for the sake of becoming unapproachable and untouchable – the person's identity becomes totally blurred. (Jaarsma "Identities versus Globalisation Catalogue")

In effect, Jaarsma investigates the different cultural skins we inhabit and come across in our travels and the kind of outcomes that the meeting of different skins brings about. In doing so, she urges us to consider how our encounters with strangers take place at the level of the body, as well as how skin performs a peculiar interplay of containing and exposing the subject, "paradoxically protect[ing] us from others and expos[ing] us to them" (Cataldi 145). Hence, at the same time as Jaarsma's veils mask

Figure 1 Mella Jaarsma, *Hi Inlander No 14*, 1999. (Queensland Art Gallery Foundation)

All Mella Jaarsma figures: Treated skins (kangaroo, frog, fish and chicken) 244 × 97 cm (kangaroo); 140 × 84 cm (frog); 150 × 100 cm (fish); 152 × 95 cm (chicken).

Figure 2 Mella Jaarsma, *Hi Inlander*, 1999. (Queensland Art Gallery Foundation)

the racial background of the wearer, both the wearer (the stranger within) and the viewer (the stranger without) are also encouraged to experience "another skin." Throughout this process, Jaarsma asks us to consider questions such as: what might it be like to inhabit and to move in another's skin? Does taking residence in another body create an alternative subjectivity? In adopting the skin of another, can skin become comfortable shelter or is it always an altogether foreign experience? Is skin a porous interface for movements of intercultural communication or an impermeable barrier to passages for intercultural dialogue? The artist regards these as important questions in what she feels is a waning tolerance for multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies.

An obvious source of inspiration for the kind of inter-cultural and cross-cultural investigations Jaarsma undertakes in her installations and performances is her own diasporic existence. While it is the case that she grew up in the Netherlands, Jaarsma has established fairly solid albeit hybrid roots in Indonesia since her move. Following her art education in the Netherlands at the Fine Arts Academy "Minerva" in Groningen (1978–1984), Jaarsma undertook further art training in Indonesia at the Art Institute of Indonesia in Yogyakarta (1985–1986) and at the Art Institute Jakarta (1984). She has chosen to live, work, and raise a family from Java, and shares her life with husband and fellow artist, Nindityo Adipurnomo, with whom she established the independent art space, *Cemeti Art House* in Yogyakarta in 1988. In this regard, her experience of being a diaspora artist is unusual, as a Western artist moving to Asia; more often, non-Western artists move to the West. While some locals are hostile to Jaarsma's representation as an "Indonesian" artist, most acknowledge her important contribution to developing the contemporary art scene in Indonesia as the co-director of *Cemeti*. Commenting on her experience of migration from the Netherlands and resettlement in Indonesia she remarks:

By choosing to live within a totally different culture, after having grown up in the Netherlands, I became more aware of the values and norms of my own cultural background. This process made me conscious of differences between cultures and also taught me how to identify these differences. What we consider reality comes to us by means of contrasts in experiences. My work focuses on an awareness of these experiences – ideas about our own existence in a certain place in a particular world. (Huangfu 167)

Jaarsma here affirms that the experience of migration often produces a condition of strangeness that is contrasted with a more familiar place that one usually calls "home." In leaving her home nation, Jaarsma becomes a stranger, "a body out of place" in the everyday world and in the communities she initially encountered and came to inhabit in Indonesia. Following Ahmed's work, "here, the condition of being a stranger is determined by the event of leaving home" (87). However, as Ahmed also points out, in this formulation "home is implicitly constructed as a purified space of belonging in which the subject is too comfortable to question the limits or borders of her or his experience, indeed where the subject is so at ease that she or he does not think." Moreover, "home becomes associated with stasis, boundaries, identity and fixity" (87).

But when does a stranger begin to acquire the status of less strange and more familiar and what does "home" come to mean as diasporic peoples such as Jaarsma come to know different experiences of locality? Jaarsma's accumulated experiences and lived connections with and within Indonesia would suggest that she is, at least now, not a *complete* stranger. Instead, she is likely to tread along a continuum of alienation and intimacy, distance and proximity, in which degrees of strangeness and familiarity are experienced dependent on specific encounters with strange and familiar Others. In this, two contrasting definitions of "home territories" (Morley) emerge: home as "where one lives" and home as "where one comes from." In her work on diasporic communities, Avtar Brah astutely observes that while the concept of diaspora implicitly inscribes the imagination of a mythic homeland, "not all diasporas inscribe homing desire through a wish to return to a place of origin" (193). In Jaarsma's case, for example, home is also inscribed as the lived experience of her Yogyakartan-Indonesian locality. Here, as Ahmed explains,

Home as "where one usually lives" becomes theorized as the lived experience of locality … the locality intrudes into the senses: it defines what one smells, hears, touches, feels, remembers. The lived experience of being-at-home hence involves the enveloping of subjects in a space which is not simply outside them: being-at-home suggests that the subject and space leak into each other, inhabit each other. (89)

Since her move to Indonesia, Jaarsma has participated in a number of exhibitions outside Indonesia in which she has represented Indonesian contemporary art practice, including "The Third Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art" (APT3). Like the growing number of other internationally practicing artists who take residence in a place other than their country of origin, her inclusion in these exhibitions has brought to the fore problems of representation.[22] Quite tellingly, in her catalogue essay for The Third Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, curator Julie Ewington headed Jaarsma's art as concerning "the problem of location" (62). For APT3 curators, Jaarsma's Dutch heritage was regarded as less important than her contributions to Indonesian art and, in this sense, also disrupted traditional models of diaspora that place diasporic communities at the peripheries of their "receiving" country. She was controversially presented within the Indonesia section of the exhibition, raising questions about her suitability to this category considering the addition of the "Crossing Borders" section to the 1999 triennial. The "Crossing Borders" section sought to include "Artists who cross borders in their life and work … and who have a direct relationship and involvement with the Asia-Pacific region today" (Turner *et al*. 188). For some, Jaarsma was considered better suited to the latter exhibition section, with its themes of diaspora, border crossings, and cultural mobility. Given the suggestion of cultural homogeneity in the national exhibition frameworks, when posited against the "Crossing Borders" section, Jaarsma's "Indonesian" inclusion was made confusing. Was this curatorial strategy a case of reflecting contemporary Indonesian cultural

Figure 3 Mella Jaarsma, *Hi Inlander No 6,* 1999. (Queensland Art Gallery Foundation)

heterogeneity, an intentional prioritizing of Jaarsma's Indonesian home base over her continued diasporic identifications and international travels as an artist, or the result of genuine deliberation between the paradoxical binary that was created against nation/crossing borders?[23] Whatever the reasoning, these very questions strike at the heart of Jaarsma's own cultural investigations, and her attempts through her art, "to reject the question of origin and actually deconstruct identities by producing renewable identities, seeing identity as a transient invention" (Jaarsma, as quoted in Valentine Willie Fine Art 3). Jaarsma's rejection of the idea of origin is particularly interesting when compared with Dono's more "Indonesian"-inflected art practice. While Jaarsma draws on the visual economy of animals to highlight human connections beyond cultural difference, Dono's art practice relies more heavily on cultural signifiers of "Indonesian-ness" to emphasize changing Indonesian cultures and traditions.

For a performance in Yogyakarta in July 1998, Jaarsma invited several foreigners who were living in Yogyakarta at the time, to cook and share frog-legs with passersby in a prominent public street in Yogyakarta. Entitled *Pribumi* (literally, "son of the soil", hence, "indigenous person"), the performance attempted to open up a space for dialogue between people of different races through the culturally codified medium of (animal) food. Frog-legs, while a Chinese delicacy in Indonesia, are, on the other hand, usually considered unclean (*haram*) by Muslims. However, in this culinary performance, many Muslim Javanese were made sufficiently curious so as to try the, until then, unfamiliar cuisine, provoking the question of how the literal consumption of strangers (and their foreign food) might incite a transformation in the subject who consumes (Ahmed 115). More specifically, this sense of "inhabiting the other" through ingesting food provokes a moment of cross-cultural understanding. The timing of this performance is significant, for it followed the riots of 13 and 14 May 1998, in the neighboring city of Solo, in which numerous Indonesians of Chinese ethnicity were raped and killed. The title of the performance referred to the notes that many people placed on their front doors with the word *Pribumi, Pribumi asli,* or *Pribumi asli Muslim* in a precautionary declaration of their indigenousness or even Muslim indigenousness.[24]

These were, in fact, the sorts of issues Jaarsma further developed in her engaging installation and performance for APT3. Entitled *Hi Inlander (Hello Native)* (1999), in this follow-up work to *Pribumi*, Jaarsma continued to engage in a kind of socially committed art that would, again, attempt to promote cross-cultural dialogue through the exchange and consumption of cooked animal food. Looking back on the project she explains, "I really wanted to create a work which could open up discussions between different kinds of people and get people interested in different cultures, different religions and so on" (Jaarsma, as quoted in Queensland Art Gallery). Alongside the creation of four of her now iconic robes – on this occasion made from Javanese *gurami* fish skins, frog skins, chicken skin (and feet) and kangaroo hides – Jaarsma also directed two performances. The first involved four people who modeled the robes on the opening night of the exhibition as they intermingled with curious-minded exhibition visitors. Given the Australian context of this exhibition, the robe made of kangaroo-hide suggested a cultural skin particular to Australians. The second and principal performance involved the participation of these models as cooks for yet another culinary performance in which different animal meats were fried and offered to gallery visitors, with the visitors, in effect, *consuming strangers*. The models, unrecognizable except for their naked eyes, hands, and feet, performed the role of hospitable strangers in a foreign land; a metaphor for cultural trust and understanding through sharing and ingesting the gift and human necessity of food. At another level, the animal associations – particularly that of humans dressed in animal skins – was a humbling reminder of human connectedness across cultural differences through the shared condition of animality.[25]

Figure 4 Mella Jaarsma, *Hi Inlander,* 1999. (Queensland Art Gallery Foundation)

The title alone was evocative of the politics of social positioning with its reference to the Dutch word "inlander" – a derogatory and now taboo term for "native" or "indigenous" Indonesians that is also suggestive of their colonized and, therefore, more lowly status. While Jaarsma's use of the term was an attempt to disrupt the taboo associated with it, her own Dutch heritage provoked some discomfort for at least one Indonesian-born artist.[26] By contrast, the joy of discovering unexpected cultural affinities and connections also provided for positive cultural engagements. Recalling one such episode, Jaarsma explains:

The exhibition organizers promised me an Aboriginal model, who would walk around in my veil, made of chicken feet, during the press conference at the APT3. I had never met the model, Rodney, and when I arrived he was already wearing the veil. He was surprised to see a white person representing Indonesia and when we started to whisper, because the press conference had already started, he whispered through the veil and I only could see his dark eyes surrounded by all the chicken feet. Hearing my Dutch accent he suddenly started to speak Dutch to me, a big surprise! We exchanged information about where we were born, where we grew up and where we lived now. Rodney turned out to be an Aboriginal from the stolen generation; a generation of indigenous children that were taken away from their parents, to grow up in a "white" family. I already knew about this stolen generation, because I was in Australia when it was hot news on the television at that time. The Prime Minister didn't want to apologize for what had happened and he was getting a lot of protests. Rodney grew up in a Dutch immigrant family, who moved back to the Netherlands when he was eleven. As an adult, he decided to go back to Arnhemland searching for his indigenous background. Isn't it a moment of exchange like this that I had made the artwork for? (Jaarsma, "About the Performances")

Jaarsma's visual investigations into the relationship between cultural recognition, identity, and belonging, forcefully challenge the idea of culture (especially national and regional culture) as a hermetically sealed and unchanging entity. This demonstrates how the experience of diasporicity, cultural displacement and experiences of otherness, open up new possibilities of being-in-becoming, questioning notions of authenticity and the very concept of cultural identity itself. Cross-cultural citizenship, belonging and exchange are made dynamic, elastic and uncertain. In this way, the fragmentary and dislocatory effects of diasporicity and its implicit movements also signal the possibility for new critical cultural imaginings and expressions unencumbered by racially essentialist definitions of subjectivity. In the case of her strange encounter with the Dutch-speaking, Aboriginal model, the notion of skin as both bodily contour and porous opening is revealed. In this instance of inhabiting a second skin, the

skin does not simply contain the homely subject, but … allows the subject to be touched and touch the world that is neither simply in the home or away from the home. The home as skin suggests the boundary between home and away is permeable, but also that the boundary between home and away is permeable as well. (Ahmed 89)

Importantly, Jaarsma's is a diasporic position of privilege and choice rather than one of forced exile.[27] By contrast, the Aboriginal model's own diasporic experiences away from his Aboriginal community within Australia, as well as while growing up in the Netherlands, offers an altogether different kind of diasporic existence. As Brah remarks on the issue of migration, "The question is not simply about who travels, but when, how, and under what circumstances?" (Brah 182). Moreover, the personal experiences of migration that both Jaarsma and the Aboriginal model have lived through demonstrate that "Movement away is also movement within the constitution of home as such. Movement away is always affective: it affects how 'homely' one might feel and fail to feel" (Ahmed 80). However, it is important to remember the different kinds of journeys undertaken by traveling figures such as the migrant, the nomad and the exile, so as to highlight "the real and substantive differences in which particular movements across spatial borders take place" (Ahmed 80). Again, Ahmed poses provocative questions relating to such comparative freedoms: "[W]hat different effect does it have on identity when one is forced to move? Does one ever move freely? What movements are possible and, moreover, what movements are impossible? Who has a passport and can move *there*? Who does not have a passport, and yet moves?" (original emphasis) (Ahmed 80).

Conclusion

In the past few decades, much effort has been made to acknowledge Indonesian contemporary art and its unique place in the field of international art practice. However, Indonesian curator Rizki Zaelani has recently pondered the relational character of contemporary art internationally, asking the controversial question, "Are not the developments and advances now taking place in the countries in Asia also determined by their relationship to the advances happening in the developed countries of the West?" (Zaelani). But surely the destiny of Asian art can no longer be determined in the oppositional categories of East and West in a world where artists' and art objects' real trajectories, through and across geo-spatial borders, intersect, merge, converge, and overlap in ways which defy such essentialist mappings. Indeed, the physically and culturally mobile Asian artist that now oscillates between myriad geographic, cultural, social, and institutional spaces poses a different set of representational issues for the exhibitions and interpretation of Asian contemporary art.

Dono and Jaarsma push categorical conceptions of "Indonesia," "Asia," "Southeast Asia," "Asian diasporas," and "Asian cosmopolitanisms" into increasingly complex territory for their representational charting in exhibitions. Both artists carry out regular travels on the passport of international installation and performance artist – a certain kind of *privileged* cosmopolitan mobility and transaction, given the frequency and relative freedom with which they experience "strange encounters" with Others during such journeys. While they both draw on local experiences in Indonesia for their

art practice, as well as from their transnational movements as international artists, their individual histories suggest different notions of cosmopolitan belonging. As I have discussed here, these artists' respective practices are rooted in different cultural histories and relationships to Indonesia and to the world. Moreover, while both are popularly received by international art audiences, Dono's cultural position has tended to be valued and sanctioned by the international art world through essentialized notions of Indonesian culture and origin, while Jaarsma's unusual translocal, diasporic experiences have been emphasized. Importantly, attention to where and how artists nurture cultural roots – however anarchic, transitory or entrenched – highlights different modes of being cosmopolitan in today's international art world, and necessarily complicates any straightforward expressions and representations of patriotic proclivity or universalist aspirations, of East or West, and of colonial or postcolonial belonging. As a result of such transformations, artists such as Dono and Jaarsma are creating renewed critical possibilities for conceiving and performing contemporary subjectivity and belonging, defying the simplified "Asian differential" presented in the curatorial discourses of dominant biennial/triennial international art exhibitions and redefining Indonesian art.

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Notes

1. The label of "diaspora artist" was increasingly used throughout the 1990s to describe those artists scattered in various parts of the world, but especially non-Western artists. While the term formally referred to exiled communities forced to leave their territories under political, economic or other persecution, today, diaspora has come to refer to "the migration (either forced or voluntary) of groups of people belonging to the same nationality or the same culture, and the resultant intercultural contacts among immigrants." As art historian Kitty Zijlmans explains in her "East West Home's Best: Cultural Identity in the Present Nomadic Age": "Nowadays the diaspora concept is also used in studies on art when referring to artists, notable non-Western artists, who live and work outside their native countries" (Ang et al. 82). While there is now a plethora of published material relating to diasporic cultures, among those which deal with how visual culture is engaged with in the diasporas are: Nikos Papastergiadis' *Dialogues in the Diasporas: Essays and Conversations on Cultural Identity* of 1998; Nicholas Mirzoeff (ed.) *Diaspora and Visual Culture: Representing Africans and Jews* of 2000; and the special issue of the journal *Art & Design* guest edited by Nikos Papastergiadis and entitled "Art & Cultural Difference: Hybrids and Clusters" of 1995.

