

***Journal of the British Association
for Chinese Studies***

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Articles

Playful *You* in the *Zhuangzi* and Six Dynasties Literati Writing

-- Xiaofan Amy Li

Empire and Visual Pleasure: Reinterpreting the Miao Albums of Yunnan and Guizhou

-- Jing Zhu

Mainstream Film Production in a Country on the Cusp of Change: An Army Officer's View of Three Chinese Films of the Early 1980s Produced by the August First Film Studio

-- Julian Ward

Analysing Indonesian Media and Government Representation of China

-- Senia Febrica and Suzie Sudarman

Essays

The EU and China, 2006 to 2016: A Clash Between Interests and Values

-- Kerry Brown

Working in No Man's Land: Between Sociology and Chinese Studies

-- Norman Stockman

Book reviews

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Editors' Introduction

We are very pleased to bring you issue 8.2 of JBACS. In this issue, four research articles are complemented by two thought-provoking essays and a selection of book reviews, once again demonstrating the wonderful variety and breadth of research undertaken under the broad umbrella of Chinese studies in the UK.

The issue starts with two papers that were highly ranked in the 2017 BACS Early Career Researcher Prize competition. Amy Xiaofan Li's article explores the notion of *you* 游 in the *Zhuangzi* and Six Dynasties literati writing. From the more literal meanings—"swim in water", "move in an unobstructed way", "wander", "travel afar"—to its extended meanings—"ramble in a carefree way", "travel playfully", "travel into foreign or unknown space", or "enjoy a leisurely activity"—Li reveals the differences and similarities between its conceptualisation in the *Zhuangzi* and its interpretation and use in later neo-Daoist writing. Jing Zhu's piece examines the Miao album (*baimiao tu* 百苗圖), a genre of ethnographic illustration from the late-imperial period depicting the bodies, cultures and environments of ethnic minorities in the southwest of China. Zhu argues that these fascinating albums were not just consumed by government officials, their intended audience; they were also viewed for pleasure by a much more diverse population.

Julian Ward's piece focuses on the August First Film Studio and the changing cinema scene of the early 1980s. Drawing on evidence from key films of the period, including *The Colourful Night* (*Caise de ye* 彩色的夜), *The Last Military Salute* (*Zuihou yige junli* 最后一个军礼) and *Star of the Battleground* (*Zhandi zhi xing* 战地之星), Ward shows that, despite contemporary criticism to the contrary, directors were starting to experiment with more challenging filmmaking methods. He also argues that campaigns against films perceived to be hostile towards communism served as a strong indication of the continuing importance of "patriotic" film to the state. Senia Febrica and Suzie Sudarman

examine how China's relations with Indonesia (and Southeast Asia more broadly) are represented in Indonesian media and government discourse. Their content analysis of government documents and media reports from 2008-2015, and findings from interviews with Indonesian government officials, reveal Indonesia's apparent ambiguity in dealing with China.

The two essays in this issue have been provided by two of the top scholars in their fields. Kerry Brown's essay examines two major communications from the European Commission in 2006 and 2016 on relations with the People's Republic of China and, in particular, how to defend and promote rule of law, human rights and associated freedoms. Norman Stockman's essay presents his reflections on his career working as a sociologist with a particular interest in China. He argues that theoretical and political disputes and dilemmas, combined with institutional and organisational factors within higher education, have operated to create and maintain barriers to fruitful interaction between disciplines and area studies, and between sociology and Chinese studies more particularly. The views and conclusions expressed are his own and we invite other scholars to respond with their own views and experiences to create a debate around this important tension. Please use the journal submission link to submit your response: <http://bacsuk.org.uk/journal>.

Judging for the 2018 ECR Prize is currently underway. We have been extremely impressed by the quality of the work submitted. For those of you interested in participating next year (or for supervisors with doctoral students who may be eligible to take part), detailed information has already been circulated via the BACS mailing list and BACS social media accounts; it can also be found here: <http://bacsuk.org.uk/ecr-prize>. The winner will be announced in September at the forthcoming BACS annual conference at KCL. Schedule and registration details are available on the BACS website: <http://bacsuk.org.uk/conferences/annual-conference>.

Finally, a reminder that JBACS is looking to fill one **co-editor position** as Sarah will have fulfilled her five years' service at the end of this academic year. We are looking for an established academic with substantive experience in reviewing research for journals, academic presses and research funders, and a proven ability to engage with Chinese-language-based research that may come from a

wide range of disciplines. Ideally, this person should be based at a UK institution in order to be able to attend editorial meetings, most of which coincide with BACS Council meetings. This is a voluntary (unpaid) position, but the rewards are great, and we would encourage anyone considering nominating themselves to get in touch with either one of us as soon as possible. We are also looking to appoint an **editorial assistant** (paid) to support the editors one day a month (eight hours). Here we are looking for an enthusiastic PhD student or post-doc with excellent command of English, who would like to learn about editorial processes by aiding the editors in their correspondence with peer reviewers and authors. Again, please contact us directly if you are interested.

JBACS is a rigorously peer-reviewed, fully open-access journal which, unlike the vast majority of open-access journals, does not charge article production fees. We are a democratic, collaborative community that relies entirely on voluntary work. You can support our work and the future of independent academic publishing by submitting your work to JBACS. We are continuously striving to improve the journal and welcome all feedback. If you do have any comments or suggestions for future special issues, please do get in touch.

Sarah Dauncey and Gerda Wielander

Playful You in the Zhuangzi and Six Dynasties Literati Writing

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University of Kent

Abstract

This essay explores the notion of you 游 in the Zhuangzi and Six Dynasties literati writing through a comparative reading. Used interchangeably with its variant you 遊, you 游 has various uses and meanings, from the more literal “swim in water”, “move in an unobstructed way”, “wander”, and “travel afar”, to its extended meanings including “ramble in a carefree way”, “travel playfully”, “travel into foreign or unknown space”, or “enjoy a leisurely activity”. You is also, significantly, combined with other characters to form compound expressions specifying different playful activities, e.g. youxi 游戲: “play and frolic”, “amuse oneself”, or “game”; youwan 游玩: “play outdoors” (with an emphasis on movement); and lüyou 旅游: “travelling for leisure”, or “tourism”—which have very different connotations from lüxing 旅行, “journey”, or “travel (the main purpose of which is not pleasure)”. In these different uses and expressions of you, in both classical and modern Chinese, what we find in common is the connotation of an unhindered, playful movement that is closely connected to its spatial context. In the context of the Zhuangzi and Six Dynasties literature, therefore, can we find articulations of you as a playful activity? If yes, in what specific ways is you playful, especially in regard to the space and context in which it occurs? Finally, what do the differences and similarities between the Zhuangzi and Six Dynasties writing say about the evolution of the notion of you within the Daoist and Neo-Daoist discourse?

Keywords: you, Zhuangzi, Six Dynasties, play, Daoist, Neo-Daoist.

This essay stems from a seminar paper I presented at the Needham Research Institute, University of Cambridge, in March 2017. I thank Professor Sir Geoffrey E. R. Lloyd, Dr Yang Fu 傅揚, and Dr Kei Hiruta 蛭田圭 for their suggestions and feedback on the draft of my manuscript. I also thank the two anonymous reviewers for their constructive and detailed comments, which have helped me complete my revision.

The *Zhuangzi* is a crucial early Chinese text for understanding *you* 游. Not only does the term itself recur constantly throughout the text, but also the idea of a carefree and playful roaming (*xiaoyaoyou* 逍遙游) has become the hallmark of the Zhuangzian spirit. Alan Levinovitz (2012), Victor Mair (1983), and Chris Fraser (2014) have all explicitly pointed out the centrality of a playful spirit in Zhuangzian “roaming” (*you*), whether it is about the sage “riding the winds”, flights of imagination, or an “eudaimonistic” approach to the Dao. Brian Bruya (2010) has further related the *Zhuangzi*'s ingeniously skilled craftsmen (often characterised by *you*) to Mihaly Csikszentmihályi's idea of an effortless and pleasurable “flow experience”, which characterises the spontaneous enjoyment of an extremely engaging activity that completely absorbs the agent of action into the action itself. These existing criticisms show the pertinence of exploring the playful dimension of *you* in the *Zhuangzi*, which is what this essay purports to do, with the further aim of refining our understanding of Zhuangzian *you* by paying particular attention to its spatial metaphors.

As for reading the *Zhuangzi* comparatively with Six Dynasties literati writing, this is a meaningful comparison because although much has been said about the *Zhuangzi* and Six Dynasties *xuanxue* 玄學 (Dark Learning), especially the creative editing work of the *Zhuangzi* done by Guo Xiang 郭象 (c. 252-312), there is less detailed comparative discussion on the connections and specific differences between the *Zhuangzi* and Six Dynasties literature and aesthetics, and on how the Zhuangzian notion of *you* evolved in the latter. But the *Zhuangzi* was a constant reference point not only in Six Dynasties literati's *qingtan* 清談 (Clear Conversation) debates about the interpretation of old masters' texts and the Dao, but also in their poetic writing that increasingly connected *you* to an aesthetics of landscape on the one hand, and to literary competitions on the other. As Holzmann (1996) shows, *you* appears as a key term in Six Dynasties literature that went hand-in-hand with the rise of landscape poetry and the *youji* 游記 (records of wandering experiences), including typical topics such as *you shanshui* 游山水 “wandering in mountains and waters”, *youyuan* 游園 “wandering in parks or gardens”, *you guji* 游古跡 “wandering in historical sites”,

and *youxian* 游仙 “wandering to immortality”.¹ These Six Dynasties writings on *you* are seen by Paul Kroll (1996: 655) to follow the poetic traditions of “far roaming” (*yuanyou* 遠游) and “encountering sorrow” (*lisao* 離騷) that portray the Daoist “randonnée extatique” and quest to rise above worldly troubles, with the *Zhuangzi* as a founding inspirational source. Nevertheless, acknowledging the *Zhuangzi*'s broad influence is not enough. We need to consider how specifically the *Zhuangzi* compares to Six Dynasties literature to understand both its influence and the transformation of the *you* motif, especially in connection to the imagination of the space of *you*.

In the following, I first examine some key passages about *you* in the *Zhuangzi* and discuss how they delineate spaces of play. Then I consider *you* in a selection of Six Dynasties literati writings that are representative in thematically connecting *you* to landscape appreciation and literary games. Finally, I discuss the differences and similarities between the *Zhuangzi* and Six Dynasties literature, aiming to shed light on the understanding of *you* as an activity that can be playful in different ways. Through this discussion, I argue that although the *Zhuangzi* provided the fundamental thematic frameworks of *you* for the Six Dynasties literati that pre-conditioned their aesthetic vision, their articulations of *you* contested substantially the Zhuangzian meanings of *you* because they formalised it as a particularly *literary* activity and trope, as well as added a new conceptualisation: performative and “gaming activity” as in *youxi* 遊戲.

¹ *Shanshui* denotes not only “mountains and waters”, or what in English translation is usually rendered as “natural landscape”, but also artificial landscapes like gardens, pavilions, parks, cultivated fields and woods, and the suburbs. Yuyu Zheng (2014: 143-166) even argues that it is not the actual scenery that defines *shanshui* poetry but the kind of poetic sensibility and attention centring on time and space that defines it. Generally, poems and rhapsodies written on the themes of “wandering in fields and forests” (*you tianlin* 遊田林), “wandering in parks and gardens”, and “wandering in historical sites” can all be considered to be in the *you shanshui* genre.

The *Zhuangzi*

The first observation to make about *you* in the *Zhuangzi* is that there is no single coherent notion of it. The text proffers, as it typically does, many different uses of the term and intriguing questions about the activity it refers to. Zhuangzian scholars (Graham, 2001: 123; Wu, 1982; Tao, 2011; Møllgaard, 2007) have observed that *you* is used to denote a spontaneous movement without obstruction, often in a state of pleasure and effortlessness. For instance, *you* is typically associated with swimming in water, as in Zhuangzi's statement that "the minnows come out and swim at ease" (*shuyu chuyou congrong* 儻魚出遊從容) (*Zhuangzi*, 2009: 17.7) in his famous debate with Hui Shi about whether the fish are happy;² or in the story of the ingenious swimmer Confucius meets at Lüliang who swims effortlessly through a turbulent and dangerous waterfall (*Zhuangzi*, 2009: 19.9). *You* is also used in the sense of "Carefree Roaming" (*Xiaoyaoyou* 逍遙遊), chapter one's title, indicating rambling in a vast cosmic space like the huge Peng bird, or drifting without a particular destination and taking pleasure in a purposeless and self-fulfilling activity: "make a huge [wooden] vessel and let it float in rivers and lakes" (*wei dazun er fu hu jianghu* 為大樽而浮乎江湖) (*Zhuangzi*, 2009: 1.3). Levinovitz and Mair have read *you* in these instances as a playful mood and spontaneous response to the Dao, characterising *you* as definitive of an "ideal free play" (Levinovitz, 2012: 481), and showing Zhuangzi as the "*homo ludens*" par excellence (Mair, 1983: 86). Nevertheless, I believe we need to question the apparent effortlessness of *you* by considering more closely *where* it happens. If *you* is a movement, then it is fundamentally a spatial activity. The space of *you* in the *Zhuangzi*, although a less examined aspect in comparison to the Daoist ethics of free wandering, is definitive in shaping the *you* activity itself.

To start with, an important space where *you* happens is in fact *confined* space. A good example is the story of cook Ding, who is skilled in butchering oxen and seems to dance to the rhythm of music when executing his task (*Zhuangzi*, 2009: 3.2). When asked how he achieves this, Ding explains (*Zhuangzi*, 2009: 3.2):

² All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

彼節者有間，而刀刃者无厚，以无厚入有間，恢恢乎其於遊刃必有餘地矣，是以十九年而刀刃若新發於硯。雖然，每至於族，吾見其難為，怵然為戒，視為止，行為遲。動刀甚微，謐然已解，如土委地。

There are spaces between the ox's joints, but the knife's blade has no thickness. If you insert what has no thickness into such spaces, then there is vast room for the knife to *wander* about, indeed more than enough space to do so. This is why after nineteen years, my knife's blade is as sharp as if it had just been polished on the whetstone. Nevertheless, whenever I come to a knot of joints, I see it is difficult to cut, *fearfully and vigilantly watch out for them*, keep my eyes fixed and move slowly. I move the knife very subtly and in a swift crash the knot is dissolved, crumbling down like clods of earth. [My italics.]

You is used here to highlight ingenious skill: Ding's ability to avoid cleverly all the obstacles in the ox's physique and cut only where it is suitable to cut. Although Ding does this perfectly, this effortless comes from more than nineteen years of practice. Ding's ox-cutting, according to Carl Olson (2017: 46), manifests itself as an immersive and playful activity in the knife's "wandering" (*you*) movement, for it transforms a difficult task into a pleasurable act. What existing criticism has rarely remarked, however, is that the inherent risk for Ding of making a mistake is still there, implied by Ding's "fear" and "vigilance" when he comes to a knot and becomes extremely careful. Dissecting the ox successfully becomes similar to winning a game of whether one can let one's knife navigate correctly within the intricate spaces of the ox's body. If Ding's *you* is playful and "joyous" (Graziani, 2005: 63), then *you* within confinements may be understood as playing in a game-like space with strict rules. Game space, as Johan Huizinga (1949) and Roger Caillois (1958) have argued forcefully, denotes a restricted time-space within which a highly technical task is to be completed, and therefore inherently carries the risk of failure. Seen in this light, in contrast to the happy fish's carefree swimming, Ding's *you* is a feat here precisely because of the difficult framework in which Ding is operating: to be able to

accomplish under formidable constraints something that would normally require extreme effort.

The darker side of Ding's story is the danger of losing the game. When *you* happens in a restricted, game-like context where something is at stake, it is a potentially dangerous activity that may not be enjoyable at all to the person who does not have supreme skill and perfect knowledge. This idea appears in chapter four “Men in Worldly Business” (*Renjianshi* 人間世). The chapter begins with Yan Hui coming to ask Confucius for leave to go on a diplomatic mission to persuade the Lord of Wei—known to be arrogant and cruel, “a violent man” (*baoren* 暴人)—to mend his ways (*Zhuangzi*, 2009: 4.1). Yan Hui's dangerous and difficult task carries the real threat of death if he offends the ruthless ruler, as Confucius immediately warns him. Then they discuss what is the best strategy for success in his mission. After repeatedly refuting Yan Hui's clever suggestions about how to deal with the bad-tempered Lord, Confucius finally says that the ultimate is to be able to *you* in this thorny situation (*Zhuangzi*, 2009: 4.1):

夫子曰：[...]吾語若！若能入遊其樊而無感其名，入則鳴，不入則止。無門無毒，一宅而寓於不得已，則幾矣。

Confucius said, “[...] Let me tell you! If you can enter his [i.e. the Lord of Wei's] cage and wander there without being affected by his reputation, if your words penetrate his hearing then sing your notes, if they fall on deaf ears then desist; having no doors and no remedy, you live in the same dwelling [with him] and reside in whatever is inevitable—then you will be nearly there.”³

Yan Hui is likened to a bird that enters a cage when he goes to persuade the Lord of Wei. The cage image here shows the confinement of *you*, and is similar

³ Translation modified after Jean-François Billeter. The translation of *du* 毒 is particularly tricky here, “poison” does not fit here, so some other possibilities according to the *Handian* 漢典 are *yao* 藥, *du* 督 and *zhi* 治. Burton Watson's translation of *du* 毒 as “opening” and Graham's translation “outlet” both repeat the idea of “doors” (*men* 門), though *du* 毒 is not used in other texts in this meaning, so I have opted for “remedy”.

to the intricacies of the ox's joints which cook Ding deals with. To emerge unscathed from his mission Yan Hui needs to respond so well to the situation that it would be *as if* he did not find himself in a cage at all, i.e. be completely “unaffected” (*wugan* 無感). *You* here denotes the ability to remain unendangered in dangerous and confined situations.

The case where one fails to *you* successfully within confinements is made explicit in the story of Zhuangzi trying to catch a bird at Diaoling, one of the very few occasions when Zhuangzi does not act wisely with his usual reassurance, and falls prey to the trap of danger (*Zhuangzi*, 2009: 20.8):

莊周遊乎雕陵之樊，睹一異鵲自南方來者，翼廣七尺，目大運寸，感周之顙而集於栗林。莊周曰：'此何鳥哉？翼殷不逝，目大不覩。'蹇裳躩步，執彈而留之。睹一蟬方得美蔭而忘其身；螳螂執翳而搏之，見得而忘其形；異鵲從而利之，見利而忘其真。莊周怵然曰：'噫！物固相累，二類相召也。'捐彈而反走，虞人逐而誅之。

莊周反入，三月不庭。藺且從而問之：'夫子何為頃間甚不庭乎？'莊周曰：'吾守形而忘身，觀於濁水而迷於清淵。 [...]'

Zhuang Zhou was *wandering* in the fenced park at Diaoling when he saw a strange magpie that came flying from the south. It had wings as wide as seven *chi* and its eyes were a good inch in diameter. It bumped against Zhou's forehead then alighted on a grove of chestnut trees. “What kind of bird is this!” exclaimed Zhuang Zhou. “Its wings are enormous but it doesn't fly well; its eyes are huge but it can't see where it is going!” He tucked up his robe, strode forward in quick and short steps, cocked his crossbow and prepared to take aim. At this moment, he spied a cicada that had found a lovely shade and had forgotten all about [the possible danger to] its body. Behind it, a praying mantis, stretching forth its claws, prepared to snatch the cicada, and it too had forgotten about its own form because it saw only its gain. The strange magpie

followed close behind, seeing the profit of catching the mantis and forgetting its true disposition. Zhuang Zhou was struck with fear at the sight and exclaimed, “Ah! Things are originally tied up with each other; different kinds incur disaster upon each other!” He threw down his crossbow and *turned back running*, at which moment the park keeper chased after him with curses.

Zhuang Zhou returned home and for three months was so depressed that he didn't cross the threshold to go outside the house. Lin Qie came and asked him: “Master, why are you so unhappy these days?” Zhuang Zhou said, “In clinging to my form I forgot my body. I have been gazing at muddy waters but *mistook them for the clear pool*. [...]” [My italics.]

The context of *you* here, presented in the form of a hunting pastime gone wrong, is game-like and echoes the spatial metaphor of a “bird trapped in a cage”. Note the recurrence of the two terms *fan* 樊 and *chu* 怵, which appear in the passages on Yan Hui and cook Ding, emphasising the “fenced-in” space and its threatening aspect. That Zhuangzi's wandering (*you*) begins in such a cage-like space already carries dark overtones implying that things could go wrong. When he goes after the bird, Zhuangzi enters unawares into a predatory game one contained within another, implicating himself in a chain of parallels between the park-keeper and Zhuangzi (when he “runs” away and his *you* activity completely breaks down), Zhuangzi and the magpie, the magpie and the mantis, the mantis and cicada—in brief, the predator-and-prey food chain. Ironically, Zhuangzi starts by assuming himself to be the agent of the game but ends up being played by the game machine that drags him into getting entangled with things (*wu* 物). Zhuangzi's intention is playful but the act he gets caught up in is not pleasurable but destructive. Like the magpie forgetting its “true” body, Zhuangzi's *you* here is inauthentic because it is a fake semblance of the genuine *you* that arises from enjoyment and spontaneity like Ding's and misleads him into taking it as a genuine *you* activity at first. This deceptive resemblance of *you* is implied when Zhuangzi admits that he mistakes “muddy waters” for “the clear pool” and realises that what he believed to be a safe playground turns out to be a killing field. Inauthentic *you* exposes him to danger

and is not at all a positive experience.

The three examples above show that the spatial context where *you* happens is of substantial, sometimes even definitive importance to the experience of *you*.⁴ When it is a restricted game-like space with imposed rules, it could become a trap for the person who wanders within it. If one has full grasp of the Dao then one can easily *you* in this threatening space, and by doing so negate its danger. If not, one may even become unaware of the risks and suffer serious consequences. Genuine *you* is precisely the kind of spontaneous activity that is also, paradoxically, “the hardest thing to do” (Li, 2015: 102). In the *Zhuangzi*'s words: “Only the perfect person can wander in the world and not [deliberately] shun it” (*Zhuangzi*, 2009: 26.8).⁵ *You* in restricted space is similar to playing a game well within constraints. The playful carefreeness usually associated with *you* is only the ideal case in this situation.

Nevertheless, there are also many instances in the *Zhuangzi* when *you* denotes wandering outside all confinements and any known space. Consider the story of the three friends Sanghu, Meng Zifan, and Qinzhang in chapter six. When Sanghu dies, Confucius sends Zigong to pay condolences. Zigong finds to his shock that Sanghu's two friends are playing music before the deceased and singing: “Oh! Sanghu! You have returned to what you truly are!” (*Zhuangzi*, 2009: 6.6).⁶ Zigong comes back bewildered by their complete disregard for funeral rites and tells this to Confucius, asking what kind of men Sanghu's eccentric friends are. Confucius replies (*Zhuangzi*, 2009: 6.6):

⁴ There are other instances in the *Zhuangzi* of *you* in potentially dangerous spaces: e.g. in 4.7 where Zhili 支離 is exempted from military conscription, in 5.2, and 9.2.

⁵ 唯至人乃能遊於世而不僻。

⁶ 嗟來桑戶乎！而已反其真！

彼遊方之外者也，而丘游方之內者也。⁷外內不相及，而丘使女往弔之，丘則陋矣。彼方且與造物者為人，而遊乎天地之一氣。

Those are people who *wander outside the space of norms*, whereas I am someone who *wanders within this space*.⁸ The outside and inside do not connect to each other, yet I sent you to pay condolences, I have been indeed vulgar! Those people are human together with the creator of things; they wander in the single breath traversing heaven and earth. [My italics.]

The contrast between two spaces: *fangnei* 方內 and *fangwai* 方外 is emphasised. The term *fang*, delineating a space with boundaries and cardinal directions, denotes rules, limits, and principles. *Fangnei* is therefore an apt description for the *you* within constraints of people like Confucius and Zigong, who comply with social norms and ritual codes. *Fangwai* is, however, beyond such limits, and denotes a space that allows one to act without “squaring” one’s “emotions” with conventions (Graziani, 2006: 213), as Sanghu’s two friends do by celebrating his death.

The theme of roaming the *fangwai* is repeated in other passages describing sagely behaviour and the Dao, pointing to an infinite space that exceeds human society and any known geographical space (*Zhuangzi*, 2009: 2.6):

1) 至人神矣! [...] 若然者，乘雲氣，騎日月，而遊乎四海之外。

The perfect person is spirit-like! [...] s/he mounts on the clouds and mists, rides the sun and the moon, and wanders beyond

⁷ The two variants of 游/遊 here do not appear in the Guo Xiang edition of *Zhuangzi* (which uses 游 only). This suggests that there is no deliberate differentiation of nuance between the two variants.

⁸ My translation of *you fang zhi wai* 遊方之外 takes *fang* 方 (“square space/realm”) in the more figurative sense as “a space that is regulated and demarcated”, i.e. a space of norms. This is close to Graham’s (2001: 89) translation of “beyond the guidelines”.

the four seas.

2) 瞿鵠子問於長梧子曰：'吾聞諸夫子，聖人不從事於務，不就利，不違害，不喜求，不緣道，[...] 而遊乎塵垢之外。'

Ququezezi asked Changwuzi: "I heard from the master that the sage does not work for any goal, does not pursue profit or shun harm, does not delight in quest or chase after the Dao, [...] and wanders beyond the dust and dirt."

3) 莊子曰：' [...] 嘗相與游乎無何有之宮，同合而論，無所終窮乎！嘗相與無為乎！澹而靜乎！漠而清乎！調而閒乎！寥已吾志，無往焉而不知其所至；去而來而不知其所止，吾已往來焉而不知其所終。 彷徨乎馮闕，大知入焉而不知其所窮。'

Zhuangzi said: "[...] Suppose you join me in wandering in the palace of nothing-at-all, converge all the directions and discuss things, then there would be no end or exhaustion!⁹ Why not join me in non-action? So calm and still! Empty and pure! Harmonious and leisurely! Making myself devoid of intents, not going anywhere and not knowing where I arrive; coming and going but not knowing where it stops, I have been there and returned but do not know where it ends. Wandering irresolutely in this boundless vastness, great knowledge enters it but does not find its limits."

These spaces of "beyond the four seas", "beyond the dust and dirt", and "the palace of nothing-at-all" are all *fangwai*—a space where the sage wanders in perfect non-action. This *fangwai* is beyond conceptualisation and no longer describes any real space with a sense of place and identity. It is a formless and

⁹ My translation of *tong he er lun* 同合而論 is more literal and emphasises the sense of levelling all directions (undifferentiated space). Graham's translation (2001: 161) provides more information: "where you put things in their places by joining them as the same".

undifferentiated emptiness, and *you* there does not carry any intentionality but is an abstraction rather than empirical experience. Because *you* is purposeless, it is appreciated for its intrinsic value; because it is also un-self-conscious, it is not shaped by any particular form of activity. As Jean Lévi (2010: 256) observes, Zhuangzian space is “de libre jeu et de libre choix où l’on peut s’ébaudir en toute liberté sans que l’activité de la conscience intervienne”. That *fangwai* points towards a free *you* that is open and not bound by any rules is unmistakable, but it is free also in the sense of “being without”: this wandering is not a choice, its experience has neither agent nor object, and its joy is impersonal (e.g. the grammatically subjectless sentences in passage three).

It is important to note that in early China, as Mark Edward Lewis (2005) argues, space was organised into units that facilitated administration and hierarchical ordering, often in checkerboard pattern. The square: *fang* 方, thus carried the symbolic meaning of orderly and mapped territory. To travel afar (*you*) was conventionally seen as an unwise and risky activity because it meant not only leaving one's family and homeland but also going beyond known space into the wild where strange and threatening creatures and spirits thrived.¹⁰ Set against this background, the *Zhuangzi*'s reversal of the usual negative connotations of *you* in *fangwai* becomes even more remarkable: when one throws oneself open to a nameless, non-hierarchical and unknown cosmos (*fangwai*), and wanders there in an unrestricted and impersonal state where rules do not exist or can be freely invented and changed, it is a sign of perfection and “great knowledge” rather than unwise and inauspicious behaviour. On the other hand, it is also implied that this nameless *fangwai* is dangerous for those who are not “perfect persons” (*zhiren* 至人) to wander in, and could be potentially as risky as travelling afar in the threatening spaces as described by Lewis.

Two types of *you* in the *Zhuangzi* have so far been observed: “wandering within” (*younei* 遊內) and “wandering outside” (*youwai* 遊外). Paula Varsano remarks that this division between moving in *fangnei* or *fangwai* uses space to conceptualise “two stages of being: [...] before and after attaining sagehood” (Varsano, 1996: 385). But the above passages show this spatial division reveals

¹⁰ See *Analects* 4.19 on travelling.

that the question is not only about attaining sagehood but also about *you* as an enjoyable and playful activity. In cases where *you* is without personal subjectivity as shown above, *you* is dissociated from any agent and points to an impersonal joy that can be characterised by the *Zhuangzi*'s (18.1) epithet, “the ultimate joy has no joy” (*zhi le wu le* 至樂無樂). Besides this subjectless *you* in *fangwai*, *fangnei* relates in particular to the question of skilful *you*. The *Zhuangzi* includes numerous portrayals of people who are incredibly skilled at something very specific: be it butchering oxen, the Lüliang swimmer, the cicada-catching hunchback of Chu (*Zhuangzi*, 2009: 19.3), or carpenter Shi slicing off cleanly with a whirling hatchet the mud on his friend's nose without hurting the nose at all (*Zhuangzi*, 2009: 24.6). These are all feats accomplished by working within strenuous conditions and undertaken for their intrinsic pleasure.¹¹ If *fangnei* is this game-like space of *you* that provides the framework for these people to cultivate and perfect their skill, then *fangnei* takes on a positive value and can be roamed *as if* it were *fangwai*.

