



PROJECT MUSE®

---

## Towards an Ethics of Transnational Encounter, or “When” Does a “Chinese” Woman Become a “Feminist”?

Shu-Mei Shih

differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies, Volume 13, Number 2, Summer 2002, pp. 90-126 (Article)

Published by Duke University Press



➔ For additional information about this article

<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/dif/summary/v013/13.2shih.html>

## Towards an Ethics of Transnational Encounter, or “When” Does a “Chinese” Woman Become a “Feminist”?

*T*o begin, two narratives: A Chinese woman who had rehearsed for the lead role in the model opera “Red Azalea” [*Dujuan shan*] during the waning years of the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s decided to emigrate to the U.S.<sup>1</sup> Upon arriving in 1984, she struggled to learn the English language and to make a living. In the span of a few short years, she successfully mastered English sufficiently to accomplish the unlikely task of writing a bestselling autobiographical novel, *Red Azalea*, named after the opera. The autobiography chronicles the traumas of the Cultural Revolution from a female perspective and clearly proclaims that America is the end of the author’s search for freedom and self-expression as a woman. Another Chinese woman, who in the 1980s had single-handedly created the discipline of “women’s studies” in the hinterland of China, the city of Zhengzhou in Henan Province, and had freely drawn from Western feminist classics in her writings, was invited to come to an academic conference on Chinese feminism in 1992 at Harvard University. There, she disagreed strongly with the assumptions of Western feminism as represented by some of the conference participants and has since publicly repudiated Western feminism.

These two narratives seem to fall within two unrelated categories as objects of academic inquiry: the former belongs with questions of assimilation and multiculturalism in ethnic and diaspora studies; the latter raises questions of cross-cultural encounter and conflict in studies of First/Third World feminisms. The former may be construed as a domestic issue belonging to immigration studies or minority studies, since the author of the autobiography, Anchee Min, had clear intentions to stay in the U.S. and has since become a U.S. citizen; the latter may appear as an international topic, since the scholar Li Xiaojiang never intended to stay in the U.S.<sup>2</sup> The main factor weighing in such a conventional academic categorization, it seems, lies in the *intentions* and the different *durations* of their stays, where one is construed as immigration and the other as travel.

What complicates this neat distinction between immigration and travel, as is evident in the uneasy way in which the “sojourner mentality” of early Chinese laborers in the U.S. is dealt with in Asian American historiography,<sup>3</sup> is that the intention to stay and the duration of the stay are neither absolute nor useful markers of national, cultural, and individual “identity,” whether for Chinese gold diggers and laborers of the nineteenth century or for Chinese women in the late twentieth century of mobile capital, travel, and migration.<sup>4</sup> In the latter case, regardless of their national and legal citizenship, both women purport to speak as authentic Chinese persons representing China and Chineseness, the former from Hacienda Heights, California, who makes frequent trips to China, and the latter first from Zhengzhou, then Beijing and Dalian, China. Postcolonial studies, dangling over and between issues of immigration and travel, may be considered the fitting paradigm here that can accommodate both women’s experiences—except that from the perspective of these Chinese women, their condition can hardly be considered postcolonial. (Post)socialist, in its implied, albeit limited, externality to capitalist-centric Western discursive practices, of which postcoloniality as theorized in the U.S. is an example, is a more appropriate descriptive term here. In the messiness of categorizing these two women vis-à-vis the artificial designations of disciplinary and methodological boundaries, we are coming closer to identifying the fluidity and complexity of our transnational moment, where migration, travel, and diaspora can no longer be clearly distinguished by intention and duration, nor by national citizenship and belonging. We are also witnessing, I think, the inability of postcolonial theory, which arose from capitalist postcolonies and

hypercapitalist metropolises, to deal adequately with the (post)socialist condition.<sup>5</sup>

What happens, then, when we disregard the customary boundaries of immigration studies and cross-cultural studies and focus instead on the logics and politics of the transnational encounter with the Other and difference? How do the border-crossings of these two women expose and confront the Western-centric regime of power and representation where difference is variously value-coded in terms of time, space, ethnicity, and subjectivity (the backward/past, the underdeveloped/remote, the racialized/ethnicized, the oppressed Third World woman, each stereotypically attributed to the Other)? What economy of subjection and subjectivization is implied in such value-codings of time, space, ethnicity, and subjectivity, and what are its problematics? How might we, finally, imagine and practice an ethics of transnational encounter that is neither simply assimilationist nor conflictual, alternatives that a cursory summary of the two stories above seems to suggest?

By bracketing “when,” “Chinese,” and “feminist” to examine Western (mis)uses of difference in encoding values of time/space, ethnicity, and gender subjectivity at the moments and places of encounter, this paper argues, among other things, the prominence of affect as a subjective expression of desire, feeling, and emotion in discursive and political encodings of difference. Affect in turn seeks and produces legitimations of difference through interlinked discourses of modernity, ethnicity, and gender subjectivity that then posit such identifications as “Chinese woman,” “Chinese feminist,” “immigrant Chinese woman,” and so on as embodying by now specifically delineated differences. From the Other side looking West, the non-West’s mimeticism of the West consolidates Western universalism and passively participates in the colonial and neocolonial circulation of knowledge, at one extreme; at the other extreme, the affective technologies of nativism and cultural nationalism produce another set of legitimizing counterdiscourses that often reproduce and replicate the “very dynamics that are being opposed.”<sup>6</sup> For others who reside in the West as racialized immigrants and minorities, their choices are also largely limited to the poles of assimilation (mimeticism) and resistance (disidentification), with the questions of what they assimilate to and what they disidentify from left uninterrogated, while socioeconomic questions also go unanswered, reduced to the realm of affect à la identity politics. The political economy of power and discursive

differentials—whether between the West and the non-West or between the majority and the minority within the West—is not to be neglected, but affect-induced cultural nationalist politics across the transnational and national terrains reductively transforms political economy into a war of cultures and ethnicities. This reactive culturalist and ethnicist reductionism, in conjunction with the condescending universalist reductionism of the West, has prevented the emergence of engaged discussions of ethical relationality among different contingents. Through a critique of both sets of reductionisms as products of affect-induced knowledges—such as the temporal coding of difference and the reaction to it (“when”), the ethnicization of nationality and culture and complicity with it (“Chinese”), the universalization of Western liberal feminism and resistance to it (“feminist”)—this paper argues for modes of relationality beyond affect for subjects variously positioned in and outside the West.

*“When,” or the Value-Coding of Time*

In the spring of 1988, I found myself sitting next to Zhang Jie, perhaps the most prominent woman writer in China at the time, at a reception in Beijing for American writers hosted by the Chinese Ministry of Culture. As the interpreter/translator for the American delegation, I had acquired the derivative power of proximity to prominent American and Chinese writers to enjoy a sumptuous banquet and to serve as the intermediary of conversation and cultural exchange. One of the questions that was frequently raised by the American delegation, especially by women writers during that reception and at later meetings in Beijing, Chengdu, and Shanghai, was whether Chinese women writers were keen on expressing feminist intent and exposing female oppression. Upon hearing the question thus posed and translated in my Taiwanese-inflected terminology, Zhang Jie appeared to be ill at ease. Despite the fact that she was then the most acclaimed writer of female sensibility, she replied after a short pause that there was no such thing as “feminism” [nǚxing zhuyi or nǚquan zhuyi] in China and that she would not call herself a “feminist” or a “feminist writer.” This was my first trip to China as a Korean-born, Taiwan- and U.S.-educated ethnic Chinese residing in California, and, out of sheer ignorance, I understood her categorical rejection to be the expression of her care to avoid making any anti-official statements at a state-sponsored event. Her statement, I assumed, hid other meanings and

was therefore opaque to an outsider like me. As there were indeed many such moments of opacity regarding various issues during the entire trip, I did not probe any further.

Had I probed further, I would have found that Zhang Jie's refusal of the name, if not the substance, of something akin to "feminism" reflected a complex social and historical formation under Chinese socialism. Perhaps if I had had sufficient objectivity and a comparative perspective on her social and historical condition, I could have asked her to narrate the tale of Chinese socialism and its complex relationship to women's liberation over the previous decades, which I could have in turn translated for the American writers. It was, of course, not my place to interject my own questions, my role in these exchanges being that of a supposedly transparent medium without a subjectivity of my own. So when the Americans, out of a misplaced and misassumed politeness, did not follow up on that question, the opportunity for genuine exchange was dropped. The assumption shared by me and the American writers was that feminism was by definition a counterdiscourse to the state, the supreme embodiment of patriarchal power; thus, Zhang Jie's denial of the term betrayed to "us" a paranoia concerning the socialist state's regulatory presence. The moment of difference was thus explained away by a universalistic rationale that displaced the real intention to know and disguised sheer ignorance of the situation. In this case, my role as a transparent translator had ironically helped produce even more opacity. My positionality at that moment collapsed into that of the American writers, all of "us" lacking both the knowledge of the history of Chinese women's liberation in socialist China and the requisite curiosity and humility to learn. More importantly still, the presumptuousness and casualness with which the question was asked, passing the burden of explanation to the native woman Zhang Jie, was itself a high-handed gesture. Considering the complexity with which Zhang would have had to grapple to tell the story of the women's movement and socialism in China, Zhang's best answer could only have been "no" or silence; there would never have been enough *time* to tell such a long and complicated story.