2. The few attempts at applying the theory of cosmopolitanism in any rigorous way to the international milieu of contemporary art practice include Peter Wollen's "The cosmopolitan Ideal in the Arts" in the 1994 *Travellers' Tales: Narratives of home and displacement* (George Robertson et al) and David Chaney's "Cosmopolitan Art and Cultural Citizenship" in *Theory, Culture & Society* 19.1–2 (2002).

3. Recent studies of cosmopolitanism are "interested to see what new archives might be brought to bear on the analysis of cosmopolitanism; to discover whether the historical and, what is equally important, the geocultural perspective on the problem [can] be extended beyond the singular, privileged location of European thought and history; and to determine whether disciplinary approaches [can] be varied so as to move the discussion beyond the stultifying preoccupations of Western philosophy and to allow the possibility of capturing the wider range of cosmopolitan practices that have actually existed in history." See "Cosmopolitanisms" by Sheldon Pollock et al. (9–10).

4. As Friedman suggests, there is often "a conflation of territorial and social boundaries" which leads to the assumption that transnationalisms that refer to the escape from one physical territory to another also interrupt prior social identifications and attachments to the originating territory. This is not necessarily the case, and is most obviously evidenced through the localizing power of national passports within the global administration of people. See Jonathon Friedman, "From Roots to Routes: Tropes for Trippers" in *Anthropological Theory* 2.1 (March 2002): 34; n3.

5. In this respect Abdul R. JanMohamed asks, "How can one situate oneself on the border? What kind of space characterises it? In theory, and effectively in practice, borders are neither inside nor outside the territory they define but simply designate the difference between interiority and exteriority, they are points of infinite regression. Thus, intellectuals located at this site are not, so to speak, 'sitting' on the border; rather they are forced to constitute themselves as the border." See Abdul R. JanMohamed, "Worldliness-without-World, Homelessness-as-Home: Toward a Definition of the Specular Border Intellectual,"

in Michael Sprinker (ed.), *Edward Said: A Critical Reader* (1992: 103).

6. See for instance Saskia Sassen's theories of globalization in *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* of 1991; and Frederick Buell's, *National Culture and the New Global System* of 1994.

7. Along with the mobility of artists, the ability for art itself to travel more readily through the flows of such networks as "a text-in-motion" (Appadurai 9) has also effected cultural consequences for the global production, exhibition and reception of Asian art. Globalization has made it increasingly easy for the already made art object to travel without the artist, and even, for the art object to be "made" by others upon reaching its destination using the artist's instructions. By contrast, while it is not always possible or necessary for the artist to travel with or for their work, many do so now for the purpose of installing their work, especially for newly commissioned works to be created for exhibitions or for general publicity purposes. On the mobility of cultural objects see Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation* (1998).

8. I borrow this description of Dono from art historian Astri Wright. See Wright. Regrettably it was not possible to include reproductions of Heri Dono's art work in this article, as was originally intended, due to delays in acquiring permissions.

9. The obvious irony is, of course, that Alfredo Aquilizan is himself one of the most internationally represented artists from the Philippines since the 1990s. His representation (alongside that of his partner in art and life, Isabel Aquilizan) in major exhibitions such as the APT, Fukuoka Triennale and the Havana Biennale, may also explain why he frequently meets Dono, who has also featured in these shows.

10. Kuda Binal was presented as part of the exhibition Pameran Binal Experimental Arts, a counter-exhibition to the State-funded Third Yogyakarta Art Biennial of July–August 1992. The latter competition, as Indonesian art critic Sumartono explains, "set up criteria that young and alternative artists could not meet … that participants must be at least thirty-five years old, and … must produce 'painting works.' Contemporary art was consequently excluded." In response to this, the exhibition Pameran Binal was organized as a protest to the restrictions placed on artists in the "official" biennial. Interestingly, "binal" was also a word play on the Indonesian for "wild," at the same time as it closely referenced the English word "Biennial." The alternative "Binal" exhibition included 130 participants that showed in various locations around Yogyakarta. In contrast to the official biennial, age was of no issue and a variety of artistic media, such as installation and performance art, was exhibited. As Sumartono astutely points out, however, the subversive capacity of works presented in Binal was weakened when taken out of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and into the international art arena where official acknowledgement and accommodation of political art specific to Indonesia was more easily accepted. See Sumartono "The Role of Power in Contemporary Yogyakartan art" in *Outlet: Yogyakarta within the Contemporary Indonesian Art Scene* edited by Jim Supangkat et al. (2001: 33–35).

11. The Pancasila is the official five-point national creed introduced by President Sukarno, which forms the philosophical foundations of the modern Indonesian nation, guiding the republic and its citizenry. They are: belief in one supreme God, justice and civility among peoples; the unity of Indonesia; democracy through deliberation and consensus among representatives; and social justice for all. The Pancasila is further underpinned by the state doctrine of cultural "unity in diversity" (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika) across the Indonesian nation. However, under this motto, history has shown that the modern Indonesian government has selectively and actively encouraged some local cultures, while actually suppressing others under the rubric of national identity.

12. On the tensions between the development of a single national against diverse local cultures in Indonesia see also Keith Foulcher "The Construction of an Indonesian National Culture: Patterns of Hegemony and Resistance" in Arief Budiman (ed.) *State and Civil Society in Indonesia* of 1990 (301–20).

13. See, for instance, the comprehensive publication of recent theorists of cosmopolitanism in Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins (eds.) *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation* of 1998.

14. See varying perspectives on this issue offered by Julie Ewington and Lee Weng Choy in *ART and AsiaPacific* 2.1 (1995): Julie Ewington, "Five Elements: An Abbreviated Account of Installation Art in South-East Asia" (108-15), and Lee Weng Choy, "Local Coconuts: Simryn Gill and the Politics of Identity" in *ART AsiaPacific* 4.16 (1997).

15. See Mikhail Bakhtin's work on hybridity, especially his separation of an "organic hybridity" and "intentional hybridity." In the former, hybrid forms emerge as unconscious evolutions and mutations and are the result of organic convergences; "intentional hybridity," on the other hand, involves politically intended orchestration of otherwise separate entities, in order to produce irony, contestation and collision (Bakhtin).

16. Where the Venice Biennale has included Asian art, it has largely done so within its separate national pavilions and not in its main exhibition. Since its participation in 1954, Indonesia was again represented in a national pavilion at the 50th Venice Biennale of 2003. Note that in this separate Indonesian National Pavilion of 2003, the artists represented were Dadang Christanto, Arahmaiani, Tisna Sanjaya and Made Wianta, and exhibited in the theme exhibition "Paradise Lost: Mourning the World," adapted from Nehru's reference to Bali as "The Morning of the World." As Indonesian Pavilion curator Amir Sidharta explained:

On Saturday, 12 October 2002 (just a year, a month and a day after the attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Center on Tuesday, 11 September 2001), two bombs exploded in Kuta on the Island of Bali, killing 180 individuals, mostly Australians, but also Americans, Europeans and Indonesians. The incident sent a grim message to the world that there was no longer any place in the entire world that was isolated from terror and violence.

The works in the pavilion commemorated not only the deaths as a result of these bombings, but also the "Mourning of the World." For, as Sidharta explains, "What has happened is a tragedy for the whole world." See Amir Sidharta's "50th Venice Biennial, Indonesia" press release available online at http://www.universes-in-universe.de/car/venezia/bien50/idn/e-press.htm.

17. On the avoidance of "cosmopolitan essences" see Clifford (*Routes*, 274–75).

18. On the issue of "homelessness" see Edward Said's 2000 *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays.*

19. The paintings and sculptures of French artist Paul Gauguin were deeply influenced by his time in the Pacific but also by the carvings of the ancient temple of Borobodur in Java. Possibly his most famous painting, Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going? (1897), is a play on the Indonesian expression.

20. Interestingly, Jaarsma has reported that, "Since September 11th the veils suddenly got a one-sided interpretation, which [the artist] is not very happy with." She goes on to assert that, "Everyone who confronts [her] work is coming at it from different backgrounds and cultures, dealing with highly personal sets of taboos and therefore experiencing the work in different ways. [She] want[s her] work to relate to these specific audiences, to deal with some of their taboos and interpretations." See Remy Jungerman, "Interview: Mella Jaarsma interviewed by Remy Jungerman," in Ang et al. (55).

21. For instance, Saya Goreng Kamu (I fry you) (2000) is made of squirrel skins; Saya Goreng Kamu II/I Fry You II (2000) is made of snake skins; SARA-swati (2000) is made of dried banana tree trunks; I Am Ethnic I (2001) is made of goat skins; Shameless Gold (2002) is comprised of gold-painted cocoons; Bolak–Balik (2002) is made of buffalo skins and horn; in The Follower (2003) Jaarsma sewed the badges of all manner of organizations together, collected in Yogyakarta from religious groups, political parties, schools, separatists groups, to sport clubs, etc.; in Witnessing to Silence: Art and Human Rights Jaarsma created cloaks using

seaweed, squid, seahorses and medicinal plants to comment on hunting, killing, feeding and healing.

22. Related to this, Jaarsma has explained that:

Up until the end of the 1990s, most foreign curators passing through Cemeti Gallery [the Gallery for which Jaarsma is Co-director and in which her work is often shown, in Yogyakarta, Indonesia] didn't consider my work for two reasons: because they were searching for "authentic" Indonesian artists and because I found it difficult to be a promoter of the other artists at Cemeti and promote my own work at the same time. Since 1998, entering the era of globalization, thanks to curators like Joanna Lee, Hou Hanru, Apinan Poshyananda, Julie Ewington and others, I have been invited to join international exhibitions and events in countries such as Japan, Australia, Singapore and Thailand, mainly representing "Indonesia"… Although finally accepted in the international circuit, I still have mixed feelings about representing Indonesia; I always feel that I have to excuse myself for being white, as if I have stolen an opportunity for a "native" artist. When I was picked up at the airport in Ireland to go to EV1A at Limerick, I got the reaction "Oh, I thought you'd look more oriental." (Jungerman 54)

Jaarsma has also reported an instance in which Indonesian curator, Jim Supangkat, "wrote about [her] work for a book published in Singapore in 1994, but the article was banned because [she] wasn't an Indonesian" (Jungerman 54).

23. As well as having exhibited in the Netherlands numerous times, Jaarsma is also a board member of the Cemeti Art Foundation and, as one of the representatives for Indonesia, she advises on the general policy of the program in the Erasmus Huis, the Dutch Cultural Centre in Jakarta.

24. Cultural studies theorist Ien Ang provides an interesting personal account of this sense of cultural divide in Indonesia between *pribumi* and Others, from her own position as an Indonesian of Chinese ethnicity. See, for instance, Ien Ang, "Returning to Indonesia: Between Memory and the Present," in Ang et al.

25. For a discussion of human animality and the connected subjectivities of "human beings" and "animal beings" see Elaine L. Graham, *Representations of the Post/Human: Monsters, Aliens and Others in Popular Culture,* 2002.

26. Specific artist is not identified in this statement by Jaarsma. See Jaarsma's "About the Performances."

27. This may be compared with the term's initial use, referring to the forced exile of Jewish and African people.

Race

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New Technology and Local Identity in the Global Era: The Case of South Korean Youth Culture

Kyongwon Yoon

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores how cultural identity is being negotiated in young South Koreans' use of new technologies. Young people in Seoul appear to rearticulate local norms of sociality in the process of appropriating the Internet and the mobile phone. For young Koreans, local norms of sociality are considered to symbolize the essence of "Koreanness" and the norms play an important role in their use of new technologies. This chapter implies that the reiteration of "old" ways of constructing "Koreanness" on the basis of local norms of sociality is an imagined response to globalization.

Introduction: Globalization, New Technologies and the Question of Identity

In international media discourse, South Korea (Korea, hereafter) has frequently been perceived as a "fast country" in that it is rapidly constructing a highly developed IT industry (see Hopfner). In particular, having gone through the Asian financial crisis in 1997, the Korean government has invested heavily in new technological industries in order to develop the economy and the nation's future. Such efforts have been shown in the Ministry of Information and Communication's launch in 1999 of a four-year policy entitled "Cyber Korea 21" and a sequential project in 2002, "Korea Vision 2006" (see Lew). Since the late 1990s, the adoption of new technology has been considered by the state as a key to, and an unavoidable task in, the country's "successful"

globalization.[1] In the process, the Korean government has seemed to mobilize the people with patriotic slogans emphasizing Koreans as an imagined entity, although what constitutes such notion of "Koreanness" was not clearly defined in those slogans. At the same time, the government distributed a series of official advertisements in which celebrities claimed their national pride as Koreans. In addition, domestic marketers often adopted a nationalistic approach in promoting Korean products especially during the financial crisis of 1997 (Hong). Furthermore, the academic sector witnessed the flourishing coverage of Confucianism and "Asian value" as an effective norm to overcome the financial crisis (e.g. Lew and Chang; Yi). The patriotic (and often traditionalist) discourse at the official and popular level intended to secure Korea as an "imagined community" (Anderson) by re-emphasizing common features among Koreans, in opposition to "others."

However, since the Korean nation-state under the financial crisis of 1997 had to participate in the rapid process of globalization by opening up the national market to the world, it seemed contradictory that Koreans maintained local norms of everyday life without giving in to the ideology of free market and competition in global capitalism (see Alford). This dilemma – how the nation can achieve modernization, which is assumed to raise its living standards as high as those of the West, without destroying "Koreanness"– is not new. For Koreans, an effective method adopted for resolving the problem, often both at the level of official and popular discourse, has been to modify and allow "tradition" and "modernity" to co-exist. In particular, the authoritarian regimes between the 1960s and the 1980s attempted to filter tradition and modernity in a way that discriminated between "pure" and "homogeneous" Koreanness and "impure" Western influences (Moon). The binary opposition of "Eastern spirit versus Western materialism" (*dongdo soki*) suggested that Koreans were in a superior position in terms of culture and morality (see Moon). Although it was acknowledged that the West displayed higher levels of scientific knowledge, these were considered insignificant and superficial attributes and not essential to Korean identity (Jang; see also Chatterjee).

By emphasizing the local cultural norms unique to Koreans, the discourse juxtaposing Eastern spirit with Western materialism seems to have been revisited recently in the discourse about new technology in Korea, as the uniqueness of Korea was especially reflected in the mainstream discourse about youth and technology. Indeed, simultaneous with the promotion of more widespread technological industry and literacy, there have been increasing debates about the effects of new technologies on Korean society (Yoon, "Consuming Youth in South Korea"). The mainstream mass media have circulated the idea that new technologies such as the Internet and the mobile phone carry the potential of disembedding young people from Korean ways of social bonding. In particular, the media kept warning of teenagers' adoption of new technologies as a form of "moral panic" throughout the late 1990s, while complimenting the economic achievement of the Korean IT venture industry. It was not rare for the mainstream media to adopt

pathologic images of young media users on the basis of an allegation that young Koreans distanced themselves from "traditional" bonding, including familial relationships, since being addicted to new "individualized" technologies such as the Internet and mobile phones ("Consuming Youth in South Korea"). In my view, such media representations have two crucial flaws: first, they ignore the fact that the new technology of mobile phones and the Internet can enhance familial bonding (see Boo Jin Park); second, by adopting the illogical association of "media panic" with youth, they reproduce the social conception of "vulnerable" young people who need to be protected by the state and the family from the technology ("Consuming Youth in South Korea").[2]

Being aware of this background, this chapter investigates the way in which young Koreans rearticulate the sense of "being Korean" in their use of new technologies. Drawing upon in-depth interviews with, and self-reports from, these young people, the research aims to question how young Koreans utilize local sociality in their response to changing forms of communication via the Internet and the mobile phone. The young people involved in the field studies conducted in 2002 were secondary school students aged sixteen to eighteen. In order to examine aspects of the "ordinary" sense of "Koreanness" among young people, the focus in constructing the sample was on academic high school students belonging to the middle class.