In sum, I have argued that in the *Zhuangzi*, two contrasting spaces of *you* can be established, which set the directions of *you*'s thematic development for later writers, namely: leisurely and spontaneous movement; playful behaviour and mood; constraints in a game-like space that can only be overcome by supreme skill; imaginative flights beyond the mundane world into infinite cosmic space; the perfect person who wanders in the world and is carefree.¹² These connotations of *you* were fully exploited by Six Dynasties literati, who took *you* as a motif and activity that typically carried Zhuangzian overtones. Nevertheless, Six Dynasties literature reveals different conceptualisations of

¹¹ In Ding's case, although butchering is his profession, he has transformed the task of butchering into a pleasurable activity, which is not a job requirement. His pleasure is therefore a surplus that he enjoys as an intrinsically valuable experience.

¹² This does not mean that all instances of *you* in the *Zhuangzi* fall into either of these two spaces, e.g. the Hao debate between Zhuangzi and Huizi (17.7) about the fish is quite ambiguous (the fish can *you* happily only in water, which is a pre-condition and some kind of constrained space; whereas for Zhuangzi and Huizi, this debate seems made possible because they are specifically located on the Hao (a spatial constraint), although Zhuangzi's argument that he can know the fish's joy implies he transgresses the epistemological *fang* 方 of his own subjectivity, which Huizi argues he cannot transgress). My argument here is however that *fangnei/fangwai* spaces can represent quite a number of exemplary instances of Zhuangzian *you* and can connect to later Six Dynasties articulations on the *you* motif.

you and what constitutes *fangnei* and *fangwai*, which I now turn to examine in detail.

You in Six Dynasties Literati Writing

As a theme in writing, *you* gradually emerged in Six Dynasties literati writing as loosely grouped around two senses of *you*. One is wandering and travelling in a landscape or outside one's native land, for instance in the poetic writings by Xie Lingyun 謝靈運, Sun Chuo 孫綽, Tao Qian 陶潛, and the rhapsodies referenced by Lu Ji 陸機 in his *Wenfu* 文賦 and the *youlan* 遊覽 section in Xiao Tong's 蕭統 (501-531) *Wenxuan* 文選. Secondly, the meaning of “playing games” and “entertainment” as in *youxi* 遊戲, especially in the context of literary games and competition at literati gatherings and court parties, also became prominent. These two senses of *you* are not mutually exclusive and their associating contexts sometimes overlapped, for instance the famous Orchid Pavilion 蘭亭 gathering in 353 (discussed later), which was both an excursion in a scenic landscape and a party where poetry composition contests were held. In the following, I consider a few representative texts spanning the broad chronological scope from 200-600 that relate to the notion of *you* as a playful activity—in both senses of wandering leisurely (in space) and gaming as in literary competition or tasks that require great skill to accomplish.¹³ What emerges from these diverse Six Dynasties writings on *you* is that, as I argue, *you* becomes established, in literary repertoire, as a distinct characteristic of literati lifestyle and aesthetic sensibility.

To begin with, we may consider the prominent Three Kingdoms political thinker Zhong Changtong's 仲長統 (180-220) *Essay on Delighting the Mind* (*Le zhi lun* 樂志論), which sets the tone for much later Six Dynasties writing about *you* as representative of a leisurely life detached from officialdom. Zhong was known for his defiant and openly critical attitude, which earned him the nickname *kuangsheng* 狂生, or “madman”. But he eventually served as

¹³ As discussed in more detail in the conclusion, *you* in Six Dynasties literature can be seen as narrowings of the meanings of *you* in the *Zhuangzi*.

“Director of the Department of State Affairs” (*shangshuling* 尚書令) (Hucker, 1985: 412) for Cao Cao 曹操 (c. 155-220). His *Essay* is written in the subjunctive mood where he envisages his ideal life after retirement from political office: “no need to work, dwelling in a landscape garden” where he could ramble about, meditate on the wisdom of the ancients, and “communicate with friends who shared noble interests with him” (Yan, 2015: 1201).

使居有良田廣宅，背山臨流，溝池環匝，竹木周布，場圃築前，果園樹後。[...] 躡蹠畦苑，遊戲平林，濯清水，追涼風，釣遊鯉，弋高鴻。[...] 安神閨房，思老氏之玄虛；呼吸精和，求至人之仿佛。與達者數子，論道講書，俯仰二儀，錯綜人物。[...] 消搖一世之上，睥睨天地之間。不受當時之責，永保性命之期。如是，則可以陵霄漢，出宇宙之外矣。豈羨夫人帝王之門哉！

I would have as residence fertile fields and a spacious house, with mountains behind and overlooking a stream, encircled by canals and covered with bamboo and trees. There would be a vegetable patch and threshing ground in the front with a fruit orchard planted behind. [...] I would *stroll about in the fields and gardens, wander and play in woods* planted on flatland, dapple in clear water, chase the fresh winds, fish for the swimming carps, and shoot the wild swans that fly high. [...] In my private rooms I would still my spirit and meditate on the dark mystery and emptiness of Laozi; my breath would be refined and harmonious, so that it would be similar to the perfect person. With extremely knowledgeable people I will play *go*, discuss the Dao and old masters’ texts, contemplate the sun and the moon, and comment on diverse people and things. Being carefree I would surpass my contemporaries, and look disdainfully at this world between heaven and earth. I would not be reprimanded by my contemporary world, and would preserve eternally my lifespan. If I could live like this, then I could ascend the clouds and skies, going beyond time

and space. How could I ever desire to enter officialdom and serve any emperor or prince!¹⁴ [My italics.]

The landscape here is cultivated to suit Zhong's taste and lifestyle, one which he can aesthetically appreciate and wander (*you*) in. The term *youxi* 遊戲 conveys the playful mood of his leisure activities; and *youli* 遊鯉 (swimming carp) echoes the Zhuangzian imagery of happy fish. Other references to the *Zhuangzi* are found in *xiaoyao* 逍搖, (being carefree), and Zhong's self-image of ascending the clouds, which adopts the *Zhuangzi*'s imaginative depiction of the perfect person's extraordinary capacities of “riding the wind and clouds” and merging with cosmic space, as cited above (*Zhuangzi*, 2009: 2.6). In the last sentence, Zhong opposes this reclusive lifestyle of leisure and self-cultivation to the space of officialdom, described metaphorically as “entering the gates of emperors and princes” (*diwang zhi men* 帝王之門). The space of *you* is outside the mundane world (*yuzhou zhi wai* 宇宙之外), thus it is *fangwai* to political office and public life, constructed here as a restricting *fangnei* where Zhong cannot be “carefree”. It is worth noting that Zhong's *fangwai*—a deliberately constructed space befitting his status and lifestyle as a scholar-official in retirement—is clearly very different from the Zhuangzian *fangwai*. Later scholars like Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555-1636) and Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書 (1910-1998) have criticised Zhong for insincerely depicting an extravagant life that only rich and privileged literati can afford rather than real hermitage (Qian, 1998: 86). This raises the question of whether *you* became a purely literary trope to express admiration for Zhuangzian carefreeness and Daoist reclusion without the real intention to experience them. Nevertheless, regardless of whether Zhong was sincere in wishing to retreat from political responsibility, his essay shows that *you* was already a motif that gave rise to the aesthetic appreciation of landscape and the scholar-official's aspiration to reclusion and self-cultivation.

¹⁴ Translation modified after Holzman (1996: 72).

Xie Lingyun 謝靈運

Xie Lingyun's (385–433) *Rhapsody on Mountain Dwelling* (*Shanju fu* 山居賦)—a monumental piece in the history of Chinese poetic appreciation of landscape and firmly established in the *youji* 游記 tradition (Swartz, 2015; Zheng, 2014)—develops much more elaborately the themes in Zhong's essay about literati reclusive lifestyle and the pleasures of wandering in landscapes. Xie was from the prominent aristocratic Xie clan of the Eastern Jin (317-420) and later served as official in the Liusong dynasty (420-479). In 423, Xie returned to his ancestral home estate in Shining 始寧 (in modern Zhejiang) “after a period in exile as the Governor of Yongjia 永嘉 between 422-423” and took a period of retreat there (Swartz, 2015: 21). The estate was inherited from his grandfather Xie Xuan 謝玄 (343–388) and it enclosed mountains, rivers, and lakes, offering an ideal residence for reclusive life. During his retreat and until 426, Xie substantially expanded and re-constructed the estate grounds. The composition of *Rhapsody* took place after this construction project when Xie was ill and had to spend much time in bed. *Rhapsody* was written in full consciousness of Zhong's essay (which Xie cites) and contains many references to the *Zhuangzi*. It describes Xie's excursions and physical experiences of viewing, cultivating, and wandering in the estate lands which he constructs to suit his poetic vision of *shanshui* (mountains and waters). In the beginning section, Xie declares his intention and mental state (*Xie Lingyun ji*, 1987: 318-334):

謝子臥疾山頂，覽古人遺書，與其意合，悠然而笑曰：夫道可重，故物為輕；理宜存，故事斯忘。[...]合宮非緡雲之館，衢室豈放勛之堂。邁深心於鼎湖，送高情於汾陽。嗟文成之卻粒，愿追松以遠游。嘉陶朱之鼓棹，乃語種以免憂。'

Lying sick in the high mountains, I read the texts left by the ancients. When I find myself agreeing with their ideas, I smile in contentment and say: “The Dao is important, therefore things are light in comparison; structural patterns should be preserved, therefore particular deeds are then forgotten”. [...] Palaces were not the right residence for the Yellow Emperor;

royal council chambers could not be Yao's abode. One went deep into the heart of Dinghu mountain; the other carried his noble sentiments to dwell in Fenyang. I gasp in admiration at Zhang Liang, who forfeited the world to follow Master Red Pine in roaming afar. I praise Fan Li for abandoning his position and becoming a boatman, telling Wen Zhong that it was to evade worldly troubles.¹⁵

By extolling Zhang Liang 張良 (c. 250-186 BCE) and Fan Li 范蠡 (536-448 BCE) for their renunciation of high positions of power to become carefree wanderers, Xie expresses admiration for abandoning the world and roaming afar. He also praises Yao and the Yellow Emperor for preferring residences in nature (Fenyang, Dinghu mountain) over palaces and state buildings, making an analogy to his own residence situated in mountains and woods—typically the symbolic abode of Daoist hermits. Reference to these precedents implies that Xie wishes to imitate them, and that the main purpose of his retreat into his mountain dwelling is to better experience eremitic life with its pleasures of wandering. As the poetic composition goes on to unfold the beautiful views of the estate grounds, we understand that the activity of *you* is crucial because Xie is depicting an ideal environment for him to ramble in.

從江樓步路，跨越山嶺，[...] 塗路所經見也，則喬木茂竹
[...] 緣路初入，行於竹逕，[...] 既入東南傍山渠，展轉幽
奇，異處同美。[...] 北倚近峰，南眺遠嶺，四山周回，溪
澗交過，水石林竹之美，巖岫隈曲之好，備盡之矣。刊翦
開築，此焉居處，細趣密翫，非可具記，故較言大勢耳。

Walking on the path from the river pavilion, I cross the mountain peaks [...] I see along the way tall trees and thick bamboo groves [...] Following along the road and upon entering [the valley], I continue walking along the bamboo

¹⁵ Zhang Liang was an important strategist serving Emperor Gaozu 高祖 of the Western Han (*Xi Han* 西漢) (206 BCE-9 CE), and is known for retiring from his position to follow Master Red Pine, a legendary Daoist immortal; Wen Zhong 文種 was Fan Li's colleague in serving lord Goujian 勾踐 (c. 520-465 BCE) of Yue 越 (?-334 BCE), and was later killed by Goujian.

paths, [...] after entering from the south-eastern side, alongside the mountain canals, the path twists and changes at quiet and unexpected places, which are all different locations but equally beautiful. [...] To the north, it leans against the nearby peaks; to the south, one sees the distant mountain ranges. Mountains surround all four sides; creeks and streams crisscross each other. The beauty of waters, rocks, forests, and bamboo, and the fineness of rocks, caves, river bends and curves, are complete here. I cleared the ground and opened it up for constructions. This is where I live. It is impossible to comprehensively record each small pleasure and intimate entertainment [I obtain here], so I have merely provided a general account.¹⁶

The landscape described here provides infinite satisfaction to Xie the wanderer who traces his roaming path through these lands as he describes their different spots and perspectives. Thus *Rhapsody* manifests itself as a travelling record as well as an account of his construction project and philosophical reflections. Unlike Zhong, whose description of landscape is generic and whose love for reclusive residence stems more from the desire to transcend society and avoid “reprimands” (Qian, 1998: 87), Xie expresses more delight in the beauty of the scenery and carefully observes its specific traits, establishing himself as the poetic subject situated in the experience of “blending sentiments with the scene” (*qingjing jiaorong* 情景交融).¹⁷

Overall, *Rhapsody* shows Xie in a mood of retirement and leisure, and confirms his estate as a reclusive space that, à la Zhong, defines negatively against the space of politics and administrative duties: a *fangwai*. *You* is again portrayed as the paradigmatic activity of the scholar-official who withdraws from officialdom to contemplate on life and ancient wisdom. But Xie's *fangwai* is not outside known space or human conceptualisation as is Zhuangzian *fangwai* because it is deliberately designed and full of Xie's sense of individuality

¹⁶ Modified after Swartz's translation in Swartz (2015: 24-25).

¹⁷ This is not to say that disappointment with political career was completely absent from Xie's expression.

and style. Xie's rambling walks through his estate—wearing wooden clogs he designed for the special purpose and in lands which he owns and controls—are not an impersonal *you* but a fully self-conscious playful activity where his aesthetic sensibility emerges. In other words, *you* in Xie's *Rhapsody* is an experience grounded in his subjectivity and the particularity of place, which introduces something substantially new and different from the *Zhuangzi*. Varsano has raised the question of whether, instead of actually travelling in landscape and relying on empirical perception, Six Dynasties poets “saw landscape ‘through the lens’ of received texts” (Varsano, 2013: 35), e.g. the literary repertoire on the poetics of space (the *Zhuangzi*, Zhong, Shi Chong, etc.) which Xie draws upon. But Xie's assertion of his subjectivity in a particular environment shows that his poetic vision stems from concrete experience, with him having full agency in shaping his space and playing in it.¹⁸ Of course, the physical activity of *you* goes hand-in-hand with its significance as literary motif, for the former provides the springboard for Xie's poetic expression and aesthetic contemplation, which he articulates in writing. Xie's travel record in the *Rhapsody* was, after all, composed after his excursions and is therefore a reconstruction of his journey and memory of the scenic views and the feelings they evoked. We may say that, to some extent, Xie constructed his estate lands to suit his taste so that they offered a delightful space for him to wander in, contemplate, then write about. The desire to create a space for *you*, the desire to write about *you* to express oneself, and the desire to *you* were complementary and fed upon each other.

The Game-like Space of the Literati Party: The Orchid Pavilion Gathering

If *you* in Xie's and Zhong's writings embodies the scholar-official's poetic sensibility and evokes a wandering activity in a *fangwai* defined by reclusive, politically-disengaged life, then *you* in Six Dynasties literati parties correlates with *fangnei* space, especially when *fang* is understood in the technical sense as “rules” and “principles”. *You* within a space regulated by rules happens in the literati party because competitive games are played between participants who share a consensus about game rules and expectations of performance. Typically,

¹⁸ Varsano (2013: 57) also argues that the real experience of landscape is important.

at such occasions where literati gather, poetry contests and other games such as chess, drinking, and rhetorical sparring take place. One celebrated example is the Orchid Pavilion gathering in 353, organised by the distinguished scholar-official and calligrapher Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361) as a suburban excursion to the Orchid Pavilion in the mountains of Kuaiji Commandery 會稽 to perform Spring purification rites. Forty-one literati participated, all famous scholars of the time. They held a poetry composition contest to commemorate the gathering, which resulted in *The Orchid Pavilion Anthology* (*Lanting shi* 蘭亭詩), with its celebrated preface written by Wang Xizhi. Since the event was organised as a “wandering in Spring” (*chunyou* 春游), the poems featured the theme of *you* prominently. The method of competition through which the poems were produced is also notably playful: wine cups were drifted down a stream along which the poets sat, and whenever a cup stopped before a poet, he had to compose a poem (Li, 2010: 145). If he failed in the task, he would be punished by drinking three *dou* 斗 of wine. In addition, Wang Xizhi recorded all the poems and names of those who failed to compose under the required conditions to pass down to posterity.¹⁹ This party is therefore a game-like space with constraints, and the literati who participated were highly aware that their literary reputations were at stake.

Swartz (2012: 276) has convincingly argued that the group composition at the Orchid Pavilion party “inspires both a sense of camaraderie [...] as well as a spirit of competition, in which performers vie” with each other to display superior literary talent, wit, and philosophical understanding of the Dao. With this understanding of the poetry competition as a basis, I would like to draw particular attention to the understanding of *you* as a playful activity in the poems. As Wang writes in his preface:

仰觀宇宙之大, 俯察品類之盛, 所以遊目騁懷, 足以極視聽之娛, 信可樂也。夫人之相與, 俯仰一世, [...] 或因寄所托, 放浪形骸之外。每覽昔人興感之由, 若合一契; 未嘗不臨文嗟悼, 不能喻之於懷。固知一死生為虛誕, 齊彭殤為妄作。

¹⁹ See Swartz (2012: 277) for the names of those who failed to compose poems.

We look upwards at the vastness of space and time, and bend downwards to observe the richness of the myriad things. These things make our eyes wander and give free rein to our feelings, so that we can expand the pleasures of our senses of sight and sound to the limit. This is indeed great joy. In men's associations with each other that quickly span a lifetime, [...] some abandon themselves to indulge in diverse interests and pursuits, forgetting their physical bodies. Every time when I consider the causes of melancholic sentiments of men of the past, if they correspond to me, I cannot help from sighing deeply before these ancient writings, yet I cannot explain why my heart feels sad. But I know for certain that the view that life and death are one is delusional, and to make level Old Peng's lifespan to that of a child who dies prematurely is absurd (*Lantingji*, 1995).²⁰

Wang's pairing of the "wandering" vision with feelings in "free rein" relates *you* to extreme pleasures for the senses and the mind, bringing about an aesthetic transcendence of the material body: "beyond the physical body and shape" (*xinghai zhi wai* 形骸之外). The last sentence directly talks back to the *Zhuangzi's* famous paradoxical aphorisms, "In living one is simultaneously dying, in dying one is simultaneously living" (*Zhuangzi*, 2009: 2.3),²¹ and "One may not live longer than a child who dies prematurely, yet Old Peng died young" (*Zhuangzi*, 2009: 2.5).²² Wang boldly dismisses the *Zhuangzi's* views and asserts his own knowledge: what arises from this delightful experience of roaming and communication of feelings between fellow literati is the melancholy realisation that life and its pleasures are too short-lived.

In contrast, we find a different attitude towards the ancients in the poem by Xie An 謝安 (320-385), uncle of Xie Lingyun's grandfather and a prominent statesman and poet:

²⁰ Old Peng 彭祖 is a legendary figure who supposedly lived over 800 years.

²¹ 方生方死，方死方生。

²² 莫壽乎殤子，而彭祖為夭。

相與欣佳節, 率爾同褰裳。
 薄雲羅陽景, 微風翼輕航。
 醇醪陶丹府, 兀若遊羲唐。
 萬殊混一理, 安復覺彭殤。

Together we take joy in this delightful festival,
 And briskly we hike up our robes.
 Thin clouds scatter the shadows cast by the sun,
 Gentle winds rock the light boat.
 The rich wine delights our pure hearts,
 Dazed and mindless, we roam with Fu Xi and King Yao.²³
 Ten thousand differences blend into one principle,
 How can one still distinguish between longevity and early
 death?²⁴

The terms *wuruo* 兀若, “as if dazed, drunken, and mindless”, and *chunlao* 醇醪, “rich wine”, imply a state of confusion and aimlessness that echoes the un-self-conscious Zhuangzian sage. Xie An's imagination of roaming with Fu Xi and Yao expresses admiration for the ancients rather than criticism. He also re-asserts the *Zhuangzi*'s levelling of different perspectives, including Old Peng and the dead child, pointedly contrasting with Wang's dismissal of the Zhuangzian view (Swartz, 2012: 289). Xie An's experience of *you* is very different from that of Wang: *you* is a journey of the spirit that enables him to join the illustrious ancients and harmonise with their wisdom. Instead of maintaining a distinction, Xie An aspires to a state of undifferentiation and co-existence between past and present. In this way, the difference between Xie An's and Wang's sentiments and views becomes clear. In this competitive poetic space, *you* becomes a common theme through which the poets express their different individual stances.

The Orchid Pavilion gathering is therefore an occasion where *you*—in both “wandering” and competitive “game-playing” senses of the term—is crucial. The party is not only an excursion by the participants who set out to *you* in

²³ Xi 羲 here may be a double-entendre referring to both Fu Xi and Wang Xizhi.

²⁴ Translation modified after Swartz (2012: 288).

landscape but also a space of competition and performance in exhibiting one's talent, expressing one's pleasure in *you*, and debating the understanding of ancient texts. In other words, the poets write in a playful way about their experience of *you*. Nevertheless, despite the apparent leisurely and delightful atmosphere of the party, it is in fact a space full of tension. Though both the intention to *you* playfully and the specific format of *you* are strongly present, what is in question is the real experience of pleasure in *you*. Although the poets wrote about their alleged pleasure and emotional abandonment, whether they actually found the competition pleasurable rather than stressful and embarrassing is another matter (especially for those who failed to compose good poems). Carrying explicit game rules and implicit codes of behaviour, the party is a big game of performance: not only the performance of literary composition but also the performance of *you* and ultimately of one's self—a self-performance that ideally matches or improves one's reputation and status. This asynchrony between the formal activity of leisurely “wandering” (*chunyou* 春游) and its actual phenomenological experience (dead serious rather than lightheartedly playful) is prominently manifested in the highly formalised games and competitions in Six Dynasties scholarly and aristocratic communities (of which the Orchid Pavilion party is one example), which relates back to the problems of restrictions and dangers in *fangnei* space which the *Zhuangzi* raises.

Comparison and Conclusion

We now observe a division of *fangwai* and *fangnei* for the space of *you* in Six Dynasties literati writing, too. For *fangwai*, from Zhong to the Orchid Pavilion poets and Xie Lingyun, it denotes a space that involves poetic writing about wandering (*you*) in landscape and a temporary retreat that suspends the scholar-official's political duties and public life. Nevertheless, the idealised reclusion in the “literary repertoire” of the scholar-official is very different from “reclusion *sensu stricto*” (Berkowitz, 1994: 632). After all, Zhong was certainly not “one who lived in a cave [...] holding the world in contempt” (Qian, 1998: 86), while Xie and the Orchid Pavilion poets were wealthy landowners who continued to engage in politics. Nevertheless, even if the Six Dynasties gentry's wanderings in landscape were an “imitation” and “watered-down version of [...] reclusive life” (Yan, 2015: 1206), it does not mean their admiration for reclusion

is not genuine and their *fangwai* is unimportant. *You* in this *fangwai* temporarily dislodges the scholar-official from his public role, allowing him to inhabit another perspective. This is crucial for the formation of landscape aesthetics and the rise of *shanshui* poetry, since it brings about the experience of wandering in landscape with a clear sense of individual subjectivity and aesthetic sensibility. Besides material surroundings, landscape is also “a construct of the mind and of feeling” (Tuan, 1979: 89). *You*—as both physical activity and poetic motif—thus channelled concrete landscape into its representation in literature. In this way, landscape and political dis-engagement in the Six Dynasties became analogous to *fangwai* in the *Zhuangzi*. Nevertheless, there are significant differences: unlike Zhuangzian *fangwai*, the landscape in Six Dynasties writing is deliberately constructed and relates to particularities of time and place that define the writer's experience of *you*. Moreover, Six Dynasties *fangwai* is neither beyond the social and human realm nor beyond conceptualisation: it is in fact the negative definition of *fangnei*; whereas in the *Zhuangzi*, it is rather *fangnei* that is negatively defined against *fangwai*. Consequently, wandering in Six Dynasties literature is a fully self-conscious and often planned artistic practice within known space rather than the Zhuangzian agentless drift in cosmic emptiness. As for *fangnei*, it can be understood as the space of codified *you* in Six Dynasties intellectual sparring and literary contests. The danger of *you* in the story of Zhuangzi in Diaoling—i.e. being caught in a game of loss and gain—has disappeared because the scholar-official knowingly joins the game to start with. Six Dynasties literati willingly chain themselves up against each other in competing to see who can better perform under the game rules, navigate the intricacies of behavioural codes, and succeed in displaying their talent and gaining recognition. Because of this formalisation of *you*, even when *you* occurs in a space constructed as *fangwai*—e.g. suburban excursions or a self-imposed retreat into the mountains—*you* is still in a sense within *fangnei* because the scholar-official is acting in a way that is conventionally associated with *you* and considered appropriate for his lifestyle and status. In this way, although the *Zhuangzi* proves to be one of the biggest influences that motivated the sensibility of the wandering and gaming Six Dynasties literati, this comparison shows that the uses and understandings of *you* undergo a fundamental change. From the Zhuangzian realm of “nothingness” where *you* manifests as a playful activity of “nourishing” and enjoying life, during the Six Dynasties, *you* has shifted to the

space of aesthetic practice that involves the game of writing, the performance of literati life, and the paradigmatic activity of poetic self-expression.

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**Empire and Visual Pleasure:
Reinterpreting the Miao Albums of Yunnan and Guizhou**

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Abstract

Traditional scholarship has emphasised the intimate link between the Miao album, a genre of illustration to emerge from colonial expansion in southwest China, and political control. Through a careful reading of evidence collected from prefaces, poems, novels, travel accounts and local gazetteers, this paper argues that these albums were also popularised in the marketplace and viewed for pleasure by consumers who included a far wider section of the population than local government officials alone. Divided into three main sections, it firstly brings the pleasure and curiosity dimensions of Miao albums to the fore; it then argues for a diversity of consumers of these albums than has hitherto been acknowledged, and finally, by probing the process of how and by whom Miao albums were produced, it highlights the participation of professional artists and the widespread practice of copying. Through the decentralisation of the political function of Miao albums, this paper offers new ways of viewing Chinese imperial images within the context of popular culture.

Keywords: *Miao albums, ethnicity, Yunnan, Guizhou, pleasure, imperialism.*

One of the more fascinating products of China's colonial expansion into Yunnan and Guizhou in the late-imperial period was the *Baimiao tu* 百苗圖 (Miao album), a genre of ethnographic illustration depicting the bodies, cultures and environments of various ethnic minorities of the southwest. Symbolising the growing direct bureaucratic regime of the Ming and Qing dynasties (Giersch, 2006: 71-82; Hostetler, 2001; Herman, 2007; Sutton, 2003: 105-152), Miao albums epitomise the intimate correlation between imperial power and visual regimes. Although the genre is known as the Miao album, the subjects of these works were not confined to the group officially recognised today as Miao 苗

族, but included a number of ethnic minorities in Guizhou, Yunnan, Taiwan, Hunan and Hainan (Diamond, 1995: 99-106). Since the nineteenth century, a number of albums have been brought to Europe and North America, valued for their ethnographic information and as part of the preservation impulse that social Darwinism helped to bring about. As a result, Miao albums can be found not only in Chinese collections, but also in the collections of the Wellcome Trust, the Bodleian Library, the Pitt Rivers Museum, the British Library, the Harvard-Yenching Library, and many other Western institutions (Hostetler, 2001: 213-219; Qi, 2012: 195-285).

The majority of Miao albums consist of images depicting the daily activities of non-Han people in groups, with short accompanying texts describing their clothes, customs, locations and dispositions (Teng, 2003: 451). Although many Miao albums make bold claims about their authenticity and the “truth” of the ethnographic information contained therein, they are more properly read as representations of ethnic minorities informed by the mental image of imperial order created by the male Chinese literati elite. Both images and texts in Miao albums betray the influence of Confucian cultural norms pertaining to marriage customs, clothes, body and gender roles. My PhD research, of which the present article forms a part, examines the ways in which the ethnic minorities of the southwest were represented visually and textually, through which it also explores how the Chinese engendered and visualised imperial experiences.

A number of scholars both in China and the West have highlighted the role of Miao albums as symbols of imperial visual regimes of the great Qing, an idea vividly conveyed in Laura Hostetler’s (2001) examination of the albums of Guizhou, and Emma Teng’s (2004) investigation of images of indigenous peoples in Taiwan. Their analyses are very convincing and significant for our understanding of the Qing colonial enterprise and China’s early modernity in a global context. In the same vein, this paper also contextualises Miao albums as products of empire in parallel to their European contemporaries. But when considering the historiography of studying imperial images, Deborah Poole (1997: 17) reminds us that:

In our rush to uncover the complicitous ties among art, representation, and power (or, perhaps more appropriately in

this case, race and representation) we frequently forget that images are also about the pleasures of looking. Visual images fascinate us. They compel us to look at them, especially when the material they show us is unfamiliar or strange.