This episode has since come back to me again and again, as I have begun to do research on Chinese women in socialist China and have become more sensitized to how easily cross-cultural encounters misfire, oftentimes simply because the Western subject refuses to acknowledge the historical substance that constitutes the Other's supposed difference. The concept of cultural difference usually takes the form of one of two

poles: reified absolutism or a been there, done that superiority complex. Either the Other woman is frozen in absolute difference (too difficult and too *time-consuming* to understand fully) or she is trapped in the earlier phase of the development of feminism (too familiar and thus either dismissed or condescendingly told what to do next). In these scenarios, which often coexist, the Other woman is readily dismissed as too different or too similar, or both, whichever works best at the time, the conceptual leap between difference and similarity being conveniently overlooked. It is not that the Western feminist has a mistaken notion of difference and similarity, which is the focus of much Third World feminist theory in its quarrel with Western feminism, but rather that the Western feminist enjoys the power of arbitrarily conferring difference and similarity on the non-Western woman. Elsewhere, I have charted the operation of an “asymmetrical cosmopolitanism” across the West/non-West divide: non-Western intellectuals need to be knowledgeable about Western cultures and speak one of the metropolitan languages to be considered “cosmopolitan,” while Western intellectuals can be cosmopolitan without speaking any non-metropolitan language.<sup>7</sup> The Western subject’s strongest weapon in practicing asymmetrical cosmopolitanism is not that s/he denies the non-West access to cosmopolitanism, but that s/he has the power to assume sheer neglect or ignorance of the non-West. A politics of selective recognition—the non-Western Other is recognized most readily through the modes of Orientalism and what I call “modernist ideology,” with its attendant time-space value-codings—cloaks the lack of desire to know the Other. Orientalism is in this sense but an alibi for the lack of interest in comprehending the non-Western Other on its own terms, reducing the Other to the site of difference to explain away the need to attend to its opacity and complexity; modernist ideology, which sees history in linear terms as moving from the primitive to the developed, confers similarity on the Other as the past of the self.

With the power to arbitrate difference and similarity in such reductive terms, the Western subject can thus simply *ignore* that which otherwise needs to be learned with time and effort, namely, the history, experience, and representation of the Other woman in multiple contexts. If sheer ignorance and neglect is the more common basis of the West’s misunderstanding of the non-West, then our critique of the West in terms of deconstructing Orientalism misses the larger target entirely. The discourse of anti-Orientalism, meant to deconstruct Western universalism, often ends up instead becoming an alibi for the West’s resistance to

looking elsewhere for paradigms of cross-cultural understanding that are able to attend to local contexts in more complicated and substantive ways. The deconstruction of Western universalist discourse in terms of its self-contradictions likewise ends up exercising the muscles of Western universalist discourse, rendering its chameleon-like flexibility more complex and better able to anticipate those latter-day deconstructive moves. Western discourse therefore becomes more and more complex, while non-Western discourse can be safely ignored—after all, if we want to study power and hegemony, we should study the West, right? While deconstructionism has recentered the West, an equally obsessive Foucaultianism has valorized the West as the site of power worthy of analysis and critique. The resulting disparity between the assumed methodological sophistication one takes to Western studies and the assumed naïveté of so-called “area studies” spells out this logic of narcissism and dismissal of the Other, all marked by supposedly well-intentioned liberal soul-searching and guilt-induced critical self-reflection.

Troubling the West/non-West binarism evoked here, which I posit schematically for analytical purposes, is my own subject position as a translator in the episode narrated above. Due to my lack of knowledge of Chinese women’s history in socialist China at that time, I was clearly aligned with the American writers. The alignment is troubling, to say the least, and is indicative of the way the derivative power wielded by a Third World diasporic intellectual can be misused to further mystify the Third World woman, thus constituting the diasporic intellectual as another imperialist agent in the neocolonial production and circulation of knowledge. Gayatri Spivak’s questions concerning the new diasporic women, “for whom do they work?” and “in what interest do they work?” are powerful ones. I was guilty of providing “uncaring translations that transcode in the interest of dominant feminist knowledge” (Spivak 260). Even though I am not from China, my recruitment as a translator for the trip was based on my ability to speak Chinese like a native, which was taken to be a good enough marker of my authenticity as a “Chinese” person, since I also “look” Chinese. One episode that exposes the paradox of the situation occurred while we were on the Three Gorges river cruise in first-class compartments. From our comfortable compartments, we had to walk through the third- and fourth-class communal bunks and seats of the locals to reach our very own dining room, where we were served eight-course lunches and dinners. We often saw some of the poorer locals eating their meals, which consisted of nothing but rice soaked in



water mixed with hot pepper powder. I was asked innocently by one of the American writers, who seemed genuinely amazed by how different I looked from the locals, since she thought I was also Chinese: “Shu-mei, why are you so much fairer and healthier-looking than these people?” I answered humorlessly or humorously, depending on how one looks at it, “Well, I am well-fed!” To be sure, I myself was more than confused as to whether I was Chinese or not during that first trip to China, and questions such as this one brought out my identity conundrum even more. It did not matter to the writer that I was not Chinese in the way the locals on the boat were; she refused to acknowledge my statement that I was not from China. If an American person of German or French heritage speaks German or French fluently, it is considered a skill that adds to rather than undermines his/her American identity. But it was confusing to her that a Chinese-speaking, ethnic Chinese could be *not* from China. The ethnicity-language-nationality assumption here is clearly racialized. Besides my own small misfortune of being racialized, which bespeaks the paradox of being both the Americans’ shadow (their translator) and the Chinese’s shadow (their racial compatriot) at once, the graver issue is the ignorance of the person who asked me that obvious question.

My role as translator, thus determined by multiple axes of nationality, ethnicity, and diaspora, implicated me not merely because of the high-class food I shared with the American writers, but also because my translation was so helplessly dysfunctional in reducing obscurity and opacity. Without acknowledging or studying the history of socialist China, the American writers and I, feminist or not, turned the possibility of cultural translation and mutual understanding into an encounter of incommensurability. Incommensurability is thus the consequence not of difference made essential or absolute, but of ignorance. Even a cursory, schematic overview of Chinese women’s history in the twentieth century will show multiple points of intersection with and divergence from Western feminism. In the following simple overview, a reversal of the value-coding of time in the assumption of a supposedly “advanced” Western feminism vis-à-vis its “backward” “Third World sisters” will be analyzed as a way to rethink the theory of time in the representation of the Other.

To be sure, Chinese women’s liberation has followed a historically different path from that of the West. Scholars of China have traced this path from liberal, Western-style feminism in the 1920s to revolutionary feminism in the 1930s and after, most importantly, to the socialist,

state-sponsored official feminism established in 1949 and in place until the 1980s.<sup>8</sup> When it came to power in 1949, the socialist regime legally instituted equality between men and women through the Marriage Law (1950) and the Chinese Constitution (1954), guaranteeing women equal rights in all social and political spheres (Yang 37). The Women's Federation, the intermediary institution between women and the socialist state that had capillary extensions to the village level, vigilantly safeguarded women's economic, political, cultural, and educational rights. Compared to that of women in the West, who still had not acquired many of the rights that Chinese women were granted by the state in the 1950s—such as “equal work/equal pay”—the condition of Chinese women's liberation could be seen as more “advanced.” Since the state granted women equality, there had been no need for women to be situated against the state or against men in Maoist and post-Mao China, hence the presumed irrelevance of “feminism” as such in the Chinese context.

This attribution of an “advanced” character to Chinese women's liberation questions the assignment of temporal value in Western feminist discourses through such time-charged terminologies as first wave, second wave, third wave, or Kristeva's homologous three-stage theory of feminist consciousness in her celebrated essay “Women's Time,” and the related assumption that non-Western feminism is stuck in the nationalist stage (Jayawardena).<sup>9</sup> Such discourses code temporal movement in terms of progress and development, always implying that what came *after* is superior to or an improvement over what came *before*. If we consider the fact that Chinese women were legally more equal to Chinese men than Western women to Western men in the 1950s and after, and thus more “advanced,” the usual temporal hierarchy of the West over China is resoundingly subverted. Indeed, during Kristeva's Maoist phase, this advanced status was both the site of envy and anxiety, as her *Des Chinoises* so uncomfortably shows. For Kristeva, Chinese women were both liberated under Mao and embodiments of the silent, primordial Orient.

Li Xiaojiang, the famous refuser of Western feminism and the protagonist of my second narrative, eloquently remarks on this contradiction:

*[American women's studies scholars] created two myths about Chinese women. One is the myth of women's liberation in the 1950s. After World War II, Western women, including American women, returned home while the Chinese women began to enter society. When in 1963 the publication of Betty Friedan's*

The Feminine Mystique *inspired a new feminist movement, they saw that Chinese women [already] had equal rights and entered the work force equally with men in society, and they thought Chinese women were the forerunners of women's liberation in the world. I call it the myth of "women's liberation" because there indeed exists an element of truth in saying that Chinese women underwent a dramatic transformation. But [these] Western women did not realize that we entered society in the condition of a very low productivity standard, and because of the heavy burden of labor, including social and domestic labor, Chinese women had not really achieved real liberation. You said we were liberated, and we said we were exhausted (loud laughter from the whole room).*

*After reform [since the death of Mao], many Western women's studies scholars went to China, noticed that numerous women's problems had emerged, and then returned and wrote many books deconstructing the myth of the 1950s that they themselves had created and giving Chinese women another myth, which I call the myth of "double oppression" of the 1980s. One source of oppression is still tradition, as they see the continued oppression of Chinese women by the traditional family; the other source of oppression is seen to stem from the state and politics, since Chinese politics is undemocratic and the economy underdeveloped. Chinese women are thereby presented as living in hell amidst indescribable suffering. Several women's studies scholars in the U.S., including those who wrote these books, told me that they felt comforted that, despite their own problems, Chinese women were worse off than they were! (loud laughter from the whole room). (Challenge 88–89)<sup>10</sup>*

Addressing a German audience at the University of Heidelberg in 1991, Li humorously pointed out the misplaced perceptions of the Western scholars who were so quick to jump to conclusions about Chinese women and to turn them into myths. In these two diametrically opposed myths, there is an unquestioned, contradictory assignation of temporal value to Chinese women, first as "forerunners," thus ahead of Western women, and then as backward sisters living in an "underdeveloped" country under "double oppression." One wonders how Chinese women could reverse revolution so as to be at first so advanced, then suddenly so backward. The problem here is not so much that the temporal value is assigned

wrongly, but that it is assigned *carelessly*, without an analysis of the complexity of local situations in both Maoist and post-Mao China. Li remarks that Western feminism tends to code Chinese women's movements in terms of what she calls "stagism" [jieduan lun] rather than contextualizing them (*Woman?ism* 264). The "stagism" imposed on Chinese women's situation is a form of decontextualization.