The Localization of New Technologies

Social and cultural studies have attempted to explore how the previous notion of local community and nationhood has been diluted due to new communication technologies (Lyon). In particular, young people have frequently been described as engaging actively with new technologies in recent debates about the new pattern of sociality via electronically mediated communication (e.g. Rushkoff). The investigation into the way in which a particular group of people engages with new technology on the basis of local norms would show the re-articulation of the notion of locality at the level of everyday life. For this reason, young people's use of new technology has attracted attention in recent social and cultural studies. Some commentators argue that with "techno-sociality" via new technologies, young people are increasingly envisaging and embodying a "global youth culture," and therefore reject the local notion of belonging which used to be influential in their identity formation (e.g. Ueno). For example, case studies in East Asian countries show that new technologies enable young people to move beyond the "traditional" sense of belonging while engaging with trans-local networks based upon consumer choice and taste (Bak; Ueno). In addition, the emphasis on a globalizing youth culture via new technology is often combined with social concerns about atomized individualization in which young people's ties with the local community are to a great extent dissolved. For example, McVeigh, in his 2003 study of Japanese youth, has noted that the mobile phone is rarely used by young people to communicate with family members. His research confirms to some extent prevailing social fears about

the negative impact of new and individualized technology, in that, in his study, young Japanese appear to avoid familial contacts in favor of peer relationships via new technologies.

However, while being aware of the influence of new technology on young people's sociality, we should not ignore the fact that new technology interacts with the "old" context of locality including the local norms and material conditions of the family as recent cultural studies of technology have pointed out (e.g. Silverstone). For example, we need to be aware that many young people are indeed constrained to a significant extent by their collective environment (see De Gournay and Smoreda). That is, young people's appropriation of new technologies is a process of negotiation with their family, as well as their local community, as a material and cultural condition (see Ling and Yttri). In this regard, it is noteworthy that a growing number of empirical studies show that young people are involved in technologically mediated relationships which are run on the norms of local sociality and local culture. For instance, Miller and Slater have explored how the Internet is appropriated and serves to construct local identity in the face of globalization among Trinidadian youth. They point out that the local appropriation of the Internet can reinforce nationalistic desires and community bonding, as well as accelerate local subjects' involvement in "global cultural space." They suggest that the Internet serves to rearticulate a sense of belonging by enhancing the relationships between members of nuclear and extended families and by performing certain nationalist practices in more diverse ways than ever before.

In addition to the role of the Internet in facilitating local relationships, it has also been explored in recent cultural studies that mobile phones are used among young people for local interaction rather than for connecting single users with dislocated others. To this end, certain contents of the mobile phone can be shared by such activities as reading aloud from the message and showing the message display; and the mobile phone itself is shared within close local boundaries. Such investigation tends to conclude that the collaborative use of the mobile phone among young people shows a localized form of new communication technologies (Taylor and Harper; Weilenmann and Larsson; Yoon, "Retraditionalizing the Mobile"). In those empirical studies, young people's appropriation of new technologies appears to show much similarity across the world. However, it should be noted that the particular meaning of localization can vary according to specific local contexts. Indeed, while the collaborative use of the mobile phone and the Internet among young people has been described as a common feature of localization in a number of studies conducted in different contexts (e.g. Miller and Slater; Weilenmann and Larsson), each case should be interpreted on the basis of very local conditions. For instance, in the case of Korean youth, as previous studies argue, meanings of new technologies are reconstructed under familial or "traditional" Confucian norms (Na; Yoon, "Retraditionalizing the Mobile"). Indeed, while Western case studies tend to see the family as a material and functional unit rather than emphasizing its

cultural aspect, studies of Korean youth have paid much attention to the role of the family as a crucial cultural determinant of young people's self-identity (e.g. Yoon, "Domesticating Technologies in Korean Families"). Furthermore, it is significant that the localization of new technology often involves the re-articulation of nationhood in that the users negotiate technologically-mediated communications on the basis of certain features assumed to be unique to a nation, such as local norms of sociality. Given that previous studies of "Koreanness" have also focused on such social characteristics (e.g. Bong-Young Choi), it seems necessary to examine whether local norms of sociality influence young Koreans' adoption of new technologies and, if that is the case, how the norms are involved in the use of new technologies, reconstructing "Koreanness" at the level of everyday life.

Defining "Koreanness" via Local Sociality

It is noteworthy that studies of "Koreanness" have defined features of Koreans in terms of particular norms of sociality. Indeed, in academic circles and the media, "Koreanness" has been described as certain social characteristics such as collectivism and familism (e.g. Bong-Young Choi). It is not only Western scholars but also Korean authors who have emphasized the collective nature of Koreans, in comparison with "Western" sociality, which is said to draw more upon individualism (e.g. Bong-Young Choi; Soo-Won Lee; Shields). However, it may be problematic to distinguish Koreans from other nations only in terms of the mode of social relationships, since, for example, such social characteristics as strong familial bonding have been witnessed on a number of occasions outside of Korea (e.g. Cucó Giner; Fukuyama). What is significant, though, is that, reflecting the popular and stereotyped way of defining "Koreanness" as a family-oriented sociality, young people in my study tended to emphasize certain forms of sociality as the distinctive feature of Koreans. The respondents thought that Koreans were emotionally richer and more family-oriented than other nationals. The emphasis on local sociality and emotion as Koreans was apparent when they defined what was not Korean:

Westerners and Japanese cannot have a soul like Koreans. If they could have the sense of being together with other Koreans and understand the particular feeling unique to us, they could be considered Korean. In contrast, if some Koreans lose what we are feeling as Koreans, they can no longer be Korean. They are assholes! (Misu, female, 17 years old)

Indeed, what most young respondents were proud of about Korea was related to a particular sociality and emotional richness as Koreans, rather than to material achievement. For instance, one respondent proudly pointed out that Koreans were different from Japanese people because the former were less individualized, although, in fact, he had never been to Japan: "I think Japanese young people are too much Westernized. Very individualized and materialistic" (Kiju, male, 17 years old). In this manner, the "materialistic lifestyle" of the Japanese was contrasted with Koreans' local sociality, which was assumed by the respondents to emphasize collective relationships.

It is worth noting here that young Koreans tended to distinguish themselves from other nationals by emphasizing *cheong*; many young people defined the main element common to all forms of "Koreanness" as *cheong*.

Koreans are quite emotional. We are warm and like the family. Compared to other nationals, Koreans are full of cheong. For example, British people do not have cheong, I guess. We consider other Koreans as family. We treat older people like our grandfather and grandmother. I think it is Koreans' unique character. (Soram, female, 16 years old)

Cheong refers to a "peculiar feeling that represents the state of affection and intimacy in close relationships" (Soo-won Lee 99; see also Choi and Lee). *Cheong* appears as a natural attribute rooted in familial norms and then extended to other very close local relationships. According to previous studies, it seems that, in this "*cheong* space" (Soo-won Lee) based upon the emotional resource of *cheong* for linking people within close boundaries, there are two features to be noted with regard to the current study. First, communication works through emotional and private norms rather than rational and public norms. This feature of *cheong* sociality has been criticized in that it may prohibit people from communicating with each other beyond collective environments determined by variables such as age, gender, and familial position (Seung-Kwan Park). Second, in *cheong* space, the individual is understood mainly as one who cannot be separated from other members in his/her *cheong* space; this is reflected in the Korean language, in which "'I' and 'we' are interchangeably used and the self-consciousness of the individual is weak" (Kim 77).

Resonating with what previous studies consider a crucial part of "Koreanness," young Koreans in my field study seemed to emphasize *cheong* as the essence of "being Korean." In my study, local norms of *cheong* played a significant role in young people's adoption of new technology. Young Koreans were likely to develop implicit methods for coping with technologically mediated communication if they felt that it threatened their local sense of sociality and emotions. They seemed to use new technologies in three ways to re-articulate local cultural norms and sociality. First, it seemed crucial for my respondents to maintain local boundaries of *cheong* space, although new communication technologies provided them with increased possibilities of extending the local boundary of their acquaintances. Second, in this process, face-to-face relationships were prioritized over "virtual" relationships; and, furthermore, young people tried to embrace technologically mediated communication on the basis of their off-line relationships. Third, local norms of *cheong* could be applied to the boundary beyond the family and were extended into peer relationships and also into other public relationships.

The maintenance of local boundary

For young people, the expanded opportunity for personal communication via various forms of new technology may result in much freedom from the face-to-face control of parents and may amplify direct connections between individuals, beyond local

communities. However, it should be emphasized that new technologies are incorporated within the "old" context in which young people rearticulate local norms of sociality. In particular, *cheong* space as a form of imagined "Koreanness" is developed and managed on the basis of face-to-face relationships. In a number of cases, young people regarded as crucial the management of *cheong* relationships with close people within local boundaries. In their technologically mediated sociality, young Koreans were even more attentive to those local boundaries, which had already existed before their engagement with the Internet and the mobile phone.

Above all, the family as a central place of *cheong* plays a significant part in young people's appropriation of new technologies. For example, giving a child a mobile phone implies the reinforcement of affection and bonding between family members. Young people considered that frequent connection with family members by text-messaging and calling would strengthen familial bonding, although the increase of technologically mediated communication with parents was also perceived as a form of parental control. However, whether or not young Koreans considered parental contacts via new technologies, especially mobile phones, as a nuisance, it is important that for many informants, calls and messages from parents were still more important than calls from other people. On a number of occasions, parental calls were associated with parental affection and attachment: "My parents can use text messages but it is slow for them to press buttons… so, I am touched when I get a message from my Dad" (*Soram*, female, 17 years old).

Jina (female, 17 years old): My mom has often sent me messages whenever she feels bored at home, since I showed her how to use text-messaging … Actually, I have just got a message from my mom. She asked me to buy something on my way home. So, she now wants to make sure I've done it by sending a text-message.

Interviewer: Does your mom send messages even when you are in school?

Jina: Because my mom knows when lunchtime is in my school, she sends me a message, "How are you? It must be lunchtime," something like that.

It is true that the parents intend to make their children's everyday lives more accessible to them as parents. Such "mobile parenting" has been witnessed in empirical studies based upon Asian and Western European countries (Oksman and Rautiainen; Yoon "Retraditionalizing the mobile"). The majority of those studies seem to point out that relationships between parents and children undergo significant changes within the environment of new technologies. In particular, some writings argue that communication technologies accelerate the individualization of society, including the dissolution of a "traditional" sense of the family (Castelain-Meunier).

Although European case studies suggest that young people cope with familial control by searching for individual channels of communication via individual ownership and use of new technologies (see Ling and Yttri), in the case of Korean youth, it may be true that technologies are embraced in existing familial norms but do not lead to significant changes in the familial relations. Indeed, young Koreans in my study seemed to negotiate

the parental control within the boundary of familial norms. Some respondents clearly did not pursue the individual appropriation of communication technologies: partly because the technology, often the home computer, was shared within families and also because the familial norms did not allow children in their late teens clear accessibility and ownership of their own technology (both physically and psychologically).

The experience of sharing between family members was apparent when a home computer needed to be used by both children and parents; the mobile phone was also occasionally shared between family members when it was passed down from the parent to the children. To summarize, parental control via/over new technologies was not definitively considered by young people as a negative aspect. It turned out that being connected with their parents and the family via new technologies was an affective aspect in *cheong* space. For example, in my field research, young people confirmed their secure connection to the family as the "security blanket" of their daily lives via the mobile phone.

Humanizing the mobile

It was also the case that, for young Koreans, technologically mediated communication was closely incorporated in face-to-face relationships. Most respondents did not much like to be involved in technologically mediated communication with unknown others.[3] For example, young people did not particularly enjoy developing new relationships via the Internet since they believed virtually initiated relationships to be "fake" and uncomfortable. Some respondents had been into online chatting with people whom they did not know, but with time they tended to be bored and disappointed by it.

I realized online chatting with someone I don't know is not so comfortable because I have to say some formal [my emphasis] words at the beginning. Something like, "where do you live?" "how old are you?" It's difficult to sound friendly then. When I chat with an unknown person on the Net, I have to use certain Emoticons [imot'ik'on: graphic symbols used in Internet chatting or e-mailing] to show that I am friendly, but in face-to-face meetings or chatting with my acquaintances, I don't have to. (Jimin, female, 16 years old)

If I have a chat with my friends face-to-face, we have a lot of things to say … Talking in person seems to be the best. I can't trust chatting on the Internet. If we meet someone in reality after Internet chatting, it's likely to be disappointing. (Sowon, female, 16 years old)

It appeared that Internet chatting was recognized by young Koreans as fruitful only when it was based on a face-to-face relationship. In contrast, communication was considered to be restrictive and artificial when it was not related to face-to-face contacts.

This attitude was also seen in the use of mobile phones. Many informants assumed that genuine communication occurred only when it was based on face-to-face

communication: "Text-messaging is kind of convenient because I can send messages without making a noise. But I don't think it can replace meeting someone face to face" (Hyojin, female, 17 years old). That is, communication mediated by the mobile phone can operate properly in *cheong* space only when the participants are already known through face-to-face contact. For this reason, many informants considered mobile communication on its own likely to be restrictive and artificial. In their narratives, peers who were much involved in contacts which lacked a face-to-face dimension were even considered to be "nerds."

However, mobile communication among people with close relationships seemed to reinforce *cheong*, although some informants believed that mobile communication might harm face-to-face relationships: "Using a mobile frequently may increase *cheong*. But, you know, there is another side to it, a bad side, of decreasing frequency of face-to-face meetings between friends" (Sumin, male, 17 years old). In this manner, young Koreans tend to maintain the local cultural norms of *cheong* by avoiding a deep involvement in technological communication not based upon face-to-face sociality. It should be emphasized that, although most young people in my study frequently used the mobile phone and the Internet, they were reluctant in engaging with technological forms of communication far beyond face-to-face relationships. They tended to avoid extensive use of communication technologies because communication via technologies was assumed to be *cheong*-less, albeit effective as facilitating and reinforcing close relationships that had already been based on *cheong*.

Extending *cheong* outside the family

Cheong can be applied beyond the family, as young people construct close relationships with peers and occasionally members of their extended family. Many young people tried to extend family-like feelings and sociality to their peers and others in their communities (online as well as off-line). Bora, a 17-year-old girl, for example, was involved on-line and off-line in an Internet-based community; she remarked proudly on how family-like it was. According to her, constructing family-like relationships based upon trust, affection, and attachment was the most important aim of the community. She noted, "the brother of the community [i.e. its leader] always emphasizes that it is a kind of family by saying 'only guys considering other members as family can remain in this community'." In this manner, young Koreans were proud of the family-like features of their "virtual" community, which often overlapped with off-line relationships.

In addition, new technology enabled young people to keep in contact with their extended family. A few respondents in my study pointed out that they used Internet chatting or e-mail in order to contact more distant relatives such as cousins: "I often e-mail my cousin. She is a graduate student and really helpful to me. When I have something to discuss with her, I like to e-mail her; she advises me well" (Kangmin, male, 16

years old). As Miller and Slater explore, communication technologies may serve to maintain extended family by “bringing back into the fold relatives that would not otherwise have been included” (60).

Furthermore, it should be noted that the application of *cheong* in cyberspace occasionally includes attempts by some young Koreans to make transnational friends. These technologically mediated transnational friendships can be considered exceptional cases in *cheong* space in that they tend not to be based upon face-to-face relationships. After initiating a relationship in transnational cyberspace, however, it was often the case that virtual contact failed to be continued or to develop further because of such factors as the lack of consistency in making contact and the lack of cultural proximity with the transnational friends. Young people were inclined to think that “virtual” foreign friends did not understand what Koreans felt. However, it should be noted that young Koreans’ concept of foreign others were often imagined; for example, cultural proximity between East Asians were easily assumed, while Westerners were considered very different from Koreans even in “virtual” communication. A girl who did not have any overseas experience noted: “I have been kind of afraid of Western people [*sŏyangsaramdŭl*]. They look so unreal and different, you know. Since I was young, I have not been very attracted to them. White, tall, and so different from us” (Sang-mi, female, 16 years old).

For some respondents, imagined feelings of cultural proximity between East Asians were occasionally applied to Japanese friends, but the feelings did not fill the distance due to national identity. Some respondents who were in “virtual” contact (usually using English) with young Japanese people pointed out that they felt distant not only for reasons of language but also because of a different sense of sociality and emotion.