Whilst her focus is modern ethnographic photography, Poole's observation is equally applicable to the study of Miao albums, in which issues of pleasure and circulation have been unexplored. Qi Qingfu (2014: 209), for example, argues that Miao albums of the Qing period were exclusively associated with government officials in Guizhou, since ordinary literati and artists could not penetrate into these remote lands. Thus the intimate association of Miao albums with government officials has led to a historiographical focus on Miao albums' political importance as an imperial tool. It is my contention that such interpretations need to be revisited, in order fully to take into account the roles of the literati, pleasure, and the marketplace in the production and consumption of these albums.

Addressing the continued production of Miao albums even after the Qing Empire had started to decline, Hostetler (2002: 187) suggests a functional transformation "from serving a practical purpose related to governance to becoming objects collected and admired in literati circles." The main section of this paper reconsiders how the function of Miao albums could be better interpreted. Existing scholarship has generally neglected to address the pleasure dimension of Miao albums, or placed it as the counterpart of their political importance in a binary relationship of empire and pleasure (Walravens, 2003: 179-193; Tapp, 2003; Rui, 1973). This paper thus proposes a new way of reading Chinese imperial images, by placing them in the context of late-imperial social and cultural histories of visual and material cultures. It emphasises the mutual constitution of imperial regimes and visual pleasures, arguing that the ways in which imperial ideologies are conveyed, cultivated, disseminated and achieved are through the pleasure of looking.

One may also ask why the pleasure function of Miao albums has been so often ignored. Although different in style, both the illustrations of the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Classic of mountains and seas) and Miao albums were representations of the "alien", and reflections of an idealised world order in the mind of the Chinese

(Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, 2007: 218). However, Miao albums were conceived as images of ethnographic truth, while the *Shanghai jing* and its various versions in many other works were regarded as fictional and for pleasure. For example, a Ming scholar Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 (1551-1602) described *Shanghai jing* as “the progenitor of eccentric language” (*gu jin yuguai zhi zu* 古今語怪之祖); in the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 (Complete collection of four branches of books), *Shanghai jing* filled the category of fiction, conceived as the most ancient fiction in China (Xu, 2010: 171). The discussion of such illustrations with apocryphal tales and exaggerated imaginations are very easily linked to the domains of consumption of pleasure, contrasting substantially with traditional interpretations of Miao albums.

In her study of the history of anthropology in nineteenth-century Britain, Efram Sera-Shriar (2013: 109-116) has examined the importance of observational practice influenced by anatomy to the conceptualisation of ethnographic truth. In order to understand the omission of the pleasure function in interpretations of Miao albums and the different comments made about Miao albums and the *Shanghai jing*, it is necessary to consider how Miao albums were authenticated in late-imperial China. Delving into the prefaces of some Miao albums, it is clear that there is indeed a set of strategies and tactics of claiming to represent ethnographic truth. One of the most important is to emphasise the maker’s long engagement with the non-Han, direct observation and proper ethics of recording. Although they are narratives that claim authenticity, such ideas of linking field observation with ethnographic truth have arguably remained very powerful, contributing to our ignorance of the pleasure dimension of Miao albums down to the twenty-first century.

The new ways of reading Miao albums discussed here are situated in two contexts pertaining to the study of popular culture: one is the proliferation of popular ethnography in late imperial China and the other is engagement of popular culture in studies of cultural imperialism. For decades, scholars from the disciplines of history, art history, economic history and literature, have shown us the proliferation of the late imperial economy, characterized by the expansion of the education system, the boom in the printing industry, conspicuous consumption and leisure activities (Johnson & Rawski, 1985; Clunas, 1997; Brook, 1998; Hay, 2010). More recently, some scholars have brought the

publication and consumption of popular ethnography into this realm of imperial popular culture. In one popular genre of book, *riyong leishu* 日用類書 (books for daily use), the encyclopaedia of life in the late Ming period, there is a section introducing the land and customs of “the aliens” (Wang, 2003: 404-450). These encyclopaedias include *Wuche bajin* 五車拔錦 (Brocades in five wagons), *Santai wanyong zhengzong* 三臺萬用正宗 (Three stages for thousands of true uses), *Wanyong zhengzong buqiuren quanbian* 萬用正宗不求人全編 (Complete and authenticated anthology for thousands of uses without bothering other people), *Sancai tuhui* 三才圖繪 (Illustrations of three powers) and *Miaojin wanbao quanshu* 妙錦萬寶全書 (Complete books of thousands of great and beautiful treasures), which were poorly printed in studios in Fujian, but reached a wide range of readers. In her monograph, *Ming Qing wenxu zhong de xinan xushi* 明清文學中的西南敘事 (The southwest in Ming-Qing literary imagination), Hu Xiaozhen 胡曉真 (2017: 53, 234-248) illuminates a growing market for things associated with the “southwest” including the marriage customs of Miao people, and the legends of female government officials in late-imperial literature and printing enterprises. Additionally, He Yuming (2013: 235) reveals that books such as the Yuan-era *Luochong lu* 裸蟲錄 (Record of naked creatures), which deals with exotic lands and peoples, were widely read during the late-imperial period. My investigation of Miao albums is discussed within this context of popular ethnographic knowledge in late-imperial China.

The question of how imperial ideas were popularised is central to theories of cultural imperialism originating in British imperial history of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries beginning in the 1980s (Leonardi, 2013: 49-73). For example, the edited anthology, *Imperialism and Popular Culture* by John McKenzie (1986), remains one of the most important works examining imperialism within popular culture, in which the musical hall, popular art, fiction, and films are addressed. McKenzie clearly points out the “the central role of imperialism must now be noted in all debates about culture, media, and society in the period between the 1870s and the 1940s” (1986: 14). In the same vein, in a recent publication entitled *Illustrating Empire: A Visual History of British Imperialism*, Ashley Jackson and David Tomkins (2011: 150-173) claim that people in Britain and the dominions regularly encountered vivid portrayals of imperial themes, and that imperial images became part of the furniture of British leisure. Although pertaining to a different historical period and

geographical area, the influential historiography of examining the popular engagement of imperialism still raises intriguing questions as to the ways in which Chinese imperial ideologies were popularised through visual and material cultures.

Through a careful reading of evidence collected from prefaces of Miao albums, poems, novels, travel accounts and local gazetteers, this paper argues that Miao albums were popularised in the marketplace and viewed for pleasure by consumers beyond local government officials. Divided into three main sections, it first brings to the fore the pleasure and curiosity dimensions of Miao albums; it then argues for a greater diversity of consumers of these albums than has hitherto been acknowledged, and finally, by probing the process of how and by whom Miao albums were produced, it highlights the participation of professional artists and the widespread practice of copying. Through the decentralisation of the political function of Miao albums, this paper offers new ways of viewing Chinese imperial images within the context of popular culture.

Zhengqi Haoyi 爭奇好異 (Competing to be Eccentric and Chasing Exoticism): The Anxiety of Pleasure

When discussing the practical use of their albums for governing the non-Han, some officials also expressed concerns that others viewed the Miao albums merely for their exoticism. For example, at the end of his preface to *Diansheng Yixi Yinan yiren tushuo* 滇省迤西迤南夷人圖說 (Illustrations and text relating to the barbarians in Yixi and Yinan of Yunnan), an album dated to 1788 in the collection of the Museum für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig, Germany, He Changgeng 賀長庚, a local government official in eighteenth-century Yunnan, claimed:

予濫竽仕籍, 歷篆滇之三迤, 體訪治夷之情而難易不齊, 爰就耳目所及, 繪以四十四種, 並錄其概於端, 非欲爭奇好異, 聊備為治之採訪雲時.

Following the fashion of official writings, I wrote several pertaining to Yunnan. My experience recounts the extent of the difficulty of ruling ethnic minorities when they are

unbalanced. Based on what my eyes and ears could reach, I depicted forty-four ethnic groups, each paired with an annotation at the end. Rather than for the purpose of competing over curiosity and chasing exoticism, your servant prepares this to rule them and to gather news (Nentwig, 2003: 2).

He initially emphasises that the forty-four images were all based on direct observation, the proper ethics of recording and his long engagement with the Non-Han as an imperial officer. He then announces that the album was not produced for *zhengqi haoyi*, but for providing useful information for the future governance of the non-Han people. This attempt to emphasise the authenticity of his album, also revealed his disdain for those who designed albums for the pursuit of exoticism. It reveals concern that his album might be viewed for fun despite his intention to contribute to the governance of the non-Han subjects. The ways in which the albums were actually read could, of course, differ from how it was thought they should be read. The fact that the author tried to offer guidance on reading his album, to some extent demonstrates the existence of albums made to convey a sense of exoticism.

Another intriguing dialogue in the preface of *Qiannan miaoman tushuo* 黔南苗蠻圖說 (Album of the Miao in southern Guizhou) (1890) by Gui Fu 桂馥, a nineteenth-century government official who worked in Guizhou for more than fifteen years, offers further evidence for the albums' pleasure dimension. The dialogue starts with the mocking of a guest:

客見而誚之：“子真好事業，前重畫養蒙圖說，取蒙以養正之意，又畫訓女圖說，取家人利女貞之意，是皆有補於世。今畫苗蠻圖，於世無補，只可供人玩好而已，奚足取？”

My guest saw [the *miaoman* illustrations I made] and mocked: “you are really meddlesome. Previously you re-drew illustrations of raising children, which might be attributed to the purpose of educating children with correct methodology; you then depicted illustrations of girls' admonition, and you might do that for women's chastity in a family. All of these are

for the benefits of society. Now you painted the illustrations of *miaoman*, which will not benefit our society and can offer people only fun and entertainment. Is there any benefit in so doing?" (Li, 2008: 151).

余曰：“唯唯否否，子不聞古之學者，為學有要，置圖於左，置書於右，索象於圖，索理於書。秦漢以前，圖籍散佚，傳於今者，如唐顏師古之王會圖，宋鄭俠之流民圖，盛度之西域圖，元趙孟俯之獮風圖，明楊東民之饑民圖，彭韶之鹽場圖，又如我朝之職貢圖，耕織圖，棉花圖，皆邀宸翰褒題，無非取索象於圖之意。且黔省自入版圖以來，苗蠻屢滋事矣，蒞茲土者，苟不悉其風俗，好尚而欲思患，預防不亦難乎？此余之畫苗蠻圖，所亟亟也。”

I replied: “With respect, I must disagree. Have you not heard that when scholars of ancient times carried out research they placed illustrations on the left and text on the right, deriving a representation from the illustration and an explanation from the text? Before the Qin and Han dynasties, books were lost. In terms of those that are extant today, such as Yan Gushi’s *Illustrations of the King’s Assembly* in the Tang dynasty, *Illustrations of Refugees* and Shen Du’s *Illustrations of the Western Areas* in the Song dynasty, Zhao Mengfu’s *Illustrations of Customs of the Bin* in the Yuan dynasty, Yang Dongming’s *Illustrations of Starving People* and Pengshao’s *Illustrations of Salt Making* in the Ming dynasty, and *Illustrations of Tributaries*, *Illustrations of Farming and Weaving*, and *Illustrations of Cotton* in our dynasty, all were inscribed by emperors and represented their phenomena through images. Moreover, after Guizhou province was integrated into the territory, Miao barbarians caused trouble frequently. If officials ruling this area are not familiar with the local customs, will it not be difficult to prevent this? That is the urgent purpose behind my making of the illustrations of the *miaoman* (Li, 2008: 151).

By highlighting a contradiction between Gui Fu's expectations and the guest's actual viewing experience, this dialogue is indeed important, offering new insights into the Miao album's functions. Gui's guest observes the fashion of making illustrations for texts. He argued that while it made sense to him to make illustrations for a son and daughter's education, it was useless to make illustrations of "barbarians", as the phrases *yushi wubu* 於世無補 (bring no benefits to the society), and *zhike gongren wanhao eryi* 只可供人玩好而已 (can offer people only fun and entertainment) vividly indicate. Gui then justifies the significance by linking to the theory of *suoxiang yutu, suoli yushu* 索象於圖, 索理於書 (seeing through images and enlightening through written words), which values images as an essential technique for learning, a methodology initially described by Zheng Qiao 郑樵 (1104-1162), a well-known Song scholar (Bray, 2007: 1). At the end of the conversation, Gui also explains the instrumental role of the Miao album in ruling the non-Han in Guizhou. Obviously, Gui disagreed with his guest who asserted that the Miao albums could only serve for fun and entertainment.

This was not necessarily a conversation that had actually happened, as other writings also start with the conventional *ke yue* 客曰 (the guest asks), and *yu yue* 余曰 (I replied), such as *Banqiao zaji* 板橋雜記 (Jottings in Banqiao) by Yu Huai 余懷 (1616-1696) (Yu, 2016: 1). Instead, it was a technique employed by the author to convey his themes, purposes and the main concerns of the writing. What was Gui Fu's purpose in listing this dialogue with his guest at the very start of his preface for the album? He might have been concerned that others would see the album in the same way as his guest. He was certainly dissatisfied with the idea that the Miao album was merely for fun and pleasure, and his reply highlights the more "noble" or "exalted" function of the album as an imperial tool.

Gui does not provide any background information about his guest, but this dialogue suggests that Miao albums could be viewed by a much wider range of people. Like Gui's guest, others might have viewed these albums for pleasure and thought that this was their only function; indeed, this may have been the perspective of many non-official viewers. The function of Miao albums varied among different consumers in different contexts, but one cannot deny the albums' dimension of fun and their pleasure function.

The pleasure dimension of Miao albums was also best demonstrated through the popularisation of scenes pertaining to gender and sexuality. When opening a Miao album from Guizhou, the second entry is often an image of a *nüguan* 女官 (female government official) (see fig. 2). This follows an image of the male Hei Lolo 黑羅羅 (Black Lolo, now officially recognised as Yi in the PRC) (Harrell, 2001). This *nüguan* was the principle wife of the Luoluo ruler and, when her husband died, became a female ruler. The Ming court fully recognised the legitimacy of confirming women as hereditary native chieftains (Gong, 1985: 263-302; Hu, 1981: 242-243). The stories of some female government officials, such as She Xiang 奢香 (1358-1396) and Qin Liangyu 秦良玉 (1574-1648), became extremely popular and were adapted for drama and fiction (Hu, 2017: 219-250). It is, however, crucial to note that the Qing emperor Yongzheng (r. 1723-35) abolished the native chieftainships and extended direct bureaucratic control over the formerly autonomous frontier areas (Herman, 2007: 47-50). While there were relatively few female government officials after the middle of the eighteenth century, Han literati still displayed a deep fascination with the female local chieftains. Rather than reality, the images of female government officials in Miao albums were the stuff of male Han Chinese imagination; rather than retaining political importance, the images of *nüguan* here reflect a pleasure dimension to the texts.

Furthermore, a number of scenes in Miao albums depict scenes of ethnic minorities dancing, and these were intimately associated with their marriage custom, *tiaoyue* 跳月 (dancing under the moonlight). For example, in figure 1, a group of Hua (Flower) Miao are depicted. Men dance and play flutes and women play bells; they are chasing one another, too. The paired text tells the reader that this is a customary way of selecting partners and that the dance is generally followed by sexual intercourse in the open. There are other images showing more intimate scenes between non-Han men and women. The popularity of these scenes relating to marriage customs and sexuality are other indicators of pleasure-seeking. Scholarship addressing such exoticising and eroticizing ethnic others, focusing either on European examples or ethnic minorities in modern China, has already developed a rich field of enquiry (Burton, 2016: 495-510; Aldrich, 2013: 74-99; Gladney, 1994: 92-123; Schien, 2000: 1-17; Hyde, 2001: 333-348; Mathieu, 1999: 81-105). One chapter of my PhD thesis explores Chinese ways of eroticising ethnic minorities in the southwest of China by linking

these to sexual regulation, in particular that applied to widows and virgins in the late imperial period (Zhu, 2018: 86-154). Imperial visual order was achieved through the manipulation of sexuality; meanwhile, these gendered and sexual elements in the Miao albums also served, through providing visual pleasure, to promote their circulation among multiple readerships.



Figure 1. “Huamiao 花苗,” in an untitled album, undated, Wellcome Trust Library, London.

Although the two accounts from He and Gui discussed above spend much ink addressing the practical utility of Miao albums as tools of imperial colonisation and governance, it is important to note that the production of albums was not carried out under the emperor’s direction. Instead, it was a fashion that many government officials followed in their spare time. The account in the preface of a 1743 Taiwanese album, *Taihai caifeng tu* 臺海采風圖 (Ethnographic illustration in Taihai) demonstrates this point well, as Liu Shiqi 六十七, a Manchu government official in the eighteenth century puts it:

乾隆癸亥冬, 余奉天子命, 來巡斯土 ... 林林總總, 莫不蒸然向化, 仰見聖治昭宣, 無遠不屆. 小臣不才, 惟有勤宣朝廷愛養德意, 夙夜不敢自違, 閑及采方問俗, 物產之異, 種種怪特, 多中土未見者. 始信區宇之廣, 其間何所不有. 公余之暇, 即其見聞可據者, 今繪諸冊若干幅, 雖不能殫其十之二三, 而物土之宜, 風俗之殊, 亦足以表聲教之訖, 獻雉貢獒, 無煩重譯也. 爰題臺海采風圖, 彝諸行篋, 歸質於博雅君子.

In the winter of the *kuihai* year of the reign of Emperor Qianlong (1743), I came to investigate this land with the order of the emperor. ... all are willing to be civilised, waiting to be called and ruled, even for those inhabited far away. I am a minor official, with no talent, and all I could do was to work hard on promoting the intentions of the court which were to raise men of virtue, and I did not dare to relax day or night. When I was free, I interviewed the locals and asked for their customs, including the local exotic products, especially those that could not be seen in the mainland of China. I started to believe that in this grand universe, anything could exist. In the free time when I had accomplished my official duties, I depicted several images based on trustworthy sources. Although it could not even reflect two or three tenths of Taiwan, the nice land and exotic customs are enough to convey the purpose to educate. The scenes of offering the tribute of birds and dogs need no repetition. I named this album *Taihai caifeng tu*, leaving it in my travelling box, in order to broaden and refine the knowledge of gentlemen (Qi, 2012: 289).

Although this is an album depicting the ethnic minorities in Taiwan, it is still helpful for understanding the production of ethnographic illustrations of late imperial China in general, as Taiwan was also part of the Qing colonial enterprise (Teng, 2004). Despite Liu's Manchu background, the text above clearly suggests an imperial tributary system, an imagined and idealised Chinese world order (Perdue, 2015: 1002-1014). Liu's claims that the indigenous Taiwanese were all eager to be cultivated and assimilated by an advanced culture vividly demonstrates imperial or Confucian ideology as adopted by the Manchus for

use in certain contexts.

Liu also claims that he had made the album in his spare time, as the words *xian* 閑 and *xia* 暇 clearly indicate. Qi Qingfu (2012: 288-290) briefly mentions this text, in his critique of Hostetler's interpretation of the transformation of the Miao albums' functions from imperial tools of officials in the High Qing to objects adored by the literati in the late Qing period, since this is a text written in the High Qing, while revealing less concern with imperial governance. At the end, he clearly states that his purpose is to *boya junzi* 博雅君子 (broaden and refine the knowledge of gentlemen), an idea probably generated from an earlier book, *Bowu zhi* 博物誌 (A treatise on broad learnings of things) by Zhang Hua 張華 (232-300), in which the exotic lands, products, and "alien" peoples were introduced (Zhang, 1985: 42-81). The full text tries to shed light on or even exaggerate exotic customs and local products unique to Taiwan. Thus the Miao albums' political use should not be overstated.

Drawing on the above texts by He, Li and Liu, this paper further demonstrates that the Miao albums are best interpreted by recognising that their functions as an imperial tool and their existence as a material cultural object created for the pleasure of looking are not mutually exclusive. Imperial ideologies and a message of cultural superiority over the non-Han were often most successfully conveyed through the curiosity, surprise and joy provoked by the depiction of exotic and eroticised customs, including scenes illustrating the marriage customs of dancing in the moonlight, and the depiction of naked women bathing (Mann, 2011: 169-185). The image of Shui Baiyi 水擺夷, known as the Dai in contemporary China, were often depicted in scenes of women with naked bodies bathing in a river in the Miao albums of Yunnan, such as *Yunnan sanyi baiman tu quanbu* 雲南三迤百蠻圖全部 (Complete illustration of all barbarians of three frontiers in Yunnan) in the Bodleian Library. Local government officials' concerns about ruling non-Han peoples and about Miao rebellions all suggest an intimate correlation between the Miao albums and the imperial regime in the borderlands. The symbolic meanings of Miao albums have been well demonstrated by such rhetoric, but the extent to which these albums could in practice help local officials to rule the non-Han needs further investigation. In his study of the images of ethnic minorities in Yunnan gazetteers, Giersch (2006: 82) argues that "As with Euro-Americans who formulated Indian policy, the

images of indigenous mattered because they shaped Qing assumptions about 'what they thought they could get' from 'barbarians.' In general, Qing officials thought they could get more from those groups who conformed more closely to civilized ideals; these were the groups whom imperial officials sought to cultivate as allies."

Some Miao albums, for example *Yunnan yingzhi miaoman tuce* 雲南營制苗蠻圖冊 (Album of Miao barbarians for military use in Yunnan; undated, circa nineteenth century) now in the collection of the Wellcome Trust, also records the Miao rebellions, whether they paid taxes, and what tribute they could offer, which might have been useful for future rulers. To some extent, the barbarians could also help the Han and others feel more "civilised", thereby justifying the mission. However, concerns that the albums might be misunderstood as mere exotic curiosities, and Gui's guest's comment that these illustrations "can offer people only fun and entertainment" suggest that Miao albums also fulfilled other functions. A new way of reading Chinese imperial images is to emphasise both their political importance and the visual curiosity that they provoked, and neither of these aspects should be ignored.

It was not only in imperialism that pleasure was often ignored, but also in the study of art, as Jonathan Hay (2010: 15) observes: "Pleasure, as I have slowly come to understand, is another blind spot in this case of modern art history's system of knowledge. Only by bracketing pleasure can art history inscribe art within the network of binaries—subject-object, centre-periphery, genuine-fake, among others—that continue to define the modern discipline. It is impossible to account for the role of pleasure in art without undoing these binaries, so it is entirely logical that pleasure should become a subject itself at a moment when the epistemology of art history as a discipline is, finally, being radically reconsidered." Thus, it is important to inscribe pleasure in the study of the history of art objects and I have highlighted how looking for pleasure was transpired and constructed in Miao albums. This argument can be further strengthened by demonstrating that these albums had viewers besides government officials, as we will see below.

Multiple Viewers: The Growing Market for Popular Ethnography

By making, collecting or simply viewing an album, the government officials of Yunnan could potentially use them in the governance of the non-Han. However, this section of the article demonstrates that the Miao albums were viewed by those who were not government officials; in fact, they reached a wider range of viewers than has traditionally been assumed. There are more than one hundred Miao albums in museum and library collections world-wide. The argument that Miao albums were exclusively associated with government officials needs to be reconsidered, as it is mainly drawn from those albums with a preface written by such officials. This seems problematic, not least because the majority of albums were anonymous. This section thus reconsiders the readership of the Miao album. They were circulated in several cities outside of Yunnan and Guizhou, including Beijing, Shanxi, Henan and Anhui (Hostetler, 2001: 192). At a time of growing immigration and economic cultivation (Lee, 2000; Lee, 1982: 279-304), the Miao albums are best understood within a context of dynamic and frequent encounters between the Han Chinese and borderland peoples, as well as the growing market for popular ethnography in the form of local gazetteers, travel accounts, fictions, poems and art.

Among the ethnographic writings of the southwest, a genre of poems, recording and commenting on the custom of non-Han, *zhuzhi ci* 竹枝詞 (Bamboo branch poems), were extremely popular (Zhou, 2012: 1-2). As well as images and textual annotation, poems were included in some Miao albums such as those in the album published by Laura Hostetler and David Deal (2006). Several poems were written after viewing Miao albums. For example, a poem written by Yu Shangsi 余上泗, a local of Guizhou, who was successful in the imperial examination at the provincial level, commented on the images of female government officials:

指顧江山亦自豪
 廳前移步曉雲高
 女官舊向圖中見
 婢子分行捉繡袍

Feeling proud, she discusses the rivers and mountains

[national affairs],
She moves forward in the front court, and the light cloud
hangs high.
In the image, I see an old female official,
Servants were divided into two lines, holding her embroidered
robe (Qiu, 2007: 36).

The third line of the poem demonstrates that Yu wrote it after viewing the images of Nüguan. In figure 2, an image of Nüguan in the British Library's collection depicts a female official in an exquisite pleated dress standing in the court and surrounded by servants, resembling the scenes described in Yu's poem. Yu, therefore, probably viewed an album similar to this one. A large number of bamboo branch poems have been written and lower-status literati contributed to this genre. Given the many bamboo branch poems that have been produced and their relationships with Miao albums, it seems that the Miao albums were viewed by literati of different levels.



Figure 2. Anonymous, *nüguan* 女官 (Female Official) in the album *Luodian yifeng* 羅甸遺風 (Legacies of customs in Luodian), Approximately 18th – 19th century. Album leaf (1 of 20), British Library, London, Series 16594.

A much earlier record in *Han shu* 漢書 (Book of Han), may also tell us more about the audience and function of ethnographic illustrations in general:

(建昭) 四年春正月, 以誅郅支單於告祠郊廟, 赦天下. 群臣上壽置酒, 以其圖書示後宮貴人.

In the first month of spring in the fourth year [of the *Jianzhao* Reign: 35 BCE], because the execution of Zhizhi Chanyu [the Xiongnu monarch] was reported in the ancestral temple in the suburbs, there was an amnesty for “all-under-heaven”. The ministers wished the emperor longevity with wine, and therefore showed the nobles of the rear palace [i.e., the concubines] illustrations of (the Xiongnu) (Ban, 2007: 74).

Clearly this *Illustration of the Huns* (an ethnic group in northern China) was shown to the concubines in the imperial palace, rather than the traditionally-assumed viewers: emperors. Thus these concubines, who did not participate directly in political administration, might have read the illustrations of the Huns for fun and from a sense of curiosity about an exotic land, people and customs. Women were also an audience for Chinese paintings and illustrations (Clunas, 2017: 87). Although this illustration is rather early, it still helps us to understand the broad audience and functions of ethnographic illustrations, and this piece of text from the *Han shu* suggests one more potential audience for ethnographic illustrations.

Moreover, the printing of the aforementioned *Qiannan miaoman tushuo*, suggests that it was, at least to some extent, intended to be made available to broad audiences, despite only one copy surviving. Several historians of print in late imperial China, including Robert Hegel (1988: 152-157), Joseph McDermott (2006), and Timothy Brook (1998: 112-142) have examined the technical innovation, refinement and standardization of woodblock printing, the rapid growth of audiences and the expansion of popular and vernacular publications. Wood-block prints for illustration printing were widely circulated in the art market during the Ming and Qing dynasties (Clunas, 1997: 134-148). *Nianhua* (illustrations for the new year) even reached peasants in the villages (Flath, 2004).

Although *Qiannan miaoman tushuo* is the only copy extant, the form of print was designed for a broad market. As Gui Fu had successfully published several books about children's education, he was probably also aware of the market for Miao albums. As already mentioned, in her study of the literature pertaining to the southwest, Hu Xiaozhen (2017) has observed the popularization of ethnography in late imperial novels, including *Yesou puyan* 野叟曝言 (A country codger's words of exposure), *Yin shi* 蟬史 (History of insects) and *Guwang yan* 姑妄言 (Arrogant words). For example, in *Guwang yan*, the author Cao Qujing 曹去晶 observes:

童自宏在貴州雲南住了年余回來，果然紀了一冊手抄，名為峒溪備錄。遂命匠人刻了絕精的版刷印，傳到各書坊中都有。腹中稍有文墨者無不喜閱。

Tong Zihong stayed in Guizhou and Yunnan for more than one year, and copied a manuscript, titled *Tongxi beilu*. Then he asked the artists to carve an extremely exquisite printing board. It is available in all bookshops. Even those with only the merest hint of culture in their bellies do not fail to enjoy them (Cao, 1997: 482).

The last sentence in particular indicates the popularity of the ethnographic writings of the southwest. In his study of the sources of the novel, Chen Yiyuan (1997: 129-136) observes that they were largely taken from *Dongxi xianzhi* 峒溪織誌 (Detailed records of Dongxi), a book about the customs and products of the ethnic minorities in the southwest written by Lu Ciyun 陸次雲, an eighteenth-century literati and official. Their production and reproduction in the form of travel accounts, novels and ethnography, has illuminated the consumption of popular ethnography in late imperial China. As mentioned in the introduction, the "alien" was discussed in the late-Ming encyclopaedia of daily lives. This was a genre of relatively poorly printed illustrated books from the studios of Fujian, and was available to a wide range of readers (Wang, 2003: 404-450; Xu, 2010: 169-192). I have argued here that Miao albums were also a genre of ethnographic illustration, and were part of the constellation of popular ethnography produced in various formats in late imperial China.

Several scholars of cultural imperialism have linked popular engagement with empire to the entertainment of the working-class men and women in metropolitan cities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Beaven, 2012: 179-207). One frequently cited example is the rise of museums in Britain, an important space for exhibiting the colony and disseminating imperial ideologies among the bourgeoisie, ranging from professionals to a wealthy upper middle class (Mackenzie, 2009; Coombes, 1994). Miao albums, along with other popular ethnography, resemble such European cultural imperialism in several ways, including their association with urban cultures and their wider influences on different levels of readership.