Li Xiaojiang's work in women's studies in China in the 1990s was in some part a critique of both of these myths, especially because the first myth—that Chinese women were fully liberated in socialist China—was upheld by the Western feminists as well as by the Chinese state. She argues that state-instituted equality between men and women hid an implicit male norm, according to which women were equal to men insofar as they were like men, thus degendering and "neutralizing" [zhongxing hua] women and depriving them of their difference and femininity. Li and Zhang put it this way:

*[Women's studies] scholars now recognize that the guiding principle of "whatever men do, women can do also," while inspirational, in fact helped to conceal a male standard for women's equality. In other words, women's equality meant that women were equated with men. A male standard, however, only creates an illusion of equality, since women ultimately have no distinct gender identity within the context of so-called liberation. Thus these scholars now conclude that the first task of women's liberation is to allow women themselves to discover who they are, where they come from, and how much they have been influenced by distorted, patriarchal images of their gender. This is the first step in breaking through the patriarchal line of dominant ideology. ("Creating" 146)*

Here, state patriarchy is criticized not because of its obvious sexism, as in the West, but because its mode of liberating Chinese women ultimately prevented that liberation from being complete. As Li's Heidelberg lecture illustrates, it was women as laborers and workers who were equal to men, not women as "women" with their particular gender identity.<sup>11</sup> In other words, women were equal to men insofar as they were workers or the so-called socialist constructors deployable for the development of the nation-state, which instituted the hegemonic identity of women as gender-neutral. Li and others therefore emphasized self-discovery and the self-consciousness of women as women to search for the grounds

of women's subjectivity [zhutixing] outside the dictates of the state. Consonant with such a critique of state-sponsored women's liberation as normatively male was the emergence of a strong refeminization drive among urban women, who were freshly incorporated into the politics of femininity in global capitalism, celebrating their new-found femininity with flair. After a detour in history through anti-imperialist socialism, China in the post-Mao era has seemingly reentered the global arena and been subjected to a renewed teleological narrative of capitalist development and modernity within which Western liberal feminism is situated.

Li's rhetoric of self-discovery and self-consciousness undoubtedly demonstrates a proximity to Western liberal feminism, although of course she would refuse such an interpretation. The moment of China's incorporation into global capitalism in the 1980s was also the moment of affinity between Western feminism and Chinese women's studies. Thus, when Western feminists expressed disapproval of such refeminization tendencies as reversing the advances Chinese women had achieved, the famed woman writer Wang Anyi, in an interview with Wang Zheng, defended refeminized Chinese women indignantly: "[W]e have just encountered differences between men and women; we lived without such a difference for such a long time" (166). Li, likewise, emphasizes how, even with all the current problems in the "regendering" of women, such as women becoming capitalist consumers and objects of capitalist exploitation and commodification,<sup>12</sup> the current situation affords Chinese women more choices and subjectivity than they had under state-sponsored gender liberation. Indeed, if women were "liberated" or "freed from" gender under Maoism, they are now reconnected with their gender, albeit in problematic ways. Wang Anyi defends Chinese women's love of cosmetics, saying that it is only natural for them. She notes how it has become a "luxury" for women to demand that their sexual, biological, and other differences be recognized against the hegemony of the discourse of sameness and equality when in fact femininity is their natural right. For her, difference is the root of female identity and female empowerment (Wang Zheng 160–78).

This is easily perceived as a paradoxical situation. In the language of temporality, the more "advanced" condition of Chinese women's liberation has seemingly regressed overnight to an underdeveloped condition as China rejoins the globe both materially and discursively. Chinese women's liberation thus appears to be caught in an earlier phase of Western feminism, when the celebration of essential difference was

the prevailing agenda. This was what Elaine Showalter designated as the “female” phase that preceded the “feminist” phase, and what Kristeva termed the second generation of feminists, who celebrated difference and preceded the third generation, which theorized gender in nonessentialist and nonreified ways. It is therefore not surprising that several feminist scholars of China situated in the West would use the Kristevan scheme to designate whatever stage of Chinese feminism they happened to be studying at that moment as the supposed current stage of Chinese feminism (Zhang, “The World Map,” 322–27). There may, in fact, be grounds for nostalgia for Maoist gender equality, especially from the materialist, postcapitalist feminist perspective emerging in the hypercapitalist West. Chandra Mohanty has recently argued, for instance, for the primacy of the identity of “worker” for Third World women who are producers and agents of history as well as the “potentially revolutionary basis for struggles against capitalist recolonization, and for feminist self-determination and autonomy” (29). Whether we agree with the truth-value of such a statement or not, one can imagine an extremely productive dialogue between someone like Li Xiaojiang, who is situated in a postsocialist society, and Mohanty, who wishes to take a postcapitalist position in which the pros and cons of the primacy of the “worker” identity for Third World women can be debated. In such an exchange, we would have to more dramatically confront the fault lines of Western-centric and (post)-capitalistic postcolonial and diasporic theorizing in the United States.

When Johannes Fabian provided a workable solution for Western anthropology in its struggle to represent the non-Western Other—the Western anthropologist must be vigilantly self-reflexive about his/her practice of Othering and maintain a dialectical notion of cultural difference rather than a relativist or a taxonomist one<sup>15</sup>—he was theorizing a two-way interaction unmediated by diasporic and postcolonial intellectuals, who transform the dyadic interaction into a tripartite construct.<sup>14</sup> The tripartite construct does not merely add an intermediary to the interaction but dramatically reshapes that interaction. Diasporic and postcolonial intellectuals are positioned ambiguously vis-à-vis both native and metropolitan women, easily becoming spokespersons of Western feminism to Chinese women and spokespersons of Chinese women to Western feminists if they do not vigilantly guard against their “representative” function.<sup>15</sup> They are positioned ambiguously in the temporal plane as well, since they move between the “advanced” and the “backward” in their travel and migration. One can still discern, as Fabian has done so

masterfully, the contradiction between actual encounters (coeval communication with the object of one's research in China and with Western women in the West) and representation (denial of coequality to the object of representation) as operating in diasporic intellectuals' work, and thereby chart a complex web of coeval encounters and distancing narratives, in this case, mixing up the aporetic time-value even more due to the frequency of travel.

My evocation of Fabian is meant to show how the persistent value-coding of time in representation and thought actually contributes to the mystification, rather than clarification, of the situations of Chinese women. Saying Chinese women are advanced or backward does not really say anything; the obsession with analyzing such a claim is itself a displacement of the need to attend to the substantive complexities of Chinese women's lived experience and history. It remains a narcissistic practice whereby *Western* constructs of Chinese women are tirelessly analyzed, the agent of representation being, still, unquestionably Western women. The obsessive critique of temporalizing the Other, Fabian's "chronopolitics," always already posits Chinese women as the perennial Object of study and does not presume the necessity of equal and genuine dialogue and exchange. How can a self-reflexive anthropology that often ends up being narcissistic, then, "meet the Other on the same ground, in the same Time" (Fabian 165)? Might it not just be a clever alibi, as I have suggested earlier, for Western scholars to resort either to temporalization and its critique, or Orientalism and its critique, whereby they absolve themselves of the obligation to understand the Other better and to meet the Other halfway in what is otherwise an asymmetrical landscape of discursive relations?

***"Feminist,"  
or Feminism and Ethnicization***

In light of historical and ideological difference from the West and Western feminism's imperialist and universalizing gesture, Li Xiaojiang's repudiation of Western feminism can be readily understood. But this clear-cut repudiation is complicated first of all by the recognizable similarity between some of Li Xiaojiang's views and those found in Western feminism. In the 1980s, when Li was almost single-handedly pioneering the academic field of women's studies [funü yanjiu] in China, the cultural zeitgeist of the decade was to "walk towards the world"



[zouxiang shijie]. This zeitgeist was variously called the “culture fever” [wenhua re] and the “new enlightenment” [xin qimeng] and consisted of a general fervor for Western-style modernism and cultural cosmopolitanism,<sup>16</sup> which were considered the logical consequences of strong humanist tendencies in the early 1980s. Like feudalism before it, socialism was repudiated as another “tradition” by the new generation of enlightenment intellectuals, who saw Chinese history as “a space of failure” (Dai 192). Li was cosmopolitan in her views, very much like the other new enlightenment intellectuals, freely appropriating Western ideas and theories, including Western feminism. In an early work entitled *An Exploration of Women’s Aesthetic Consciousness*, we find extensive references to Western women writers such as the Brontë sisters, Dickinson, Mansfield, Plath, Woolf, and Oates, as well as frequent quotations (without much critical mediation) from feminist scholars and theorists including Beauvoir, Showalter, Gilbert and Gubar, and de Lauretis. In another book written before her 1992 trip to the Harvard conference, *Women, A Distant Beautiful Legend*, we are given a gallery of exemplary women figures who are fiercely independent and rebellious, culled from myths, literature, and history across the world (Greece, Australia, Russia, China, India, Germany, and so on). Although these cultures are juxtaposed without apparent hierarchy, the list of exemplary women is predominantly Western, and the book ends with a quote from Goethe’s *Faust*, evoking the “eternal woman” as the universal source of inspiration and sublimation.