At first, it was kind of easy to get along with them [Japanese friends], but with time, I felt we did not share what I shared with my Korean friends or my family. My Japanese friends are friendly and we can exchange information about TV stars that we both like, and so on, though. (Unji, female, 17 years old)

In the transnational application of *cheong*, it also appeared that defensive nationalistic feelings emerged in virtual relationships, especially when national affairs began to be involved. There were several cases where young Koreans’ awareness of Korea’s historical memories and current political footing with Japan raised defensive attitudes towards “virtual” Japanese acquaintances in cyberspace. Miram, a 17-year-old girl, for example, noted that she was occasionally angry at Japanese people, which to some extent influenced her relationships with virtual friends on the Internet: “I was very angry at Japanese people when Japan insisted a part of our sea was theirs. The feeling made me argue with Japanese guys in chatting.”[4] This reaction can be developed into more aggressive forms of protest, as has been witnessed in Korean young people’s on-line protests against Japanese officials who gave permission for a politically

incorrect history textbook to be published (see Ducke). In this manner, it appeared that young Koreans' efforts to develop transnational contacts ended at a certain stage without being facilitated further, due to nationalistic dissent with their friends and the failure to accumulate family-like feelings between the correspondents. There were several young Koreans in my study who considered themselves able to construct a deep relationship with their "virtual" Japanese friends; but, in these cases, the virtual friends were not entirely "virtual" in that the respondent had a chance to meet their "virtual" friends in person. Therefore, it was easier to develop *cheong* sociality with these friends.

In short, young Koreans apply the sociality and emotions of *cheong* in their extended social relationships even via technologically mediated communication. While the close local boundaries of people can, by applying *cheong*, be imagined as a sort of family boundary in electronic communication, it is argued by young people that translocal or transnational communications not based upon face-to-face relationships are unlikely to embrace *cheong*. It should be emphasized that, as young Koreans deal with extended social relationships with technologically mediated communication, they tend to cope with the new boundaries on the basis of the "old" context including local norms of sociality.

Conclusion

For Koreans, the appropriation of new technology in the process of globalization has represented an opportunity to reach a high standard of living and accumulate great national wealth. But it has also provoked fear about the transformation of those deep local ties which are considered essential to a sense of "Koreanness" (Alford). Social concern about the negative impact on Koreans' local sociality of new communication technology has also been reflected in young people's attempts to localize the mobile phone and the Internet.

The present research has shown that the local cultural norm is continuously engaged in technologically mediated sociality among young Koreans. The research findings suggest that new technology does not necessarily precipitate the disembedding of local subjects from their local and face-to-face social relations. Rather, it may be true that a sense of belonging tends to be articulated by means of the new technologies of communication. In particular, local sociality and emotions enable local users to create specific meanings in the process of appropriating new technology. It also appears that local cultural norms can reinforce a particular notion of nationhood by defining national identities on the basis of particular norms of sociality. As discussed in this chapter, for example, local norms of *cheong* were often considered to symbolize the essence of "Koreanness" among young Koreans and they play a crucial role in the use of new technology. For young Koreans, *cheong* was symbolically significant as a marker of something peculiarly Korean. This suggests that

new technology allows young Koreans to perform their identities by connecting them with their family and peers in the close boundary of *cheong* rather than entirely individualizing themselves. Young Koreans' appropriation of new technology can be regarded as a form of negotiation with the challenge posed by the new type of individualized and virtual sociality. Resonating with dominant discourse about "Koreanness," young people rearticulate the notion of an imagined "pure" local identity.

Young Koreans' reliance on the local cultural norms of *cheong* has implications for Koreans' response to globalizing forces via new communication technologies. That is, by personalizing the globalizing forces on the basis of local norms and emotions, Koreans are dealing with the conflicts between modernity and tradition and yet retaining a modern everyday culture that generally places Koreans apart, especially from Westerners. In particular, there has been a belief at the national and popular level that pure Koreanness and local norms of sociality – contrasted to Western values such as individualism – could be maintained by limiting Westernization only to technological and material aspects, which, it is assumed, would not impact on essential Koreanness (Alford).

Young Koreans, in their use of new technology, are adamant that they are consuming Western hardware but are not adopting the Western spirit since they prioritize the maintenance of *cheong* as the essence of Koreanness. The myth of maintaining Koreanness, without the materialistic and individualistic values of the West, is also taken up by Koreans at the inter-personal level, as they reaffirm their own local norms of sociality. In doing so, it appears that the local applies its norms extensively while reducing globalizing forces. However, it should be noted that the emphasis on local norms of sociality is likely to be an imagined response to globalization rather than a lively encounter with rapid changes due to globalizing processes. In the present study, local sociality of *cheong* can be considered an imagined and ideologically engaged form of nationalizing forces. The reiteration of "old" ways of constructing Koreanness on the basis of local norms of sociality implies that globalization constitutes a specific ideological construct in the local context.

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Notes

1. It should be noted that globalization in Korea has been discursively constructed as the second stage of modernization in comparison with its first stage during the 1960s and the 1980s. Given the previous investigations into Korean modernization (Chang; Cho Han), it can be said that the current stage of modernization under the slogan and policy of "globalization" corresponds to the second phase of Korean modernization, which is different from dictatorial modernization under previous military regimes. The authoritarian regime between 1962 and 1987 mobilized the people for rapid economic modernization. In particular, under Park Chung-hee's regime (1962–1979), a series of 5-year plans for economic development (1962–1981) led the people to "quasi-war mobilization" (Cho Han 52). In order to distinguish the period of the rapid authoritarian development from economic development based upon a model of neo-liberal capitalism since the early 1990s, some authors have named the former "compressed modernization" or "rushed modernization" (see Chang; Cho Han).

2. In this regard, it is significant in Korea that the media's positioning of youth has also been echoed in a youth policy. For instance, the government launched a new law on youth in 1997, "Law of the Protection of Youth" (*chungsonyun bohobub*), which states the punishment for and ways of controlling those who contribute to the creation of harmful environments for young people, but not the ways of promoting their welfare and rights (Dong-yeon Lee).

3. In this regard, it was significant that the receipt of a large number of junk e-mails from unknown others often for commercial purposes was one of the main reasons why the majority of young people avoided using e-mail.

4. South Korea and Japan have recently been in conflict over the ownership of Dok Island, which currently belongs to Korea.

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Haunted Cosmopolitanisms: Specters of Chinese Art in the Diaspora

Francis Maravillas

ABSTRACT

Maravillas examines a number of artists (Guan Wei, Ah Xian, Fan Dongwang, Shen Jaiwei and Guo Jian) who migrated from China to Australia in the late 1980s and early 1990s and shows how the work and identity of these artists may be situated in relation to a renewed cosmopolitan framework of understanding, one attuned to their transnational forms of imagining and living, as well as their particular local contexts of art-making, exchange and appraisal. Particular attention is paid to how these artists alter and reconfigure the “Chineseness” of their originary “homeland” culture by creatively restaging it in the context of their new adopted “home.” In this way, “Chineseness” appears as a *spectral* entity that both haunts, and is haunted by, the work and identity of these diasporic Chinese artists. Their “cosmopolitan” experience of migration and diaspora can thus be viewed as one that is haunted by ghosts, while also producing forms of haunting that enact a politics and poetics of memory and translation.

Introduction

In February 1989, the *China Modern Art* exhibition opened at the National Gallery in Beijing, gathering together for the first time the chaotic yet exhilarating experimentalism nurtured in China’s art academies since the early 1980s and the era of Deng Xaioping’s open-door policies.[1] Soon after the exhibition’s opening ceremony, the sound of gunshots ricocheted across the halls of the gallery. Two young and relatively unknown artists from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Xiao Lu and Tang Song, had fired two rounds at their own installation, *Dialogue*, so as to complete the work

through performance. Amidst scenes of mayhem and confusion, the exhibition was temporarily closed and both artists were immediately arrested by the police.[2] As the climax to a decade of experimental art activity, the exhibition was described by one of its organizers, Li Xianting, as a "precursor to the fate of the student movement at Tiananmen," one that marked "the conclusion of an era and also the end of its ideals" (xix). Xiao Lu's and Tang Song's performance was, moreover, viewed as a "symbolic act" and "a gesture of desperation, facing a reality hermetically closed to dialogue and change" (Koppel-Yang, *Semiotic Warfare* 178). Yet, despite the sense of tragic heroism that attended the exhibition and the artists' performance, the entire event may also be taken as marking a paradoxical point of renewal and transformation, heralding the start of a new and uniquely "cosmopolitan" dialogue borne out of the varied experiences of travel, migration and displacement of a significant number of artists, critics and curators who left China in the late 1980s and early 1990s.[3]

Indeed, this exodus has resulted in the emergence of a diasporic Chinese artistic community that continue to engage with China from vantage points outside the country while simultaneously negotiating with different cultures to reconstitute a domain of "Chineseness" overseas. At the same time, the increased visibility and prominence of the work of diasporic or "overseas Chinese" artists in the international art circuit has led to a growing concern – amongst critics and curators based in China and elsewhere – about the dominance of Euro-American frameworks of interpreting and evaluating contemporary Chinese art. A key point of contention revolves precisely around the category of "Chineseness" as a marker of identification and distinction in relation to the complex and dynamic cross-cultural work of these diasporic Chinese artists (see Wan; del Lago; Erickson; Huangfu; Rowley). For while Chinese artists in the diaspora have played a significant role in the globalization of contemporary Chinese art, their work have often been understood either as exotic emblems of "Chineseness"[4] or as subsidiary manifestations of a "rootless" international style or visual language.[5] This has the effect of sequestering both artists and artworks within geographically bounded national categories of identification and simple local/global dichotomies, without attending to the transnational connections and cross-border linkages of these artists, and the complex and dynamic processes of intercultural contact and exchange that is constitutive of their experience of migrancy and diaspora.

In this essay, I examine the work and lives of a number of artists – Guan Wei, Ah Xian, Fan Dongwang, Shen Jaiwei and Guo Jian – who migrated from China to Australia in the late 1980s and early 1990s.[6] I show how the work and identity of these artists may be situated in relation to a renewed cosmopolitan framework of understanding, one attuned to their transnational forms of imagining and living, as well as their particular local contexts of art-making, exchange and appraisal. In particular, I show how these artists alter and reconfigure the "Chineseness" of their originary "homeland" culture by creatively restaging it in the context of their new adopted "home." In this way, "Chineseness"

appears as a *spectral* entity that both haunts, and is haunted by, the work and identity of these diasporic Chinese artists. Their "cosmopolitan" experience of migration and diaspora can thus be viewed as one that is haunted by ghosts, while also producing forms of haunting that enact a politics and poetics of memory and translation.

Specters of Chineseness and Diaspora

In his analysis of Chinese cosmopolitanism, Pheng Cheah draws on Derrida's notion of spectrality in order to account for the way in which the Chinese diaspora has been paradoxically represented as bearers of both cosmopolitanism and patriotism within the discourse of neo-Confucian capitalism (Cheah 145–151; Derrida 1994). He argues that the category of "Chineseness" is a spectral entity that constitutes the diasporic Chinese subject, allowing it to transform itself and be transformed by others. According to him, the *form* of "Chineseness" is "that which makes [the diasporic Chinese subject] actual and allows it to materialize – [it is a form that] must be able to persist through time so that it can be identified as the same throughout all its possible repetitions" (147). The spectralisation of the diasporic Chinese subject thus involves the movement of difference, a process of "differing-deferral (differance)" that ensures the "living-on" of "Chineseness," not as an ideological mystification, but through the reiterative sameness of its form (146–47).

What is important for my analysis of the work and lives of diasporic Chinese artists in Australia is Cheah's recognition of spectrality as a *transformative* category of reality, which is in turn informed and shaped by hauntings. In this paper, I want to call attention to the way diasporic Chinese artists both haunt, and are haunted by, the "Chineseness" of their originary culture. This form of mutual haunting arises through a dynamic interaction between the culture of their "homeland" and that of their adopted "home" that is constitutive of their experience of diaspora. On the one hand, these artists continue to be haunted by the spectrality of their "Chineseness," experiencing a residual yet continually evolving form of identification and distinction that manifests itself in their chosen medium, technique, style and subject-matter. Yet, at the same time, by creatively incorporating references to Chinese culture and tradition in their work from their vantage point outside of China, these artists produce hauntings that challenges the idea of a fixed, originary notion of "Chineseness." In this way, they engage in what Derrida calls a process of "being-with spectres" that participates in a "politics of memory and inheritance" (Derrida 1994: xix), a form of haunting that reconfigures "Chineseness" by imaginatively recuperating the past and reinserting it within the vastly different cultural context that their present being inhabits.

Cosmopolitanism and Migrancy

The past fifteen or so years has witnessed an increased diversification and globalisation of the art world, and the expansion of its "cosmopolitan" imaginary beyond

the traditional centres of Euro-American modernism.[7] This massive opening out of the contemporary art scene has been marked by the extraordinary proliferation of international art biennals, studio residency programs and the global expansion of the art market, along with the emergence of "nomadic" international artists, critics and curators caught in a "culture of itineracy" (Meyer 11; Bydler 27–156). The increased visibility, circulation and recognition accorded to contemporary Chinese art in the international arena is both a symptom and effect of this rapidly expanding field. Significantly, the international standing of contemporary Chinese art has arisen as a result of the various large-scale survey exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art that have taken place ever since the seminal *China Modern Art* exhibition in 1989.[8] This has, in turn, led to a steady increase in Chinese participation at international art biennales throughout the 1990s,[9] a process that is now officially sanctioned as a result of recent shifts in Chinese cultural policy geared towards repositioning China on the international stage (Köppell-Yang "The Ping-Pong Policy").[10]

While Chinese artists have undoubtedly prospered in this increasingly globalized art environment, it is worth noting that those whose work has been most widely exposed and "consecrated" have tended to be based outside China. Indeed, the migration of a significant number of leading artistic figures from China to various countries in the West over the past two decades has played a key role in the international reception of contemporary Chinese art. For while many artists in China have traveled abroad since the turn of the twentieth century – particularly during the period of the "May Fourth" movement from the late 1910s to the 1930s – the period from the early 1980s to the mid-1990s has witnessed a much larger and qualitatively more significant number of artists leaving the country (Clark 1998: 14). With a few exceptions, these artists migrated to countries located primarily in the West, and although some have returned to China, many have since been living and working in Europe, the United States and Australia.

While the government clampdown on the student protest movement at Tienanman in 1989 had a significant bearing on the decision of many artists to leave China, the reasons for their departure are complex and varied, stemming as much from the recurrent pressures and constraints on the Chinese art world as from the increased opportunities for these artists to travel, migrate and exhibit overseas. These opportunities arose partly as a result of invitations to attend international studio residencies as well as scholarships to study abroad as in the case of Fan Dongwang who came to Australia in 1990 to pursue his scholarly interests and artistic career. Indeed, while their association with dissent has provoked periodic ideological clampdowns throughout the 1980s and early 1990s,[11] Chinese artists were nevertheless able to travel and exhibit abroad under the auspices of foreign curators and members of the resident foreign diplomatic community who also served as unauthorized channels of support and exposure.[12] Guan Wei and Ah Xian, for instance, migrated to

Australia after spending time as artists-in-residence at the Tasmanian School of Art in Hobart in 1989. This opportunity to travel abroad arose following their meeting with the Australian Fine Arts Delegation in 1988[13] that was organized by the cultural attaché stationed in the Australian embassy in Beijing, Nicholas Jose, in whose home they exhibited.[14] Other foreign or external support stemmed from a diverse community of scholars, critics and curators in Australia with long-standing professional interests in Chinese art and culture, who provided valuable assistance in obtaining visas and residence permits for these artists (Clark 1998: 21).

While some artists in China were able to leave the country by drawing on their connections with foreign nationals both in and out of China, others were only able to secure passage abroad after overcoming government constraints imposed on their movement. Having taken to the streets in the student protests of 1989, the former military artist Guo Jian had his travel documents withheld by Chinese authorities and was only allowed to emigrate to Australia in 1992. The decision by the Hawke Labor government to allow significant numbers of Chinese students and other professionals to remain in Australia after 1989 also made it easier for Chinese artists already in the country to settle permanently. Shen Jiawei, for instance, came to Australia in early 1989 to study English and decided to remain in the country after he was blacklisted by the Chinese authorities for denouncing the Communist party leadership in the wake of the violent crackdown of the student protest movement in Tiananmen Square. The migration of Chinese artists to Australia was thus prompted as much by overseas artistic and educational opportunities available at the time as it was by the pressures of domestic political events in China.