Making Ethnographic Truth? The Paradox of Copying and Participation of Artists in the Marketplace

At the very start of this paper, I made the claim that Miao albums were conceptualised and authenticated as products representing ethnographic truth through a set of narrative techniques. In this section, I argue that not all of the albums were made by those who had actually observed the non-Han in their native land; many artists contributed to the genre and copying was pervasive. Norma Diamond (1995) discusses Miao albums in her study of the changing meanings of “Miao” from imperial to contemporary China. She questions “whether most of the artists had ever travelled extensively through the Yunnan and Guizhou frontier areas, let alone spent any time in the Miao communities. At best they may have seen some of these peoples in towns, markets, or along the roads and then, relying on available text and/or access to other “Miao albums,” let their imaginations take over to highlight a special marker discussed in the text” (1995: 101). In what follows I seek to prove Diamond’s hypothesis that several producers of Miao albums had not actually travelled extensively in the ethnic minorities’ homelands, and that many of the Miao albums were made by copying.

Returning to the aforementioned preface of the *Qiannan miaoman tushuo*, the dialogue between Gui Fu and his guest continues:

客又曰, 若然市中畫工已先為之, 何庸再事?

My guest asked again: “professional painters in the market have already done this. Is there any need to repeat their work? (Li, 2008: 151)?

余曰彼畫工家, 考核不精, 所作侏苗仡仲各種服飾, 大概相同, 其膚色皆隨意而施, 所畫率本黔人張某所作八十二種苗蠻詩記. 其中有仲混為苗者, 有苗混為僚者, 有一種二名而分畫者, 甚至如古州地方苗仲徭僮難處, 大寨稱爺頭, 小寨名洞崽, 竟以爺頭, 洞崽偽為二種, 所住地方, 亦多錯訛. 余今所畫, 大都親眼所及, 非畫工家所可同語.

I replied: Those painters in the marketplace, their examination (of ethnic minorities) is not quite precise. The costumes of Luo, Miao, Ge, and Zhong are almost the same; the skin colours are applied freely; [I guess] what they depict follows the *Eighty-two Miao Barbarian Poems and Accounts*, by someone called Zhang. Some of them mix Zhong with Miao, Miao with Liao; those who are the same kind, but have two names are depicted twice. For example, in Guzhou where Miao, Zhong, Yao and Zhuang rebelled, people in the large stockaded village, are called Yetou, while they are called Dongzai in the small stockaded village. However, these painters wrongly consider Yetou and Dongzhai to be two different categories. In terms of the places they inhabit, most of them are recorded incorrectly. What I have painted here is based on my direct observations. Those made by professional painters cannot compare with mine (Li, 2008: 151).

The question posed by the guest reveals that some Miao albums were actually made by professional painters, indicating that some albums were produced for the market and were available to a wide range of consumers. In response, Gui admitted that Miao albums circulated in the market place and that most were based on an album by “Zhang mou” 張某 (a certain Mr Zhang), a local of Guizhou. The omission of Mr. Zhang’s full name might suggest that he was of lower status, probably a professional artist or one of the literati of lower classes of Guizhou.

Gui also emphasises the roughness and inaccuracy of Miao albums made by professional artists, and highlights the accuracy of his own album, which he claims is based on meticulous observation. Gui obviously wanted his albums to stand out in the marketplace, but his comments also confirm for us that many Miao albums were copied.

Miao albums also attracted the interest of European and American missionaries, diplomats, art dealers, adventurers and anthropologists who visited China in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and several of them were collected and brought back to Europe and America. Archibald Colquhoun recorded a conversation about Miao albums that he had with a school-master in Yunnan in his well-known travel account, *Across Chrysê: Being the Narrative of a Journey of Exploration through the South China Border Lands from Canton to Mandalay* published in 1883:

He [the school master] pointed out to us several of the different tribes present, and did us a great service, through the tin-chai, by telling him of the existence of a series of pictures of the aboriginal people, made by an amateur artist (a gentleman who painted for pleasure). This man, he said, was dead, but copies, he believed, were extant in Kaihua. One series had been sent to the Viceroy of Yunnan as a present, and one was in the possession of his family, at Kaihua (Colquhoun, 1883: 359-360).

This text indicates that this particular Yunnan album was made by a gentleman who painted for pleasure, something which supports the argument above about the pleasure dimension of Miao albums. It also demonstrates those participating in the albums' production extended beyond the official class. Moreover, the confidence of the school-master about the existence of copies in Kaihua again provides evidence that many albums were copied. The school-master also said that one series had been sent to the Viceroy of Yunnan as a present, which suggests another possible source for the albums in the government officials' collections.

The way in which the *Bolin tushuo* 伯麟圖說 (Illustration and texts of

Bolin) was made provides further evidence that copying was common. The *Bolin tushuo* was an album of Yunnan commissioned by the Manchu governor Bolin 伯麟 (?-1823) in 1818, which was given significant attention in *Daoguang Yunnan tongzhi gao* 道光雲南通誌稿 (Draft of gazetteer of Yunnan during the Daoguang reign). An album with twenty-two entries entitled *Yunnan zhongren tushuo* 雲南種人圖說 (Illustration and texts for the ethnic groups in Yunnan), in the collection of the library of Yunnan University, is said to have been selected from *Bolin tushuo* (Yunnan University Library, 2005: 6-7). Bolin appointed Li Gu 李沽, a renowned local artist of Yunnan in the nineteenth century, to make an album for him. Based on Li's collection of *Yunnan zhuyi tu* 雲南諸夷圖 (Illustrations of barbarians in Yunnan), Li remade an album for the governor, which became the *Boling tushuo* (Yunnan University Library, 2005: 6). This seems to suggest that it was common to make albums by copying, especially among the artists who were commissioned to make albums, or who made an album for the marketplace. Although several officials, like Gui Fu, professed to despise professional artists because they copied Mr. Zhang's album, in reality, even government-commissioned albums such as the *Bolin tushuo* were copied.

Some scholars have suggested that the *Yunnan sanyi baimantu* 雲南三迤百蠻圖, an album in the collection of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, is a copy of *Bolin tushuo* (Qi: 2012: 59-67). Among the extant Miao albums, I have found that both *Yunnan sanyi baiman tu quanbu* 雲南三迤百蠻圖全部 (Complete illustration of all barbarians of three frontiers in Yunnan) in the Bodleian library, Oxford, and *Yiren tushuo mulu* 夷人圖說目錄 (Catalogue of illustrations and texts of the barbarians) in the Harvard-Yenching Library are similar albums to the *Yunnan sanyi baimantu*. Moreover, Qi (2014: 70-92) has found five more similar albums in the collection of Chinese libraries and museums. These various copies of the same original strongly indicate the prevalence of copying in the production of Miao albums. Furthermore, it was the pleasure dimension of Miao albums and the demand of non-official viewers that stimulated this copying.

Although it is another genre, a consideration of the *Zhigong tu* 職貢圖 (Tributary illustrations), which depicts foreigners on their way to or at the Chinese court to offer gifts, such as jewellery, and fortune animals, to the Chinese emperor, and showing their respect and willingness to be "civilised"

(Lai, 2012: 1-72), is a potentially useful avenue for understanding the production of ethnographic illustrations more broadly. Peng Nian's 彭年 (1505-1566) colophon to the *Tributary Illustrations*, attributed to Qiu Ying 仇英 (1494-1552), records that:

此卷畫於懷雲陳君家, 陳君名官, 長洲人, 與十洲善, 館之山亭, 屢易寒暑, 不相促迫, 由是獲畫. 其心匠之巧, 精妙麗密, 各極意態, 雖人殊國異, 而考按圖誌, 略無違謬. 能事直出古人上.

This handscroll was painted at the house of Mr. Chen, who is called Huaiyun. Mr. Chen's given name is Guan, and he is from Changzhou. He hosted [Qiu] at his mountain pavilion repeatedly for several winters and summers. There [Qiu] was not hurried or forced; hence, he was able to make complete use of the skill of his mind's inventions, which were refined, subtle, and beautiful, with fully conceived ideas. Although the men of the different nations are foreign, they have been examined according to the [various] nations' records, and in the end nothing is disregarded or in error. In his ability he has surpassed the men of antiquity (Chang, 2004: 7).

This text indicates that Qiu's *Tributary Illustrations* was influenced by his frequent viewings of the paintings of his friend Mr. Chen. Though Qiu has been honoured as one of the Four Great Masters of painting of the Ming Dynasty, very little is known about his life. His name, unlike the other three Great Masters of Ming Painting, Shen Zhou (1427-1509), Wen Zhengming (1470-1559), and Tang Yin (1470-1523), did not appear in the social writings of his contemporaries because he was a professional painter and therefore considered a member of the artisans, while the other three artists were literati, in the upper level of the social strata (Laing, 1999: 69-89). Thus this scroll attributed to Qiu suggests the engagement of professional painters with ethnographic illustrations.

China has a long history of depicting and recording the customs of foreigners and domestic ethnic others, and it has generally been assumed that the makers of ethnographic illustrations were court painters who had the opportunity to

observe foreigners coming to the Chinese court, the diplomats who were sent to investigate the borderlands and the local government officials ruling the local ethnic minorities as suggested in the prefaces of several tributary illustrations (Wang, 2014: 190-195). Yet the involvement of Qiu, a professional painter, in the production of tributary illustrations, at least indicates the popularity of the genre. As one product in the proliferating late imperial art market, the symbolic and ideal imperial blueprint was thus popularised and circulated among officials, literati and even the semi-literate. The title of the scroll, *Tributary Illustrations*, clearly suggests an idealised world order in Ming imagination; the scroll of Qiu thus offered another wonderful example of the juxtaposition of empire, commercialisation, and pleasure.

The discovery of the prevalence of copying complicates our understanding of how ethnographic knowledge was produced. In his examination of the sources representing the “alien”, Ge Zhaoguang 葛兆光 observes the intermingling of previous ethnographies, whether travel accounts, imaginative tales or more “reliable” new ethnographies based on direct observations in late-imperial China (Ge, 2004: 347-370). Although *Luochong lu* has traditionally been assumed to be entirely fictional because of its many references from *Shanghai jing*, He Yuming (2013: 227-230) has emphasised its relevance to diplomacy during the Ming dynasty. Earlier, I noted that the *Shanghai jing* and Miao albums have traditionally been viewed very differently: one as fiction; the other as reality. Thus one has to be cautious when linking the fictional illustrations with popular culture, while associating those based on direct observations with “truth”, since the lines between imagination and reality, copy and new product were often blurred.

Other intriguing issues are to what extent albums with a preface claiming their authenticity, such as the aforementioned *Diansheng Yixi Yinan yiren tushuo* and *Qiannan miaoman tushuo*, differed from commercial Miao albums. And which, if any, Miao albums housed in the various modern libraries and museums are copies of Mr. Zhang’s work made by professional painters, as mentioned by Gui Fu and his guest? Comparing albums with prefaces claiming their authenticity with anonymous albums reveals that the composition and the content of the albums, and the scenes selected for representation are all quite similar. For example, figure 3, an image from an unsigned and un-prefaced album depicting

eighty-two ethnic groups, *Qiansheng miaotu*, in the collection of the Pitt Rivers Museum, depicts a group of Miao in a picnic scene. On the left, an old man in a blue robe is lying over the arm of a young Miao woman feeding him alcohol with a horn cup. The other three figures on the right all look towards the drinking couple.



Figure 3. Anonymous, “Qingjiang Heimiao 清江黑苗 (Black Miao in Qingjiang)” in an album of *Qiansheng miaotu* 黔省苗圖 (Miao album of Guizhou), undated (approximately 18th or 19th century), Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, no. 1917.53.723.

The group of black Miao in figure 4, taken from *Qinannan miaoman tushuo*, is similar to the Miao in figure 3. Although the artist added pine trees to the mountain, the main part of the image still depicts a group of Miao sitting around some bowls of food. A Miao woman feeds an old Miao man and all the other figures laugh at them. Gui Fu has even enlarged the horn cup held by the lady standing at the right, which highlights their exotic material culture; the later image divided the figures into three groups and each group contains a male and a female, which further appeals to the viewers’ sexual imaginations. These themes were what a good Confucian order was trying to get rid of, and were set as the opposite side of late imperial sexual regulations in the Chinese upper class. The information expressed through these images pertaining to gender and sexuality were quite rich, and one of the functions was to convey the

“uncivilized” status of the ethnic minorities in the periphery, which constituted part of the visual order of the empire.



Figure 4. Gui Fu, “Qingjiang Heimiao 清江黑苗 (Black Miao in Qingjiang),” in an album of *Qiannan miaoman tushuo* 黔南苗蠻圖說 (Images and text on Miao barbarians in southern Guizhou), 19th century, Ancient book collection of Zhongyang Minzu Daxue, Beijing.

The contents and composition of the images in Gui Fu’s Miao album undermines his claims in the album’s preface about its authenticity. This also complicates our understanding of the relationship between words and images (Mitchell, 1980: 3). The Miao albums indicate that images can tell a different story to that conveyed by words, and this paper has demonstrated the high value of images for historical analysis, a discipline traditionally dominated by text (Burke, 2001). Furthermore, among several studies of the representation of ethnic minorities in tourism, dances and heritage parks in modern China, Louisa Schien (2000), Jing Li (2013: 69-100), and Stevan Harrell (2013: 285-297) stress the commercialisation of the culture of ethnic minorities, and perhaps a modern day version of the pleasure seeking we see in imperial China.

Concluding Remarks

By both zooming in and zooming out of the Miao albums, this paper enlarges upon previous understandings of these works. Bringing the pleasure dimension to the fore and examining makers, consumers, and production processes in light of recent scholarship, has allowed this paper to pose some basic questions about the use and circulation of Miao albums and their pleasurable use that have never been fully addressed. Although this paper departs, at times, from Hostetler's interpretations of the function of Miao albums, its overall placement of China as an empire in parallel to its European contemporaries is broadly in accord with her conclusions, highlighting the popularisation of China's imperial imagery. Following Teng's underlining of the need to explore imperialism from cultural angles (2004: 12), this paper links the production of Miao albums to late imperial popular culture.

Apart from government officials, professional artists also participated actively in the making of Miao albums, and the practice of copying was widespread. There was a rhetorical hierarchy of expectations about how Miao albums should be viewed—some government officials wished only to communicate the value of ruling the non-Han, and did not want their Miao albums to be viewed for enjoyment. Yet, as this article has indicated, in practice the albums might be viewed in ways that their creators would not admit to facilitating. Some viewers, in particular the non-official class, may have only read the Miao albums for pleasure, but this did not weaken their role as imperial images, since the ways in which visual pleasure was achieved was often bound up with imperial orders related to gender, morality, rites and sexual regulations.

In his influential and powerful work, Steven Shapin (1995) has reflected on the ways in which trust, truth and moral order were constructed in seventeenth-century England, and this paper has sought to bring similar reflections to the production of ethnographic knowledge in late imperial China. The omission of the pleasure dimension of the Miao albums in existing historiography is indicative of the way in which ethnographic truth and imperial regimes in late imperial China have been conceptualised. The narrative of ethnographic truth is set in a binary relationship with the pleasure of looking. Disdaining the pursuit of the curious and the exotic was a powerful way in which some producers

claimed the authenticity of their Miao albums.

As was suggested by Jonathan Hay, “pleasure should become a subject itself” (2010: 15), and this article seeks a reinterpretation of Chinese imperial images by taking pleasure seriously, by penetrating the ways through which ethnographic knowledge was generated, by decentralising the political function of the Miao albums, and by complicating the binary relationship between imperial tools and pleasure. Although some albums emphasize their political value for ruling the non-Han, they still manifest great fascination with images, like female government officials in Guizhou, moon dance scenes, non-Han women bathing in rivers and Miao women in short skirts. Imperial superiority was conveyed through these images pertaining to gender and sexuality; meanwhile these elements popularized the production and circulation of ethnographic images. Imperial vision and pleasure were, in fact, mutually constituted and reinforced. By shining a spotlight on the proliferation of popular ethnography, and emphasising the importance of copying, this paper has sought to resituate Miao albums within late imperial Chinese social and cultural history. Such a reinterpretation might also prove fruitful with regards to other imperial images in China, including the tributary illustrations, as well as modern ethnographic photography produced in republican China and in the PRC.

Inspired by studies of imperial engagement of popular culture in the domain of leisure and recreation, a discipline mainly generated from European, in particular British examples, this paper has revealed that Chinese imperial images shared several similarities with their European counterparts in terms of their popularity, commercialisation and the engagement of growing urban audiences. Yet, as several scholars remind us, it is not easy to generalise from imperial theories, which are often based on textual analysis from different historical epochs and geographic locations (Wilcox, 2016: 18; Levine, 2007: 1-13). Bearing this in mind, this specific research into the consumption, production, and proliferation of Miao albums helps us to understand the nexus between politics and popular entertainment, amateur and professional artists, copying and direct observation, truth and imagination, and empire and visual pleasure in the ongoing creation and definition of empire in late imperial China.

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**Mainstream Film Production in a Country on the Cusp of Change:
An Army Officer's View of Three Chinese Films of the Early 1980s Produced
by the August First Film Studio**

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Abstract

*In June 1984, the journal *Dianying pingjie* (Film Criticism) published a short article titled "An Open letter to the August First Film Studio", written by an army officer called Xu Gewei, in which he described *The Colourful Night*, *The Last Military Salute* and *Star of the Battleground*, three of the studio's recent productions, as mediocre, inept and crudely made. This paper will look at the three films in the context of the early 1980s, a period in the history of filmmaking in Communist China, which, in spite of being critical for the subsequent development of the Chinese film industry, still receives comparatively little attention. The paper will show how, although the films rely for the most part on out-moded techniques and narrative forms, there are moments that display an interest in new film techniques and reveal an understanding of the evolving world of China in the early 1980s.*

Keywords: *August First Film Studio, post-Mao cinema, mainstream filmmaking, film language, Four Modernisations, zoom.*

In June 1984, the journal *Dianying pingjie* 电影评介 (*Film Criticism*) published a short article titled "An Open Letter to the August First Film Studio", written by an army officer called Xu Gewei. Xu singled out three of the studio's recent productions for criticism, describing them as mediocre, inept and crudely made, particularly in comparison with the films being made at the time by other less hide-bound studios. He went on to implore the studio to stop producing work of inferior quality and instead make films that people would want to see. The three films were *The Colourful Night* (*Caise de ye* 彩色的夜; Zhang Yongshou, 1982), *The Last Military Salute* (*Zuihou yige junli* 最后一个军礼; Ren Pengyuan,

1982) and *Star of the Battleground* (*Zhandi zhixing* 战地之星; Wei Long, 1983). Xu Gewei's article adds to the debate about raising the quality of Chinese filmmaking that attracted the attention of critics and academics in the late 1970s and early 1980s, his words acting as a *cri-de-coeur* for someone to address what he, and others, saw as the inadequacies of the studio's output (Xu, 1984). While the works of the Fourth and, especially, the Fifth Generation filmmakers have received considerable critical attention, the mainstream productions that constituted the greatest part of the output of the Chinese film industry in the early 1980s have been largely ignored. Through an examination of Xu's letter and other contemporary material this article will address this gap, providing a deeper understanding of this crucial period in the development of Chinese film, at a time of great change across many areas of Chinese society.

The three films typify a kind of mainstream production that was the norm for China's film studios in the early 1980s. Nevertheless, close examination reveals that, while some of Xu's critical comments are justified, there are signs that the directors were starting to implement some of the more challenging filmmaking methods that had been appearing in certain Chinese films since the end of the 1970s. At the same time, as this paper will show, the films do not exist in a vacuum but reflect the political and social changes that were affecting China during the early years of the reform era. After a discussion of critical writing on the period, there will follow a brief history of the August First Film studio, prior to a more detailed consideration of filmmaking in the post-Mao period, and analysis of the three films listed by Xu Gewei. The analysis will be further supported by consideration of a range of articles published in what was a burgeoning field of film-related journals. Analysis of the content and cinematic style of the three films, all of which are available not just on online but as DVDs, will reveal their continuing relevance in China, a country where the production line of patriotic war films, manifesting the very same patriotic values, never dries up and where many of the best-known films of the Maoist era have been recycled in the form of lengthy TV series.

Apart from a range of material about the three films taken from contemporary sources, I will draw on discussion of the film production of the early post-Mao period, when adaptations of works of Scar Literature explicitly addressed the traumas of the recent past, with blame generally directed firmly

towards the Gang of Four. The political dangers of going beyond the limits of what constituted acceptable criticism of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) can be seen with the banning of Peng Ning's 1981 film *Unrequited Love* (*Kulian* 苦恋) which was criticised for expressing hostility towards Communism, thus exceeding the limits of the short-lived period of cultural liberalisation. The ensuing campaign against the film, discussed below, serves as a powerful indication of the continuing importance of film to the state.¹ It was around the same time that a wide-ranging debate was taking place on how to improve Chinese film: key texts from the debate written by figures such as Zhang Nuanxin, Li Tuo and Bai Jingcheng, also discussed below, revealed widespread dissatisfaction with the existing model of filmmaking.² Zhang Nuanxin, who began her own filmmaking career with *The Drive to Win* (*Sha'ou* 沙鸥; 1981), went on to make the critically acclaimed *Sacrificed Youth* (*Qingchunji* 青春祭; 1985): her work would later be classified along with other contemporaries such as Xie Fei and Wu Tianming as part of the Fourth Generation group of filmmakers.

The production of the three films listed by Xu Gewei occurred in the aftermath of the campaign against *Unrequited Love* at a time when film was very much at the heart of state cultural production and, with ownership of private television sets still uncommon, when it could still command huge audiences. Statistics cited by Zhang Yingjin show that audience figures around the end of the 1970s and early 1980s were at a record high: annual cinema attendance in 1984 was 25 billion, or around 70 million per day and production was increasing; 144 new feature films were released in 1984, more than double the figure of 67 in 1979. Zhang goes on to note other developments which reflected the rebirth of film in the post-Mao period, not just the opening of new studios and new cinemas, but the resumption of the Hundred Flowers Awards in 1980 and the appearance of new journals such as *Dangdai dianying* 当代电影 (*Modern Film*), first published in 1984 (Zhang, 2004: 227-228). These figures show one aspect of the changing film scene of the early 1980s: the films of the Fourth Generation

¹ Discussion of the post-Mao period in general, and scar films in particular, can be found in Clark (1987) and Zhang (2004).

² The translated texts can be found in Semsel et al. (1990).

directors, initially, and the Fifth Generation, subsequently, constitute a response to the perceived failings of the existing model of filmmaking.

The August First Film Studio

A brief summary of the development of the August First Film Studio up to the early 1980s will reveal its singular nature.³ Established on August 1, 1952, shortly after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and around the time when the film industry was being nationalised, the studio was part of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). After concentrating on educational and documentary films in its early years, the studio moved into the production of feature films with *Breaking through the Darkness before Dawn* (*Chongpo limingqian de heian* 冲破黎明前的黑暗; Liu Peiran, Wang Ping and Ding Li, 1956), before going on to make some of the most renowned films from the first seventeen years of Communist rule, including *The Five Heroes of Mt Langya* (*Langyashan wuzhuangshi* 狼牙山五壮士; Shi Wenchi, 1958), *Land Mine Warfare* (*Dileizhan* 地雷战; Wu Jianhai, Tang Yingqi, Xu Da, 1962), and *Tunnel Warfare* (*Didaozhan* 地道战; Ren Xudong, 1965).⁴ Foregrounding heroic Chinese workers, peasants and soldiers overcoming the dastardly deeds of a variety not just of Japanese or foreign imperial troops but also of Nationalist traitors, Chinese war films were at the core of cinematic production in the early years of the PRC and, by the mid 1960s, the August First Film Studio was a key player.

Although it did not entirely escape the enforced hiatus of the Cultural Revolution, August First was one of the first studios to restart the making of features, with the celebrated children's film *Sparkling Red Star* (*Shanshan de hongxing* 闪闪的红星; Li Jun and Li Ang, 1974). Production levels rose subsequently; a short article published in the journal *Film Art* (*Dianying yishu* 电影艺术) in 1982, recording an event held to mark the thirtieth anniversary of

³ August First was the date of the Nanchang Uprising of 1927, marking the founding of the People's Liberation Army, the military wing of the CCP.

⁴ For the early history of the August First Film Studio, see Huangfu (2005: 131-132) and Ding (1982).

the founding of the Studio, noted that it had produced a grand total of 1275 films since the 1950s. Among the names of those recorded as attending the event are not just major figures from the art world such as the renowned film critic Chen Huangmei, but also leading members of the political and military establishment, including Yang Shangkun, who was then Secretary General of the Military Commission, and Wei Guoqing, Director of the General Political Department. In a nation where ideologically reliable filmmaking was central to cultural production, the August First Film Studio was one of the leading studios (Anon, 1982).

Ding Jiao's celebratory piece marking the same anniversary emphasised the need to follow current policies such as the Four Modernisations and Deng Xiaoping's Four Cardinal Principles and made much play of the Studio's close connections with the PLA (Ding, 1982). The usefulness of these connections is evident in *The Colourful Night*, *The Last Military Salute* and *Star of the Battleground*, each of which engaged PLA units as extras, their names prominently listed in the opening or closing credits.⁵ A further indication of the central role of August First productions in Chinese filmmaking in the early 1980s can be seen in a list of recently released films published in *Film Criticism* in 1983, in which *The Last Military Salute* is the first name (Anon, 1983).

Filmmaking in Post-Mao China

By the early 1980s the August First Studio, like the rest of the film world, was adjusting to the realities of post-Mao China. Chris Berry has painstakingly chronicled the gradual shifts in the subject matter of films made from the late 1970s on, as, tentatively at first and then more boldly, the many problems of life in the PRC were addressed. Initially confined to the latter stages of the Cultural Revolution, the period represented in the films gradually shifted back in time, so that by 1980 Xie Jin's melodrama *The Legend of Tianyun Mountain* (*Tianyunshan chuanqi* 天云山传奇) traced the problems encountered by intellectuals and others as far as the Anti-Rightist campaign of the late 1950s

⁵ The credits for the films list the Chengdu troop for *The Colourful Night*, Units 81076 and 51118 for *Star of the Battleground* and Units 81131 and 57601 for *The Last Military Salute*.

(Berry, 2004).

The controversy that erupted over *Unrequited Love* (1980, aka *The Sun and the Man*), made by the Changchun studio, showed the continuing influence of conservative elements within the CCP when it came to the matter of the representation of recent Chinese history. Directed by Peng Ning from a script by Bai Hua, *Unrequited Love* was the story of a patriot who returned to China after 1949, only to be persecuted subsequently for his associations with western capitalist countries. A spate of articles which appeared over the course of 1981 in journals such as *Liberation Army Daily* and *Literary Gazette* criticised the filmmakers for straying too far from the accepted parameters of apportioning blame for the impact of the Cultural Revolution on the shoulders of the Gang of Four towards a more general suggestion that the CCP itself might be at fault. The film was never released. The line in the Literary and Art Workers Pact that emerged from a 1982 meeting of the Federation of Literary and Art Circles which read "Oppose Ultraindividualism, Liberalism, Factionalism and Sectarian Bias", spelled out all too clearly the limits of artistic freedom.⁶

While the subject matter may have been slowly evolving, stylistically progress had, on the whole, been even slower, with frustration at the style of so many films of the time provoking a series of articles from the end of the 1970s. Bai Jingcheng's "Throwing away the walking stick of drama", for example, published in *Film Art Reference* (*Dianying yishu cankao ziliao* 电影艺术参考资料) in 1979, looked at what he saw as the film world's attachment to theatrical modes of storytelling, suggesting that most Chinese films were too wordy and tied to a set of highly conventional dramatic, or perhaps more accurately, melodramatic formulae.⁷

In "The Modernisation of Film Language", also published in 1979, Zhang Nuanxin and Li Tuo cited *Early Spring in February* (*Zaochun eryue* 早春二月; Xie

⁶ For discussion of *Unrequited Love*, see Clark (1987: 167-172). Chris Berry (2004) translates the film's title as *Bitter Love*.

⁷ A translation of Bai Jingcheng's article can be found in Semsel (2004: 10-20). (Bai's given name is listed in Semsel as Jingsheng). See also Zhang (2004: 231, 235). For further coverage of the debate see Pickowicz (1989: 37-56), Li (2002) and Semsel et al. (1990).

Tieli, 1963) and *Stage Sisters* (*Wutai jiemei* 舞台姐妹; Xie Jin, 1964) as examples of filmmaking from a period when Chinese directors had attained a lofty level that reflected a national style. However, following the onset of the Cultural Revolution and the subsequent interference of Jiang Qing and others, Zhang and Li asserted that filmmaking had atrophied and the many innovations engulfing western filmmaking had passed China by. Instead of Bazinian long takes, Chinese film language remained stuck in the clichés of Socialist Realism, notably an over-reliance on the use of montage (Zhang and Li, 1990: 10-20). As recent scholarship has noted, politics also played a part in the deliberations of Zhang and Li, who saw the reform of filmmaking as part of the much larger project of the transformation of the superstructure of Chinese culture and society (Tweedie, 2013: 230). In addition, Jason McGrath has pointed out that Zhang and Li were also criticising the over-reliance on the part of filmmakers during both the Cultural Revolution and post Cultural Revolution periods, on the notion of revolutionary class struggle (McGrath, 2016: 226).

The two articles by Bai Jingcheng, and Zhang Nuanxin and Li Tuo, appeared in specialist film journals: He Kongzhou and Peng Ning's "What's Wrong with the Movies", in contrast, was published in the *People's Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报) in January 1979. For He and Peng, too many of the films coming out of China were insipid. "Art must serve politics, but the ways in which art can serve politics are many.... If no one wants to watch them, how can we still talk of art serving politics?" He and Peng called for greater artistic freedom, insisting in particular on the necessity for the director, rather than the hierarchy of the film studio, to be placed at the centre of film production.⁸ It is worth noting that other film critics adopted a more cautionary tone. Writing in the CCP journal *Hongqi* 红旗 (*Red Flag*) in 1981, for example, Chen Bo noted: "The blind and indiscriminate copying of foreign artistic techniques is not only harmful to the future creativity of a national film art but is also detrimental to a genuine assimilation of useful artistic experience" (Chen, 1981: 29).