Although such frequent references to Western literature and feminism gradually disappeared in Li’s work in the 1990s, Li’s views on Chinese women remain very much the same, consistently positing the necessity for women to become subjects with independent wills and inviolable freedom of choice and judgment. She argues that Chinese women were the passive recipients of handouts of equality by the state and that only in the 1980s did women start coming out of “passivity” to determine their own subjectivity on their own terms (“Political”). After the safety net of the socialist state was removed, women were finally awakened to “women’s consciousness as subjects” [nǚxing zhuti yishi] and “women’s collective consciousness” [nǚxing qunti yishi] and began to actively participate in China’s social transformation, using their “progress and development” to actively propel the “progress and development” of Chinese society (*Woman* 7–9). The increase in the unemployment rate of women in the post-Mao era paradoxically initiated a necessary process by which women began to define themselves outside the state’s problem-



atic protection. The main task for women's liberation, in Li's view, is not the acquisition of equality, but the "independence of female character and self-worth," "the awakening of female self-consciousness and efforts towards self-improvement," as well as an "awakening of female subjectivity" ("Economic" 380–82): "If the collective consciousness of Chinese women were awakened, then we would definitely see *enlightened* women actively involved in society, and would see *self-improvement* and consciousness-raising movements for women" ("Economic" 382 my emphasis).

A rhetoric of enlightenment, progressivism, individualism, and humanism punctuates Li's work even as she has vehemently repudiated Western feminism. The history of Chinese women who were "granted" equality by fiat by the state and thus in need of a humanist, enlightened, self-conscious subjectivity of their own traces a reverse trajectory of Western women's pursuit of equality from the state. One could, however, still fruitfully examine the similarities between some of her views and those expounded by Western feminism. What prevents such a project from being a viable one to her and others, ironically, is not that it is wrong or impossible, but that it has been conducted with too much facility, failing to account for historical and cultural differences and often ending up as an imperialist gesture of the Western feminist who imposes her paradigm only to reproduce a neocolonial regime of knowledge. Having perceived this, Li rejects Western feminism's hegemony in the strongest terms possible and argues passionately for the particularity of Chinese women's situation, denouncing Western feminism as another imported discourse that will damage new women's movements in China. For her, Western feminism is another form of ideological domination, foreclosing "the possibility of our autonomous thinking" ("With What" 264) and undermining the "untranslatable history" of Chinese women (269). From the 1980s to the present, Chinese women have increasingly become "untranslatable" to the West because of the West's willful mistranslation of them and the subsequent reaction of Chinese women against such mistranslation.

Li would increasingly refrain from using Western women as examples of liberation or referencing Western classics in her writing due to her awareness of the discursive imbalance between China and the West. Evolving from a Westernized intellectual to a vocal critic of Western feminism's pretense to universalism, Li Xiaojing's change is analogous to that of many intellectuals of the Chinese New Left, who had

in the 1980s espoused the new enlightenment discourse of westernization but in the 1990s became critical of the expanding Western cultural domination that came with the spread of global capitalism into China.<sup>17</sup> To the new generation of liberals [ziyou zhuyi pai], who advocate speedy and complete integration with global capitalism, the New Left represents old statist lines of anti-imperialism and is hopelessly out of date. The irony is that now that the state itself has increasingly turned to economic liberalism as the balm to quell potential political dissent, the New Left's orientation is at odds both with the current policies of the state and with mainstream perceptions of how China should proceed, appearing to uphold the old ideological lines of the pre-Deng Xiaoping state. Such is the predicament of what may be called the postsocialist New Leftist position in China: its critique of Western cultural invasion is easily mistaken for a recuperation of old socialist, statist lines, whereas its agenda is in fact to keep alive the hope of a more accountable state that protects the working classes and local culture. The New Left's stance vis-à-vis the state is not unlike that of Spivak on the importance of the state in Third World nations as the "instrument of redistribution and redress" against the transnational financialization of the globe (263). This explains why Li Xiaojiang's position in recent years has become increasingly ambiguous and, one may say, posthumanist in regard to statist discourses such as the policy of population control through forced abortions (*Challenge* 215, 245). Herein lies the crux of the deep disagreement over "human rights" issues across the West and non-Western countries.

When encountering Western culture in China in the 1980s, prior to her visit to Harvard, Li's discursive construction of "the West" as such had been different. The West, so to speak, was very much the counterdiscourse to what she had to write and argue against in those years. The encounter in 1992 and its aftermath could be seen as the time when the politics of sameness and difference, universalism and particularism, discursive colonization and resistance, surfaced in cross-cultural interactions for Li so much so that she became a virulent critic of Western feminism and a defender of the irreducible differences between Chinese women and Western women in history, culture, and society. Li Xiaojiang would later half-jestingly write that "the disaster started at Harvard" (*Woman?ism* 1). So what exactly happened at Harvard? Over the years, Li wrote several essays reflecting critically upon this event. In all of these, the target of her most severe criticism was not the white feminist scholars of China but the diasporic Chinese women intellectuals who presented

themselves as “feminists.” This is another significant aspect of Li’s famous repudiation of Western feminism—it is directed both at Western feminists and diasporic Chinese “feminists” and is differently articulated against these two targets. The 1992 encounter was the moment the tripartite construct of the China/West encounter became more explicit, and a nativism articulated against Western feminism began to be mediated by a nativism against diasporic intellectuals. The diasporic intellectuals, rather than being simple intermediaries between the West and China, are implicated in complex and full-fledged relations with each of the others in this tripartite construct.<sup>18</sup>

Li was most offended by diasporic Chinese women scholars who called themselves “feminists” and presumed to speak on behalf of Western feminism to Chinese audiences and on behalf of Chinese women to Western audiences. On the third day of the conference, 8 February 1992, Li presented her lecture on how Western feminism should not be blindly applied to the Chinese context. According to her narrative, she was asked these three critical questions by a diasporic Chinese woman scholar named “P”:

1. What is feminism in your understanding?
2. Why do you say it is “Western” feminism?
3. What do you think are the differences between what you call the “particularities of the Chinese women’s movement” and feminism?

Behind these three questions, Li detected P’s three hidden implications:

1. What you call *feminism* is not true feminism;
2. *Feminism* is universal, not “Western”;
3. Therefore there is no so-called “Chinese” particularity outside *feminism*. (*Woman?ism* 2; original English words in italics)

Not having been present at the conference, I cannot determine whether Li’s interpretation of what she calls P’s hidden agenda is accurate. What can be clearly discerned here is that Li was offended by the condescension implied by the questions posed. This would later be developed into a general position regarding discursive rights:

*In the fields of humanities and sciences, scholars from developing or underdeveloped countries cannot but be “resistant” in their “dialogues” when facing Western-centric culture and its self-contained discursive system. If you don’t raise your voice, there will always be those who will speak uninvited on our behalf as part of “us.” It becomes clear to you that what they call “we” does not have a position for you. To clarify who you are, you must stand out and declare “No.” What you want back is not necessarily national sovereignty but another right intimately related to sovereignty: discursive rights. (Q and A 51)*

For Li, the “we” is assumed by diasporic intellectuals who speak on behalf of Chinese women and thus deprive women back in China of the right to discourse and utterance. While Western feminists make Li feel “exhausted” in their insistence on imposing Western standards to judge Chinese women and telling them what ought to be done and how (*Challenge* 211), these diasporic women leave her feeling indignant that her discursive rights are being usurped. In her perspective, she is thus doubly deprived. She contends, furthermore, that these diasporic women had not been involved with women’s studies in China and “became feminists” only after their “education” in the West, hence they tend to speak in terms of Western feminist paradigms (Interview). Li writes sarcastically that white Western intellectuals, who presumed to be “teacher-lords” [jiaoshiye] to the non-West, have become quite immobilized by the critique of their Orientalism and the suspicion of their identity. In response, they have retreated to a second line of defense, allowing native informant “assistant teachers” [zujiao] to speak for them as teacher-lords so long as the assistants use the teacher-lords’ discourse as their “weapon” (*Q and A* 52). We are familiar with various criticisms directed toward postcolonial, diasporic intellectuals in Western academia who build their careers at the expense of native societies and are complicit with global capitalism (Dirlik 52–83; Spivak). The general assumption about the relationship between Orientalism and diasporic intellectuals is that the critique of Orientalism provided the opportunity for non-Western scholars to speak for themselves and participate in Western academia in a more clearly integrated and relational fashion. But Li Xiaojiang’s critique here is even more unrelenting than that of Dirlik and Spivak: the critique of Orientalism, she contends, actually made Western discursive hegemony more indirect and hence more powerful, because it denied Western intellectuals their discursive hegemony only superficially. Western intellectuals

could now leave it to the diasporic intellectuals from the non-West to do the work of upholding Western discursive universalism. As I argued above, this form of critique exercises the muscles of Western-centric universalism because it is articulated within the discursive limits of the West using the same paradigms and confined within the same parameters; there is supposedly no “outside” or externality to the West per se. The existence of the inside/outside of the West as a discursive construct is a moot question since all discourse is relational; but one can still easily discern whether a certain discursive practice pays more or less attention to the complexity of local contexts. Denying that there is any “outside” to Western discourse can serve as a strategy to gloss over a lack of research on the local and as an easy way to safeguard the primacy of the West as the source of methodological and theoretical paradigms. The diasporic intellectual, desiring to be recognized as fully in command of Western theory and eligible for admittance to the pantheon of theorists (since all theory is Western), contributes to the closed circuit of Western theory through his/her mimetic act of “doing theory.”