A sense of desolation and defiance about the violent suppression of the pro-democracy movement at Tiananmen did, however, mark some of the first works produced by these artists after they arrived in Australia. Guan Wei's *Two Finger Exercise* series, painted during a six-month period in late 1989–1990, featured nude, androgynous humanoid figures making the "V" sign with their fingers, a form of signage that the artist witnessed during the student demonstrations. This series was as much a protest against the violent suppression of the demonstration as it was a rebuke of the reckless idealism of the student movement. In contrast to the scathing humor that marked Guan Wei's paintings, Ah Xian's *Heavy Wounds* series, 1991, featured bleak scenes of stylized figures with heavily bandaged wounds on their heads that allude to the pathos of lost individuality. Executed in a social realist style derived from the Chinese Red Cross propaganda posters issued during the Cultural Revolution, this series boldly registers the trauma of the victims of the massacre. The sense of loss and trauma that marked Ah Xian's work, along with the comic humor and satire of Guan Wei's paintings, was as much an individual testimony to a turbulent period of China's recent history as it was a reflection upon their initial experience of migration and settlement in Australia.

While Guan Wei was – from the time of his arrival in Australia – able to devote himself fully to his practice and was supported by various grants, art awards, as well as representations in prestigious commercial galleries, including a retrospective solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney in 1999, the initial experience of migration and settlement in Australia of most post-Tiananmen artist-émigrés was marked by uncertainty and a constant struggle to meet the demands of economic survival in a new environment. As a highly acclaimed and largely self-taught artist specializing in academic realism in China, Shen Jiawei sketched thousands of tourist portraits for three years to earn a living before he eventually secured recognition by winning a number of prestigious art competitions run by the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Similarly, Ah Xian worked for many years as a house painter before achieving a level of success in the mid-late 1990s with his works in porcelain and by being awarded the National Gallery of Australia's inaugural National Sculpture Prize in 2001. For most newly arrived Chinese artists, the initial experience of marginality was further compounded by their lack of competency in the English language. Yet, while these artists' inability to communicate effectively with their English-speaking peers was a barrier to the exchange of ideas and social contacts in the Australian art world, their reliance on Chinese-language materials for information about tendencies in art practice – along with their ongoing connections with Chinese-speaking peers in both China and Australia – served to maintain the link between the artists' concerns and practice and their originary Chinese culture.[15]

Since their arrival in Australia, many of these artists have undertaken frequent and extensive travels abroad, including periodic trips to China to re-establish contact with their peers, engage in collaborative work and/or access skilled labor for the manufacture of their work. Ah Xian, for instance, spent nine months in China in 1999 working with skilled local artisans to produce his highly acclaimed porcelain busts. Similarly, Guo Jian spent intermittent periods of time throughout 2005 and 2006 in China to work with mainland artist Zhang Ge on their collaborative project entitled *Dirty Mind*. Both Ah Xian and Guo Jian, along with Guan Wei and Fan Dongwang have, moreover, regularly returned to China to visit friends and peers since the 1990s. This renewed connection to their homeland has been largely due to the rapid economic development and large-scale structural changes that have taken place in China over the past one and half decades. In particular, the post-1989 economic boom has resulted in an easing of restrictions on artistic experimentalism, and the government's recognition of contemporary art as a vital part of China's identity in the new global order. Some artists have even been invited to exhibit their work in major state-sanctioned exhibitions as was the case with the once blacklisted artist, Shen Jiawei, whose work was exhibited at the Beijing Biennale in 2003 and 2005.

While this re-engagement with China has rendered the distinction between the mainland and diasporic Chinese artistic community more fluid and permeable, the

physical and cultural dislocation of diasporic Chinese artists in Australia have, nevertheless, opened up a space for them to produce work that would not have been possible in China. This is particularly the case when one considers the paintings of Guo Jian that parodies the People's Liberation Army (PLA), an institution that is still revered in China as a unifying symbol of patriotism. Significantly, these artists' experience of migration and diaspora has also opened up a space for them to transform Chinese culture and traditions from a distance. As John Clark has observed, the flow and movement of artists from China in the late twentieth century has seen the emergence of "artists who regard their work in cultures "other than Chinese" as *re-constitutive* or *counter-constitutive* of the "Chineseness" of the culture from which they have come" (Clark 1998: 19). I want to suggest that the reconfiguring of this originary "Chinese" culture can be understood as a translative process whereby the "original" and the "translation" engage in acts of mutual haunting that results in the disappearance of the "original" *and* its survival through its transformed "after-life" in translation.

Ghostly Translations

In recent debates on the theory and practice of translation, the assumption that an equivalence of meaning can be readily established between different texts has been rejected in favor of a view that stresses the opacity and partiality of the business of translation (see Maharaj; Niranjana). In his seminal essay, "The Task of the Translator," Walter Benjamin problematizes the traditional relationship between the original and the translation by showing how the original lives on, and can be known, only through its growth or "after-life" in translation (72). In such a scenario, the quest for absolute clarity and coherence – or what Derrida refers to as "the dream of translation without remnants" (1979) – can never be fulfilled; only "echoes" of the original can be heard as languages and cultures pass through the complex layers and filters of translation.[16]

Recognizing the limits and incoherence of translation has profound implications for the way we understand what Nikos Papastergiadis refers to as "the enigmatic affinities between a sense of belonging and the creative act" that powerfully manifest itself in the work of diasporic artists (135). For while diasporic Chinese artists are haunted by the specter of their ethnicity, they also produce hauntings that shadow the spectral entity of "Chineseness." And they do so by re-inscribing and transforming the symbols, icons, styles and imagery of their originary "Chinese" culture in their work. Significantly, these markers or signs of "Chineseness" represent particular forms of haunting that reveal themselves through the ghostly presence or figuration of the body (Ah Xian), the shadow (Fan Dongwang), cosmological forces (Guan Wei), history (Shen Jiawei) and the pantomime (Guo Jian). In this way, the specter of "Chineseness" lives on through its *transformed* "after-life" in translation. Spectrality thus appears in the work of diasporic Chinese artists as a constantly evolving *trace* of difference rather than a fixed originary essence.

Corporeal inscriptions: The Work of Ah Xian

Ah Xian is one such artist who seeks to communicate his experience of exile and diaspora in Australia through creative acts of translation that crosses cultural boundaries and visual languages. Since his arrival in Australia in early 1989, Ah Xian's practice has shifted from an early concern with the freedom of the individual subject (that informed his *Heavy Wounds* series, 1991), towards an exploration of memory and tradition through works that use overtly traditional Chinese forms and references such as his *Fading Book* series, 1996 [fig.1], which features fading images of his mother – along with prominent women such as Princess Diana and Mother Theresa – reproduced onto cloth-bound Chinese concertina books used for practicing calligraphy.

In the late 1990s, he began to work with three-dimensional forms with painted motifs, producing his *China, China* series from 1998 onwards, after traveling to Jingdezhen in China to develop his knowledge of porcelain manufacture, painting and glaze technology.[17] This series is a culmination of a decade-long reflection on his journey from China to Australia. He describes the dilemma that arises from his physical and cultural dislocation in this way:

How can an artist brought up in a Chinese cultural context retain its values and traditions while at the same time enter into a contemporary world dominated by the languages and values of the West? How can I negotiate this Chinese culture that, in a sense, is being devalued from within? (Ah 1999)

In his *China, China* series, Ah Xian positions "China" as a central point of reference in an effort to bring about a renewal and transformation of Chinese culture. This body

Figure 1 Ah Xian *Fading Book: My Mother* 1996, Toner on cloth bound concertina book. Installation at the Asia Australia Arts Centre (Gallery 4a), Sydney (photo by Francis Maravillas)

of work consist of porcelain busts cast from life-models and hand-painted with traditional Chinese decorative patterns and motifs in underglaze colorings or overglaze enamels. An extraordinary array of designs ranging from idealized landscape and oceanic patterns to dragons, plum blossoms and wild peonies drawn from the rich symbolism and patterning of bowls and vessels of the imperial court, overlay the lustrous surface of these cast figures evoking a powerful sense of "China" and "Chineseness." While his early busts such as *China*, *China No. 3* [fig.2], produced in Australia in 1998–1999, features cobalt-blue as the primary color applied as an underglaze of the brilliant white surface of porcelain, his later works in the same series was produced in collaboration with local artisans at Jingdezhen in 1999–2001, during which he experimented with jade, lacquer and traditional cloisonné techniques in order to reinterpret the centuries-old traditions of Chinese craft and decorative arts.

This practice of creative renewal is neatly underscored by the titular designation of the series – *China, China*. This title-text is neither a neutral designation nor a purely denotative nomenclature. Signifying both the name given to this medium and the country associated with its origin by non-Chinese viewers familiar with the long history of connoisseurship and trade in this once coveted material, the sign of "China" appears in the work's title as an evocative signifier that expresses Ah Xian's affirmation of the rebirth *and* transformation of the country's artistic traditions.

Figure 2 Ah Xian *China, China, Bust No. 3* 1998, Porcelain body-cast, with hand painted underglaze blue and copper red decoration, 28.5 × 32.5 × 21 cm (approx., irreg.), Courtesy of the Artist

In his more recent series, *Human, Human*, 2001, which he also produced in Jingdezhen, Ah Xian retains the use of traditional Chinese patterns and motifs while shifting away from his earlier geo-cultural point of reference towards a more humanist metaphysical concern. Along with their recognizably "Chinese" surfaces, both the *China, China* and *Human, Human* series alludes to the figurative tradition of classical Western sculpture and its concern with representational accuracy and clarity of form. Significantly, by overlaying two-dimensional decorative patterns onto a three-dimensional human form, Ah Xian foregrounds the way "Chineseness" *becomes* inscribed onto the body of the cast figure.[18] While such corporeal inscriptions have been described as serene "death masks" (Davenport 50) or "mortuary sculptures" (Rafell and Seer 12) that "suggest oppositions between life and death" (Roberts 50), they may be more productively viewed as a kind of ghostly presence, a spectrality that is inscribed onto the *living* body: the individual body of the diasporic Chinese subject *and* the collective national body of China. In other words, the traditional Chinese patterns and motifs appear as a *phantasmatic* tradition that incarnates itself on the surface of the body, paradoxically revealing its "presence" by bringing to the surface the "absence" produced by Ah Xian's decade long experience of geographical and psychological distance from China. Hence, by creatively deploying ostensibly traditional Chinese patterns, symbols, motifs and techniques, Ah Xian engages in a process of translation that reconfigures the sign of "China" in ways that calls into question fixed, originary notions of "Chineseness".

Shadowy Perspectives: The Work of Fan Dongwang

While Ah Xian's practice has shifted across a wide range of mediums, painting has remained at the core of Fan Dongwang's practice. Like Ah Xian, however, Fan transforms Chinese culture and traditions by using traditional Chinese iconography and painting techniques and representing them anew through a contemporary and cross-cultural perspective borne of out his experience of negotiating the culture of his homeland and that of his adopted home.

For Fan, perspective marks the main difference between traditional Chinese and European renditions of spatial depth, as well as referring to one's social and cultural viewpoint. He describes both his experience of living in the diaspora and the animating principle of his work through the idea of "shifting perspective":

The idea of shifting perspective that I develop in my work can also be used to describe my own personal experience and identity as a Chinese artist living in Australia. Perspective can be understood in two ways; it is both a visual tool or method of observation as well as a metaphor for one's social and cultural outlook. (Fan, unpublished interview)

His work throughout the 1990s, such as his *Descendant Bodies* series, 1996, and *Shifting Perspective and the Body* series, 1998, features an array of figures from Western art history (such as Botticelli and Michealangelo), juxtaposed alongside

Chinese embroidery patterns, floral motifs and jade and ivory carving to convey different approaches to pictorial depth. In contrast to the collision of perspectives that mark these early works, his more recent series of paintings – *Dragon Head*, 2001 [fig.3], *Tiger*, 2001, *Guardian*, 2001, appear as simpler and pared back. Executed in Australia while working alongside his former mentors, Yu Youhan and Li Shan (who were key figures in the "political pop" movement in China), these paintings reflect a more direct and bolder engagement with China. In this series, Fan combines his mastery of traditional Chinese carving with his knowledge of Western perspectival and pictorial techniques, to produce visually engaging symbols and icons, drawn from popular Chinese mythology. His paintings feature strongly contoured images of dragons, tigers and mythical guardians rendered in a vivid palette and on flat, evenly colored surfaces. These object-like images are the artist's renditions of traditional Chinese low-relief carvings that originally adorned the walls of the Imperial court and which still decorate the facades of many public buildings across China today. Significantly, Fan draws on his knowledge of traditional Chinese carving techniques to create "shadows" beneath the various symbols and imagery of traditional

Figure 3 Fan Dongwang *Dragon Head No. 10 (Yellow)* 2001, Acrylic on Canvas, 180 × 180 cm, Courtesy of the Artist

Chinese culture so as to enhance the illusion of depth. He describes his use of the trope of the shadow as an illusory device in the following way:

In my series of paintings, I am trying to paint the image as if it was a sculpture. This gives the viewer a strong sense of three-dimensionality, since each symbol or artifact appear to stand out of the canvass surface. In my work, the carvings all have a black shadow underneath that indicates a light coming down from the top. The shadow enables the viewer to grasp the work as a low-relief carving, thereby enhancing the visual illusion. This is a particularly Chinese kind of illusion. (Fan 2001)

By using the brush and paint to "carve" out "shadows" or high-contrast reliefs on the canvass surface, Fan juxtaposes the three-dimensional, object-like quality of his traditional Chinese symbols and images with the two dimensional surface on which they are set, so as to make them appear tantalizingly tactile yet illusive. His use of hard-edge techniques to eliminate cues of surface texture, along with his deft handling of tonal contrast and variation, enhances the visual ambiguity of these object-like images by creating a shifting and illusory sense of spatial depth and ascension. Significantly, these "shadows" can also be viewed as a form of haunting, a ghostly outline that manifest itself as a projection of the object as well as its seemingly natural appendage. The shadows are thus not simply fugitive shades that lie "outside" the object; rather, they are both "in" and "out" of the object, occupying an illusory, liminal space "in-between." It is precisely the "in-between" space of the ghostly shadow that enables Fan to delineate a shifting perspective that constantly oscillate between the "past" and the "present," "here" and "there," in ways that defy a single, unitary and fixed vantage point.