The articles from the late 1970s and early 1980s set off impassioned

⁸ He and Peng's article was subsequently reprinted in *Dianying yishu* under the title "Wenyi minzhu yu dianying yishu" (Artistic democracy and film art) (He & Peng, 1979: 28-33). For further discussion of this debate, see Clark (1984: 177-196).

discussion in Chinese film circles about the many inadequacies of the films made not just during the Maoist era but also in its aftermath. While undoubtedly related to the specific conditions of the era, this debate also highlighted long running issues about the relative merits of national, that is Chinese, artistic forms, and imported, Western, forms of cultural creativity. Above all, there were calls for a move away from simple reliance on plot and the adoption instead of some of the more cinematic aspects of filmmaking.⁹ While the works of the Fifth Generation directors were still some way off, students and teachers at the reopened Beijing Film Academy were watching the works of western auteurs from the 1950s onwards as well as previously banned Chinese films from the 1930s and pre-Cultural Revolution period.

In fact, the style of filmmaking was slowly starting to change from around the end of the 1970s. Among the most interesting of the films to emerge at this time were *Troubled Laughter* (*Kunaoren de xiao* 苦恼人的笑; Yang Yanjin, 1979), a satire about the travails of a Shanghai journalist in the last days of the Cultural Revolution, and *Xiao hua* 小花 (Little Flowers; Zhang Zheng, 1980), a melodrama which alternated between the present day and the Civil War of the 1940s. Yomi Braester has noted how Yang Yanjin used dreams, remembrances and fantasy to represent an individual's state of mind, while other contemporary filmmakers experimented with novel camera angles, hallucinations, and jittery editing (Braester, 2003: 136). *Xiao hua* had a huge impact on Chinese filmmakers, with Huang Jianxin, who went on to direct *Black Cannon Incident* (*Heipao shijian* 黑炮事件; 1985) and other works, writing admiringly of what he described as the film's rebellious qualities in terms of both content and style, adding that it was neither a straightforward educational film nor a documentary style record of a glorious military campaign (Huang, 1980: 15-20). Xie Fei, the noted Fourth Generation director, recorded his shock at seeing the film's juxtapositions of time and space, as well as the use of fast motion, flashbacks and still frames (Xie, 1984: 76-84). A more recent study also stressed the film's significance, noting the use of a non-linear plot as well as the innovatory editing, cutting across time and space, and sequences that alternated between colour and black and white (Gu, 2004: 9).

⁹ As mentioned above, translations relating to this debate are contained in Semsel et al. (1990). A selection of the original articles can be found in the second volume of Luo (2003).

Post-Mao Filmmaking August First-Style

Prior to discussion of their form and content, brief plot summaries of the three films discussed by Xu Gewei will be given.

The Last Military Salute, which lasts a compact 72 minutes, tells the story of Geng Zhi, a middle-aged man adjusting to the prospect of entering civilian life after being told that he is to be discharged from the army where he had been serving as a political instructor for the last thirteen years.¹⁰ For the first half hour of the film we see Geng's home life in the army base as he awaits his farewell journey, with a group of other demobilised soldiers, to a nearby town. The remainder of the film shows the physical journey away from the military base towards civilian life, a journey that is punctuated by a series of incidents, including having to deal with obstreperous colleagues and a bus carrying a group of schoolchildren that has broken down in the middle of an icy river: together, these tests of his resolve come to represent a metaphysical journey. By the end of the film he has accepted that he is no longer a soldier but firmly in the ranks of the ordinary people.

Set in the present day, *The Colourful Night* starts with a convoy of lorries about to set off from Chengdu on the hazardous journey to Tibet; Li Tao, one of the drivers, is told off for turning up late after spending time with his girlfriend, Li Li, the daughter of the convoy's deputy director. The next day, following an accident which results in the road being blocked, Li Tao is severely criticised by Li Li's father, his words upsetting the other drivers who feel he was too strict. In order to resolve the dispute, Captain Liu, one of the older members of the convoy, talks about his experiences during the Korean War, his selfless actions during this period of active service for the state in a time of national crisis showing the younger members of the group how individual needs should always come second to one's duty to the nation.

Star of the Battleground is set during the Korean War in 1952, at a time when peace negotiations are underway. Having been sent to the frontline because of

¹⁰ *The Colourful Night* is 78 minutes long, while *Star of the Battleground* is the longest of the three films at 90 minutes.

her ability to speak English, Bai Lu, a recent university graduate from Shanghai, broadcasts music and propaganda in Chinese and English to both Chinese and American soldiers. The film charts the conversion of the male commander of the unit to which she is assigned from out and out hostility to the very presence of a female soldier to gradual acceptance. At the same time, Bai Lu learns valuable life lessons about the need to obey rules and how to be part of a team. Of the three films discussed by Xu Gewei, *Star of the Battleground* is the only one set in wartime, rather than relying on flashbacks to present the scenes of fighting that would be expected of an August First film.

The Criticism of Xu Gewei and Others

Xu Gewei stressed that it was precisely because he was in the army that he was so keen for the August First Film Studio to produce good films, “Since the smashing of the Gang of Four and especially since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CCP in 1978 the Chinese film industry has been flourishing, producing a succession of outstanding movies. As a soldier myself, how I wish the August First Film Studio would make even better films; unfortunately, compared with the national film industry, the situation in the August First Film Studio today is disappointing” (Xu, 1984). He suggested the following reasons for the poor quality of the studio’s output. Firstly, the leaders of the studio were working in isolation, resulting in stale films. Secondly, the ideology of the creative personnel was not up to the mark, and they did not adopt a rigorous attitude. Thirdly, the studio’s leadership was weak, with individuals concerned only with avoiding political problems, rather than attempting to raise artistic standards. He pointed out the reforms taking place elsewhere in Chinese society, and wondered why the August First Film Studio remained indifferent to change. The only August First director to be praised for his work over the previous few years was Li Jun, director of *Anxious to Return* (*Guixin sijian* 归心似箭), a melodrama set in 1939 during the War of Resistance. Anyone watching a film like *The Colourful Night*, Xu commented, would consider it a waste of two hours (Xu, 1984).

In a different article, also from 1984, Bian Guoli was if anything even more scathing about *Star of the Battleground*. After acknowledging the fact that the

film should be praised for presenting the first cinematic depiction of a female participant on the frontline in the Korean War, Bian went on to state that the film suffered from two major imperfections: namely that it was untruthful and old-fashioned. Bian noted that Bai Lu's face remained clean and pure throughout the film and that she was able to carry on broadcasting even after the broadcasting station was hit by enemy fire. In addition, the depiction of the overall state of the war was unclear and there was no clear sign of the importance of the particular location to which Bai Lu is sent. Bian was particularly exercised by the hackneyed characters, all of whom he felt could be found in many other war films: the conservative, fiery commandant; the straightforward, happy political instructor; the revered head cook; the smart, courageous reporter. Bian wondered how audiences could become involved, given the actors' identikit expressions (Bian, 1984).

The New and the Old

Narrative is one obvious area of weakness in the three films. The plot of *The Colourful Night*, for example, relies extensively on the use of coincidence. Thus, Wang Jing, the journalist who has been sent to report on the convoy's trip to Tibet, turns out to have been a close friend of Li Li's mother during the Korean War, when they were both members of a performing troupe: this allows Wang to participate in the telling of the moral tale which offsets the film's central narrative. Narrative implausibility is also a striking feature of each film. Thus, in *Star of the Battleground*, for example, as Bai Lu heads for the frontline at the start of the film, she takes off her army cap, shakes out her hair and announces in English to her escort, "How gorgeous to see the battlefield!" She then picks a bunch of flowers that somehow survives the arduous journey to the army station, along with all the long-playing records that she is carrying with her. The foregrounding of an attractive young female actor here is a sign of the increasing glamorisation of film stars. Overall, although two Chinese soldiers do die in the course of the fighting, the film offers a remarkably anodyne vision of war, perhaps the most bizarre aspect being the complete lack of a single Korean soldier or civilian throughout: one could be forgiven for thinking that the war was simply Chinese against Americans. Stereotypes also persist. The peace-loving Chinese soldiers relax by learning English, while the American soldiers are

shown playing cards and drinking alcohol when they are off duty. There is even an unsubtle allusion to the racism found in American society when one of them is addressed by a fellow soldier as “Black Devil” (*hei gui* 黑鬼).



Figure 1. “How gorgeous to see the battlefield!” (*Star of the Battleground*).

A similarly unlikely picture is presented in *The Colourful Night*, notably in one surreal scene in which Korean natives are seen casually strolling round in national costume in the middle of an air-raid. Such implausibility attracted the attention of contemporary critics: Halalei describes a scene from *The Last Military Salute* in which a demobilised medical officer takes his doctor’s bag home, commenting “This would be like a typist taking a typewriter home or a soldier taking a gun home” (Halalei, 1984).

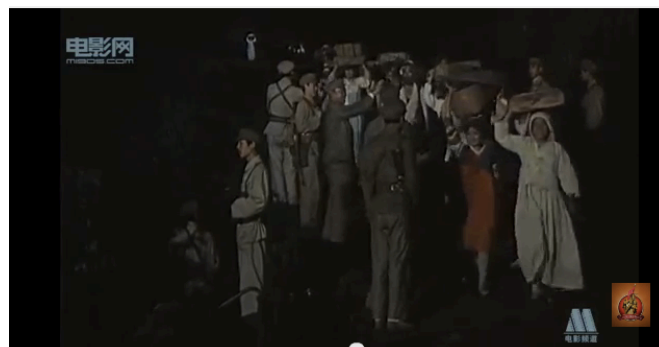


Figure 2. Korean civilians walking past PLA soldiers in *The Colourful Night*.

Where *Star of the Battleground* does cover new ground is in the depiction of gender and class. The newness of Bai Lu's position is indicated early in the film when, during her journey to the frontline, she and her male companion Niu Qiang encounter a group of soldiers passing the time by singing songs as they rest on a hillside. After expressing their surprise at seeing a female soldier, one of them says that fighting is like going on stage, before asking where Bai and Niu are going: she replies that they are heading for the big stage. The message is clear. While the male soldiers are idling, far away from the frontline, she is committed to serving the state wherever necessary. Similarly, one of the older Chinese officers, company commander Yang Fusheng, is at first opposed to the presence of a woman so close to the battlefield, a woman moreover who is a student and, thus, in his eyes, an intellectual.

Eventually, Bai Lu earns her spurs when the American officers, having been ordered to prevent her from broadcasting, attack the army post: she protects the record player by covering it with her body and hits an American soldier over the head with the handle of a gun. Company commander Yang is won over by her practical approach and accepts that while she may be an intellectual, she is certainly not aloof from the masses. The American soldiers also fall for Bai Lu's charms: seduced by the mellifluous tone of her homilies about the joys of family life, one of them says, "To be frank, I like the sound of her voice." Not only do her actions convince sceptical males that women can make a valuable contribution to the war effort, they also convert Yang Fusheng to the need to avoid rushing to judge individuals on the basis of their class background. At the time of the film's release, new generations of students were graduating from the universities that had reopened in the late 1970s: the example of what a female graduate from a middle-class background could offer serves to show how the representation of class struggle, once at the heart of Chinese cinema, was no longer mandatory.

Each of the three films examines the question of the relationship between an individual soldier's humanity and the responsibility of that soldier towards the state. The two films set in peace-time, *The Last Military Salute* and *The Colourful Night*, explicitly address the question of the application of military knowledge to problems found in civilian life. Soldiers are shown as being able to draw on their experiences of fighting real wars to find their own place in China and

inspire those living in a more peaceful age. *The Colourful Night* looks at the misunderstandings that arise between generations, and the need for everyone to work together, ending with brief homilies from Li Tao, the impetuous young man who has now learned his lesson and is prepared to accept the wisdom of the older generation acquired through experience on the frontline, and Wang Jing, who simply says that life is wonderful.

In *The Last Military Salute*, Geng Zhi must learn that he still has a role to perform, and that he should put the interests of the state above his personal wishes. Thus, prior to his departure from the military camp he overhears his superior discussing his own return to civilian life and a demobilised cook who has no desire to go to university and is happily preparing for his future as a pig farmer, each one willing to accept the need to play a part, however small, in the future development of the country. The incident involving the broken down bus is the acid test for the former soldiers as they head towards their new civilian lives. Initially, some of the men do not wish to help to push the bus because they are technically no longer in the army, but, after encouragement from Geng Zhi, they wade through the icy river to help. The film ends with Geng proudly giving his final salute. While he remains disappointed to be discharged, he has accepted the decision of the army to let him go. The smaller picture is Geng's future away from the army; the bigger picture is the importance to the Party and the nation of every individual participating in the successful modernisation of Chinese society.



Figure 3. Demobilised soldiers freeing the bus from the icy river in *The Last Military Salute*.

The Changing World of the Early 1980s

Particular aspects of life in China in the early 1980s feature prominently in the three films listed by Xu Gewei. In *The Last Military Salute*, for example, immediately after Geng Zhi's commanding officer stresses the need to implement the Four Modernisations, the lorry transporting him and the other soldiers away from the camp passes a group of huge chimneys belching out smoke. Far from representing a warning of the dangers of pollution, the chimneys symbolise the bright industrialised future that awaits the men. While there is no direct reference in the narrative of *The Colourful Night* to the Four Modernisations, the closing shot of a vast landscape filled with scores of lorries criss-crossing ziz-zag roads as they transport goods to Tibet is a striking image of the growing economic power of the nation.¹¹



Figure 4. Geng Zhi's view from the army lorry of the industrialisation of China in *The Last Military Salute*.

¹¹ Images of the Four Modernisations can be seen in other contemporary films, including Xie Jin's *The Herdsman* (*Mumaren* 牧马人; 1982), which contains many shots of the changing landscape of Beijing, and Wu Tianming's *Life* (*Rensheng* 人生; 1984), when a succession of factories, skyscrapers, motorways and aeroplanes flashes before the eyes of the protagonist Gao Jialin as he leafs through a propaganda magazine.

The importance for an individual's future of joining the CCP had been an issue for a long time, regularly featuring in films of the Maoist era. In *The Five Heroes of Mount Langya*, for example, the protagonists are seen discussing their applications for Party membership in the midst of fighting the Japanese soldiers. Party membership was not simply a great accolade but a public acknowledgement of an individual having the correct attributes to contribute to the well-being of the nation. In the course of the lengthy flashback section of *The Colourful Night* that takes place during the Korean War, after the deputy company commander accepts that he has made an error, the officer who arrested him asks whether he is a Party member: his response to the affirmative answer is to say, "Then you know that any time you fall down, you just have to get back up again." In the early 1980s, the desirability of becoming a member of the Party was still strong: as we shall see, the start of the Reform Era had brought an added twist.

Thus, in *The Last Military Salute*, several of the demobilised soldiers are keen to join the Party and there is much discussion of how best to go about this. In a flashback sequence, Wei Cheng, one of the younger soldiers, approaches Geng Zhi asking for support for his application: in return, Wei suggests, Geng's prospects for advancement in his new civilian life would be bolstered by the backing of Wei's mother, who has strong local connections. Known as the back-door method, the seeking of support for personal advancement was much debated during the early stages of economic reform in China. The upright and honest Geng Zhi is unwilling to take up the offer, and to underline the significance of his actions an additional counterpoint is served up through a short scene showing the unfussy, efficient actions of Xiao Ling, a young nurse who is also applying to join the Party, her impeccable behaviour providing a stark contrast with Wei Cheng's self-serving attitude. His impetuosity leads him to storming off from the rest of the group, thus causing a delay that forces them to camp out overnight: he eventually realises the selfishness of his actions when he hears Geng Zhi announcing his decision to join the local commune. An

analogous issue is raised in *The Colourful Night* where Li Li's father goes out of his way not to give preferential treatment to his daughter.¹²

Star of the Battleground alludes to other contemporaneous concerns. When Bai Lu plays western classical music to rouse the troops, Yang Fusheng complains that her choice of music has no "Chinese flavour" (*Zhongguo wei'er*) and when she sings "The Beautiful Meteor" he mutters to himself about the relevance of stars to life at the frontline, complaining that the song is just for intellectuals, and certainly isn't right for the army. He would prefer her to sing the PLA marching song "Xiangqian, xiangqian" (Advance! Advance!). She also plays an English language popular song, Bing Crosby's "I Can't Begin to Tell You", in an attempt to engender homesickness among the American troops. We hear early on that her parents were English teachers and she herself learned English at university, a sign not merely that education was no longer a dirty word, but also that the acquisition of foreign languages was once again considered to be a noble pursuit. This suggests a recognition of a growing interest in, and tolerance of, other cultures, particularly on the part of young people.¹³ A further indication of the evolving world of Chinese filmmaking is evident in scenes in *The Colourful Night* in which two of the truck drivers speak in Sichuan dialect. In a similar vein, Paul Clark noted the use of Shanghai dialect by minor characters in the 1983 film *Under the Bridge* (*Daqiao xiamian* 大桥下面). This reflected a change from the early years of the PRC, when Chinese film had served as a powerful medium for language standardisation, the ubiquity of Putonghua pushing regional or class accents to one side (Clark, 1987: 58, 178-179).

In her English-language broadcasts directed at the American troops, Bai Lu stresses the pointlessness of the war that they are fighting. This is picked up in a scene of an American soldier writing a letter home in which he repeats the

¹² Contemporary references to the back-door method can also be seen in two films from 1984, Xie Jin's *Garlands at the foot of the Mountain* (*Gaoshanxia de huahuan* 高山下的花环), in which the mother of a political instructor tries to pull strings to enable him to be withdrawn from the frontline, and Wu Tianming's (1984) *Life*.

¹³ Learning English features equally prominently in *Romance on Mount Lu* (*Lushanlian* 庐山恋; Huang Zumo, 1980), in which the protagonists repeatedly declaim the phrase "I love the morning of my motherland."

exact phrase that she used in her broadcast. The film concludes with yet one more iteration of the phrase, as well as the famous words of General Omar Bradley about the Korean War being the “wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy.”¹⁴ The bellicosity of the Cultural Revolution was in the past, the image that the PLA wished to present in the early 1980s was more peaceful.

Cinematic Style

Above all, though, it is the style of the films that indicates their provenance in the early 1980s, during the early stages of the reform of Chinese filmmaking. Familiar techniques include the use of voiceover, used to provide easily digestible chunks of exposition, often to the accompaniment of a montage sequence. At the start of *The Last Military Salute*, for example, Geng Zhi’s voice introduces his character and presents the film’s core dilemma, while in *Star of the Battleground*, we listen to Bai Lu reading out a letter that she is writing to her father in which she talks of her life at the battlefield, to a montage of brave soldiers. Montage also features in *The Last Military Salute*, when images of soldiers earnestly engaged in a variety of activities—from crossing a swollen river and sewing to reading reports—provide substance for Geng Zhi’s reflections on his military career.

In terms of cinematography, it is perhaps the overuse of the zoom that most clearly marks the films out as belonging to the early 1980s. Already familiar to audiences from the films of the last few years of the Cultural Revolution, the zoom was employed to foreground the resolve of the central hero or indicate serious consideration of a weighty matter. At worst, as in the case of Shui Hua’s ponderous adaptation of Lu Xun’s story “Regret for the Past” (*Shangshi* 伤逝; 1981), repeated use of this technique renders the film unwatchable.¹⁵ Thus, in

¹⁴ Bradley’s words are cited in Burton (1999: 13).

¹⁵ For more on the use of the zoom in Chinese films of the early to mid 1970s see Clark (2008: 139-140). This did not escape the attention of contemporary film commentators: see, for example, Shao Mujun’s article “Summary of Casual Thinking on Film Aesthetics Part IV”, originally published in *Film Art* in 1984, and translated in Semsel et al. (1990: 109-112).

The Last Military Salute, the camera moves slowly in on Geng Zhi's face whenever he is about to head off into a reverie about the past, and a zoom towards Bai Lu's face in *Star of the Battleground* indicates her determination to be a match for any male soldier. While the zoom is on the whole employed to signpost meaningful emotional moments by highlighting an individual's expression, there is an instance in *Star of the Battleground* when it is used slightly differently in order to emphasise the importance of the propaganda that is broadcast to the American soldiers. Alarmed by the impact of Bai Lu's messages on his homesick soldiers, the American commander orders the destruction of a loudspeaker located on a ridge above their base. The response from the Chinese side is for one of their soldiers to crawl across the battlefield with a replacement speaker, which he successfully installs, only to be struck down by an enemy bullet. Although he dies from his injuries, there is a victory for the bigger cause, as we see when the camera moves in on the speaker at the moment when Bai Lu's broadcast starts up once more.



Figure 5. Replacement of the damaged loudspeaker in *Star of the Battleground*.

A further common feature of the three films is the regular use of flashback, an indication of the widespread move away from the straightforward linear plots which had dominated the early years of PRC filmmaking. In *The Last Military Salute*, for example, Geng Zhi regularly muses on important moments from his many years in the army as part of the process of his readjustment to

civilian life, while almost the entire second half of *The Colourful Night* involves the two main protagonists, Captain Liu and the reporter Wang Jing, taking turns to present their memories of events from thirty years ago, the action shifting regularly from past to present and back again. At one point towards the end of the lengthy tale, there are even flashbacks within flashbacks, as short montage sequences show two of the leading protagonists in turn going over the most significant of the events we have just witnessed. This is similar to *Xiao Hua*, whose leading protagonists repeatedly look into the past after their memories have been stirred by a present-day encounter. The inner monologue is also employed: in the concluding scene of *The Colourful Night*, for example, as the convoy sets off again on its journey to Tibet, all the conflicts now resolved, we hear the inner thoughts of Wang Jing and Li Tao, their words guaranteeing that the message of mutual respect between older and younger generations is not forgotten. Thus, while the more innovative techniques and developments of narrative structure, called for by Zhang Nuanxin and others, and, by the early 1980s appearing in such works as *Troubled Laughter* and *Xiao hua*, are nowhere to be seen, the three filmmakers do display some evidence of adapting to the changing world.

Conclusion

By the early 1980s, the August First Film Studio had been at the forefront of the production of war-related films for almost thirty years and still relied to a large extent on the template, discussed above, that was established in pre-Cultural Revolution films such as *The Five Heroes of Mt Langya*, *Land Mine Warfare* and *Tunnel Warfare*. Because of the straitjacket that had been imposed on the film world from the early years of Communist rule, and to an even greater extent during the Cultural Revolution, the evolutionary development of film that had taken place in other countries had not taken place in the PRC. From the late 1970s, Bai Jingcheng and others had spelled out how the old-style film industry needed to adapt to what was fast becoming a very different world, sparking a debate that was already underway well before the films listed by Xu Gewei were released. Indeed, several years had already passed since the publication of Zhang Nuanxin and Li Tuo's seminal discussion of film language. Filmmakers now faced many challenges, in terms of handling not just the fallout from the

chaotic political and social aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, but also the very new social conditions engendered by the early stages of the era of economic reform.

However, while Zhang Nuanxin and the directors of films such as *Troubled Laughter* and *Xiao hua* were introducing new cinematic styles, many Chinese film directors of the early 1980s, as this paper has shown, were still hanging on to old ideas. This may be explained partly by a lack of interest on the part of the filmmakers in making films in a more up-to-date style, but it is worth noting that the furore over *Unrequited Love* would have served as a very strong reminder of the ongoing lack of artistic freedom. Nevertheless, the publication in *Dianying pingjie*, and other journals, of strongly worded criticism of August First productions reveals the depth of frustration many felt at the poor quality of films produced by such a prominent studio. As already noted, Xu Gewei stresses his own military credentials. The by-line for the article by Halalei, moreover, points out that the author is attached to an unnamed unit based in a military district in Gansu province. The message is clear: if even patriotic military professionals are dissatisfied with the output of the PLA's own film production unit, then the need for change was undeniable. In this regard, the three films cited by Xu Gewei, and referred to by others, stand as manifestations of the conservatism of those who were slow to adapt to the new world of China in the early 1980s.

In spite of this, as has been shown in this article, there are signs of the August First filmmakers moving away from the old ways of making films, and, instead, starting to embrace change. When discussing the content of the films, we have seen the acceptance of intellectuals, the presentation of regional accents, the prominence given to young female actors, as well as the move away from the portrayal of class struggle, and the allusions to prevailing feelings of dissatisfaction with the nascent corruption as manifested in the back-door method. When looking at cinematic techniques, while the zoom remains over-used, there are signs of progress in the use of non-linear narratives and interior monologues. The disapproval expressed by Xu Gewei and Bian Guoli relates above all to the clichéd plots and stereotypical characterisation, while the filmmakers' tentative steps towards modernisation are not recognised.

More recently, in a development almost certainly not envisaged by Xu Gewei, the three films he discussed belong to the category of Red Classics, models of revolutionary culture from earlier generations that are still widely marketed. At the same time, the films can be seen as precursors for the Main Melody films, described by Yu Hongmei as “uplifting films with didactic and pedagogical functions” that would soon come to form a central part of state-funded filmmaking in China.¹⁶ The production values may have been upgraded, and a new cohort of skilled filmmakers trained at the Beijing Film Academy and other institutions brought in to add artistic quality to the films, but the straightforward extolling of the virtues of the Communist state has remained constant. Indeed, although the August First Film Studio closed on February 1 2018, when, as part of a national restructuring of cultural production, it became a department of the new PLA Culture and Arts Centre, the production of war films continues to this day (Yu, 2018: 52).



Figure 6. The cover of the DVD version of *Star of the Battleground* categorises the film as an “Everlasting Classic Chinese War Film.”

¹⁶ The term “Main Melody” (*zhuxuanlü* 主旋律) was first used in 1987. See Yu (2013: 167).

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Analysing Indonesian Media and Government Representation of China

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Abstract

The discussion of regional leadership in Southeast Asia tends to be dominated by analysis of the relationship between the United States and China. Looking beyond great power competition this article examines how China's relations with Indonesia and Southeast Asia are represented in Indonesian national media, government documents and statements through a content analysis of government documents and media reports from 2008-2015. This is worth studying because Indonesia is the largest country in Southeast Asia and has its own aspirations of regional leadership. Using semi-structured interviews and content analysis of government documents and newspaper articles, this article presents empirical evidence that is currently lacking in research regarding perception or representation of China. The current literature on Sino-Indonesian relations points to Indonesia's ambiguity in dealing with China. The findings presented in this article support this line of argument.

Keywords: *Indonesia, South China Sea, Belt Road Initiative, Southeast Asia.*

Academics and practitioners pay close attention to the economic and political dynamics of Southeast Asia due to the region's economic potential and the implications of territorial conflict in the South China Sea between China and a number of the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states. The discussion of China's regional leadership in Southeast Asia has been

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dominated by interpretation regarding interaction and competition between two great powers, the United States (US) and China in the region. This article aims to contribute to the literature on China's role in Southeast Asia by looking beyond great power competition in the region. It seeks to understand how China and China's leadership is presented in media and government discourse in Indonesia, the largest country in Southeast Asia that has the potential to be a regional leader, through the combination of semi-structured interviews and content analysis, a technique which is broadly unexplored in the literature on Sino-Indonesian relations. By doing so, it presents empirical evidence that contributes to the argument presented in the literature regarding Indonesia's ambivalent representation of China.

Both economic and security dynamics in Southeast Asia raise a question pertaining to the possibility of China's involvement in the region. Collectively, Southeast Asian countries are the 11th largest economy and fourth largest exporter for manufactured products, services and technology (Oxford Project Southeast Asia, 2015) in the world. The region's vast land area covers 4.4 million kilometres and is located at the centre of the world economic corridors: between Europe and East Asia, Australia and East Asia and the Persian Gulf and Japan (Coutrier, 1988: 186-188; Invest ASEAN, 2015). China actively promotes economic and maritime cooperation in Southeast Asia through various initiatives including the Belt Road Initiative (BRI) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). However, despite the positive cooperation and progress between China and Southeast Asian countries, the political dynamics within the region are not trouble-free.

Southeast Asia is known as the "arc of crisis" where maritime disputes and border conflicts take place (Calder, 2004: 135-157). The growing disputes in the South China Sea have raised concerns regarding the potential escalation of conflict. In a number of incidents, China's increasing coordination and physical support between its maritime agencies and fishermen in the South China Sea has led to friction with Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesian maritime authorities (Pitlo, 2013). From 2007 to 2015, the Indonesian maritime agencies arrested 31 China-flagged vessels (Kementerian Kelautan dan Perikanan, 2015). In 2010, a Chinese naval vessel confronted an Indonesian patrol boat and demanded the release of a Chinese trawler that had fished

illegally in Natuna waters. This incident was widely reported by the media. An Indonesian official claimed that at least three such incidents between Indonesia's maritime authorities and its Chinese counterparts took place in 2010 alone, with one of them involving the shooting of an Indonesian citizen.¹ In 2013, armed Chinese vessels compelled an Indonesian maritime and fisheries ministry patrol boat to release Chinese fishermen apprehended in Natuna waters (Reuters, 2014).

This article will provide a detailed analysis of Indonesian media and government representation of Indonesia-China bilateral relations and China's leadership in Southeast Asia. Understanding Indonesia's portrayal over the involvement of China in Southeast Asia is important since Indonesia has long been seen as the "natural born leader or first among equals within the ASEAN" (Roberts & Widyaningsih, 2015: 264). The views expressed in its media will therefore provide us with a better understanding of how China is presented in Indonesia's public discourse, the ASEAN's largest country, which has its own aspiration for regional leadership.