If we consider coequality to be a lure that inspires the non-Western intellectual’s mimetic desire for the West, the Foucaultian pessimism that there is no outside to Western discourse likewise traps the non-Western intellectual within the limits of Western discursive paradigms, thus regenerating and perpetuating Western discursive universalism and hegemony. One might reasonably ask: why do we not posit that there is no outside to Chinese discourse? What might it mean to say that? Shouldn’t all American scholars take Chinese discursive paradigms into account? In this sense, one may argue that positing coequality as the object of desire is a trap set by the Western subject for the Other within the limits of Western discourse. For coequality is premised, first, on assigning a primitive temporality to the Other and then on arousing the Other’s mimetic desire to become like the Western subject by encoding temporality with value. And all this happens within the confines of Western discursive parameters. From this perspective, charging Li Xiaojiang’s repudiation of Western feminism with naïve or narrow-minded nationalism or nativism is too simple to have any explanatory power. Rather, her position can be interpreted as expressing the desire not to be contained within the trap of coequality that restricts the Other to the universal claims of Western knowledge. Her refusal, then, is the refusal to be ethnicized by the global reach of Western feminism, whose mode of containing ethnic difference is by way of multiculturalism. Furthermore, since many of her views are similar to those of Western feminism, her refusal of the

imposition of “feminism” can be chiefly interpreted as the rejection of its mode of incorporation and containment, which swings between the two extreme poles of treating the non-Western intellectual as the recalcitrant ethnicity (the embodiment of absolute difference and the Other) or the assimilated ethnic minority (as is the case for diasporic feminists). In her most recent writings, Li has become less adamant about her rejection, saying that it was the discursive hegemony of Western feminism that she had been resisting, not its tenets per se, and she is no longer quick to deny “surprising similarities” between the conditions of Chinese women and American women in different historical periods (*Woman?ism* 32).

The itinerary of Li Xiaojang, from a Westernized liberal humanist to a nativist resistant to Western feminism (with and without diasporic intellectuals’ mediation), who sees through the politics of discursive power in Western assertions of hegemony, marks the reverse trajectory of that of many Chinese diasporic women. In the extreme versions of the diasporic trajectory, the diasporic woman exposes the darkness of China for Western consumption and writes narratives of liberation in the United States and of her rebirth as a “feminist.” The story of Anchee Min and her book *Red Azalea*, with which I began this article, is an example of such a diasporic trajectory. By now, Min has become quite a celebrity, having published three books in English and been portrayed in many major journals and newspapers as an authentic voice from China. Her autobiography ends with these words:

*One day in 1983 an overseas letter came from a young friend whom I used to know in film school. She had left China three years before and was now living in Los Angeles. She asked me whether I had ever thought of coming to America. The idea was as foreign to me as being asked to live on the moon, the moon as my father described it—icy, airless and soundless. Yet my despair made me fearless. Though I spoke not a word of English, though I hated to leave my parents, my sisters, my brother, and to fight for permission to leave would take all my energy, I knew that escaping China would be the only solution.*

*I fought for my way and I arrived in America on September 1, 1984. (336)*

Here the autobiography comes to a close, implying the arrival in America as the escape from China, that is, the end of trauma. Described as an exposé of the “brutality and oppression” of the Cultural Revolution, a time

and place “where the soul was secondary to the state” and “where beauty was mistrusted and love could be punishable by death” (jacket blurb), the autobiography takes a putatively “feminist” stance by criticizing state patriarchy, presenting the stereotypes of weak Chinese men and heroic Chinese women, and providing a feminist rereading of the fate of the Cultural Revolution’s most scapegoated politician, Jiang Qing, Mao’s wife. What is most sensational is how this putative “feminism” embellishes a seductive narrative of sex and violence with a tantalizing structure of voyeurism built into it. The American reader is invited to gaze at Cultural Revolution China framed by the Hollywood formula of eroticism tinged with brutality and violence.<sup>19</sup> What helps confirm the American reader’s sense of self and self-righteousness is the underlying ethos of humanism and liberalism that pervades the whole book. This is the kind of humanism and liberalism that celebrates pet culture<sup>20</sup> and endorses the reading of Western children’s stories such as “The Little Mermaid,” “Snow White,” and Hans Christian Andersen fairy tales (Min relates that a schoolteacher was tortured because she lent these books to the author) in order to solicit mainstream readers’ disapproval of the Chinese past (how can anyone be tortured for the sake of innocent children’s literature?). Clearly, Min’s perspective is retrospective and strongly colored by her American experience and her knowledge of an American readership, and she accordingly renders her “past” experience in the “present” language of liberal humanism and feminism. In this rendering, China is the primitive, raw, and brutal arena whose representation has earned Min such accolades as “courageous,” “honest,” “brave,” her work being praised as a book “of deep honesty and morality.”<sup>21</sup> The virtues of honesty, courage, and morality attributed to the book reflect the assumption that Min is telling the truth in her autobiography. Her harrowing depiction of China under the Cultural Revolution coheres with the typical vilifications of China during the Cold War era, which a post-Cold War readership has continued to accept and even desire since the demise of the Soviet Union.<sup>22</sup>

The autobiography is clearly teleological, with the United States as destination and promise of liberation, where Min “becomes” a “feminist” and to which she frequently refers as “heaven” (Ni E1). This narrative of becoming, like those of other diasporic intellectuals whom Li Xiaojiang criticizes, confirms the assimilationist narrative of freedom and the American dream in the anxious haste with which diasporic intellectuals claim to be part of Western feminism and the ease with which

they feel entitled to represent their native sisters. This representative function has aided their/our arrival in the U.S., enabling them/us to find a place of identity that is simultaneously sought after and imposed. If this identity as the representative Chinese woman is sought by Min, Li, and other diasporic women, it is also a function of the lack of other identity options in ethnicized transnational encounters in which the Other always needs to be represented by a spokesperson so that the prolific heteroglossic voices of the Other can be ignored or displaced. What further complicates this representative function of the diasporic Chinese woman is how she functions to displace the need for white feminists to engage with Asian American feminists, transnationality displacing the necessity to redistribute discourses and resources within the nation-state. Scholars have noted that postcolonial studies, promoted by diasporic intellectuals, unwittingly functions to displace ethnic studies, since now the white mainstream has another, more authentic Other to deal with, one who decries the ills of colonialisms long gone in far away places (and mostly British or French and not American) rather than the internal, racialized colonialism in the U.S. Although the logic behind this reasoning is that there is only so much of the American pie allotted to different Others, so that when one particular Other takes a piece, the other Others are displaced, one needs to be aware of the fault lines of transnational theorizing in regard to ethnic minorities within the nation.

One of the pernicious effects of transnationality is therefore the displacement of one ethnic Other (domestic minority) with another (from another nation) through a globalizing multiculturalism: national cultures are ethnicized and commodified into different representatives of the global multicultural scene. That is why Li Xiaojiang and Anchee Min can so easily become and be reduced to “representatives” of Chinese women; their ethnicity is the clear outer limit of their identity. When Chinese women can be represented by one representative, the West needs only to listen to her summaries and conclusions. Ethnicization is that unspoken procedure that buttresses the West’s willful reductionism and ignorance of non-Western and ethnicized Others at home and abroad.

*“Chinese,” or the Limits of “Chineseness”*

As “time” and “feminism” prove to be overdetermined codes of value within the West/non-West relation, “Chineseness” is likewise multiply encoded and has increasingly become the site of contention from peripheral, diasporic, and minority perspectives. This contention is



importantly centered on the critique of the heavily political and ideological determinations of Chineseness in diaspora (Chun, “Fuck Chineseness” and “Diasporas of Mind”) and a two-pronged refutation of both the sino-chauvinism of the Chinese in and from China and the racism against persons of Chinese descent in diaspora (Ang, “Can One”; Chow “On Chineseness”). In both China and diasporic locations, two very different regimes reduce the complexity and multiplicity of Chineseness, one regime ascertaining its centrality and supremacy as the most authentic Chineseness to which all persons of Chinese descent in the world should pay homage, the other the racialized equation of all persons of Chinese descent, whether in Australia or the United States, with a reified and homogeneous notion of Chineseness as ethnicity and cultural identity. What further complicates this complicity between the two regimes that for very different reasons codify Chineseness in reductionist ways is the way in which national Chineseness has itself been ethnicized. By this I refer to a process of ethnicization of national cultures by Western-centric global multiculturalism in which the family of nations is reduced to the family of ethnic cultures, following the logic of domestic multiculturalism in the United States. Nation-bound U.S. multiculturalism has always ethnicized minority peoples as embodiments of ethnic cultures where ethnicity is displayed and commodified as the site of difference. With globalization, we increasingly see national cultures in geographical locations outside the United States being readily transformed into ethnic cultures, American multiculturalist logic doing the job of ethnicizing wherever it goes (see Shih, “Globalization”). Even before the current era of globalization, of course, management of national cultures as ethnic cultures that embody essential differences was prevalent in the imperialist discipline of anthropology; in the specific case of China, classical sinology in the West has been charged with being the ethnicity management mechanism that reduces Chineseness to essence and ethnicity (Chow, “On Chineseness”).