In this context, the ghostly shadows appear as a *trace* that allows Fan to realign traditional Chinese symbols and imagery and imbue them with a contemporary and cross-cultural significance. He thus engages in a process of creative transformation of his originary Chinese culture in ways that reflects his efforts to negotiate the constantly shifting, "ambivalent" perspectives borne out of his experience of migration and diaspora. As he puts it:

The traditional and contemporary images in my work are…signs that the past continues to have a bearing on the present as well as the future…The amalgamation of these images reflects our emerging diversified cultural identity. My continuing movement between China and Australia enables me to acquire a constantly shifting perspective, and to develop a unique visual language that represents my ambivalent identity. (Fan 2005)

Haunted Geographies: The Work of Guan Wei

In a similar, albeit more oblique and coded way, the paintings of Guan Wei creatively remaps "Chineseness" onto an Australian environment to reveal the volatile tensions and contradictions inherent in the attempt to forge a new sense of place and

identity. His work is characterized by the consistent use of vertical rectangular formats, divided into narrative sections by the use of flat colors and generic figures that enact tales across a range of subject matter that reflects his migratory passage from China to Australia. In an interview in 2003, Guan reflected on the shift from his initial, uncertain encounter with a new and strange Australian environment towards a confident familiarity and ease in negotiating across the multiple spaces that he inhabits:

[W]hen I first arrived here, I found things new and strange, I was curious about things but a little superficially. And then several years later, I found it very interesting and had a deeper understanding of [Australian] culture, particularly its history, geography and its Aboriginal heritage and then I could identify with it to a certain degree…After another few years, I seemed to find that I had an advantage of my own: I could paint two cultures, both the Western culture and the powerful traditional Chinese culture and I could move between these two with skill and ease. (Guan 188)

The elusive positioning on the map of history, geography and culture that marks Guan Wei's migratory passage from China to Australia is reflected in his ongoing concerns about the environment and his representations of topographical, cosmological and geo-elemental signs and forces ranging from *feng shui* (literally "wind and water") to weather isobars and compass points. The process of negotiation and adjustment to his new environment that constitutes his experience of migration is evident in

Figure 4 Guan Wei *Trepidation Continent No. 2* 2003, Painting on map, 98 × 82 cm, Courtesy of the Artist

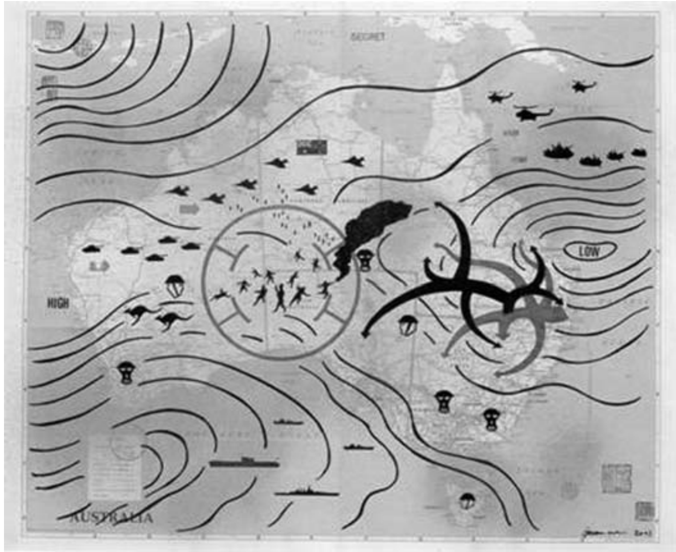

Figure 5 Guan Wei *Trepidation Continent No. 3* 2003, Painting on map, 98 × 82 cm, Courtesy of the Artist

works such as his *Treasure Hunt* series, 1995, that depicts frogs, crocodiles and snakes searching for an elusive capsule in a stark and arid terrain beneath an expansive blue sky, an archetypal imaging of Australia and its environment that recalls the palette of Australia's landscape painting tradition. From the mid 1990s, Guan began to more overtly signal his interest in maps and cartography in works such as *Le Vents*, 1997, that depicts Chinese, American and European coastlines separated yet bound to each other by large stretches of ocean; as well as works such *Feng Shui*, 1999, that overlays the scientific rationalism of Western cartography and meteorology, with the equally exacting principles of Chinese geomancy and cosmology.

In his more recent series, *Trepidation Continent*, 2003, Guan extends his concern with space and identity to explore the geography of Australia as a site of migration in an increasingly fraught and racialized, geo-political world. His *Trepidation Continent No. 2* and *3* [fig. 4 and 5] charts the flows of human movement across the terrestrial and maritime territory of Australia. In these two paintings, local vernacular interdictions – "Not Welcome," "Piss Off" – are inscribed onto the continental territory, alongside the injunctions of officialdom – "Urgent," "Confidential," "Secret Document." Significantly, both paintings depict a continental landmass that is both strange and familiar, overlaying the rational representational forms and symbols of Western cartography with stylized animal, humanoid and mechanical figures. Both paintings also feature military target points as markers of death and destruction, overlapping with

weather isobars whose tremulous ripples appear as a portent of the renascent threat of "invasion" from the North.

In this series, the once fabled island-continent of Australia trepidates with both anxiety and fear as it seeks to violently reassert control over its sovereignty by militarizing its borders and recolonizing its space. Taken together, the disparate visual signs of these paintings coalesce into a narrative of invasion and engulfment while simultaneously making an oblique reference to bad *feng shui*, a ghostly geo-elemental trope aggravated by the forces that have unsettled the balance and harmony of the environment. In this fictive scenario, the imagined geography of Australia is figured as a site of haunting, where specters of both purity and contagion ominously cast their shadows. Australia thus appears as haunted as much by the specter of invasion from its North – a haunting that resonates with earlier anxieties about the specter of Asianization (as well as Sinicization) of Australia that the White Australia Policy sought to exorcise – as by the ghostly presence of Chinese cosmological forces that flow across the anxious landscape of the nation. Guan Wei thus engages in a form of storytelling that relies on a unique and constantly evolving visual language, replete with ambiguous visual cues, allusions and the "invisible presence" of Chinese ghosts that reflects his own elusive and haunted positioning across the imagined histories and geographies of China and Australia.

History as Hauntology: The Work of Shen Jiawei

Like Guan Wei, Shen Jiawei also engages in a form of story-telling by harnessing the narrative power of history, understood as both the past and the stories that are told about the past. In particular, Shen deploys his highly accomplished technical skills in academic realism to depict history, tradition and politics in often deeply allegorical ways that draws on his experience as a former Red Guard and PLA soldier. His work consists of history paintings that depict a range of subjects. These include portraits of Chinese and Australian subjects set against a background of historical references such as *Mabel Lee*, 1991; *Dr John Clark in Black Kimono*, 1992; *Claire Roberts*, 1993; *Guo Jian and Elly*, 1998 and *William Yang*, 1998. In these portraits, Shen Jiawei explores the intersecting histories of contact and interaction between China and Australia as they are inscribed in the lives of individuals who either have played a key role in forging links between the two countries or have themselves undertaken the journey from China to Australia. Significantly, the individual sitters in these portraits are depicted both as the bearers of history, and as figures who participate in the (re-)making of history.

Shen's interest in the significant, and at times pivotal, role of individuals in the unfolding of history is also evident in another body of work that explores the turbulent history of the Cultural Revolution. In his *1966 Beijing-Jipu N0. 2*, 2002 [fig.6], the statuesque figure of Mao stands above disgraced Communist party figures on a Beijing jeep (a Chinese-made vehicle that became an iconic symbol of national pride). By depicting a

Figure 6 Shen Jiawei *1966 Beijing Jipu No. 2* 2002, Oil on canvas, 198 × 198 cm, Courtesy of the Artist

Chinese revolutionary leader standing alongside denounced party cadres, Shen engages in a subtle form of ironic subversion that reflects his ambivalence towards China's revolutionary history and politics. He describes his ambivalence in the following way:

I convey a message through the juxtaposition of visual images and political identities and through the disjunction of space and time. I try to cultivate ambiguity. History painting does not have the obligation of the history essay where you have to tell the reader clearly what is your view, what is your conclusion. History painting can be more ambivalent. (Shen 12)

A sense of mixed feelings towards his own Maoist past can be discerned in *Third World*, 2002 [fig.7], a large figure composition that brings together a motley cast of heroes and villains from the "Third World." On one corner of the painting, figures such as Nelson Mandela, Aung San Suu Kyi, Mother Theresa and Gandhi are depicted, while the rest of the painting is taken up by the likes of Ayatollah Khomeini, Osama Bin Ladin, Imelda Marcos, Augusto Pinochet and Pol Pot. Standing close to the centre of the painting is Mao, who points to the body of Che Guevara. Here, Mao is depicted as the self-proclaimed leader of the Third World in line with the Maoist revolutionary

Figure 7 Shen Jiawei *The Third World* 2002, Oil on canvas, 259 × 356 cm, Courtesy of the Artist

doctrine of the 1950s and 60s that upheld the promise of "permanent revolution." A sense of chaos, however, unsettles the order of the painting as the various figures in this impossible collective portrait exchange glances and jostle for position. Hence, despite its seemingly ordered assemblage, the subtly-inflected poses and gestures of the various figures in the painting registers Shen's own discomfort and disillusionment with the troubled history of the Cultural Revolution.

Both Shen's *Beijing-Jipu* series and *Third World* were exhibited in Sydney in 2002 as part of his first major solo show, *Zai-Jian Revolution*, The title of the exhibition "Zai-Jian" means both "goodbye" and "hello again," reflecting the ambiguity of the Shen's relationship to Maoist revolutionary history, and the role that he played in the making of that history. Yet, while Shen is haunted by the specter of the Cultural Revolution, his history paintings themselves produces hauntings that shadow the orthodox narratives of the past. His paintings can thus be viewed as "hauntologies" in line with Derrida's coinage of the term to refer to both haunting and ontology in relation to the "endings" of man and history (*The Spectres of Marx* 10, 14). For Derrida, hauntologies "obliges us to ponder if the end of history is but the end of a certain history"(15). In this sense, Shen Jiawei's history paintings are hauntologies that gives rise to hauntings by offering different, alternative histories that ironically subverts the officially sanctioned and taken-for-granted orthodoxies of both Chinese and Australian history.

Pantomime Productions: The Work of Guo Jian

The specter of the Cultural Revolution that haunts, and is haunted by, Shen Jaiwei's work is confronted in a more parodic and satirical way in the paintings of Guo Jian. Guo's works contain strong, unequivocal references to China, drawing on his experience as a former military artist in the PLA and transforming them into vivid and garish images with an undercurrent of eroticism and violence. His paintings draw on a wide array of memorabilia – old photographs, propaganda posters and an assortment of kitsch objects – which he then cobbles together in a collage-like manner to produce strange, dream-like images that resonate with his traumatic memories of his life in China. As he recalls:

I used to have nightmares all the time…Then in the library, I was looking at some pictures of China during the Cultural Revolution and I realised what was triggering those nightmares. Since coming to Australia ten years ago, I'd push my memories of the years in the Chinese army, and of Tiananmen, out of my mind. But seeing these images triggered memories and, once I started to use them in my paintings, I stopped having bad dreams. (Guo 10)

In this context, the spectre of China takes the form of traumatic memories of the past that resonates throughout Guo's work. In the mid-1990s, he executed a series of small-scale paintings entitled *Excitement – Slideshow* (1995–6) that depicts claustrophobic scenes of PLA soldiers in full uniform being entertained by opera singers, acrobats and musicians, and frolicking with scantily-clad women.

In contrast to this series, his paintings in the late 1990s appear more potent and fiercely satirical in its depiction of the PLA. His *Excitement: Great Tiananmen*, 1998 [fig.8], for instance, mockingly depicts a chaotic collection of characters – soldiers, generals, government officials, cavorting strippers, and even panda bears – flanked by a range of military hardware, including a Chinese jet fighter that flies low over Tiananmen Square, a site that continues to be haunted by the specters (and spectacles) of nationhood and uprising.

In 1999, Guo Jian produced his *Trigger Happy* series [fig. 9 and 10] based on the Cultural Revolutionary opera, *The Red Detachment of Women*, that was originally produced in the 1960s. Guo describes the lasting impression of the opera – which he viewed while serving as a PLA soldier – in terms of the sexual undertones of the performance:

I was attracted by the image of the PLA. At the time I joined, the propaganda called soldiers "the most lovable people." Then there was The Red Detachment of Women. I loved it. We all did. Why? Thinking back, it's got to be all those women in shorts! At the time, in China, you never got to see women's legs. But you could go to The Red Detachment of Women without anyone calling you a hooligan or suspecting your motives. In China, sexuality carries a negative connotation. You don't admit to sexual desire. But even army propaganda used subtle sexual imagery to draw us in. (Guo 12)

Figure 8 Guo Jian *Excitement: Great Tiananmen* 1998, Oil on canvas, 145 × 198 cm, Courtesy of the Artist

The sexual undercurrents of the Cultural Revolutionary opera is explicitly brought to the surface in Guo's pantomime-like (re-)presentation of the performance in his *Trigger Happy* series. This body of work consists of vibrant depictions of imaginary worlds featuring the recurrent appearance of images of himself as a central figure brandishing a vulgar-looking toy-gun and playing sex games, while teams of ideally depicted young women perform patriotic song-and-dance routines against an expansive landscape. In this body of work, Guo enacts a double-entendre of sorts by dramatizing the decadence and sexual connotations that underlie Maoist mythologies of patriotism. Moreover, by deploying collage-like techniques to layer the iterative images of himself and his women companions onto naïvely drawn backgrounds of mountains and blue skies, Guo highlights the *artifice* of the Cultural Revolution, depicting it as a kind of phantasmagoric *mis-en-scène*, a highly contrived stage-like environment entirely reliant on sets, props, costumes, actors and dancers who engage in acts of sexual play and innuendo.

In this series, one can also discern a shift in Guo's palette away from his earlier dark tones towards the use of brighter hues evident in the splashes of blue that form the background of his canvas. This shift is partly due to the vastly different visual environment that Guo encountered when he migrated to Australia. As he observes:

The paintings with water and the beach are influenced by Australia. I was knocked out by my first sight of the coast, of the beach. We don't have any ocean in Guizhou.

Figure 9 Guo Jian *Trigger Happy No.16* 1999, Oil on Canvas, 145 × 198 cm, Courtesy of the Artist

I love the sea. I still feel I've been here for too short a time, and I haven't digested my Australian experience. But you can see how bright the blues are in these paintings—that's all from Australia. (Guo 12)

Hence, by reconfiguring the visual language of the Cultural Revolution and parodying its legacy of violence and iconoclasm, Guo Jian's paintings produces a kind of haunting that sneers at, and ridicules – through lurid satire and absurd caricature – the authority invested in the PLA and the puritanical constraints and iconography of Chinese propaganda.

Living with Ghosts

What is thus notable about the work of diasporic Chinese artists in Australia is the various ways in which they have incorporated symbols, icons, techniques and motifs that are legible as "Chinese." This can be seen in the recurrent citation of the iconography of the Cultural Revolution in the work of Guo Jian and Shen Jiawei; the references to Chinese cosmology and geomancy in the work of Guan Wei; the use of calligraphy books and porcelain designs and motifs in the work of Ah Xian; and the incorporation of Chinese symbols and perspectival devices in the work of Fan Dongwang. In the work of each of these artist, however, the notion of "Chineseness"

Figure 10 Guo Jian *Trigger Happy: Water Player* 1999, Oil on Canvas, 80 × 80 cm, Courtesy of the Artist

is altered and reshaped through a process of translation that transposes and inscribes Chinese culture and traditions onto a new cultural environment. In this way, the specter of "Chineseness" can be viewed as neither an "absence" or "presence" but a constantly evolving *trace* of difference that marks both the disappearance of the "original" *and* its ghostly re-incarnation as an "after-life" in translation.

While these transformative recuperations of Chinese culture and traditions have enabled these artists to explore the past while engaging their present cultural environment, there also appears to be a conscious awareness of the need for strategic self-positioning in an Australian art world whose circles of appreciation and patronage tend to valorize works that display recognizable signifiers of "Chineseness." The valorization of the "Chineseness" of the artists and their work has occurred despite their inclusion in exhibitions as representatives of Australian art. The curatorial positioning of Guan Wei is a case in point. Despite being selected to represent Australia

at the *Third Asia-Pacific Triennial* in Brisbane in 1999, Guan's work was described in the *Triennial*'s catalogue as deriving from his "charismatic Chineseness" (Seear 180).[19] This has given rise to a knowing attitude of the kind that may be discerned in Ah Xian's observation that "the artists who left China become very Chinese, and the ones who stay become very Western. You could call it a survival need in both situations" (cited in Davenport and Jaivin 25). In other words, diasporic Chinese artists in Australia inhabit an art world where their continued survival as artists require them to respond by taking on the spectral form, "Chinese." It thus *became* them. In this context, the status of "Chineseness" appears as "no longer a problem of *invisibility*, but one of *excessive visibility* of a certain order" (Fisher 5).

This has led to a growing concern amongst some artists and critics in mainland China about the way their use of recognizable signifiers of "Chineseness" conforms to Western expectations and stereotypes of Chinese culture. Indeed, much of their concern have centered around the category of "Chineseness" as a marker of the style and content of the work of these diasporic Chinese artists. The mainland Chinese artist and critic, Wang Nanming, for instance, asserts that Chinese artists living abroad have produced work that "conforms to the 'Chinese characteristics' mandated by the West" that results in a "Chinatown culture," one that is completely removed from the "dynamic environment of China's cultural present" (Wan 265–66). This concern is partly replicated by the modern Chinese state, which has historically played a central role in articulating the category of "Chineseness" as an essential component of "Chinese" art. According to John Clark, this has occurred through various official structures of art production, mediation and appraisal such as the academic regimes of art schools, exhibition selection procedures and the sanctioning of particular styles, medium, subject-matter and techniques. In this context, Chinese artists "were thus constrained to construct or deconstruct their work via a notion of 'Chineseness' as a central value" (Clark, "Dilemmas of (Dis-)attachment" 17; see also Andrews). These efforts to sinicize art production from China – and the Chinese diaspora – continues to occur in the context of the Chinese government's recent recognition of contemporary art as an *essential* part of China's cultural identity.[20] Yet, underlying this process of sinicization is a barely-disguised attempt at self-legitimation that seeks to re-assert sovereignty over the meaning and value of "Chineseness" *vis-à-vis* the perceived hegemony of "the West," a perception that has its roots in the history of modern China's positioning of "the West," as its "implied addressee" and "preferred Other" (Chow 151).