This article will present the findings generated from the analysis of Indonesian media, government documents and interviews with officials. Given the history of troubled relations between the two governments, one might expect China to be presented negatively by the Indonesian media and government. According to Drake most Indonesians believe that the government of China provided financial and political support to an attempted coup on September 30, 1965 conducted by junior leftist Indonesian army officers and the Indonesian Communist Party (Drake, 1991: 216). Despite little to no evidence of China's involvement in the attempted coup, this incident led to Indonesia's complete break in diplomatic relations with China from 1967 until 1990 (Williams, 1991: 149).

On the other hand, there are also reasons why China may be cast in a positive light. Since the restoration of diplomatic ties in 1990, Sino-Indonesian relations have improved significantly. On April 25, 2005 Indonesia and China signed the Strategic Partnership arrangement which includes cooperation to address

¹ Interview with an Indonesian official (Jakarta, April 7, 2015).

transnational crimes, improve maritime capacity building, and strengthen the development of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and ports (Indonesian MoD, 2008: 148). As an attempt to provide a legal umbrella to govern their defence cooperation in November 2007, the two countries signed an Agreement on Cooperation Activities in the Field of Defence (Indonesian MFA, 2012). Indonesia concluded its defence cooperation with China ahead of the US-Indonesia Defence Framework Arrangement that was only signed in June 2010.

The following section provides a broader context by reviewing the existing literature on China's regional leadership. This article then proceeds with an explanation of the research methodology that we used. In order to understand how China is viewed by the Indonesian government and media we combined elite interviews and content analysis of interview transcripts, government documents, and newspaper articles. We carried out ten interviews, and analysed over 60 government documents, and more than two hundred newspaper articles. The empirical findings presented in this article support the current understanding of Sino-Indonesian relations. The findings highlight Indonesia's ambivalent behaviour towards China.

Framing China's Regional Leadership

The literature on Sino-Indonesia relations touches upon four key themes including economic relations, the transition from troubled relations to normalisation, current Sino-Indonesian relations, and China's leadership in Southeast Asia.

Scholarly works that touch upon the theme of Sino-Indonesian economic relations explain the development of economic cooperation between the two countries from the 1980s to the present, identify the cooperation benefits, and offer recommendations to improve cooperation in this area (Wu, 2011: 119-141; Atje & Gaduh, 1999:1-24; Williams, 1991: 145-158). Williams explains the interplay between economic and political interests that led to Sino-Indonesian normalisation of diplomatic relations in August 1990. He points out that the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry had been vocal in its demand for the restoration of diplomatic relations, which helped to achieve the

breakthrough in restoring Indonesian and Chinese relations (Williams, 1991: 151, 154, 156). For Indonesian businesses, the resumption of direct trading between Indonesia and China meant that they would not need to pay a substantial cut of their profits to traders in third countries such as Singapore and Hong Kong (Williams, 1991: 154). Atje and Gaduh argue that China's increased integration into the world market brings benefits to Indonesia's and Asian economies as a whole. According to them, China's participation in the World Trade Organization and the ASEAN+3 provides room for Jakarta to build an economic relationship with Beijing that is more detached from politics. Atje and Gaduh further explain that China's involvement in the ASEAN+3 promotes cooperation in financial, monetary and other economic fields, and serves to encourage integration of Asian economies (Atje & Gaduh, 1999: 20). Wu claims that since China has become Indonesia's 4th biggest trading partner, the two countries have become closer in various fields. These range from tourism to population/family planning programmes (Wu, 2011: 119).

Scholars such as Suryadinata and Drake focus on the transition from a troubled past to the renewal of political ties between the two countries in 1990. They trace the reasons underpinning the long political break between Jakarta and Beijing, and the renewal of diplomatic relations (see Suryadinata, 1990: 682-696; Drake, 1991: 214-221). These works map the historical events that led Indonesia to freeze its diplomatic relations with China, issues that hinder restoration of formal ties for over twenty years, and contributing factors to normalisation. Suryadinata argues that Indonesian President Suharto's desire to play a major role in world politics was a key contributing factor in shaping the decision on normalisation (Suryadinata, 1990: 690). Although some Indonesian leaders, such as the Chairman of the Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee, H. Imron Rosyadi, and the Governor of the Institute of National Defence, General Subiyakto, opposed the idea of normalisation, they could not do much because Suharto had the final say (Suryadinata, 1990: 693, 696). Drake points out that the renewal of diplomatic ties between Indonesia and China was informed by China's efforts to develop a new image as a responsible international power, Indonesia's willingness to maintain regional stability, the two countries' agreement not to tamper with the sensitive issue of the role and status of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, the need to expand bilateral trade, and the decline of superpowers' dominant role in the East Asian region, which

enables Indonesia and China to pay more attention to each other (Drake, 1991: 214).

A third line of research found in the literature on Sino-Indonesian relations highlights the dynamics of Indonesia's response towards the rise of China. Hong argues that the current new wave of China fever has a precedent in modern Indonesian history, particularly the domestic cultural scene during Soekarno's era (Hong, 2006: 204). Similar to Hong, authors such as Laksmana, Sukma, Nabbs-Keller, and Syamsul acknowledge the increasingly closer relations between Indonesia and China in recent years. Laksmana, Sukma, Nabbs-Keller and Syamsul argue that despite the growing Sino-Indonesian economic and military ties in recent years, Indonesia's policy has continued to be characterised by persistent ambivalence (Laksmana, 2011; Sukma, 2012; Nabbs-Keller, 2011; Syamsul, 2012). Despite their growing convergence of interests, Indonesia's policy behaviour towards the rise of China is marked by a combination between maintaining close relations with the US, and working closely with China through ASEAN (Syamsul, 2012: 151-153; Nabbs-Keller, 2011: 39; Sukma, 2012: 42-44; Laksmana, 2011: 26, 30-31).

Some of these works implicitly make reference to the role of representation in informing Indonesia's policy behaviour towards China. Hong points out that positive representation of China had informed the close relations between Jakarta and Beijing during Soekarno's era. This positive perception of China was influenced by both internal and external factors. Internally, a positive and dynamic image of China resulted from Indonesian intellectuals' desire to look for a non-Western model of social transformation (Hong, 2006: 182). Externally, China's cultural diplomacy portrayed China as a successful state becoming an important source of literary production and cultural consumption in Indonesia (Hong, 2006: 182). In contrast to Hong's positive historical account of Indonesia's view of China, Laksmana argues that at present among the Indonesian elite, China was viewed as "arrogant, gigantic and expansionist" (2011: 25). He further argues that among the wider public, perception of China is shaped by views of the Chinese as a separate race with different religions and a privileged economic position who are "unwilling to change and only concerned with its own well-being" (Laksmana, 2011: 25). Nabbs-Keller points out that the growing economic and foreign policy convergence between

Indonesia and China is boosted by the effect of democratisation in Indonesia. She argues that democratisation in Indonesia has led to the “dismantling of discriminatory measures against Indonesia’s ethnic Chinese” that in turn led to closer relations with China and improved relations with Indonesia’s ethnic Chinese community (Nabbs-Keller, 2011: 28-29). Discussion on how China’s relations with Indonesia and Southeast Asia are represented in Indonesian national media and government documents and statements, however, is not central to Hong’s, Laksmana’s and Nabbs-Keller’s works.

Studies which discuss China’s leadership in Southeast Asia have been dominated by interpretations which focus on interactions, cooperation and competition between the US and China; and Southeast Asian countries’ strategies to deal with superpowers’ engagement in the region. Research that investigates the great powers’ leadership in Southeast Asia or the Asia-Pacific focuses on the tensions and conflict between the US and China. A number of works focus on strategies employed by Southeast Asian countries to deal with the Sino-US rivalry in the region (Roy, 2005: 305-322; Ba, 2003: 622-647). Ba argues that in a context of declining US benevolence and increasing Chinese influence, ASEAN countries have chosen to expand bilateral and multilateral linkages with China (Ba, 2003: 646). According to Ba, ASEAN will continue to encourage multilateralism to mitigate China’s rising influence, and ensure their own role in Southeast Asia (Ba, 2003: 646). In comparison, Roy claims that Southeast Asian countries employ two strategies in dealing with China: engaging and hedging. He argues that as part of the engagement strategy, Southeast Asian countries have made China an ASEAN dialogue partner, and formed additional organisations such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN+3 (China, Japan and South Korea), and the Chiang Mai Initiative to integrate China into regional cooperation mechanisms (Roy, 2005: 310). Roy highlights that the hedging strategy employed by Southeast Asian countries includes maintaining defence cooperation with the US (Roy, 2005: 305). Other works look at how China’s engagement with Southeast Asian countries has reshaped the regional order (Shambaugh, 2005: 64-99; 2016). Shambaugh argues that China’s participation in regional organisations, and its efforts in establishing strategic partnerships, deepening bilateral relations, expanding regional economic ties, and reducing distrust in the security sphere are key developments in Asia (Shambaugh, 2005: 64, 72). He claims that all Asian countries and the US must

adjust to the rise of China (Shambaugh, 2005: 99). According to Shambaugh, the tendency of Asian countries to bandwagon with China “is likely to become more manifest over time,” although some states may hedge against Beijing’s dominance (Shambaugh, 2005: 99). In his book *China’s Future*, Shambaugh points out that as a consequence of China’s sheer size, rising nationalism, strong military power, huge economy and territorial disputes, it is experiencing growing difficulties and tensions with its neighbouring countries including those in Southeast Asia (Shambaugh, 2016: 138-139). He states that “these rising tensions can be expected and even intensify in the years ahead” (Shambaugh, 2016: 138).

Overall, the existing works offer some insights on Indonesia’s portrayal of China. Their works, however, do not provide a systematic analysis of Indonesian media and government views of Sino-Indonesian relations and China’s leadership in the region. They are, nonetheless, a valuable resource for this article because they provide a detailed account of the history of cooperation and conflict between Indonesia and China, various cooperation arrangements between China and Southeast Asian countries, how they were established and what Indonesia could receive in exchange for participating in these arrangements. We, therefore, use the literature on Indonesia-China relations and China-Southeast Asia relations as a point of departure. Through media analysis, a study of government documents, and interview results this article enhances our understanding of how China is presented in Jakarta’s strategies in dealing with Beijing.

Methodology

This article uses two qualitative methods: semi-structured interviews, and content analysis of government documents and newspaper articles. A semi-structured interview method was used during field work in Indonesia. This is important for gaining new perspectives and insights into the internal politics of Indonesia. Analysis of interview results was then compared with government documents in order to look at whether there were discrepancies between the representation of China reflected in statements made by government officials, and government documents. For this purpose, interview subjects primarily

included government officials. To trace suitable interview subjects, a snowball sampling procedure was used to select further interviewees. We carried out ten interviews in August 2015 with high government officials from the Indonesian Maritime Security Board (*Badan Keamanan Laut*); the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Indonesian Ministry of Defence; the Indonesian Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal and Security Affairs; the Indonesian Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs; and the Indonesian Ministry of Transportation. During interviews we asked a number of questions including the interviewees' view regarding China's recent initiatives such as the BRI and the establishment of the AIIB; the threat and/or opportunity presented by these initiatives to Indonesia and Southeast Asia as a region; and the compatibility of the BRI with Indonesia's Maritime Axis initiative.

In order to examine how China is depicted in media and government documents, we combined interviews with content analysis of government documents and newspaper articles, a method that remains under-used in Sino-Indonesian relations studies. We used government documents and media reports in Indonesian and English. Content analysis provided us with a systematic approach to analyse, organise and retrieve evidence over large aggregates of texts (Berg, 2001: 225; Deacon et al., 2007: 119). It revealed the trends, patterns, and absences in how Indonesian officials, government documents and media portray China for nearly a decade (Deacon et.al, 2007: 119). We examined 64 primary documents published by Indonesian government ministries and the House of Representatives from 2003 to 2014, which touch upon Indonesia's and Southeast Asia's relations with China.

As part of the media analysis, we examined the two newspapers with the highest readership in the country. The two newspapers selected for this research are *Kompas* and the *Jakarta Post*. Leading national newspapers in Indonesia, including *Kompas* and the *Jakarta Post*, are owned by non-state corporations. We analysed 229 newspaper articles on China's relations with Indonesia and Southeast Asia published by *Kompas* and the *Jakarta Post* from January 1, 2008 to August 31, 2015. *Kompas* is an Indonesian language newspaper with the largest circulation in the country with around 530,000-610,000 copies daily. It has been published daily by a non-state corporation called the Kompas Gramedia Group since June 28, 1965 (*Kompas*, 2017). The

Jakarta Post was first published on April 25, 1983. It is the English newspaper with the biggest readership in Indonesia, with 40,000 copies daily. The *Jakarta Post* is owned by a non-state corporation, namely the PT Bina Media Nusantara (Merdeka, 2017).

Both *Kompas* and the *Jakarta Post* have a track record of being critical and independent newspapers in Indonesia. In 1978 *Kompas* received a strong warning from the Soeharto government and nearly lost its licence for writing about the president and his family (Simarmata, 2014: 64). In 2010 *Kompas*'s editor in chief was summoned by the Indonesian police for publishing transcripts of taped records played at the Indonesian Constitutional Court (*Mahkamah Konstitusi*) regarding attempts to bribe members of the Indonesian Corruption Eradication Commission (*Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi*) (Simarmata, 2014: 64). The *Jakarta Post* praised itself for being "always bold, always independent" (Jakarta Post, 2017c). The newspaper has no history of political or legal dispute with the Indonesian government. However, since its establishment the *Jakarta Post* has published a number of headlines that are critical of government policy, including the security forces' clash with demonstrators in East Timor during the Soeharto regime, and more recently, the government's plan to increase fuel prices (Hill, 2011: 181; *Jakarta Post*, 2017a; 2017b). There is no indication that the government issued certain directives to newspapers on how to cover Sino-Indonesian relations.

In order to ensure a systematic analysis, we used software named *AntConc* for the content analysis of media reports and government documents. *AntConc* is used to assist the storing, coding, and analysis of texts. Despite the strength of content analysis and the use of *AntConc* to analyse a large aggregate of texts, there are limitations to this method. As Hansen, Cottle, Negrine and Newbold claim, "as a method content analysis provides no pointers to what aspect of texts should be examined, or how those dimensions should be interpreted" (1998: 99). Therefore, we have to decide which aspects of the texts need to be examined, and interpret them. In order to provide working guidelines to study how China is represented in Indonesian government documents and media, we used several categories for coding content, for example: (1) acknowledgment of China's leadership in the region by Indonesia (presence, absence); (2) Indonesia's portrayal of China (opportunity/opportunities;

benefit(s)/beneficial; threat); and (3) the claim that Indonesia makes regarding their own leadership role in Southeast Asia (leader, not a leader). We then analysed and interpreted the association of coding content with negative or positive representations of China.

The Importance of Indonesia for China in Southeast Asia

Indonesia is an important state for China due to its strategic maritime position, vast energy resources, and recognised status as the first among equals in ASEAN. It is the largest archipelago state in the world, comprising 17,480 islands and a maritime territory measuring close to 6 million square kilometres. Indonesia is located between the two key shipping routes of the Pacific and Indian Ocean, and between two continents, Asia and Australia (Indonesian Department of Defence, 2008: 145). Indonesia's waterways are central for China's trading activities, energy security and naval manoeuvres. Almost half of the world's trading goods and oil supply pass through key Indonesian straits including the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, the Strait of Sunda and the Strait of Lombok (Carana, 2004: 14; US Department of Homeland Security, 2005). The total value of goods transported via these waters is as much as US\$ 1.3 trillion annually (Bakorkamla, 2009: 34). Around 80 per cent of China's imported oil originating from the Persian Gulf transits through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2012; US Department of Defence (DoD), 2006: 33; US DoD, 2005: 33; US DoD, 2007: 8). Access to the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, the Strait of Sunda and the Strait of Lombok is also crucial for China to be able to strategically move its naval assets between the Pacific and Indian Oceans (Nabbs-Keller, 2011: 34). The importance of these sea lanes has led China to establish an MoU on Maritime Cooperation with Indonesia that incorporates various maritime security arrangements including coordinated patrol, search and rescue operations, naval visits and exercises.

Indonesia's abundant energy resources offer a secure and stable source of basic energy needs for China (Wu, 2011: 129). China's large population and rapidly growing economy have fuelled its quest for energy resources outside the country. China has become the largest global energy consumer, the world's largest net importer of petroleum and other liquids, and top coal producer,

consumer, and importer (Energy Information Agency, 2015). Indonesia is the largest coal exporter in the world, with 8.26 billion tons of coal reserves and 104 trillion cubic feet of gas (Indonesian Ministry of Energy and Mineral, 2012; Detik, 2017). Thus, Indonesia offers great potential to supply China's fast-growing energy needs. China's growing investment in Indonesia's mining sector reflects this. China's investment in Indonesia's mining sector in 2016 (47,969,400 USD) is close to 60 times higher compared to its investment in 2007 (800,000 USD).

Indonesia also matters for China as it enjoys the status of the largest country in the region, and is a recognised leader within ASEAN. Indonesia is one of the founding members of ASEAN and has played a central role in shaping the regional architecture (Sukma, 2012: 44). Indonesia has proposed the concept of the ASEAN Security Community, actively sought to conduct conflict mediation efforts in the Vietnam-Cambodia conflict and the South China Sea disputes, developed regional mechanisms to promote democracy and human rights, and initiated the development of the ASEAN Maritime Forum (Tomotaka, 2008: 23; Emmers, 2014: 543; Febrica, 2017). There have been concerted efforts carried out by Indonesia and other ASEAN member states to draw China into regional processes (Ba, 2003: 629). Each of the ASEAN multilateral dialogues, such as the South China Sea Workshops, the ASEAN+3 and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum to mention a few, includes China (Ba, 2003: 629). These arrangements provide opportunities to China to offer transparency and redefine its relations with ASEAN (Ba, 2003: 629).

In conclusion, Indonesia is important, because the routes of global trade and oil, its secure base for energy resources, and its being a recognised leader in ASEAN have positioned Indonesia as a crucial player in the region. The role that Indonesia plays in China-Indonesia and China-Southeast Asia relations, therefore, can be seen as a key to the success of China's engagement in Southeast Asia and a significant achievement for regional stability and prosperity.

Findings: How China is Presented by the Indonesian Media and Government

Indonesia sees itself as one of key powers in Southeast Asia (Kementerian Luar Negeri Indonesia, 2013: 29).² As a leading country in the region, Indonesia feels the need to play an active role to improve the US-China interactions with Southeast Asian countries.

Our analysis of news articles, government documents and interviews with officials shows an ambiguous representation of China by the Indonesian media and government. The majority of interview results, media reports, and government and parliament documents portray Indonesia-China relations in a positive light. However, government documents, media reports and interview results also frequently depict China both as opportunity and challenge, and on a number of occasions as a threat. Interviewed officials in Indonesia articulated words such as “challenge” or “threat” together with “opportunity” when asked about their view of China.³ According to them, relations with China offer economic opportunities for Indonesia, particularly in trade and infrastructure development such as sea ports, road and train construction.

Indonesian government officials relate China’s BRI with the Jokowi administration’s Maritime Axis Initiative, and look for synergy between the two.⁴ President Jokowi announced the concept of Indonesia as the World Maritime Axis in his speech during the 9th East Asia Summit in Myanmar in 2014. Indonesia’s Maritime Axis concept is built upon five pillars including the

² Interviews with a senior official at the Indonesian Ministry of Defence (Jakarta, August 24 2015); and two officials at the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jakarta, August 21 2015)

³ Interviews with two senior officials at the Indonesian Maritime Security Board (Jakarta, August 26 2015); an official from the Indonesian Directorate General of Sea Transportation (Jakarta, August 7 2015) and an official from the Indonesian Directorate General of Sea Transportation (Jakarta, August 6 2015).

⁴ Interviews with two senior officials at the Indonesian Maritime Security Board (Jakarta, August 26 2015); two senior officials from the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jakarta, August 21 2015); a senior official from the Indonesian Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal and Security Affairs (Jakarta, August 21 2015); an expert staff at the Indonesian Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal and Security Affairs (Jakarta, August 21 2015); a senior official at the Indonesian Directorate General of Sea Transportation (Jakarta, August 6 2015); and a senior official at the Indonesian Ministry of Defence (Jakarta, August 24 2015)

re-development of Indonesia's maritime culture; conservation of marine resources; the development of maritime infrastructure and connectivity by building up deep-seaports, ship industry and maritime tourism, for example; the implementation of maritime diplomacy to resolve various sources of inter-state tensions including boundary disputes, illegal fishing, and marine pollution; and the development of maritime defence power (Indonesian Presidential Office, 2015).

The BRI is one of Beijing's most ambitious initiatives and has precipitated debate on China's growing leadership in Southeast Asia. The initiative was first coined by President Xi Jinping during his visit to Jakarta on October 3, 2013 (Bu, August 5 2015). The purpose of the BRI is to build efficient routes between the major sea-ports of various countries in the world from China's east coast to Europe through the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean, and into the South Pacific (China-Britain Business Council, 2016).

A former Indonesian Minister of Marine and Fisheries, Rokhmin Dahuri, claimed that "the BRI is China's international policy that has most profound influence towards Indonesia" (Dahuri, 2015: 9). The Governor of the Indonesian National Defence Institute (*Lembaga Pertahanan Nasional*), Agus Widjojo, suggested that although the BRI is "developed by China for China, however, there are opportunities that can be exploited by anyone, especially Indonesia" (Suropati, Sulaiman & Montratama, 2014: 13). There is an expectation that China's BRI can offer beneficial support in the form of loans and investment to help finance Indonesia's Maritime Axis Initiative. According to an Indonesian official at the Indonesian Defence Institute and two defence experts, during President Xi Jinping's visit to Bandung and Jakarta from the 19th to the 24th of April in 2015, China offered to provide 90% of the financial support for infrastructure projects in Indonesia that are in line with the BRI (Suropati, Sulaiman & Montratama, 2014:126).

The Maritime Axis Initiative was introduced by President Jokowi on November 13, 2014, one year after President Xi announced the BRI in his speech before the Indonesian parliament in 2013. It is designed to transform Indonesia's development platform from land-based to maritime-based development. The Indonesian government has estimated that the Maritime Axis Initiative will

increase economic growth by 1.2 trillion USD and create new jobs for 40 million Indonesians (Dahuri, 2015: 125). Under the Maritime Axis Initiative, Indonesia seeks to improve its maritime connectivity by building new ports, shipyards and shipping lines (Dahuri, 2015: 39). Currently, Indonesia is dependent on its neighbouring countries' ports to support its export-import activities. The majority of Indonesian export shipments are via the trans-shipment ports of Singapore and/or the Malaysian ports of Port Klang and Port Tanjung Pelepas (Febrica, 2017).

Despite China's BRI presenting opportunities to advance Indonesia's Maritime Axis Initiative, it also raises concerns, as the two are not designed to be in line with each other. The BRI aims to connect ports in China to the South China Sea, the Strait of Malacca, the Strait of Lombok, and the Strait of Sunda through to the northern part of the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden (Suropati, Sulaiman & Montratama, 2014: 115). In other words, it is designed to improve connectivity between China and other countries that are located in the main economic corridors and straits used for international navigation. The priority of the BRI in Southeast Asia is the area located close to the Straits of Malacca and Singapore that overlaps with the western part of Indonesia's maritime territory. Indonesia's maritime infrastructure in this area has been well established, particularly, if we compare it with port infrastructure in the eastern part of the country. In comparison to China's BRI, Indonesia's Maritime Axis aims to improve connections between the developed western part of the country with the underdeveloped eastern part so the price of goods between the two regions in Indonesia do not differ as much. The key priority for the Jokowi administration is the development of maritime infrastructure in the eastern part of Indonesia. This suggests that the focus of the BRI does not always coincide with Indonesia's maritime initiative.

There are also other crucial economic and security concerns raised by Indonesian officials, such as the presence of Chinese economic spies in Indonesia; the influx of foreign workers from China to Indonesia due to the majority of China's big infrastructure projects in Indonesia not employing local workers; and the possible use of deep-port infrastructure in Indonesia by

China's military establishment.⁵ Officials voiced their concerns that deep-ports built by China in Indonesia might be used by Beijing as sites to repair and refuel its naval ships in Southeast Asia. A senior official at the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs explained that this apprehension has been raised due to the precedent of China's naval activities in Sri Lanka.⁶ According to him China built a deep-port in Sri Lanka and later used the port facilities for its naval vessels to visit and re-supply. He pointed out that Indonesia is not willing to accept such an arrangement if China wins the bid to develop ports in Indonesia.⁷ To quote him:

The Maritime Silk Road is interesting. We can use the opportunities offered by [the BRI] but we also need to be prudent ... If we look at Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Bangladesh's experiences, economic factors are not the only concern here. Normally, when China is developing a port ... part of this port management will be handled by them. In the case of Sri Lanka and the Maldives, as China control the port management, their warships [can] enter [the port facility]. This is a concern that we need to pay attention to.⁸

During interviews, officials used the term "challenge" or "threat" together with "opportunities" when describing China's relations with Indonesia. Indonesian government officials used the word "threat" to describe Sino-Indonesian interactions in the South China Sea. Indonesian government officials frequently asserted that due to the proximity of Natuna to the disputed area, and the absence of China's clarification on whether or not its claims encompass

⁵ Interviews with two senior officials at the Indonesian Maritime Security Board (Jakarta, August 26 2015; and two senior officials at the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jakarta, August 21 2015).

⁶ Interview with a senior official at the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jakarta, August 21 2015).

⁷ Interview with a senior official at the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jakarta, August 21 2015).

⁸ Interview with a senior official at the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jakarta, August 21 2015).

Indonesia's exclusive economic zone, the growing tension in the South China Sea does pose a threat to Indonesia.⁹ In comparison to interview results, there are no Indonesian government documents published from 2008 to 2015 that explicitly frame China as a threat to Indonesia. Government documents mention China as Indonesia's strategic partner in creating cooperation opportunities and facing common challenges. There are no documents that state China is a source of military or security threats. There is only one document that refers to China as a source of economic challenges. The document suggests that "cheap products from China that flooded the Indonesian market" could bring dire effects to the archipelago's economy (Kemenkopolkam, 2007: 34). The majority of Indonesian government documents that make any remark about Jakarta-Beijing relations put emphasis on cooperation opportunities between the two countries in the oil industry, technology and in infrastructure development.

Documents published by the Indonesian Parliament portray China in a positive manner. The relations between Indonesia and China are seen as involving mutual cooperation that provides opportunities for the Indonesian government to improve the country's economic growth (DPR, 2014a; DPR, 2014b; DPR, 2014c; DPR, 2014d). The word "threat" is absent from all documents published by Parliament. Rather, the words that are commonly used are "opportunities" (used sixteen times); and "benefit" (used six times) to exclusively portray China in a positive light.

The articulation of economic opportunity and the benefits offered by Indonesia-China relations are featured in articles published by Indonesian newspapers.

⁹ Interviews with two officials from the Indonesian Bakamla, August 26 2015, an official from the Indonesian Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal and Security Affairs, August 21 2015, an official from the Indonesian Ministry of Defence, August 24 2015, Jakarta.

Table 1. Frequency of Keywords and Representation of China in Articles Published by *Jakarta Post*

Year	Opportunity/opportunities		Benefit/beneficial		Threat	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
2008	2	0	2	0	0	0
2009	2	0	8	1	1	1
2010	0	0	8	0	0	0
2011	2	0	1	0	0	1
2012	0	0	0	0	0	0
2013	1	0	0	1	0	2
2014	2	1	3	4	0	9
2015	5	0	5	7	0	6
Total	14	1	27	13	1	19

In Indonesian newspapers, however, keywords such as “opportunity” or “opportunities, and “benefits” or “beneficial” are mostly but not exclusively used to show positive representation of China. As Table 1 shows the words “opportunity/opportunities” (was used 14 times), and “benefit/beneficial” (was used 27 times) in articles published by the *Jakarta Post* from 2008 to 2015 to describe the positive aspect of China’s and Indonesia’s bilateral relations. China is seen by Indonesia as the largest trading partner, a supplier of weaponry, and a source of investment to develop infrastructure the country badly needs, including sea ports and railway networks (Supriyanto, 2014; Witular, 2014; *Jakarta Post*, 2009).

Negative association with the words “opportunity/opportunities” appeared only once in 2014 in a *Jakarta Post* article explaining the Komodo Naval Exercise in Natuna waters as a measure for Indonesia to assert its role in South China Sea. This article was written against the backdrop of a series of political events including the launch of the multilateral Komodo Naval exercise hosted by Indonesia in 2014, a series of conflicts between Indonesian and Chinese maritime authorities over Chinese fishermen’s illegal fishing activities in Natuna waters; and China’s naval exercise in the Indian Ocean in 2014 that involved transiting through the Indonesian Straits of Sunda and Lombok. The word “benefit” or “beneficial” when pointing to a negative representation of China

was mainly used from 2013 to 2015 to critically question the benefits of China's aggressive actions in the South China Sea in informing Beijing's relations with Indonesia and ASEAN. Major political events that derived this negative association include China's military build-up in the region from 2013 to 2015, Chinese official statements defending the construction of artificial islands in the South China Sea in May 2015, and the 26th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, where Southeast Asian leaders discussed various regional issues including the South China Sea.