In this reductive scene of Chineseness, Li Xiaojiang’s and Anchee Min’s assumptions of Chineseness in China, in travel, and in diaspora, will have to be problematized. Three issues need to be dealt with: the inevitable reinscription of Chineseness through travel and diaspora, Chineseness as ethnicity in racist thinking, and the representative roles of Li Xiaojiang and Anchee Min as spokespersons of Chineseness. Anchee Min’s becoming an ethnic minority as an immigrant in the United States, the most expedient means for which is submission to the majoritarian stereotype of the “strong Asian woman/evil Asian

man,”<sup>25</sup> is also the moment when her Chineseness undergoes a process of destabilization. Even though she perceives herself to be as authentically Chinese as she had been in China, she is ineluctably implicated in the racialized logic of minoritization and ethnicization in the United States within which the game of authenticity is also the mark of the foreigner. It is commonly observed that first-generation immigrants often turn a blind eye to their minoritization, choosing instead to remain loyal to their nations of origin, if not politically, then culturally. This willful blindness could be a defensive posture adopted by a victim of racism (for first-generation immigrants), the result of an illusion that s/he will be accepted as an equal by whites due to his/her exceptional accomplishments (for the model minority), or any number of other reasons, but this blindness risks losing the political language of minority rights and becoming an obstacle to minority struggles for redistribution.<sup>24</sup> In the case of Min, her avoidance of her minority status and persistent presentation of herself as a Chinese person who speaks on behalf of Chinese culture, history, and women is problematic in many ways: not only because she thereby remains aloof to minority causes in the United States (and is hence an easy target of Asian American cultural nationalist attacks on the immigrant generation as the exemplification of the stereotype that Asians are “perpetual foreigners”), but also because she becomes complicit with the mainstream’s need to translate (read: reduce and simplify) minority and national cultures into shorthands and summaries provided by a handful of authentic representatives.

In contrast, Li Xiaojiang’s journeys to the West in the 1990s can be seen as the moment of reactive affirmation of her Chineseness as a unique identity, even though during the 1980s her Chineseness was very much framed in Westernized cosmopolitan terms. Her repudiation of translatability between Chineseness and Westernness can be better understood as a rethinking of her own earlier cosmopolitan stance, which had taken translation for granted. This was the moment when Chineseness was solidly equated with and reduced to ethnicity, a comfortable zone of inviolable difference for both the nativists and the Eurocentricists, which readily shows us how nativism runs the danger of being the defensive flipside of Eurocentric racism in regard to the question of ethnicity. For Li, especially in the assumed/imposed role of spokesperson for Chinese women to Western audiences, to assert Chinese difference as absolute, even if for very understandable reasons, may thus be similar in effect to and become complicit with Western sinology’s management of Chineseness as ethnic difference, as Chow charges. Even when she

deplores the diasporic women's usurpation of her discursive rights, one cannot help but wonder to what degree she is in fact asserting her higher degree of authenticity over the diasporic women, since she still lives in China—whether, in other words, it is not a struggle over *who* gets to represent China, Chineseness, and Chinese women.

Furthermore, when Chineseness is reduced to ethnicity as represented by Li as spokesperson, the infinitely complex institutional, political, ethnic, class, and gender determinations of Chineseness within China appear by one stroke of the magic wand to be homogenized. The internal diversity of Chineseness is suppressed in the interest of simplifying it for external consumption, as if all Chinese are Chinese in the same way. The history of Chinese women that Li and other scholars construct ought to be self-reflexive about the conditions of possibility of such history writing, including certain gender, class, educational, and economic privileges. If Li's criticism of diasporic intellectuals is to be taken seriously, we should not lose sight of the old issue of the role of the intellectual in his/her representation of the "people" or the masses. What has changed in the reemergence of this issue since Marx and Gramsci is that now the intellectual has to reflect critically not only upon his/her representative function within his/her nation-state, but also cross-culturally and transnationally. Whether s/he is diasporic or not, s/he is equally implicated in overlapping fields of symbolic power.

It is therefore of great significance that in Li's most recent work she has moved away from a staunch nativist stance and has expressed a willingness to reengage with dialogues and translations. As she says plainly, "[I]n situations without the pressure from imperialism and cultural imperialism, I am not a nativist" ("The Choice" 83). The question that remains, of course, is whether Western feminists are ready for her or not. In the end, what Li's trajectory tells us, then, is not that there is an ontological lack or wealth of translatability between Chineseness and Westernness, but that the conferral of translatability and opacity is itself a historically determined and *affective* act conducted in the field of unequal power relations.

### *Ethics, or beyond Affect and Recognition*

I have tried to show above that translatability and opacity in transnational encounters through migration and travel are not results of essential differences (as essential differences themselves are constructs)<sup>25</sup> but *affective* acts of conferral of difference and similarity

through value-codings of time, space, ethnicity, and gender subjectivity. For the stereotypical Western feminists, Orientalists, sinologists, and others situated in the West, various affective investments—such as fear of the Other, condescension towards the Other, or desire for the Orient's exoticism—dictate a politics of neglect and/or essentialism. These affective investments produce a complex set of cognitive procedures that value-code time, place, ethnicity, subjectivity, and so forth, which then comprise a self-consolidating epistemology that sets *the* standard of subjectivity to be imitated/affected by the non-Western Other. These value-codings give theoretical support to Western-centric knowledge production and circulation. The irony for Western feminists is that the feminist agenda in the domestic realm is in principle opposed to such knowledge but becomes paradoxically supportive of it in transcultural situations. For instance, Western feminists may claim Western women's time to be cyclical in contradiction to Western men's time (Felski 18–20), but their time becomes linear in relation to that of non-Western women (advanced versus backward). The affective manipulation of the terms of transnational encounters ensures that Western-centric feminist discourses are viewed as universal objects of affectation/imitation and end up reconsolidating masculinist paradigms. In the final analysis, the (neo)-colonialist value-coding of time in terms of backwardness and progress is contiguous with the capitalist measurement of time as value in economic terms. Indeed, in all forms of temporal management of the Other, the value-coding of time has always gone hand in hand with the universalization of capitalist modes of production, consumption, and exchange. Nothing is valuable unless it has use value; the value-coding of time has been useful for material and discursive colonization of the non-West. Time as value is as material as it is discursive, and it has been known to have successfully produced surplus value for the West.

For non-Western Others who willingly aspire to meet the standards of a Western-centric epistemology in the process of migration, travel, or the neocolonial circulation of knowledge, assimilation and imitation are often primary goals; thus, they *affect* Western-centric values and join in the essentialization of the non-West. For immigrant subjects, this occurs in the fractured terrain of ethnic populations' critical struggles against the host nation-state as they attempt to move away from conforming assimilationism and thus can become the object of the critical minority's accusation of being naïve assimilationists fresh off the boat (FOBs). This accusation needs to be examined properly, and I do not

have space here to do so. Suffice it to say that being born in the U.S. is not the necessary condition of one's becoming a critical minority (many immigrants are of a critical mind-set as well), and that often such accusations are a subtle expression of internalized white racism (the logic that FOBS are making Asian Americans look bad).

For non-Western Others who resist assimilation and incorporation, affective investments in a strong sense of injustice and anger trigger reactive desires of essentialized difference and forthright rejection. Indeed, it is not only the West that essentializes, but also the non-West (Chen; Sakai). Reactive affect is the expression of counter-essentialization, and nativism is one of its expressive modes. Affect, which appears to be subjective emotion, is thus historically determined and leads to serious consequences in the cognitive and epistemological realms, which in turn yield political consequences; as one of the *American Heritage College Dictionary's* definitions of "affect" indicates, it is a "strong feeling having active consequences." The challenge before us is how to imagine and construct a mode of transnational encounter that can be "ethical" in the Levinasian sense of nonreductive consideration of the Other, for which the responsibility of the self (be it Chinese or Western) towards the Other determines the ethicality of the relationship (*In the Time*). I do not agree with Levinas's philosophical emphasis on the irreducibility and absolute difference of the Other, nor with his re-valued coding of the time of the Other as that of the future; both are unable to deal with the history of colonialism and imperialism that has irrevocably hybridized cultures and used temporal categories in highly value-ridden ways.<sup>26</sup> But his non-Hegelian insistence on "going out towards the Other," in which the Other is not reduced to the object of knowledge and where subjectivity is not defined in terms of autonomy (through assimilation of the Other to the self) but, rather, in terms of heteronomy (presented by the Other) is instructive in rethinking a transnational politics of interaction, communication, and representation.

What Levinas is arguing in the philosophical realm resonates with recent materialist rethinkings of identity politics that have focused on recognition as a means to subjectivity for minority populations. To demand recognition is to subscribe to the Hegelian notion that one's subjectivity exists only when recognized by another subject. Nancy Fraser argues that such emphasis on recognition—as in a minority's struggle for representation in metropolitan countries—has displaced the struggle for redistribution in economic and political realms, caused the reification of

group identities, and perpetuated the status subordination of minorities. Enlarging the scope of Fraser's discussion to the transnational terrain of a Self/Other encounter in which a politics of recognition has likewise operated—the non-Western Other desiring to be “recognized” whether through assimilation or nativism—we can see how the politics of recognition binds the terms of relationality to the very limited options determined by a Hegelian dialectic. The Hegelian dialectic incites affect in both terms of the subjective-subjectivization relationality. Ethics, then, may be defined as that relationality beyond affect and recognition.