Haunted by the specters of Western hegemonic ambitions, the spectral nation of China has thus, in turn, generated hauntings that cast their shadows over the lives and work of its diasporic subjects. Yet, as I have shown in this essay, Chinese artists in the diaspora have themselves produced hauntings that call into question fixed and originary notions of "Chineseness" from the vantage point of their adopted home.

The cosmopolitan world of travel, mobility and exchange that emerged in the aftermath of the social and political upheavals of 1989 is thus experienced by these artists as a profoundly haunted one. In this context, being a cosmopolitan diasporic Chinese artist necessarily involves living and working in a phantasmic world inhabited by a multitude of ghosts.

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Notes

1. As the first nation-wide survey of experimental art to be held in China, the *China Modern Art* exhibition featured 297 works in various mediums by 186 artists. It was a historically significant event as it marked a culmination of experimental art activity in China over the past decade, and encapsulated the rebellious and turbulent mood of the times in Beijing in the months leading up to the student demonstrations at Tiananmen.

2. The artists were released after being detained for just three days. Their performance thus tested the limits of the law, while simultaneously confirming their privileged position as children of high-ranking communist party cadres. Both artists migrated to Australia in 1989 soon after the political turmoil and violence that erupted a few months later in Tiananmen Square. During their time in Australia, they participated in the *Twelve Contemporary Chinese Artists* exhibition at the University of Sydney Staff Club in 1991 where photographs of their 1989 performance were shown alongside other artists who migrated from China to Australia at around the same time. They were also included in the *Mao Goes Pop: China Post-1989* exhibition in the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney in 1993, an exhibition that was hailed as the first major international survey exhibition of contemporary Chinese art held outside China. Both artists returned to China in the mid-1990s.

3. Chinese artists such as Chen Zen, Huang Yongping, Yan Peiming, Wang Du and Yang Jiechang migrated to France; Xu Bing, Gu Wenda, Cai Guoqiang settled in the United States; Ni Haifeng moved to the Netherlands; and Ah Xian, Liu Xiao Xian, Fan Dongwang, Guan Wei, Guo Jian, Zhou Xiaoping and Shen Jiawei migrated to Australia. Chinese curators such as Hou Hanru moved to France; Gao Minglu is now based in the United States; and Binghui Huangfu moved to Australia, initially as an artist and then as a curator.

4. This was evident in the landmark exhibition *Magiciennes de la Terre*, held at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 1989, which included the works of three Chinese artists, two of whom – Huang Yongping, Yang Jiechang – were based in France. Despite its good intentions in asserting the co-evality of "western" and "non-western" artistic cultures, the exhibition conjured an exoticized image of China. See Hanru where he states "As was seen in *Magiciennes de la Terre*, in the Parisian context, despite the intention to overcome in-built Euro-centrism, there is great difficulty in discarding a folklorized or exoticized reading of the colonial other" (Hanru 4–5). Evidence of exoticism can also be found in the state-sponsored *Alors la Chine* exhibition at the same venue in 2003, which included work by New York-based artist Cai Guoqiang, but curiously excluded Chinese artists based in France. See Clark where states "this was an exhibition couched in terms of *ambience* not aesthetic experience, not a sequence of worked out representations of the contemporary in Chinese art and architecture, nor a conceptually ordered inter-relation between expression and types…[It] was all very *spectacle touristique*" (Clark 2003: 70).

5. This manner of reception is not entirely incompatible with those that exoticize "Chineseness." Indeed, the circulation of contemporary Chinese art occurs in an international circuit that privileges a recognizably "international" set of idioms, forms and practices (such as conceptual, video and multi-media work), while engendering an expectation of new and decidedly exotic subject matter. See David McNeil where he states that the international art world often demands "a judicious mix of the familiar and the novel" from the "[diasporic] artists on whom it bestows its blessing" (28).

6. This essay focuses on those artists who migrated to Australia from mainland China in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Their work and lives are, of course, different to those third and fourth generation diasporic Chinese artists such as William Yang and Lindy Lee, as well as younger emerging artists such as Aaron Seeto and Owen Leong, who have very different experiences of both Chinese and Australian culture and history.

7. A cosmopolitan ethos and imaginary has long been a defining feature of the practices and institutions of modern art, underlying the visions of global ascendancy of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century universal expositions, as well as the creative ferment arising from the presence of an exile community of artists in the metropolitan capitals of Europe and America in the early decades of the twentieth century (see Roces; Williams; Leininger-Miller).

8. Some of the most significant exhibitions include *Mao Goes Pop: China Post-1989* (1993) in Sydney, *China's New Art: Post-1989* (1993) in Hong Kong, *Another Long March* (1997) in Breda, the Netherlands, *Transience* (1999) in Chicago and large touring international survey shows such as *Inside Out: New Chinese Art* (1998).

9. Indeed, the inaugural presence of a Chinese national pavilion in the prestigious garden site of the Arsenale at the 51st *Venice Biennale* in 2005 can be seen as an index of the extent to which contemporary Chinese art has consolidated its place in the international biennal/triennial circuit. It should be noted that what would have been China's first official participation in a national pavilion – with an exhibition entitled *Synthi-Scapes* – at the Venice Biennale in 2003 was cancelled because of the SARS epidemic. The pre-history of the Chinese presence at the Venice Biennale can be traced to the "unofficial" participation of artists from China at the 1993 Biennale and the inclusion of significant numbers of Chinese artists at the 1999 Biennale. See Clark for an account of the Chinese participation in the international biennale/triennale circuit and the important role played by curators based in China and elsewhere in putting "China" forward as a "prescriptor of contemporary art" (Clark 2005).

10. Martina Köppell-Yang has observed that, since 2000 contemporary Chinese art has been deployed by the Chinese government as a way of projecting an image of China as a nation that "has entered a new stage of historical development, that of globalization, thus joining the international community on an equal footing without forgetting its cultural roots. Cultural identity is performed here through the employment of contemporary art as a rhetoric enhancing China's diplomatic efforts. It is used as a kind of diplomatic language…[and] makes explicit that contemporary Chinese art is part of 'China's advanced culture'" (Köppell-Yang 2004: 66).

11. The pressures on the art world range from the anti-"spiritual pollution" campaigns against members of the *Xing Xing* (Stars Group) in the early 1980s to the closure on experimental art exhibitions in the wake of the massacre at Tiananmen in 1989. In the following two years, all forms of artistic experimentalism was stigmatized as having contributed to an unhealthy ideological environment and artists, critics and curators worked under an increasingly restricted environment marked by government "pressure on art criticism, pressure on artists, pressure on art journalism, and pressure on art teachers" (Clark 1992: 34). For an account of the constraints placed on the exhibition of experimental art in China in the 1990s, and the various experimental art practices that have circumvented or tested the limits of these constraints see Wu (1999) and Berghuis (2004).

12. The foreign diplomatic community in Beijing played a significant role in nurturing these artists and their networks. Their support extended to hosting numerous salon-style exhibitions of their works in private homes located in foreign compounds which often resulted in the sale of work, the dissemination of information (including the supply of officially prohibited exhibition catalogues and art magazines), and the formation of a network of contacts with visiting foreign critics and curators (see Huangfu 1999).

13. Sponsored by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Fine Arts Delegation comprised Geoff Parr from the Tasmanian School of Art; Betty Churcher, then Director of the Art Gallery of Western Australia; and David Williams, then Director of the Canberra School of Art. The delegation visited art schools in Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and Hangzhou and held numerous meetings with artists, curators and academics to explore the potential of establishing art exchanges between China and Australia (Williams 1).

14. During his posting as the Australian cultural attaché from 1987 to 1990, Jose held numerous meetings with Chinese artists, critics and curators which subsequently led to opportunities for them to travel and exhibit abroad in shows such as the *Mao Goes Pop* exhibition in Sydney in 1993, for which he became a curatorial advisor. The time in which Jose, and his predecessor Carillo Ganter, was the cultural attaché at the Australian embassy has been described by the Australian writer, Linda Jaivin as "probably one of the most exciting period of our official cultural exchange with China" (Jaivin 152). For an account of his various meetings with artists, critics and curators in China whilst stationed as cultural attaché at the Australian embassy in Beijing in the 1980s, see Jose (1992, 1994).

15. Their situation is vastly different from the experience of diasporic "cosmopolitan" intellectuals such as Ien Ang whose seminal work on the Chinese diasporic experience has centered on the ontological and linguistic predicament of "not speaking Chinese" (1994; 2001). The key difference stems from their differential positioning within their respective fields of professional practice in an Australian and international academic and artistic world where English is increasingly the dominant *lingua franca*. In this context, "not speaking English" is a significantly greater barrier to professional integration and success than "not speaking Chinese."

16. Derrida seizes on Benjamin's use of organic metaphors in order to reject the notion of equivalent translation and foreground the inherent instability of origins. For Derrida, the practice of translation can never be a simple matter of transferring meaning between different texts "within the horizon of an absolutely pure, transparent and unequivocal translatability" (1981: 20). Moreover, he argues that the translation will "truly be a moment in the growth of the original" and that "if the original calls for a compliment, it is because at the origin it was not there without fault, full, complete and total, identical to itself" (1985: 188) In Derrida's reading, the messianic-utopian impulse that animates Benjamin's notion of the "after-life" is dissolved by the movements of post-structuralist textuality which precludes any prior semantic unity in either the "original" or the "translated" text, thereby ensuring that the original text is itself always already a translation that exceeds the intentions of the author or translator.

17. Jingdezhen is the historical center of China's porcelain and ceramic production, famous for its fine porcelain objects and vessels made for the Chinese imperial courts.

18. It is worth noting that Ni Haifeng, a Chinese artist based in the Netherlands, has also explored his Chineseness by painting his own body with traditional Chinese porcelain motifs and patterns.

19. Seear describes Guan Wei's work in this way: "[t]he essential characteristics of what has been termed the artists" 'charismatic Chineseness' are undeniably present [in his work] – in the confident, continuous line of his brushstrokes, the opaque washes of color, and a generous orderly use of space that has clear precedents in traditional Chinese painting" (180).

20. In a speech delivered at the Seventh National Conference of Cultural Workers and the Sixth National Conference of Writers in Beijing in December 2001, the then General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party and former President of the People's Republic of China, Jiang Zemin, stressed that Chinese artists "should make great efforts to advance the innovative force and flourishing of culture and art of our country and to create works that propagate the *spirit of the Chinese nation* and the progressive spirit of our times" (cited in Koppel-Yang 2004: 66, my emphasis). The recent participation of diasporic Chinese artists in a number of significant state-sanctioned international exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art – such as the one held in China's national pavilion at the *51st Venice Biennale* in 2005, which was curated by the New York-based Chinese artist Cai Guoqiang – suggests that, from the point of view of the Chinese state, the "spirit of the Chinese nation" is to be propagated by both national *and* diasporic subjects.

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The Vision of the Other

Qin Liwen

ABSTRACT

This essay provides concrete examples of how Chinese artists Cai Guoqiang and Yung Hochang, who often participate in international exhibitions, have to deal with and are influenced by the discourses of post-colonialism, anti-orientalism and nationalism as used by the art critics in their home country. This essay sums up some of the dominant ideological narratives that shape the intersections between patriotism and cosmopolitanism. The artists have acquired different identity modes to deal with demands and expectations inside and outside China, thereby perpetually navigating between articulations of Chineseness and its artistic Others.

Question: *Did you choose bamboo as the material of your work on the exhibition because you want to show the oriental spirit to an international audience?*

Answer: *I don't think bamboo is purely oriental. How many people in China have really conducted research on bamboo? China is in a very strange time, when people think they know everything while they actually know very little. There are many places in the world where you can find bamboo, Japan, France and even in Rome. The bamboo buildings in Columbia are the best in the world. Americans also know how to use bamboo. As an architect I am interested in all kinds of materials. But this time we had very limited time to decide – in only one hour we placed the order for all the bamboo. We had to make a decision in a hurry because we had such short notice.*

Question: *Do you feel that artists from other countries are especially curious about the China Pavilion this time?*

Answer: *I don't think that artists from other countries care too much about nationality. Maybe this was the case five years ago. They might have thought Chinese artists were "exotic" at that time, but now it is "normalized". As an architect who works internationally, other international architects and I know each other very well. They simply think I am international, and in the end they only look at your work. (Interview with Yung Hochang, Venice Biennale, 10 June 2005)*

Question: *Do you think Western audience's interest in China's modern art mainly derives from their curiosity about China, from the perspective that China is an exotic country?*

Answer: *I don't think so. Nowadays Westerners are more interested in the political power of china, the high-tech and low-priced products from China. There are not many Westerners that know about Chinese culture, except a very small circle.*

Question: *Do you mean that your identity as a Chinese person has nothing to do with the attention that you have received in the international art scene?*

Answer: *Identity is important, but the critical point is creativeness. One has to be very lively and creative. (Interview with Cai Guoqiang, Venice Biennale, 10 June 2005)*

The dialogue above was conducted on a boat near the San Marco Square of Venice. The mild wind and beautiful sunshine made people very relaxed and pleasant. Nevertheless, as soon as I raised the question, the nice and patient Yung Hochang was suddenly put on alert and spoke faster. Obviously the answers he gave had been prepared in advance, and he could hardly control his impatience. The same question – about whether a Western audience's interest in China's modern art mainly derives from their curiosity about China – was swiftly and completely denied by Cai Guoqiang. Obviously, this kind of question upset them and made them uneasy.

Yung Hochang and Cai Guoqiang are the most internationally active and renowned modern Chinese architect and artists. They both participated in organizing the first China Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2005. The outdoor exhibition of the China Pavilion consisted of two pieces of work. One was Wang Qiheng's *Fengshui Project for Venice*. Wang is professor at the Architecture Department of Tianjin University, and is famous for his study of the *Fengshui* knowledge of ancient China and his study of architecture design theories. His exhibited piece was a Fengshui analysis of the geography and buildings of the Venice city and biennale exhibition sites. A computer was adapted to print the graphs and show the process and results. The other piece was done by Yun Hochang. He is the Director of the Architecture Center of Peking University, hosting FCJZ (an architecture studio), and the Director of the Architecture Department of MIT.

His work in Venice was an outdoor structure of bamboo that was fifty-two meters long and twenty-nine meters wide, which was partly hand-made by traditional bamboo craftsmen from southern China.

The question of whether Chinese artists should use "oriental" elements and materials in their works has become a common controversy, one that has started to gnaw at artists' hearts. Only after the Venice Biennale did I read the articles written by high-profile artist and independent critic Wang Nanming. For more than a decade, Wang vehemently criticized many contemporary Chinese architects and artists in and out of China. All his criticism developed from two key words: post-colonialism and Orientalism. He criticized almost all the movements in China's modern art: kitsch art, violence art, "recycling" of so-called "Chinese elements", etc.

Here is an example of Wang Nanming's criticism on "violence art":

There are so many social problems left unaddressed by these artists, who instead focus their attention on "the violence tendency." The ugly themes of China's modern art after 1989, the "street vendors' effect" achieved by overseas Chinese artists' works, and the current "violence tendency" has been exhausting the tricks that appeal to the West. They are now heading for the opposite direction taken when China's modern art kept on talking about "violence." If we look at it from perspectives given by the theories of modern liberty society, the "violence tendency" only inherited the rogue tradition of the history. This tradition means continuous trampling on human rights in a society that doesn't respect human rights. Now we are watching the killing of cows and sheep and the abusing of animals, or installations made of dead babies and scalps, arms and other parts of dead people, or even dead babies eaten and burning human oil, as if we are watching a cannibal witchery society. China becomes ever more exotic in its range of post-colonialism.

The "violence tendency" in today's art world is only one aspect of the story. Weird seeds are everywhere, waiting for their chance to grow and bear vicious fruits. In Chinese society, we've never brought in the concept of "rights," or, rather, we haven't cultivated the concept that the law is installed to protect people's "freedom" from being violated. We always think that "freedom" equals unlimited exertion of "power," or we imagine that "freedom" equals "power." Urged by this desire, they praise the "culture revolution" as the biggest performing art. And when this "power" revolution theory is put into practice in the revolution, revolution became a mixture of authoritarian tyranny and the performance of rogues. China has never been short of revolution, but it has always been short of revolution based on a modern liberty society. That's why we now have a political tradition of "Mao" and "rogues" whose character is to violate "rights" with "power."