Table 2 below shows that the words "opportunity/opportunities" appeared 28 times and "benefit/beneficial" appeared 36 times in *Kompas* articles published from 2008 to 2015, and were used to provide a positive portrayal of China. This suggests that the words opportunity/opportunities and benefit/beneficial are mainly associated with a positive representation of China by *Kompas*. Major political events surrounding the positive representation of China in the *Jakarta Post* and *Kompas* mainly include official visits by the Chinese president, political leaders and business representatives to Indonesia, and vice-versa, and the signing of economic or defence deals between the two countries. From 2010 to 2015 the words "opportunity/opportunities" and "benefit/beneficial" were also used to depict China in a negative light. In 2010 these words were used to explain the negative implications of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA) to Indonesia. There were concerns that the implementation of ACFTA in 2010 would provide greater opportunities for China to supply more products to the Indonesian market. The weakening of the Chinese yuan was the reason underpinning the negative portrayal of China in 2011. From 2012 to 2015 a number of major political events informed the publication of articles that displayed negative associations between China's regional leadership and the words "opportunity/opportunities" and "benefit/beneficial." These include disagreements between the Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen and the Philippine President Benigno Aquino III regarding ASEAN's consensus not to internationalise South China Sea disputes during the ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh in 2012; the firing of warning shots to Vietnamese and Filipino fishermen by China's maritime authorities; the deployment of Chinese warships to prevent the Philippine ships exploring oil in the area in the same year; and the deepening of the trade deficit between Indonesia and China following the implementation of ACFTA in 2010.

Table 2. Frequency of Keywords and Representation of China in Articles Published by *Kompas*

Year	Opportunity/opportunities		Benefit/beneficial		Threat	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
2008	0	0	0	0	0	0
2009	4	0	0	0	2	0
2010	1	6	5	1	0	2
2011	3	1	5	0	0	4
2012	2	1	6	0	2	0
2013	2	4	2	0	0	3
2014	9	0	14	0	1	2
2015	7	2	4	2	0	5
Total	28	14	36	3	5	16

In comparison to the positive representation of China highlighted in documents published by the Indonesian government and Parliament, articles published by Indonesian national newspapers openly referred to China as a threat to Indonesia. The word “threat” is mainly associated with a negative representation of China. The word “threat”—when related to a positive representation of China in the Indonesian media—only appeared once in the *Jakarta Post* and five times in *Kompas*. Here, the word threat mainly refers to common threats faced by Indonesia, China, and the East Asian community such as terrorism and other transnational crimes. As shown in Table 2, articles published by *Kompas* from 2008 to 2015 show that the word “threat” was used 16 times to describe China in a negative manner. The word was used in articles published by *Kompas* mainly due to China’s growing aggressiveness in the South China Sea disputes, the growing scale of imported products from China that entered the Indonesian market after ACFTA came into effect, and illegal fishing activities by Chinese fishermen in Indonesian waters.

As shown in Table 1, China has not always been depicted as a beneficial partner in the *Jakarta Post*. Threats posed by China range from lower-level political issues such as the growing number of Chinese goods entering the Indonesian market after ACFTA came into force on 1st January 2010, to higher-level political issues such as the South China Sea territorial disputes. The

newspaper used the word “threat” 19 times to specifically discuss negative representations of China.

China’s engagement in the South China Sea has been the main topic in the *Jakarta Post* when discussing the threat of China to the peace and stability of Southeast Asia. The words “South China Sea” (*Laut China Selatan/Laut Cina Selatan*) were used 343 times in the *Jakarta Post* and 54 times in *Kompas* articles. The word “threat” was mainly used when explaining China’s involvement in the South China Sea disputes.

Table 3. Frequency of the Word “Threat” in Indonesian Newspapers and Negative Representation of China in the South China Sea Disputes

Year	Jakarta Post	Kompas	Corresponding Major Political Event(s)
2008	0	0	-
2009	0	0	-
2010	0	0	-
2011	1	0	China’s military build-up in the South China Sea including the placement of China’s nuclear submarine, warships and a network of underground tunnels at the Sanya base on the southern tip of Hainan island.
2012	0	0	-
2013	2	2	The 12 th International Institute for Strategic Studies Asia Security Summit, the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore in June 2013.
2014	9	2	China’s fishing restrictions in the South China Sea, the establishment of Air Defence in the East China Sea, a naval blockade around Second Thomas Shoal, and inclusion of part of Indonesia’s Natuna Islands waters in China’s territorial map.
2015	6	5	The 2015 ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur; China’s rapid progress in building an airstrip suitable for military use in the Spratly Islands; and the signing of the AIB Articles of Agreement in June 2015.

As shown in Table 3, from 2008 to 2010 there was no mention of China’s involvement in the South China Sea disputes as a threat to Indonesia and the region either in the *Jakarta Post* or in *Kompas*. From 2013 to 2015, China’s increasing military build-up; and its policy measures to restrict fishing activities for foreign vessels, to impose a naval blockade, to include part of Indonesia’s Natuna waters in its map, and to construct artificial islands in the South China Sea have shifted the Indonesian media’s representation of China. Table 3 shows

that from 2013 to 2015 the *Jakarta Post* and *Kompas* increasingly articulated China as a threat in the context of the South China Sea disputes. From 2013 to 2015, the *Jakarta Post* identified China's behaviour in the South China Sea disputes as a threat 17 times, and *Kompas* 9 times.

In the context of the South China Sea disputes, Indonesia was depicted as a neutral state and a peace broker between China and other claimant states in Southeast Asia including Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Brunei. A number of phrases were used to describe Indonesia's position in the South China Sea territorial disputes. These include "neutral stance", "a neutral broker", and "neutral position" (*Jakarta Post*, 2015a; Supriyanto, 2014; Arsana, 2012).

China's growing assertiveness in Southeast Asia has also served as a key discussion topic in the Indonesian media. Both *Kompas* and the *Jakarta Post* focused their news reporting on a range of issues including China's leadership in the development of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement, China's role as a host of APEC and G-20 meetings in 2014, and Beijing's new initiatives including the BRI and the AIIB. Of all the new initiatives introduced by China in recent years, media attention focuses on the AIIB and the BRI. From 2008 to 2015, the AIIB was discussed 91 times in news articles published by *Kompas*, and 65 times in the *Jakarta Post*. The BRI (*Jalan Sutra Maritim*) was mentioned 18 times in articles published by *Kompas*, and 8 times in the *Jakarta Post* from 2008 to 2015.

The AIIB fund is portrayed in the media as a potential source of assistance to support Indonesia's Maritime Axis ambition. The AIIB is expected to fund the development of 24 seaports, 15 airports, 1,000 kilometres of road, 8,700 kilometres of railway networks, and power plants with a 35,000-megawatt capacity (*Jakarta Post*, 2015b). Despite the AIIB promising investment in Indonesia, the media also raised concern over China's low success rate in finalising its investment projects in Indonesia. This circumstance has generated doubt over the realisation of the AIIB investment projects in Indonesia. The Indonesian Capital Investment Coordinating Board (*Badan Koordinasi Penanaman Modal*) pointed out that the success ratio of China's development projects in Indonesia is 1:10. This is very low in comparison to the success rate of Japan's development projects, which reaches 6.5:10 (*Jakarta Post*, May 2

2015). News articles published in 2008-2015 that discuss the negative aspects of Indonesia's and China's economic relations, such as the one that explained the low success rate of China's investment projects in Indonesia, are very few (*Jakarta Post*, 2015b). Despite there being a widespread perception that China and Japan are engaging in a tight investment race in Indonesia, the data from the Indonesian Investment Coordinating Board (*Badan Koordinasi Penanaman Modal*) also shows that in 2016 alone the value of Japan's investment in Indonesia's infrastructure sector was five times higher than that of China. Japan's investment in five infrastructure sectors including the transportation industry; electricity, gas and water; construction; transportation, warehouses and telecommunications in 2016 reached US\$2,547,294,800 (Pusat Data dan Informasi Badan Koordinasi Penanaman Modal, 2017). By comparison, China's investment in the same five infrastructure sectors only reached US\$465,729,000 (Pusat Data dan Informasi Badan Koordinasi Penanaman Modal, June 25 2017). The progress of the Indonesian Patimban Port and other maritime infrastructure projects that involve cooperation with Japan shows Tokyo's positive performance in implementing its investment projects.

The majority of Indonesian news articles tend to discuss the benefits that Indonesia can gain from the AIIB, especially to support Indonesia's Maritime Axis Initiative. China's low performance in delivering its investment projects in other countries was not reported in newspaper articles published in *Kompas* and the *Jakarta Post* from January 1 2008 to August 31 2015. An eight-year-old Chinese-operated port, namely, Hambantota port in the southern part of Sri Lanka, for instance, is a prime example of China's weak performance in the BRI. As reported by the *Straits Times* this port has "almost no container traffic and trampled fences that elephants traverse with ease" (*Straits Times*, 2018). In Vietnam delays, disruption, cost overruns, and accidents have prompted criticism of a Chinese-built railway section of Hanoi's (*Financial Times*, 2016). This put the project in unfavourable contrast to other infrastructure projects that are built by Japanese and South Korean firms (*Financial Times*, 2016). In Hanoi, a Japanese consortium including Japan's Sumitomo is building the Ho Chi Minh City project, while the China Railway Engineering Cooperation has a contract to build one railway line, and a South Korean firm, Daelim, gained a contract to build another (*Financial Times*, 2016). Despite there being cases of China's weak performance in delivering BRI projects, as shown in the case of the

Hambantota port or Hanoi's new railway, news items such as these were not widely reported in Indonesia.

Conclusion

To conclude, based on the evidence analysed here, Indonesia presents Indonesia-China relations and China's leadership in Southeast Asia with a degree of ambiguity. On the one hand, the Indonesian media and government presented China as a strategic partner that can provide economic opportunities. On the other hand, Indonesia depicted China as a "less than benign" power due to Beijing's growing military activities in the South China Sea, the negative implications of the ACFTA deal to the Indonesian economy, and concerns over potential misuse of joint port infrastructure projects for China's military activities.

Analysis of media reports, government documents, and interviews with Indonesian officials show three important points. First, our analysis of articles published by the *Jakarta Post* and *Kompas* shows that China is more often portrayed in a positive light. The use of the words "opportunity/opportunities" and "benefit/beneficial", when associated with negative representation of China, only began in 2010 when ACFTA came into force.

Second, the word "threat" is mostly used both in the *Jakarta Post* and *Kompas* to refer to China's aggressive behaviour in the South China Sea disputes. From 2008 to 2010, articles published in both newspapers did not mention China as a threat in the South China Sea. Between 2013 and 2015, we observed an increased use of the word "threat", pointing to China's negative behaviour in the South China Sea, in the *Jakarta Post* and *Kompas*. The increased portrayal of China as a threat in Indonesian newspapers has taken place against the backdrop of China's decision to implement an array of policies in the South China Sea including the deployment of warships and submarines, imposing fishery restrictions for foreign vessels, implementing naval blockades, incorporating parts of Indonesian Natuna waters in China's map, and constructing artificial islands during the same period. It is natural to conclude that the negative portrayal of China should increase.

Third, out of all of China's proposed initiatives in Southeast Asia, the BRI and the AIIB have received the most attention both from government officials and the media. China's BRI is often compared and discussed together with the Indonesian Maritime Axis Initiative. Although China's success rate in project implementation compares unfavourably to Japan, the AIIB is seen as a source of potential funding to support infrastructure projects under the Maritime Axis Initiative. China's low success rate in project implementation in Indonesia is in line with comments about Beijing's BRI performance in other parts of the world such as Sri Lanka and Vietnam, where the projects do not appear to be as successful as China claims.

Taken as a whole, this article shows Indonesia's ambivalent representation of and commentary on China. The current literature on Sino-Indonesian relations points to Indonesia's ambiguity in dealing with China. The findings presented in this article support this picture. This article adds to the current literature by providing empirical evidence that resulted from content analysis of interview transcripts, government documents and newspaper articles, a method that is under-explored in Sino-Indonesian relations studies.

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The EU and China, 2006 to 2016: A Clash Between Interests and Values

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In the last decade, while undergoing its own reform through the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 which created a designated foreign affairs body across the 28 member states, the European External Action Service (EEAS), the European Commission has also produced two major communications on relations with the People's Republic of China. The first, in 2006, was issued at a time when the European Union (EU) was just recovering from its failure to lift the arms embargo on China, and was being criticised by Beijing because it had not accorded market economy status to a country that had become its largest trading partner. The second came out in 2016, at a time when the relationship had settled into a more pragmatic mould, though the continuing refusal to grant market economy status still rankled with the Chinese partners.

This essay will look in particular at the history of the relationship, and the ways in which this is reflected in the language in the two communications on the specific issue of values and defence of human rights. Defence of these have been, after all, a key part of the European project since its earliest period. It is written into its current constitution—to defend and promote rule of law, human rights and associated freedoms. How has the EU's internal understanding of this key area developed over the period from 2006 to 2016, when it itself was undergoing crisis and transformation, and China was also rapidly developing, often in very unexpected ways?

Historic Context

Separate states in Europe had diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China almost from its establishment in 1949. Great Britain, in particular, in order to defend its interests in the then colony of Hong Kong, was amongst the first in what was then Western Europe to create relations, in 1950, and was followed by Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway the same year. France was to follow in 1964, with the remainder of the major European countries following in the 1970s and 1980s.

The evolution of the European Steel and Iron Zone to the European Economic Community (EEC), created by the Treaty of Rome in 1957, meant that by 1975 there were enough member states to formally create diplomatic relations on a multilateral basis with the People's Republic. This was bolstered by the rapprochement between the USA and China from 1972 that saw a diplomatic relaxation clearing the way for more parties to seek formal links with Beijing.

The most significant date after this was the signing in 1985 of a framework agreement, the "Trade and Cooperation Agreement" between the two powers—one which, as its title states, largely focused on economic, transactional issues (EEC, 1985). Despite this narrowness, the 1985 agreement remains, to this day, the foundation of the legal relationship between the two entities. It reads very much like a standard trade agreement, with provision for tariff-free access for certain classes of goods and services. At no point are social or political values or aspirations towards China for legal changes mentioned. This is unsurprising; in 1985 the EEC was much more an economic concept than driven by political norms and values.

With the implementation of the Maastricht Treaty from 1992 that created the European Union (EU), a host of new concepts occurred. The EU became a much bolder and wider endeavour than the EEC, with significant parts of the treaty agreed that year embracing social and political themes. With the political changes happening in the rest of the world, from the fall of communist governments in Eastern Europe in 1989 to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the EU became part of a move to promote liberal democratic government models and procedures. The EU, along with the US, set itself at the heart of this

mission to embed multi-party liberal democratic norms across the rest of the world. Its trade and aid were related to the support of these.

Around this time, after the brutal suppression of a rebellion in Tiananmen Square in June 1989 by the Chinese government, the desire was to engage with China in the hope that it would ultimately change into a Western-style democracy. Such an attitude was best exemplified by the Clinton presidency, when Bill Clinton visited Beijing and stated to the then President Jiang Zemin that China had been on the “wrong side of history” because of its stance on human rights since 1989.

The EU in this way became a major normative power, one which promoted a specific liberal values agenda. This phenomenon reached its apogee in the mid-2000s. It was around this time that writers like the British foreign policy commentator Mark Leonard were able to speak of the Union as a major model of a rules-based, enlightened political power (Leonard, 2005). Following the Colour Revolutions in the countries which had once been part of the USSR in the middle part of this decade, this sense of confidence strengthened. Hand and hand with a more zealous and activist leadership on foreign affairs in the US under George W Bush, the notion of spreading democracy as part of the EU’s mandate was accompanied by an era in which the membership of the Union started to extend to new accession countries like Poland and Romania, increasing the number of member states to 27 by the end of the decade.

This makes the timing of the 2006 document, “EU China: Closer Partners, Growing Responsibilities” (Commission of the European Communities, 2006), very significant. Issued at a time when EU economic growth and political confidence was strong, it came only two years after the abortive attempt by the member states to lift the arms embargo imposed in 1989 on military and dual-use equipment sales to China. This was a symbolic move rather than one of practical import, largely because most sensitive technology was covered under member state law. Even so, the US vehemently opposed the idea, meaning that despite strong Chinese protests, the idea was dropped. As an extra irritant, the EU continued to refuse to convey market economy status to China, and leaders of specific member states continued to pressurise China on human rights and to

allow top level meetings between the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan religious leader, and their heads of government or state.

“Closer Partner: Growing Responsibilities” sets out the core areas of mutual interest and potential cooperation between the two powers as: (1) supporting China’s transition towards a more open and plural society, (2) sustainable development, (3) trade and economic relations, (4) strengthening bilateral co-operation, and (5) international and regional co-operation. Under the first few, the language is strikingly confident:

Democracy, human rights and the promotion of common values remain fundamental tenets of EU policy and of central importance to bilateral relations. The EU should support and encourage the development of a full, healthy and independent civil society in China. It should support efforts to strengthen the rule of law—an essential basis for all other reform.

At the same time, the EU will continue to encourage full respect of fundamental rights and freedoms in all regions of China; freedom of speech, religion and association, the right to a fair trial and the protection of minorities call for particular attention—in all regions of China. The EU will also encourage China to be an active and constructive partner in the Human Rights Council, holding China to the values which the UN embraces, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The twice-yearly human rights dialogue was conceived at an earlier stage in EU-China relations. It remains fit for purpose, but the EU’s expectations—which have increased in line with the quality of our partnership—are increasingly not being met. The dialogue should be: more focussed and results-oriented, with higher quality exchanges and concrete results; more flexible, taking on input from separate seminars and sub-

groups; better co-ordinated with Member State dialogues
(Commission of the European Communities, 2006).

The Communication from a decade later went under the more prosaic title “Elements for a New EU Strategy on China”. A longer document than the one from 2006, it occurred at the end of ten years of radical change internally and externally, and on the same day as the UK voted to exit the EU in a national referendum. This was an event which was symbolic of the changes that had occurred to erode the Union’s sense of confidence in the previous few years. The most important contributing factor to this was the great financial crisis starting in 2008, and the problems which beset the Eurozone from 2009, calling into question some of the fundamental tenets of the whole EU project, damaging much of its economic prowess and creating a sense of almost perpetual crisis. The Lisbon Treaty in 2009 had bravely attempted to create a closer sense of Union, with a new European External Action Service (EEAS), referred to above, a kind of EU diplomatic service, a presidency, and a clearer shared political structure set up.

But by 2015, there were a series of unprecedented issues, from a wave of migrants coming from war-torn Syria, of whom over a million came to Germany alone that year, to continuing issues over stagnant growth, and the rise of populist, nationalist parties coming to power. These remained issues three years later when a major migrancy summit was held in June 2018 to try to handle issues which had been appearing around this time. The EU seemed to be increasingly vulnerable, and far from promoting its sense of values abroad, was largely attempting to at least maintain some of them back in Europe. All of this happened in a context in which China under Xi Jinping was able to maintain relatively high growth, but also was becoming much more assertive in its foreign policy in the Asian region while ratcheting up repression and autocratic governance back in China. In 2015 alone, over 250 rights lawyers were detained, with some given lengthy jail sentences (Wielander, 2017). Never had it seemed more challenging to be a supporter of political change and reform in the People’s Republic.

That was the background against which the 2016 “Communication on China” was articulated. The issues addressed again are values and rights. To quote from the “Principles of Engagement” section of the document:

The fundamental principle of the EU's relationship with China is that it should be based on reciprocal benefit in both political and economic terms.

- The EU's engagement with China should be principled, practical and pragmatic, staying true to its interests and values. It will continue to be based on a positive agenda of partnership coupled with the constructive management of differences.
- EU Member States' engagement with China must comply with EU laws, rules and policies.
- The EU expects China to assume responsibilities in line with the benefits it draws from the rules-based international order.
- The promotion of human rights will continue to be a core part of the EU's engagement with China, with the well-being of citizens and respect for international obligations at the centre of its approach. The EU will hold China to account for its human rights record.
- The EU confirms its "One China" policy.
- The EU should continue to develop its relations with Taiwan and to support the constructive development of cross-Strait relations.
- The EU should support the continued implementation of "One Country, Two Systems" in Hong Kong and Macao.
- EU policy-making on China should take full account of the EU's close relationships with the US and other partners (European Commission, 2016: 5).

There are a number of observations to make about the difference in tone, context and content of these two articulations of rights issues between 2006 and 2016.

Firstly, the 2006 entry is highly generic. It does not speak about specifics, beyond support for rule of law, and the associated rights that flow from political, social and cultural freedoms. This indicates a level of confidence that the rationale and basis for these rights are understood, universally applicable, and that they should, and can, be urged on political cultures as different as that of China's. The 2016 Communication, on the other hand, while recognising the importance of rule of law, is much more specific in its articulation of key areas and expected outcomes. It also stresses pragmatism in its first tiret. It is clear that this document is an evolution of the earlier one, and shows the development of a more complex, nuanced situation in which to locate the rights dialogue between China and the EU.

Secondly, the 2006 entry occurs in a context in which the imperative is to "work with China to help it with its internal reforms" towards becoming a more pluralistic society, and one that is, though this is not explicitly stated, on the way to becoming more broadly democratic. It is true that in 2006, there was greater confidence in the need for China to adopt political models more akin to those found in Europe or North America. However, with the 2008 financial crisis and the Eurozone's issues enveloping the EU thereafter, this confidence was dented. By 2016, unexpected outcomes from democracies like Brexit in the UK, and the election of Donald Trump as president of the USA later that year, meant that the high confidence in the international liberal democratic order had been eroded for many.

Under Xi Jinping, in China since 2012, the Communist Party had set itself even more aggressively against attempts to see it reform and become like polities elsewhere. This was best exemplified in the "Document No 9" issued by the Propaganda Department of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee in early 2013, which stipulated that academics in class should not be teaching universalism, constitutionalism and other values which were dismissed as Western (China File, 2013). This means that the 2016 document, even in its values section, is keener to stress reciprocity. This appears clearly in the statement that at heart the relationship between the two needs to be "principled, practical and pragmatic, staying true to its interests and values. It will continue to be based on a positive agenda of partnership coupled with the constructive management of differences." Differences in this context are simply

to be accepted and managed, rather than resolved in the EU's favour. This is a marked change in tone, and reflects the falling back from the more assertive, confident and perhaps, in hindsight, naïve tone of the 2006 Communication.

Thirdly, the 2006 document does express frustration at the lack of progress in human rights dialogues, set up between the EU and China from the 1990s, to create a means of addressing and then discussing differences over rights. By 2016, the various dialogues had been compromised, so that many analysts felt they lacked legitimacy and needed to be scrapped. In the words of one report by German scholar Katrin Kinzelbach, they only served to excuse European leaders from directly talking of sensitive issues by outsourcing them to experts, officials and lower level functionaries (Kinzelbach, 2014). In many ways, the journey from 2006 to 2016 for the Chinese government had been one during which it became less keen or willing to put itself in a position of hearing lectures from foreign leaders on values issues.

Finally, the 2006 document expresses the hope that member states would be able to co-ordinate their China policy more effectively. However, over the course of this period, clear divisions about how to handle values issues with China mapped out the distinct positions of countries within the EU—ranging from a more emollient attitude on Tibet, Taiwan and treatment of dissidents by Malta, to a sometimes harder line by the Czech Republic. In some ways, the 2016 document, which has a far more detailed section on economic sustainability and other issues, shows the ways in which while values still figured, for the EU in general and member countries in particular, they had to be situated in a more complex range of considerations. This growth of complexity is clear from the two entries. While the 2016 Communication sets out that “it will hold China to account for its human rights record”, it also shows that this occurs in a context in which defence of the global rules-based trade and governance order offers the best tangible bet to bring China onside. This sense of tactical engagement, working in areas where there was now clear common interest, is unpacked in the rest of the 2016 document, which is twice the length of the 2006 one.

The 2006 Communication stated as one of its three objectives that the main priority was to see a relationship in the area of values, rights and political

dialogue with China which was “more focussed and results-oriented, with higher quality exchanges and concrete results”. It is true that there had been mutual learning over this period, which is recognised in the greater detail expressed in the 2016 document. By 2016, a harder attitude towards Western-style political reform in China was accompanied by a greater circumspection within the EU. The EU’s awareness of more shared concerns around sustainability, the need to create better quality growth in the EU, the need for investment from China, and access to growth opportunities within the Chinese market meant that values and rights, while still figuring, competed within a marketplace of other ideas and imperatives. This explains the references to Hong Kong, Taiwan and the more geopolitical issues that end the 2016 Commission document. The differences between the 2006 and 2016 documents mark a journey towards greater pragmatism on the part of the EU, and a possible recognition of the more complex world both China and the EU exist in, and the more complex links with each other within it—an issue that has only been reinforced with the arrival of Donald Trump as president of the US, and the rising prominence globally of China under Xi Jinping.

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Working in No Man's Land: Between Sociology and Chinese Studies

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Having worked for my whole career in a department of sociology, and for the second half of that career primarily on aspects of Chinese society, I have continually reflected on the questions of what relationships there might be between sociology and Chinese studies, and how the study of Chinese society might relate to general theorising in sociology. I always thought of my own undergraduate course on Chinese society not just as an analysis of a specific society but as an exploration of the applicability (or otherwise) of sociological theories and concepts to a society other than those where sociological theory originally developed, but I discovered that this view was not widely accepted among my colleagues in sociology.

Similar questions have been posed by other China researchers in other contexts. Wang Mingming, one of the most prominent Chinese anthropologists, said in an interview conducted in 2010 that “people rarely consider the potential contribution of Chinese anthropology to world anthropology”, and went on to suggest a simple explanation, that “China has been perceived as too special a case by sinological anthropologists” (Feuchtwang & Rowlands, 2010: 912). In another interview (Wang, 2008), Wang sees it as his task to rectify this, and to incorporate the study of China into general anthropology. Much the same point was made by Frank Pieke in his inaugural lecture as Professor of Modern Chinese Studies at the University of Leiden (Pieke, 2012). Another example, in a quite different area, of the exclusion of China from general theorising can be found in Mark Elvin's comments on the influence of Joseph Needham's monumental *Science and Civilisation in China*. Elvin finds it “hard to come to terms with ... the limited assimilation of Needham's work into the bloodstream

of the history of science in general: that is, outside the half-occluded universe of East Asian specialists and a handful of experts sensitive to the decisive contributions of comparisons” (Elvin, 2008: xxv). He goes on to give some examples of mistakes that historians of science have made by failing to incorporate China into the general history of science.

The opposite argument, that it is mistaken, or premature, to incorporate the study of China into the mainstream of a discipline, can also be found. An example was Kevin O’Brien’s keynote address to the Chinese Studies Association of Australia (CSAA) at the 2011 conference held at ANU (O’Brien, 2011). O’Brien bemoans the trend, as he sees it, for researchers on Chinese politics increasingly to be involved in general debates in political science which, because they are so specialised, fragment the community of China scholars who talk less and less to each other. In reply, Kelly Dombroski of Macquarie University explained in the *CSAA Newsletter* why members of her generation are deserting Chinese studies for the disciplines (Dombroski, 2011).

There is an extensive literature on the relationships between academic disciplines (of which sociology is one) and what has come to be known as “area studies” (of which Chinese studies is one example). Much of this literature starts from the premise that such relationships are fraught with difficulty, and much of it derives from the side of area studies practitioners, complaining about the stranglehold of disciplines on teaching and research in higher education and about the lack of attention paid in disciplinary work to the parts of the world investigated by area studies. In the introduction to one edited book on the topic, the editor criticises what he sees as the “parochialism” of the dominant disciplines, especially those in the social sciences, and claims that it is, or should be, the mission of area studies to “de-parochialise” the disciplines (Szanton, 2004: 2). The social sciences and the humanities, especially in the United States, are seen to be immured in US- and Euro-centric visions of the world, which persist even when practitioners deign to extend their horizons to include other parts of the world.

But first, what counts as an “area”? The book just mentioned contains chapters on studies in the following areas: Latin American, Middle Eastern, African, Japanese, Soviet and Post-Soviet, Eastern European, Chinese, South

Asian, and Southeast Asian (Szanton, 2004: v). Another such list can be extracted from the membership of the UK Council for Area Studies Associations (UKCASA) which, in addition to many of the areas already mentioned, also embraces American, Australian, Canadian, Caribbean, European, French, German, Iberian, Korean, and Low Countries Studies, for each of which there exists a British association. A couple of conclusions can be drawn from these lists: one is that areas refer to chunks of the globe of various sizes, from small countries to whole continents; the other is that for many of these chunks, but perhaps not all, one identifying feature is the existence of a shared language. In some cases, such as French, German or Iberian Studies, university language and literature departments have broadened out into the study of the history, politics, society, and so on, of the countries where those languages are spoken. In other cases, the belief has spread, for reasons I will touch on later, that larger areas of the globe have some cultural, political or economic significance, understanding of which requires a knowledge of the local language or languages which have hitherto been very much a minority interest among American or European academics; Middle Eastern Studies rooted in the study of Arabic would be such an example. Recently, the concept of "Language-based Area Studies" has become sufficiently prevalent to merit an acronym, "LBAS", and is much used in academic planning by the British higher education funding councils.

Area studies are many and various, and different area studies have different histories. Some can be traced back to earlier incarnations connected with European expansion around the globe, such as Chinese or African studies, or even further back to classical and biblical studies, as is the case with Middle East studies. The major British institutions in this stream of development include SOAS, the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University, founded as the School of Oriental Studies in 1916, and the Oriental Institute at Oxford University. Others are more recent, and stem from geopolitical concerns especially in the United States during and after the Second World War. This was when government agencies, backed by the major funding foundations (Ford, Rockefeller, Carnegie), encouraged the establishment of area studies centres in universities to train people in the linguistic, cultural and political knowledge needed for public policy in the Cold War. Since then, various area studies have risen or declined in importance according to the weight placed on them by

governments. Most recently in Britain, collaboration between the research councils (ESRC and AHRC) and the funding councils in England and Scotland has promoted expansion in those language-based area studies thought to be of strategic and economic significance: Chinese (and other East Asian) Studies, Arabic and Middle East Studies, and Russian and East European Studies (AHRC, 2018).