A practical consideration of such an ethics of transnational encounter has been articulated by Li Xiaojiang in terms of what she calls “transpositionality” [*lichang de zhihuan*] and “transvaluations” [*jiazhi de zhihuan*]. In a 2001 interview, she proposed a new epistemology and methodology for women's studies in China, which she has tried to institute in the new Center for Gender Studies she established at Dalian University. This practice includes three surprisingly simple methodological procedures: (1) the transposition of gender positions wherein men are also studied and male perspectives are considered; (2) the return of issues to their original contexts, that is, shifting the perspective of one moment and space to that of another moment and space; (3) an analysis of the simultaneity of loss and gain for all ideologies and paradigms in order to “multidimensionalize” them, that is, to include multiple and contradictory perspectives. As can be inferred from these procedures, the key to transnational communication is the ability and willingness to situate oneself in both one's own position and the Other's position, whether on the plane of gender, historical contexts, or discursive paradigms. In practice, this could mean that the Western feminist is asked to speak about China's problems by shifting her position from Western universalism, returning Chinese women to their original contexts and using the multiple and contradictory discursive paradigms used there. This is not nativist, since the “there” is not a pure construct free of discursive contamination and influence from the West. According to Li, this will help reduce the two major problems of Western feminism in transnational encounters: “a monistic perspectival narrowness in scholarship” and “a political narrowness that uses moralistic perspectives to criticize any non-feminist orientations” (Interview). This is not unlike the calls of minority feminists in Australia and the United States for white feminism to practice a politics of partiality beyond the pretenses of universalism (Ang, “I'm a

Feminist but”), and of the Italian Transversalists arguing for the need to root oneself in one’s struggle and shift one’s position to that of the Other as a coalition-building strategy among different groups of women (Yuval-Davis). Li takes these insights to the transnational terrain and further demands that this politics of partiality be buttressed by a knowledge of other contexts and other genders as well as a historicized and critical view of all knowledge-claims coming out of a certain location. “Transvaluation” is the result of such transpositionality, since to position oneself in the history of the Other is to be given the opportunity to see how a given system of value production works and thus to be exposed to the mechanisms of value-coding and knowledge production as political, material, and affective acts.

Beyond the Hegelian logic of recognition that requires affect as the underlying mode of operation in encounters of differences, a transpositional and transvaluational relationality may be the definition of what ethics means in our increasingly globalized world. For minority populations, this does not mean foregoing struggles for representation, but emphasizing at the same time struggles for material redistribution; for those in the non-West, this means insisting on a nonreactive and nonaffective mode of relation with the West while contesting discursive asymmetry; for Western feminists, this means not positing themselves as the objects of mimesis or reducing the non-West to the object of knowledge—both of which are affective acts with colonial implications—but practicing partiality and shifting positions to local ones, with all the hard work that implies; for diasporic non-Western intellectuals living or working in the West, this means exploiting their transpositional potential to the fullest for critical purposes rather than self-enhancing purposes. There are basically two kinds of multiply situated subjects who shift and root in different positions: those who flaunt their multiple subjectivity as a strategy of flexibility for maximum accumulation of money or fame, and those who practice multiple subjectivity out of ethical, political, and historical necessity, with all the difficulty, contradiction, and confusion it implies. Attending to this necessity vigilantly, border-crossing intellectuals and scholars must use their radically multiple positions to destabilize the production and circulation of value from any one given locational standpoint as preparation for transpositional dialogues in transnational encounters.

SHU-MEI SHIH teaches in the Departments of East Asian Languages and Cultures, Comparative Literature, and Asian American Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, where she also directs the Center for Comparative and Interdisciplinary Research on Asia and co-directs (with Françoise Lionnet) the University of California Multicampus Research Group on Transnational and Transcolonial Studies. She is the author of *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China* (University of California Press, 2001) and is at work on a book manuscript tentatively entitled *Visuality and Identity*.

## Notes

- 1 This paper was originally conceived when I was a resident fellow at the University of California Humanities Research Institute in the fall of 1999 in a seminar called “Feminist Crossings” organized by Marguerite Waller. I am grateful to the seminar participants for the many inspiring conversations we shared. My gratitude extends to Françoise Lionnet, Rey Chow, and Ellen Rooney for their substantive and editorial comments, and to Rob Wilson, Gail Hershatter, Chris Connery, Ying-ying Chien, Leti Volpp, and Leo Ching for giving me the opportunity to hash out the ideas with audiences.
- 2 Anchee Min’s name appears with first name and last name in their anglicized order, while Li Xiaojiang’s follows the Chinese convention with the last name appearing first. Clearly, how one writes one’s name order is an indication of one’s location.
- 3 In the purist version of Asian American cultural nationalism, one is not granted “Asian American” status unless one was born in the United States. Those who continue to consider themselves Chinese “nationals” are discriminated against variously as unacculturated immigrants and diasporics who unfortunately continue to exemplify the “perpetual foreigner” status charged to Asian Americans by white America. However, those Chinese who came as “sojourners” in the nineteenth century and intended to return to China have been claimed as part of “Asian American history.” Asian American cultural nationalist valorization of early immigration and unspoken bias against recent immigration is the consequence of a complex set of social and psychological conditions having partly to do with internalizing or rejecting white racism. Conversely, there has been prejudice by new Chinese immigrants that American-born Chinese (sarcastically termed ABCs) are not Chinese enough. The old “juk-sing” (empty bamboo heart) accusations directed at second generation Chinese Americans by the immigrant generation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century also live on in different guises.
- 4 This paper posits “identity” as a process within which moments of identification are arrested temporarily or strategically for political and other purposes.
- 5 For a rethinking of the uses of postcolonial theory for the study of an earlier moment in Chinese history, the early twentieth century, see Shih, *The Lure of the Modern*, esp. the introduction and conclusion.
- 6 Korean American poet Myung Mi Kim asks simply but powerfully, “How would it be possible to deliberate on the oppositional in a way that does not re-enact and replicate those very dynamics that are being ‘opposed’?” (75).
- 7 See Shih, *The Lure*, chapter 6.



- 8 See Barlow, "Theorizing Woman"; Liu, "Invention and Intervention"; Rofel, "Museum as Women's Spaces"; and Yang, *Spaces of Their Own*.
- 9 This is not unlike Fredric Jameson's totalistic designation of all Third World narratives as national allegories. For any Third World cultural production, be it feminism or literature, it is often assumed that it must be undergirded by nationalism and its related issues. This reductionist thinking effectively withholds from Third World cultural production a potential claim to redefine the universal, on the one hand, and denies it the palpable cosmopolitanism that is always already Westernized thanks to colonialism and neocolonialism, on the other.
- 10 Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the original Chinese are mine.
- 11 Li Xiaojiang offers an astute analysis of women's incorporation into labor in an earlier unpublished essay:  
*With the encouragement for women's employment and the lure of "equal pay for equal work," the government has incorporated women into the pattern of "employment-work unit-state" and completed the transformation of the traditional family structure. Women are therefore mobilized and integrated into the new polity of the state and are put under its direct control. ("Political" n. pag.)*
- 12 We may note here the neglected underside of the conjunction of China's turn toward capitalism and assertions of femininity and difference: the resurgence of a masculinist critique of the Maoist policy of gender equity. According to this perspective, the degendering of Chinese women in the Maoist era had gone hand in hand with the feminization of Chinese men. Men had been castrated by the state, as the state patriarchy had displaced male patriarchy within the family by empowering women. This castration ensured that both men and women were made submissive to the state, hence the family had come under the unmediated control of the state. As could be expected, the post-Mao remasculinization drive has taken on a blatant form for compensatory effect, emboldened by the rise of a new culture of masculinist entrepreneurship. This dovetailed perfectly with women's rediscovery of femininity, to generate a condition of increasing gender disparity and oppression based on essentialist conceptions of gender difference laden with terms of inferiority and superiority. Hence, the unfortunate emergence of problems that were branded capitalist vices in the Maoist idiom: widespread commodification of women's images and bodies, the devaluation of women's labor, resulting in their widespread unemployment, and the reinstatement of gender discrimination in all aspects of society. In other words, the unavoidable other side of the coin for Chinese women's search for femininity is Chinese men's reassertion of their masculinity. The market economy has provided the perfect arena for such reassertions. See also Yang, "From Gender."
- 13 See esp. chapter 5.
- 14 The aftereffect of the influence of Fabian's critique of Western anthropology and call for self-reflexivity is well known: there has been a prevailing sense of paralysis as well as a strong apprehension that anthropology cannot be revived as a respectable discipline except as a form

- of self-critique. This paradoxically resulted in the overflowing of obligatory self-reflexive narratives, with anthropologists reporting their minute emotions and perceptions in their writing of ethnography. These narratives cannot help but come through as plainly narcissistic sometimes. For an analysis of this “deadlock,” see Chow, *Primitive Passions*, part 3.
- 15 I will deal with Li Xiaojiang’s critique of Chinese diasporic feminists working in the United States later in the essay.
- 16 See Jing Wang, *High Culture Fever*.
- 17 For an overview of the New Left movement in China by one of its leading voices, see Wang Hui.
- 18 Wang Anyi also implicated Chinese diasporic women in an interview:  
*Foreigners and people in Hong Kong have often asked me if I am a feminist. When I say no, they get angry. Have you any idea what feminism is, they say? Perhaps they thought that I was denying point-blank because I did not actually know that I was a feminist. It appears that they would very much like me to be a feminist. [ . . . ] I found it scary. (Wang Zheng 164–67)*
- 19 Min was reportedly asked by her editor to add lesbianism to the text in order to make the narrative more titillating (Yin 171).
- 20 The problematic of American pet culture is not unlike the highly contentious human rights problematic. American pet culture selectively humanizes or anthropomorphizes animals, so that Chinese or Vietnamese eating dog meat is considered barbarous. In *Red Azalea*, the author depicts a chicken that the family raised and describes how it became a pet for the author, who thus denounces those who ate the chicken. A diametrically opposed, critical analysis of American pet culture can be found in Glen Cao’s novel about Chinese immigrants in New York, entitled *Beijinger in New York*.
- 21 Reviews on the jacket cover of *Red Azalea*.
- 22 This is not meant to suggest that the Cultural Revolution was not violent and brutal, but to question *what* and *whose* interests are being served by Min’s sensational exposé of the atrocities of the Cultural Revolution. Also telling is the different fate of this autobiography in the United States and China: even though the book is a huge success in the United States, Min’s own father in China has refused to read it and has forbidden his daughter from translating it into Chinese (Ni E3).
- 23 I analyze this domestic stereotypical race/gender formation expanding to the transnational terrain in the management of global multiculturalism in “Globalization and Minoritization.”
- 24 Many first-generation immigrants who have experienced police brutality motivated by racism are unwilling or unable to articulate their predicament in the language of minority rights. One of my acquaintances was a victim of such brutality with clear racialized motivations, but he would rather see it as an unrelated, unfortunate incident than risk losing his fiercely defended sense of masculinity. Since Asian masculinity in the United States is constantly under threat by racism, linking police brutality with racism is equivalent to admitting one’s emasculated status. For members of the

professional class, the unwillingness to admit their minority status under the illusion that upper-middle-class Asians can be accepted as whites deprives them of the language to name the violence done to them. See Koshy for an analysis of such a legal case.