Wang also criticized Yung Hochang's idea of "bamboo city" and Cai Guoqiang's fascination for "dragons" and "*fengshui*." He regards Chang's idea of "bamboo city" as useless in the practical concern of city planning, because a city is not a "panda house," and he feels that Chang is building China according to the expectation of Westerners.

Wang showed disdain for Cai Guoqiang's "national culture symbols and exotic content of mass entertainment," which naturally led to his criticism of Zhang Yimou's promotion of the Olympic Games, and of all television advertisements aiming at attracting attention by means of traditional Chinese dresses and historical figures. He insisted that:

the narration of the West appears to be respectful to the culture of the East, in fact…it is aiming at restricting the development of Chinese culture in a given range of China, while at the same time adopting a model of cultural imperialism instead of culture imperialism which puts Western culture above Eastern culture, and thus makes Chinese culture dependent (on the Western culture). This is the methodology that the West adopted in its colonization, and it is the principle of Western "Orientalism."

Wang Nanming's argument is highly politicized. According to him, the fact that the Chinese government has not built up an "effective system" for China's modern art has allowed the West (with its foundations, exhibition system and market maneuvers) to write a "history of post-colonialism for China's modern art" during the 1990s. And now, if the Chinese government starts to adopt the perspective of "Orientalism" for itself, the whole process of post-colonization would be completed within China, by China itself.

Wang Naming, himself a famous artist and calligraphist, is not the only one who criticizes China's modern artists this way. Zou Yuejin, the associate professor of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, and also a famous designer and curator, has written a book *The Vision of the Other [Ta Zhe De Yan Guang]* in 1996 based on the same point of view. Zou Yuejin argued in this book that China's modern art actually exists with and partly derives from the vision of "the other" as "Western modern art". Also in 1996, a series of books edited by Zhang Xiaoling, a researcher of the China Art Institute, was published. This series of books, *The Criticism of China's Modern Art Phenomenon*, also "disclosed" how "Chinese people's memory" has been "suppressed, modified, revised …" on Western exhibitions and media. Furthermore, we can find on the Internet a lot of questions raised about Chinese modern artists. A blogger named Tao Shilong introduced the main content of the China pavilion at the Venice Biennale of 2005, before asking suspiciously: "Disregard all these, I just want to ask whether the UFO and Fengshui show the image of today's China?"

The "New Left" (intellectuals against elitism in all forms); the "Old Left" (old-fashioned Marxists who believe that art should always "serve the people"); the liberals (e.g. Wang Nanming); the "Right Wing" (a new urban estate who insists that elite culture should dominate mainstream culture) … Criticizers come from almost all the political factions of China, no matter whether they are aware of or acknowledge their political stances or not. They all participate in this blaming game with the same degree of abhorrence. One of the terms that unites them is "real China," although they give very different definitions to this very term.

In today's China, where modern art is still strictly regulated and observed by a suspicious authority, the nervous reaction of modern artists to such criticism is very

understandable. Any criticism that is brought up to the level of "national dignity" would stimulate unpredictable emotions. Art criticism can still easily touch upon the political nerves of Chinese people, and have a disastrous after effect on the career of artists.

That is why Yung Hochang and Cai Guoqiang firmly denied my questions about "Chinese elements." Later, they gave the same answer when they held interviews with another Shanghai daily, the "Oriental Morning Post". When talking to Chinese media, they try to deny the importance of the word "oriental" in their works, dismissing any link between they works and "Chinese character". They try to describe to the Chinese media that there exists a highly globalized core in the modern art world, in which top artists and critics of different countries can distinguish those "really competent artists" from the rest. Nobody can succeed by selling cheap and dead "Chinese elements."

In sharp contrast, Chinese domestic artists and Fan Dian, one of the organizers of the Chinese Pavilion and President of Central Academy of Fine Arts, are much more careful when they conduct interviews. During the preparation for this exhibition, they gave no information to the media about it. Obviously they could foresee some controversy around the exhibited works. Yung Hochang used to complain on an architecture forum: "Chinese critics' criticism restricts Chinese architects and makes them afraid to do many things."

However, during an interview with *Economist* magazine, Cai Guoqiang and Yung Hochang used different words:

"What makes the UFO project different," explains Cai Guo-Qiang, the curator of the Chinese pavilion, "is a desire to enter into dialogue with the rest of the world, rather than remain isolated."

"Bamboo shoots," his spiralling modern design, is made from traditional Chinese basket-weaving techniques. "I wanted the structure to be open to the elements," Mr Yung (Hochang) says. An important feature of traditional Chinese architecture is the idea of the platform or "tam". "In Beijing's Heavenly Temple," the architect explains, "the 'tam' is the wide open space for communing with the gods. I wanted to consider that idea here." (The Economist print edition, 23 June 2005)

First, it is difficult for us to judge whether the journalist of *Economist* magazine has "seduced" the artist to say what he/she wanted to hear. Actually, the whole report about the China Pavilion by the *Economist* is full of words like *authoritarian, close society, feudal culture, red* … without much comment on the "art itself." "Europe's collective day-dream of the orient" named by Victor G. Kiernan in *Lords of human kind* still exists. The end of the report runs like this:

China's support for its increasingly successful – and profitable – artists and galleries may well be no more than a figleaf for a repressive political system, but the Western art world, eager for a new audience and a new market, likes seeing red.

In March 2005 I attended a small exhibition of a private collection of North Korean posters. Almost all the audiences were foreigners traveling or working in China. They marveled at some of the "very fine" revolutionary posters wholeheartedly, just like archeologists discovering vivid fresco done by pre-historical homo sapiens. It seemed that political factors were ignored in such a "pure appreciation of art," but the fact is, had the French Marianne been painted on the posters instead of the healthy revolutionary beauties of North Korea, they would not have caused such sensation and attention.

Second, no matter whether "seduced" or willingly, Yung Hochang conveniently used "Chinese elements" when he introduced his work to the Western media, as did Cai Guoqiang. This can be seen in his introduction of himself on his website (www.caiguoqiang.com):

Cai Guoqiang was born in 1957 in Quanzhou City, Fujian Province, China. The son of a historian and painter, Cai was trained in stage design at the Shanghai Drama Institute from 1981 to 1985 and his work has, from the outset, been scholarly and often politically charged. Accomplished in a variety of media, Cai initially began working with gunpowder to foster spontaneity and confront the suppression that he felt from the controlled artistic tradition and social climate in China at the time.

The conflicting "self-descriptions" of both the most internationally renowned Chinese architect and artist, are carefully designed for media from different countries. They had to develop different antennae and identities in order to explain the same work and to explain themselves. The explanation keeps on changing, but this does not mean that the artists are not sincere – they are just different sides of the same coin. The definition of "pure art" and "Chinese elements" can be changed with flexibility. In the same way that Yung Hochang refutes the criticism against his "Panda House" idea by pointing out the "international character" of bamboo; Cai Guoqiang can combat the criticism aimed at his "selling Chinese elements" by referring to internationally-seasoned artists and art critics.

We can ask the Chinese artists and architects who are "walking into the global art scene" some questions here. Is bamboo really a highly international element to an international audience? Has it not been fixed as a Chinese element in their imagination by so many pop culture products that represent China? Is there really a "real" global standard of fine arts? Is there an "invisible hand" in the development of modern China's art scene?

To nationalists and anti-Orientalist art critics, we can ask different questions. What is the difference between "post-colonialism," colonialism and Orientalism? Is there really such an omnipotent force that controls the imagination of artists, writers, scholars and journalists? Has its force not been exaggerated by the critics? Most importantly, when aiming their vision and guns at these internationally renowned artists, have the critics not made the same mistake of adopting "the other's vision"

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to look at themselves? In the process of expanding globalization, the anxiety of getting rid of the mirror image may be dissolved (like in Japan), but it can also increase during this process (like in many other non-United States countries). Most probably, with the increase of mirrors (splitting from a shadowy "West" into real countries, like the United States, Britain, Sweden …), this anxiety would be alleviated somehow.

In January 1947, when Simone de Beauvoir visited the United States for the first time, she was surprised by the annoyance of American east-coastal intellectuals who could not accept the popularity of Hemingway's novels in France. This interesting phenomenon is repeating itself in China's modern art scene, with a different face and body, but with the same degree of anxiety.

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Afterword

Rey Chow

Something that catches my attention as I go through the current volume of essays is that quite a number of the contributors give prominence, in their discussions of specific forms of media, to processes of movement, transfer, transgression, and destabilization. Much of the writing, in other words, is about mobility. Be it the case of queering in Hong Kong cinema (Leung); dubbing of Western films on Indonesian television (Boellstorff); the "ventriloquism of dead man talking" performed as root-searching in Singapore (Lim); radio as a new public sphere in Indonesia (Jurriens); or the playful pollution of mainstream patriotic culture by Chinese digital music, experimental art, and popular film (de Kloet) – the epistemological, linguistic, gender, and social ramifications presented are argued by way of a shared focus on *not staying put* in predictable spaces as the predominant force shaping identities. If there is an implicit definition of cosmopolitanism being advanced here, it is that of constant boundary-crossing.

Just as remarkably, however, some of the other contributors emphasize a different side of cosmopolitan existence. Rather than concentrating on mobility, they ask us to note the steady pull of local, national, or regional habits and allegiances. In her study of Indonesian pop music, Baulch, for instance, describes how so-called Indonesianness needs to be seen as already woven into the discourse of global consumerism. As consumer sovereignty becomes the key aspiration in such a discourse, she argues, it is important to recognize cosmopolitanism's need to "settle down" in particular localities, taking root in the space of something like a middle class. In a comparable manner, both Antoinette (in her discussion of international art in the context of Indonesia) and Yoon (in his discussion of South Korean youth culture) demonstrate how attachments to old particularisms such as nationhood are often paradoxically reinforced by the trend toward cosmopolitanism, with which such particularisms tend to coexist. Where physical mobility may have encouraged severance from traditional bonds, their examples show that the line between global and local in actual

social relations is often blurred and unsteady. And, as both Maravillas and Qin illustrate with their studies, whether working abroad or "at home" in China, Chinese artists are continuously haunted by the spectrality of their ethnicity, which informs their creativity with a sense of affective belonging but can also cause feelings of anxiety as they are frequently interrogated by local art critics for "selling out" or "betraying" their assumed Chineseness.

The general picture one derives from this rich collection thus goes something as follows: wherever one turns in Asia, one is likely to find media representations; such ubiquitous representations are often permeated by high technology with its globalist leanings, and yet high technology alone is far from being an adequate means to account for the complex articulations of local cultures, especially the persistent gravitations toward traditional ties and imagined stable identities that are embedded in such articulations. This encounter between (being pushed toward) globalism and (being tugged at by) residual particularism is probably what is intended by the title word of this volume, cosmopatriots. Arguably, the volume as a whole suggests, cosmopatriotism is a phenomenon that finds comparable and parallel expressions across contemporary Asian cultures.

On the issue of global-local encounter, an earlier, influential paradigm of analysis has been Edward Said's famous critique of Orientalism, which is premised on the unequal power relations between Western imperialism and the colonized cultures of "the East." Transcoded into the terms of this volume, Said's critique may, in retrospect, be seen as an attack on a specific form of cosmopolitanism – one that, in the name of representing the other, ultimately serves only Western self-interests. Because Western perspectives and perceptions are typically anchored in and legitimated by Western territorial and military dominance, Said charges, what might have passed for global, international, or cosmopolitan representations are, in fact, mere reflections of Western cultural privilege. Although Said is seldom invoked by the contributors, the work they present may be seen, in part, as a logical consequence to decades of Orientalism-critique. By drawing attention, with the granularity of meticulous scholarship, to the specificities of the local scenes, the contributors are pointing to crucial aspects of cross-cultural encounters that are considerably more elaborate than the rationale behind Said's original provocation.

In particular, by foregrounding Asian people's active and voluntary participation in the production and consumption of global media culture, these contributors make it necessary for us to rethink Orientalism – and, for that matter, any kind of dominant cross-cultural ideology involving power differentials – not simply, as is most commonly understood, as a system of mystification and manipulation imposed from the outside, but also as an ongoing process of self-realization and self-fashioning, a process that can be vital even when, as is often the case, it is controversial. This is evident, for instance, in Epstein and Dunbar's study of Korean punk. As the authors ask, in a kind of music that is an oxymoronic mélange of anti-authoritarianism and

nationalism, how are we to come to terms with the Korean youths' troubling relationship to the white supremacist, racist connotations of skinheads? Even more pointedly, as Baulch points out in the case of Indonesian consumerism, it would be a mistake to see the natives' adoption of discourses of individualism and autonomy in terms of "resistance" toward global capitalism's perceived imperialistic tendencies. Quite to the contrary, she reminds us, such discourses in fact "intersect with the embodying work of commodification and feed into the myth of consumer sovereignty."

Clearly, in order to "be" themselves, Asian cosmopatriots tend inevitably to keep reproducing a certain dualist dynamic: on the one hand is the aggressive force of globalist ideological mystification and manipulation (which, for many, is traceable to the history of Western imperialism); on the other, and to varying degrees, there is the ineluctability of a certain *internalization* (voluntary or involuntary) of such mystification and manipulation at both psychic and behavioral levels. The true legacy left by Said's work on Orientalism – itself a form of cosmopolitanism – is therefore a continued challenge: how should scholars engage, rather than simply dismiss, the *contradictions* so deeply embedded in everyday social practices, whereby people may defy the enlightened rationale of academic critique even as such a critique is intended to address the historical injustices to which they and their ancestors have been subjected? If Orientalism is most objectionable in situations of political and economic disparity where the violation and transgression of boundaries, otherwise generic to all cross-cultural encounters (as any discussion of cosmopolitanism would have to acknowledge), becomes a matter of subordinating and humiliating the other, how do we come to terms with those whose affects and behaviors may be immersed in such Orientalism – those who, in their daily existence, seem to have thoroughly bought into the myths and the ideologies?

At this juncture, both the older paradigm of Orientalism-critique and the newer paradigm of cosmopatriotism may benefit from a form of cross-cultural analysis that centers less on the binarist global-local divide than on the processes of subject-formation among native – in this case, Asian – peoples. Boellstorff's summation of the intricacies of dubbing offers a succinct way of mapping the vertiginous, because often cross-purposed, nature of such processes: "In a metaphorical sense we might say that *lesbi* and *gay* Indonesians dub 'Western' sexual subject positions: They overwrite the deterministic 'voice of the West,' yet they cannot compose any script they please; their *bricolage* remains shaped by a discourse originating in the 'West' and filtered through a nationalistic lens." Moreover, even when they have "escaped" to the West, as in the case of emigrants from Hong Kong before 1997, many of them, as Leung points out in her essay, are simultaneously reluctant to leave Hong Kong behind definitively.

Alternatively, as Chow asks in his reflections on the coercively adamant interpellations of Chineseness issued in the Hong Kong popular music industry and beyond: why are people so *sure* about their ethnic/national belonging – in this case about what

and who the Chinese are? In such multifaceted interrogations of the uncertainty of identities lies perhaps one of the key questions pertaining to cosmopatriotism: how exactly do we grapple with the competing libidinal investments constituting the subjectivity of the cosmopatriot, caught as she/he is (and we are) among different, often unbridgeable geopolitical, temporal, sexual, and media zones? Would the figure of mobility that I mention at the beginning still suffice?

Finally, cosmopatriotism may demand something beyond what I'd call a "horizontal" approach, in which it is a phenomenon shared by multiple cultures, each with its historical and mediatized specifics, and in which every culture seems to be different but at the same time "equal" to the others. My reason for suggesting this is simple: some cosmopatriots are more equal than others because they in fact command more global attention and cultural capital.

In the context of Asia, the recent rise of China, which followed the rise in the 1970s and 1980s of Japan and the "Asian Tigers," obviously has huge numerical and demographic implications. The sheer magnitude of what is happening means that apart from the usual complications of global-local encounters, what is rapidly assuming center stage these days is the disturbing new symptom of Chinese exceptionalism, whereby everything Chinese is believed to be unique, different, deserving special treatment, and ultimately rewarding under the global hegemony of a market-driven economy. How might such exceptionalism complicate things? Might it not necessitate our going beyond the horizontal approach – by conceptualizing cosmopatriotism, instead, as a highly uneven phenomenon, one that is underwritten with extreme power differentials? The essays in this volume provide us with an incentive to venture further along these lines.

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