- 25 I am referring, here, to Diana Fuss's argument that essentialism itself depends on the construction of an essence and thus cannot be posited in an oppositional dynamic with constructivism. Repudiating neither essentialism nor constructivism, Fuss would rather analyze the causes, processes and contexts in which

these two assumptions are mobilized (1–21).

- 26 See Levinas, *Time and the Other*, and the translator, Richard A. Cohen's, informative introduction to this work. E. San Juan Jr. places Levinasian philosophy in the phenomenological tradition and criticizes it thus: "One can raise the question here whether or not the fusion of hermeneutic horizons proposed by Gadamer and Heidegger, an orientation informing Levinas's transcendence through the Other, has been able to illuminate the historical complicity of Western powers in exploiting the hermeneutic circle for its benefit" (214).

## Works Cited

- "Affect." Def. 1b. *The American Heritage College Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1982.
- Ang, Ien. "Can One Say No to Chineseness? Pushing the Limits of the Diasporic Paradigm." *boundary 2* 25:3 (Fall 1998): 223–42.
- . "I'm a Feminist but. . . 'Other' Women and Postnational Feminism." *Transitions: New Australian Feminisms*. Ed. Barbara Caine and Rosemary Pringle. New York: St. Martin's, 1995. 57–73.
- Barlow, Tani, ed. *Gender Politics in Modern China: Writing and Feminism*. Durham: Duke UP, 1993.
- . "Theorizing Woman: *Funu, Guojia, Jiating*" [Chinese woman, Chinese state, Chinese family]. *Genders* 10 (Spring 1991): 133–60.
- Butler, Judith. *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1997.
- Cao, Glen. *Beijinger in New York*. Trans. Ted Wang. San Francisco: Cypress, 1993.
- Chen, Xiaomei. *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter-Discourse in Post-Mao China*. New York: Oxford UP, 1995.
- Chow, Rey. Introduction. "On Chineseness as a Theoretical Problem." *boundary 2* 25:3 (Fall 1998): 1–24.
- . *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography, and Contemporary Chinese Cinema*. New York: Columbia UP, 1995.
- Chun, Allen. "Diasporas of Mind, Or Why There Ain't No Black Atlantic in Cultural China." Cultural Studies, Ethnicity and Race Relations Working Papers Series 14. Pullman: Washington State U, 2000.
- . "Fuck Chineseness: On the Ambiguities of Ethnicity as Culture as Identity." *boundary 2* 23:2 (Summer 1996): 111–38.

- Dai, Jinhua. "Rewriting Chinese Women: Gender Production and Cultural Space in the Eighties and Nineties." Yang, *Spaces* 191–206.
- Dirlik, Arif. *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism*. Boulder: Westview, 1997.
- Fabian, Johannes. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*. New York: Columbia UP, 1983.
- Felski, Rita. *Doing Time*. New York: New York UP, 2000.
- Fraser, Nancy. "Rethinking Recognition." *New Left Review* 3 (May/June 2000): 107–20.
- Fuss, Diana. *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature and Difference*. London: Routledge, 1989.
- Jayawardena, Kumari. *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*. London: Zed Books, 1986.
- Kim, Myung Mi. "Generosity as Method: Excerpts from a Conversation with Myung Mi Kim." With Yedda Morrison. *Tripwire: A Journal of Poetics* 1 (Spring 1998): 75–85.
- Koshy, Susan. "The Postmodern Subaltern: Rethinking Globalization Theory and Postmodern Coloniality." *Minor Transnationalism*. Ed. Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih. Forthcoming.
- Kristeva, Julia. "Women's Time." *The Kristeva Reader*. Ed. Toril Moi. New York: Columbia UP, 1986. 187–213.
- Levinas, Emmanuel. *In the Time of the Nations*. Trans. Michael B. Smith. London: Athlone, 1994.
- . *Time and the Other*. Trans. Richard A. Cohen. Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 1998.
- Li, Xiaojing. *Challenge and Response: Lectures on Women's Studies in the New Period* [Tiao-zhan yu huiying: Xin shiqi funü yanjiu jiangxuelu]. Zhengzhou: Henan People's P, 1996.
- . "The Choice of a Feminist: The Creator of the First Chinese Women's College Refuses to Join World Women's Congress" [Nüquan zhuyi zhe de jueze: Zhongguo dalu xiujian nüzi xueyuan chuangbanren jüjue chuxi shifuhui]. *Ming Bao Monthly* (Oct. 1995): 81–85.
- . "Economic Reform and the Awakening of Chinese Women's Collective Consciousness." *Engendering China: Women, Culture and the State*. Ed. Christina K. Gilmartin, et al. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1994. 360–82.
- . *An Exploration of Women's Aesthetic Consciousness* [Nuxing shenmei yishi tan wei]. Zhengzhou: Henan People's P, 1989.
- . "From 'Modernization' to 'Globalization': Where Are Chinese Women?" [Cong 'xiandaihua' dao 'quanqihua': Zhongguo nüren zai nali?]. Unpublished short essay solicited by *Signs*. 2001.
- . Interview with Shu-mei Shih. Beijing, China. 30 Jan. 2001.
- . "Political Connotation of the 'Women's Issue' in Modern China: The Status and Role of Chinese Women in Modern Social Transformation." Unpublished typed and handwritten script, 1992.

- . *Q and A about Women* [Guanyu nuren de dawen]. Nanjing: Jiangsu People's P, 1997.
- . "With What Discourse Do We Reflect on Chinese Women? Thoughts on Transnational Feminism in China." Yang, *Spaces* 261–77.
- . *Woman, A Distant and Beautiful Legend* [Nuren yige youyuan meili de chuanshuo]. Taipei: Awakening Foundation, 1992.
- . *Woman?ism: On Cultural Conflict and Identity* [Nuxing? zhuyi: Wenhua cong tu yu shenfen rentong]. Nanjing: Jiangsu People's P, 2000.
- Li, Xiaojiang, and Xiaodan Zhang. "Creating a Space for Women: Women's Studies in China in the 1980s." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 20:1 (Autumn 1994): 157–51.
- Liu, Lydia. "Invention and Intervention: The Female Tradition in Modern Chinese Literature." Barlow, *Gender* 35–57.
- Min, Anchee. *Red Azalea*. New York: Berkley Group, 1995.
- Mohanty, Chandra. "Women Workers and Capitalist Scripts: Ideologies of Domination, Common Interests, and the Politics of Solidarity." *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*. Ed. Chandra Mohanty and M. Jacqui Alexander. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Ni, Ching Ching. "Confronting the Ghosts of Shanghai." *Los Angeles Times* 10 Sep. 2000. E1+.
- Rofel, Lisa. "Museum as Women's Space: Displays of Gender in Post-Mao China." Yang, *Spaces* 116–51.
- Sakai, Naoki. *Translation and Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997.
- San Juan, E., Jr. *Hegemony and Strategies of Transgression*. Albany: State U of New York P, 1995.
- Shih, Shu-mei. "Globalization and Minoritization: Ang Lee and the Politics of Flexibility." *New Formations* 40 (Spring 2000): 86–101.
- . *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917–1937*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2001.
- Showalter, Elaine. "Toward a Feminist Poetics." *Women's Writing and Writing about Women*. Ed. Mary Jacobs. London: Croom Helm, 1979. 22–41.
- Spivak, Gayatri. "Diasporas Old and New: Women in the Transnational World." *Textual Practice* 10:2 (1996): 245–69.
- Surber, Jere Paul. "Kant, Levinas, and the Thought of the Other." *Philosophy Today* 38:3 (Fall 1994): 294–316.
- Wang, Anyi. *Songs of Sorrow* [Chang hen ge]. Beijing: Writer's P, 1996.
- Wang, Hui. "Fire at the Castle Gate." *New Left Review* 6 (Nov./Dec. 2000): 69–99.
- Wang, Jing. *High Culture Fever*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1996.
- Wang, Zheng. "Three Interviews: Wang Anyi, Zhu Lin, Dai Qing." Barlow, *Gender* 158–208.

Yang, Mayfair. "From Gender Erasure to Gender Difference: State Feminism, Consumer Sexuality, and Women's Public Sphere in China." Yang, *Spaces* 35–67.

———, ed. *Spaces of Their Own: Women's Public Sphere in Transnational China*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1999.

Yin, Xiao-huang. *Chinese American Literature since the 1850s*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2000.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. *Gender and Nation*. London: Sage, 1997.

Zhang, Huiyuan. "Ethnic Chinese Writers Bravely Storm the American Literary Arena" [Huaren zuojia yong chuang meiguo wentan]. *World Weekly* [Shijie zhoukan, a weekend supplementary to the daily *Chinese Daily News*, Shijie ribao] 15 Feb. 2000: 14–17.

Zhang, Zhen. "The World Map of Haunting Dreams: Reading Post-1989 Chinese Women's Diaspora Writings." Yang, *Spaces* 308–36.