Much of the literature on area studies is imbued with an assumption that relationships between area studies and the more conventional disciplines of university departments are fraught with difficulty. Proponents of area studies are often directly critical of disciplines such as economics, sociology and politics for paying too little attention to parts of the world other than America and Europe where these disciplines had their origins. Although they may well proclaim an aim of “de-parochialising” the disciplines, they also see themselves as providing more “holistic” accounts of their areas of the world, showing interconnections between the culture, society, economy, political system and so on, all of which can only be understood through in-depth knowledge of the language, literature and history of the area concerned, something which the separate disciplines are thought to be incapable of. And despite the presently fashionable moves to interdisciplinarity or transdisciplinarity, there are still many practitioners of disciplines who would reply, as the leading American sociologist of China Andrew Walder has done in his contribution to Szanton’s book, that at least in the earlier stages of the development of Chinese studies, this area studies approach ran the risk of being “non-disciplinary” (Walder, 2004: 318).

Fields of Tension

I want to suggest that we can identify three fields of tension surrounding the relationships between disciplines and area studies, which I will exemplify by discussing the tension between sociology and Chinese studies. I call these: firstly, theoretical (or meta-theoretical or epistemological); secondly, political and geo-political; and thirdly, institutional or organisational. There are no hard and fast divisions between these sets of issues, but rather complex

interconnections between them, but I want to try to summarise a few themes of each of them, and then go on to concentrate on the third, the institutional.

1. Theoretical

The first set of issues concern discussions on what kind of knowledge is aimed at by disciplines and by area studies and, as a corollary, what kind of research methods are appropriate for pursuing such knowledge. As mentioned earlier, some area studies claim to be producing holistic, all-inclusive accounts of the culture and society concerned, whereas disciplines carve out some particular aspect according to their disciplinary specialism. Some may connect this subject with long-standing and complex traditions of thought in the philosophy of science and epistemology. For example, one might go back to neo-Kantian debates in the later nineteenth century (which form the background to the work of Max Weber and others in sociology), and suggest that disciplines, especially in the social sciences, aim at nomothetic knowledge, seeking universal laws which govern social phenomena (rather as the natural sciences are supposed to do for natural phenomena), whereas area studies stress the uniqueness of the particular area, and therefore seek ideographic knowledge (Szanton, 2004: 20). The distinction and its application is, however, much disputed, both within disciplines such as sociology and between such disciplines and area studies. On the one hand, the very notion of uniqueness of cultures is sometimes hotly challenged even from within area studies: one could mention the splendidly vitriolic book on *nihonjinron* (discourse over Japaneseness) by Peter Dale, under the title *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness* (Dale, 1986), or, in the Chinese studies context, the paper by Allen Chun with the title that should not be spoken in polite company, "Fuck Chineseness" (Chun, 1996). On the other hand, the de-parochialisation mission of area studies mentioned earlier can provoke attacks on social scientific generalisations of the form: "it's not like that in my area".

Another strand of dispute could be indicated by the common (but variously interpreted) anthropological distinction between "emic" and "etic" approaches, originally introduced by Kenneth Pike (Pike, 1967; Harris, 1976). "Emic" concepts refer to those in the mind, or culture, of the society being studied, while "etic" concepts are those used by the observer. While there is much discussion within anthropology and sociology about the place of these types of

concepts in sociological and anthropological work, it is also sometimes argued that area studies quintessentially depends on understanding the culture and society in its own terms, hence the basic requirement that the area studies scholar learn the language or languages current in the area concerned. Opponents might well argue that this supports cultural relativism of a kind that would make social science impossible.

2. Political and geo-political

I have already pointed to the main point of political contention surrounding area studies: that the post-war thrust towards area studies came from primarily American interests in the cold war, and that area studies, so some think, continue to be bound to national interests defined by political elites. This is often countered with arguments and examples showing the independence of scholars from such political influences, or even their explicit opposition to officially defined interests, as in the case of the influential journal *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* and to some extent its successor, *Critical Asian Studies*. In the specific context of China, argument flows back and forth, and is joined by those who argue that China research in the social sciences is sometimes excessively shaped by agendas set within China. An example would be interpretation of the Cultural Revolution (CR), which shifted from political sympathy and interest in the period when Mao was alive, to critique which often paralleled the official reassessment of the CR after the trial of the Gang of Four. To cite just one example, Mobo Gao has published a series of papers and a book documenting this shift and criticising the overwhelming tone of rejection of Maoist discourse during the 1980s and early 1990s (Gao, 1994; 2008).

However, these discussions are also related to the processes of the globalisation of knowledge. As disciplines such as sociology which first emerged among scholars in Western Europe are exported to or imported by other parts of the world, a kind of dialectic is created between claims to universality of the discipline's theories and concepts, on the one hand, and accusations of the false universalisation of culturally specific theories and concepts, on the other. In the case of sociology, Martin Albrow, then editor of the journal *International Sociology*, argued at the time of the Madrid World Congress of Sociology in 1990 that the discipline was developing through five stages: the "*universalism*" of its

founders Comte and Spencer, aiming to create a universal natural science of society; the “*national sociologies*” of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, institutionalised in professional academic associations with their role in national systems of higher education and research; the “*internationalisation*” of the post-World War Two period, attempting to overcome the disaster of national rivalries by means of international associations bringing together national representatives, such as the various United Nations organisations and, in sociology, the International Sociological Association, founded in 1949; the “*indigenisation*” of the 1970s and 1980s, especially in the newly independent countries of the third world, where sociologists aimed to draw on their indigenous culture without importing inappropriate models of social science from the imperialist first world; and finally, the stage-in-the-making of “*globalisation*”, which would be neither national nor international, but be created by networks of sociologists operating on a global scale (Albrow, 1990). In the case of China, as I have mentioned elsewhere (Stockman, 2000: 15), the phase of indigenisation can be seen in arguments in favour of the “*sinification of sociology*”, which would draw on indigenous cultural concepts such as the social theory of Confucianism. Going beyond this, the phase of “*globalisation*”, as Albrow conceived it, would require dialogue between different indigenised sociologies and discussion of possible cross-fertilisation. An example of such work might be the work of Xiaoying Qi, at the University of Western Sydney, on the possible fruitfulness of incorporating Chinese concepts such as “*face*” into general sociology (Qi, 2011). Once again, without going into the intricacies of these debates, we can see here another aspect of the intersection of theoretical and geo-political issues which infuse the tensions between disciplines and area studies in general, or between sociology and Chinese studies in particular.

3. Institutional and organisational

I turn now to the third set of factors which I call institutional and organisational. My aim here is to view these issues through the lens of the sociology of higher education, the sociological study of institutions of higher education and the people who work in them. Although this branch of sociological research is quite well developed, I have not yet found any systematic sociological research on the relationships between area studies and disciplines, so I can only outline my own observations to illustrate my ideas.

Burton Clark, a prominent American scholar who wrote prolifically on higher education organisations, argued that the primary membership group in universities is the discipline (Clark, 1983: 33-34). Academics are more likely to identify with their discipline than with, for example, the university in which they work. The discipline is the focus of their education and training and defines the parameters of their career path; their university is where they happen to be employed, often as a result of accidents of the academic labour market. Academics are more likely to move from one university to another preserving their disciplinary identity, rather than change disciplinary department within the same university. Within universities as organisations, disciplines are, at least in Anglo-Saxon types of universities, institutionalised as departments. So departments tend to have fairly strong boundaries between them, although this varies considerably from discipline to discipline.

Seen in this way, the problem of the relationship of disciplines to area studies can be recast as one of overlapping or competing principles for the organisational division of academic labour. In principle, universities could use either areas or disciplines as the basic element of organisational structure. As universities modernised in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and ceased to be based on the renaissance curriculum of the trivium and the quadrivium, they tended to assume the discipline as the basic unit. Unusually, the University of Sussex, established in 1961, departed from this assumption. From its inception it was composed of Schools defined around area studies, such as the School of European Studies, the School of American Studies, and so on. If you worked as, for example, a sociologist in that university, you would be located in one or other of these Schools. A few years ago, however, the university was restructured along the lines of disciplinary departments, much to the disgust of some who had grown to appreciate the area studies schools.

In the case of Chinese studies, different universities have adopted different structures to accommodate and promote them. In some universities, such as Leeds, Sheffield or Edinburgh, Chinese studies are located primarily in a department rather like an extended modern language department. In others, Chinese studies are promoted by the establishment of interdisciplinary research centres, often with few of their own staff but serving as a focus for China specialists whose primary employment is in a disciplinary department, be it

economic, history, and so on. A UK example might be the University of Manchester, with its China Institute together with the Chinese Studies section of the School of Modern Languages and Cultures. All of these different structures, however, reproduce for social science specialists on China a dilemma: where do I really belong? While evidence seems to suggest that disciplinary departments in the US have been more open to accommodating China specialists (for sociology, see Walder, 2004), in Britain, no such trend is immediately apparent. If anything, the reverse may be the case. A number of new and expanded Chinese studies centres, as well as expanded departments of East Asian Studies, have attracted many of the newly qualified as well as established China specialists in the social sciences, and relatively few sociology departments have made specific appointments of China researchers, Edinburgh being one notable exception. In one case, that of Nottingham, the university switched structures in 2016, moving staff in the hitherto expanding, and multidisciplinary, School of Contemporary Chinese Studies into disciplinary departments, two of whom went into sociology. Such vacillation points to the difficulty universities have in creating organisational forms that can embrace Chinese studies and sociology.

The problem is compounded if we turn to some other institutional aspects of academic life. Scholarly work in higher education is also promoted, encouraged, and protected by the formation of scholarly associations. While it may be logical and relatively inexpensive to be the member of both the relevant disciplinary and the area studies associations, attendance of conferences is a different matter. Does the sociologist specialising in China go to sociology conferences or to Chinese studies ones? The choice has consequences, as it may determine the networks that a scholar builds up, the potential audience for their research output, the job opportunities that may come his or her way.

A further, significant aspect of the dilemmas facing the sociologist working on Chinese society is the question of publication. Walder argues that, in the 1970s, publication of social science articles on China centred on the *China Quarterly*, at least in part because research on China was not seen by the editors of social science journals as contributing to or related to debates in the social science disciplines; controversially, Walder claims that academics working on Chinese politics, economics or society were not sufficiently trained in the social science

disciplines to be taken seriously by other practitioners of those disciplines. In recent years, there have been several changes which affect the possibility of publishing social science articles on China. On the one hand, there has been a great expansion in the number and range of Chinese studies journals, many of which are suitable for placing social science articles. On the other hand, it is supposedly the case that journals in social science disciplines have responded to the area studies mission to “de-parochialise” the disciplines by publishing more articles on other parts of the world. According to Walder, between 1978 and 2002 there had been modest increases in the number of articles about China in the sociology and politics journals, and a considerable increase in such articles in the one economics journal he examined. My own online searches resulted in rather different conclusions, as far as Britain is concerned. To take just the journal *Sociology*, the flagship journal of the British Sociological Association, as example, from its inception in 1967 up to 2013 there were just three articles relating specifically to China (one of which was authored by me). In the last four years, however, there has been a minor explosion of such articles, with eleven clearly related to aspects of Chinese society. A similar pattern can be found in the *British Journal of Sociology*. It seems that even sociologists working on China have not, until very recently, seen the major sociology journals as appropriate outlets for their research. One result of this is that such articles are not easily found by non-specialist sociologists with an interest in China, although in the days of electronic access and sophisticated search engines, it has certainly become easier. But the fact remains that publication of sociological research on China in Chinese studies journals rather than sociology ones creates a barrier of sorts to the incorporation of China into general sociology.

The last set of institutional factors affecting relationships between sociology and Chinese studies that I want to touch on concerns government and administrative procedures for funding, auditing and evaluating academic activity. Funding has been a perennial issue for area studies, as for universities in general. I have already alluded to post-war moves to promote area studies, in which the milestones were the Scarborough Commission on oriental languages and cultures of 1947, the Hailey Report of 1963, and the Parker Report of 1986. In fact, as far back as 1908, a Treasury Committee had bemoaned the weakness of provision in oriental studies in British universities, since when, every decade

or so, the same soul-searching has been undergone. During the time of my involvement in Chinese studies, there were two further developments: first, toward the end of the 1990s, when pressure on the funding councils from BACS and the Foreign Office resulted in the provision of funding for new Master's programmes in Chinese studies at several universities, targeted at graduates in social sciences and history, and enabling them to gain sufficient language competence to go on to doctoral research on China; the second was the initiative at the beginning of the 2000s, already mentioned, to set up LBAS centres in East Asian, Arabic and Russian/East European/post-Soviet studies. But both of these developments were competing for funding with more established disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, and funding was provided on a pump-priming basis over five years, after which the universities concerned were expected to make the activities self-financing or fund them themselves. So, while complaints about the inadequacy of funding for postgraduate research are ubiquitous, tensions over funding between disciplines and area studies remain strong.

Finally, the position of Chinese studies, and area studies in general, in the processes of research assessment is worth a mention. When the RAE was set up in the 1980s, the basis for peer assessment of the quality of research was essentially disciplinary, with panels of assessors drawn from the various disciplines after consultation with stakeholders, notably including the professional or scholarly associations. For the RAE of 2008, research in sociology was to be submitted for assessment to the sociology panel 41, to be assessed by sociologists. Similarly, for the REF of 2014, sociology had its own sub-panel 23 of main panel C. In addition, panels were established to assess research in area studies. These changed somewhat from one RAE/REF to another but, for example, the 2008 RAE included a group L of area studies panels, panel 47 on "American Studies and Anglophone Area Studies", panel 48 on "Middle Eastern and African Studies", panel 49 on "Asian Studies", and panel 50 on "European Studies" (RAE, 2008). By contrast, the 2014 REF reverted to a single panel for all Area Studies, namely sub-panel 27 of main panel D (REF, 2014). In the context of the present discussion, the question immediately arises of how sociological research on China was to be assessed. Was such research to be submitted to the sociology panel or to the Asian Studies or Area Studies panel? In practice, according to one informant on this matter (Tim Wright), submission of research

was determined by the employing unit of the researcher concerned. If the researcher was employed in a sociology department, their publications were sent to the sociology panel; if they were employed in a department or a centre of East Asian studies, it was submitted to the Asian studies or Area Studies panel. There is no indication of whether the final assessment varied depending on which panel was doing the assessment and pieces are referred to other relevant panels or specialists wherever deemed necessary. But it is at least curious that this indeterminacy existed in the bureaucratic process. However, other countries with research assessment processes have used different structures. In the research assessment process in Australia, the ERA (Australian Research Council, 2018), there are no area studies panels, but only disciplinary ones. It might be argued that, where there are separate research assessment panels for area studies, as in the British RAE/REF, this constitutes another institutional obstacle to interaction between area studies and disciplines.

Conclusion

The argument I have been developing in this paper can be summarised as follows: together with a whole range of theoretical and political disputes and dilemmas, institutional and organisational factors within the processes of higher education and research operate to create and maintain barriers to fruitful interaction between sociology and Chinese studies, and quite possibly between disciplines and area studies more generally. In the terms of Burton Clark's sociology of higher education, these factors operate to maintain boundaries between sections of higher education institutions, defined as horizontally differentiated units making up the division of academic labour. Put another way, the more successful Chinese studies are in establishing their own departments, centres, associations, conferences, informal networks, funding streams, research assessment procedures, and so on, the more detached they become from disciplines in the social sciences and elsewhere, and quite possibly the less influence Chinese studies have within the disciplines, as a force for de-parochialisation or in any other way. The more Chinese studies own the study of China, the less incentive there is for sociologists and others to take account of China.

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Editors' note: As mentioned in our introduction to this issue, we hope this essay will be the start of a wider discussion and invite responses to it. Please use the journal submission link to submit your response: <http://bacsuk.org.uk/journal>.

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Laurel Bossen and Hill Gates (2017). *Bound Feet, Young Hands: Tracking the Demise of Footbinding in Village China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 264 pp., ISBN 9780804799553.

Ten years after Dorothy Ko's study that shifted the understanding of footbinding fundamentally (Ko, 2007), Laurel Bossen and Hill Gates's ground-breaking research on footbinding will again change our knowledge of this practice for good. Through exploring the long-neglected subject of rural women's footbinding, Bossen and Gates argue that the reason for the demise of footbinding in village China is not because of fashion, beauty, sex, education or a political campaign. Instead, women stopped this practice because of industrialisation, which inevitably drove them out of the business of domestic, sedentary textile-production.

One of the most impressive aspects of this book is its methodology. Previous studies of footbinding predominantly relied on written evidence, such as the writing of elite men and women, foreign observers and researchers, local and foreign reformers, and governmental archives that recorded various anti-footbinding campaigns (Fan, 1997; Gao, 1995; Ko, 2007; Levy, 1966; Wang, 2000; Yang, 2012). In recognising the lack of information about rural women among this evidence, Bossen and Gates carried out empirical research in 16 counties in eight provinces in China. This painstaking research is built on data collection carried out on an unprecedented scale, obtaining information from 5,000 elderly women, and conducting surveys and interviews with 1,943 elderly women, most of whom had bound feet.

As anthropologists, Bossen and Gates present this book in an anthropological way, unlike other social and cultural historical works prior to it. The book devotes the entire second chapter to explaining their research methods and fieldwork process. Their field work stretched over a period of two decades, from 1991 to 2010. Geographically, their research sites include villages in Hebei,

Shandong, Anhui, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan provinces. The following three chapters are organised geographically, grouping women's experiences in three regions: north China, northwest China and southwest China. The structure within these three chapters is rather repetitive. For each research site, Bossen and Gates provide its social and economic history, geographical information, the work women did there, and a statistical analysis of the demise of foot-binding. The authors find positive correlations between the demise of footbinding and the local development of the textile industry, or industrial textile imports, in all of their research sites. Therefore, their data strongly supports their argument that footbinding disappeared because factories eliminated the economic benefits of women's hand labour.

The most surprising case is perhaps Ding county in Hebei province, which all historians specialising in modern China know as a place where modern mass education experiments took place. Bossen and Gates find that even in Ding county the real reason for the death of foot-binding was industrialisation, rather than education. The final chapter integrates their data across regions, and confirms the correlations between the demise of foot-binding and the cessation of women's participation in handwork for income across China. Generally speaking, the grounded data of this research has convincingly uncovered an important cause of foot-binding's disappearance that had long been neglected by historians, presumably due to lack of evidence. At times, however, one suspects that too much effort has been spent on analysing the statistical data. Although the authors conducted 1,943 interviews with women, analysis of these qualitative materials is rare throughout the book. Historians who expect to read rural women's life stories relating to footbinding would be disappointed.

Another significant contribution of this book is its inclusion of young girls in the history of the economy and labour in China. Textiles have long been one of the most important products in Chinese history, both for domestic usage and exports. However, previous economic histories of textiles have long neglected the importance of young girls in their production (Huang, 1985; 2011; Chao, 1977). By revealing women's extensive participation in production since the age of around seven, Bossen and Gates challenged the May Fourth paradigm that condemned women for their unproductivity in Chinese history.

Although the book has convincingly proven that one of the definitive motives mothers had for ending the practice of binding their daughters' feet was the rise of the modern textile industry, the negative proposition raised by the authors, that mothers bound their daughters' feet because of the need of young girls' labour, is not self-evident. One of the three reasons why the relation between girl's hand labour and footbinding has been neglected by so many observers and scholars, Bossen and Gates points out, is that previous researchers were reluctant to believe that mothers would cripple their daughters in order to make them work (Bossen & Gates, 2017: 147). The authors attempt to explain this argument by suggesting that infant killing or the extreme disciplining of children are not uncommon in Chinese history or even today (Bossen & Gates, 2017: 12).

However, this could not explain the universality of foot-binding. After all, infant killing was not carried out in every single family, whereas footbinding was. This argument needs to be illustrated with further evidence, probably by using the first-hand narratives of women. The following questions are left unanswered: did mothers use footbinding as a tool to make their daughters work diligently, from a very young age, intentionally or subconsciously? Is it possible that mothers sincerely believed foot-binding was necessary for their daughters to enter into marriage, and that the usage of their labour was just a side product? Was it really necessary to keep girls working through this extreme method? How can we explain that some girls had their feet bound before or after the age of doing handwork, at the age of four, or fifteen?

In addition, in challenging the idea that women bound their daughters' feet so they could get married in the future, this book has limited success. As a cause-effect study, this study only measures the relationship between female labour and foot-binding, without taking marriage as a variable. Therefore, it could not decide which reason is more significant.

Nevertheless, this book successfully demonstrates that in researching modern history, especially the history of those who could not speak for themselves, it is essential to use methods such as surveys or interviews, to provide a fuller picture. As quantitative data-driven research, this book also inspires historians working with words to pay serious attention to numbers.

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Michelle Tien King (2014). *Between Birth and Death: Female Infanticide in Nineteenth-Century China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. xiii + 250 pp., ISBN 9780804785983.

It seems obvious and trite to discuss female infanticide in China. Female infanticide has long been regarded as a product of backward cultural practices and gender inequities under an authoritarian, patriarchal regime bent on enacting and enforcing a "birth" sub-regime. Along with footbinding, female infanticide becomes a marker of traditional China's decadent culture and

regressive past. This perception of China is reinforced by first a single-child policy and then a prevalent desire to have even smaller, nuclear families in an increasingly affluent society, which have “amplified the effects of a long-standing societal preference for sons, derived from a traditional Confucian value system that still lingers in present form” (p.2).

The common perception of female infanticide as a uniquely Chinese feature is perplexing. As Michelle Tien King has observed, examples of infanticide abounded throughout the classical world and Western history. Her book aims to dismantle the historical fixture of a “naturalized and eternal relationship between female infanticide and Chinese culture and [to build] that association instead as a product of historical processes of the nineteenth century” (p.3). Looking at perceptions rather than practices of female infanticide, King examines male attitudes toward infanticide; men discussed female infanticide whose most intimate actors—mothers, midwives, mothers-in-law—were “almost never addressed in written sources” (p.3). She argues that we have anachronistically projected our understanding of female infanticide onto a complex set of conditions in late Qing China, where infanticide was a response to unwanted children—an undesirable yet unavoidable result of normal sex relations (p.7). Female infanticide had been a “local, moral, philanthropic issue”—a localized “vulgar custom” perceived by Chinese male elites—before it became a “cross-cultural, political, scientific issue of international concern” in the nineteenth century, after Western diplomats, missionaries, and travelers wrote about female infanticide in China and helped shape the worldwide perception of female infanticide as a “totemic marker of Chinese society” (p.10). Such writings dismissed more nuanced Chinese interpretations of female infanticide, perpetuating instead for their agendas a sense that female infanticide was, almost without censure, prevalent in China. Foreign religious missions organized humanitarian actions to rescue the unwanted Chinese children, but they met strong Chinese resistance, galvanized in the larger milieu of Chinese-foreign antagonism and geopolitics. The book is a history of silence, of the absent bodies of the ephemeral infant girls hijacked by both imperialistic and nationalistic discourses with global resonance in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The book opens with the “infanticidal mother” woman Ye, a late imperial Chinese woman who described her own experience of infanticide. Ye chose to drown her own infant daughter given her helplessness and poverty. Late imperial Chinese morality books reveal that women killed their own daughters because they foresaw the “pains and miseries” the latter would have to suffer in a patriarchal world (p.45). Chapter two turns to elite men’s moral reform of their local communities. Female infanticide was a regionally specific custom, and scholars such as Yu Zhi (1809-1874) had tried to discourage it in their didactic writings and village lectures.

Chapter three is the beginning of what I see as part two of the book: the advent of self-taught foreign Sinologists and missionaries in China. While Chinese sources emphasize morality and local acts of philanthropy, Western sources were “exercises of ‘scientific’ investigation, with the general purpose of informing European and American audiences about the cultural mores of an exotic land.” Female infanticide was one of many Chinese cultural markers in the Western—predominantly British and French—“textual excursions to China” (pp.78-79). Western writers, most notably members of the Royal Asiatic Society, regarded female infanticide as a synecdoche of the entire Chinese civilization, passing off their judgmental observations as objective facts. The irony came when they deployed Chinese anti-infanticide moral tracts as evidence of the prevalence of female infanticide in China. Missionaries created data, illustrations, and tales to explain the extent of female infanticide in China to instill compassion and passion in the hearts of a Western audience, which would further their cause of proselytizing their religious and scientific ideas. Chapter four analyzes the sympathetic efforts at saving unwanted Chinese children by American and European Catholic schoolchildren, who had been exposed to the Western literature on Chinese infanticide. These schoolchildren became missionaries who aimed to “create an indigenous army of Christians to spread the message of salvation in China” by “saving, baptizing, and rearing unwanted Chinese children to adulthood” (p.118).

Chapter five examines the change in perception of female infanticide from a local custom to a “transgression against the nation’s population, robbing it of potentially productive female citizens and threatening China’s survival on the world stage” (p.150). Foreign orphanages vied with the Chinese for the right to

save Chinese children. The competition extended to labor, land, and other resources at the provincial and prefectural levels. After the Tianjin Massacre in 1870, Chinese villagers grew suspicious of foreign intentions of rescuing and caring for unwanted children. Chinese and foreigners accused each other of infanticide, and King argues that the Tianjin Massacre articulated the issue of unwanted Chinese children as one “requiring a particular *Chinese* solution” (pp.158-159). As a result of exposure to Western “secular” ideas and shifting geopolitics, husbands, not wives alone, were now blamed for committing infanticide. Physical brutality rather than karmic retribution was emphasized. As China became republican, female infanticide became highly politicized, and was at once an issue of women, population, and nation building. The book concludes with an analysis of the One-Child policy in light of the nineteenth-century experiences of female infanticide in China.

The book has explained how female infanticide was problematized as a uniquely Chinese phenomenon. It has successfully reconciled empirical data comprised of multiple and sometimes divergent strands. Highly readable, it deserves to be read by both specialists and students of cross-cultural exchanges and late imperial Chinese society.

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Lawton Robert Burns and Gordon G. Liu (eds.) (2017). *China's Healthcare System and Reform*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 458 pp., ISBN (hardback) 978-1-107-16459-8; ISBN (paperback) 978-1-316-61646-8.

Lawton Robert Burns and Gordon G. Liu's edited book *China's Healthcare System and Reform* aims to make sense of one of the biggest healthcare systems in the world. At first glance, the scope of the book's theme appears alarmingly broad. However, the collection of expert essays constructs a comprehensive analysis of the development of the Chinese healthcare system and its reforms. All contributors are professionals in their own fields, and it is a breath of fresh air to collect their expertise into one comprehensive package.

China's Healthcare System and Reform provides a complete review of China's healthcare system and policy reforms in the context of the global economy. Previously, articles focusing on the Chinese healthcare system (e.g. Yip et al., 2012; Hougaard et al., 2011; Gong et al., 2012; Liu, 2004) have been published in various journals (e.g. *The Lancet*, *Applied Health Economics and Health Policy*, *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*). Thus, *China's Healthcare System and Reform* is an essential manual for anyone interested in the Chinese healthcare system. Students, researchers, practitioners and policy-makers benefit from this thorough collection of essays.

There are several ways to analyse the healthcare system as is explained in the first chapter. It is extremely important to describe these methods as there are so many operators in the field of healthcare. The book's 16 chapters cover the payers, the providers, and the producers (e.g. manufacturers) in China's system. Expectations can be extremely high or unreal even, when a new colossal book is published. However, *China's Healthcare System and Reform* meets all expectations. It provides a remarkable feat in collecting in one place the key elements of change and reforms on one of the most massive healthcare systems in the world.

The book provides a detailed analysis of the historical development of China's healthcare system, the current state of its broad reforms, and the uneasy balance between China's market-driven approach and governmental regulation. Most importantly, it devotes considerable attention to major problems confronting China, including chronic illness (non-communicable diseases), public health, long-term care and economic security for the elderly. In addition to that, two important themes emerge from the essays: the urgent need for reforms but also the concerns about rising costs in the healthcare system.

The book's structure is very logical and easy to follow. Part one explains the analytic framework, history and how the public health system is connected to the infrastructure. Part two introduces healthcare reform in quite a detailed manner. This is followed by part three's information on healthcare providers and part four's overview and analysis on insurers and reimbursement. The final part, part five, introduces various kinds of product manufacturers.

One of the strengths of this book are the numerous charts, pictures and tables that are used throughout the book but especially in part five, “Product Manufacturers”. *China’s Healthcare System and Reform* is easy to use as a manual that provides adequate information on two key elements, evolution and reform. The use of many government sources (e.g. State Council, China Food and Drug Administration, National Health Insurance Administration) is also very interesting, because the Chinese curtain of secrecy can sometimes prevent researchers from acquiring information (see for example: chapter eight, “China’s Hospital Sector”; the eleventh chapter, “Health Insurance in China”; and the fourteenth chapter, “China’s Pharmaceutical Sector”). The book is very technical and at some points it would have been interesting to hear how the patients, actual users, of the healthcare system feel. However, the aim of the book is to introduce the healthcare organization and not to analyse how patients feel about the system.

In conclusion, this massive information package gives an extensive overview of the complexity of the Chinese healthcare system. It offers a comprehensive look at one of the world’s largest healthcare systems, its background and future. I truly hope this book inspires and encourages future researchers to take on the task to further study the Chinese healthcare system.

The editors, Burns and Liu, are experts in their field of study. This gives the book its professional feeling. Lawton Robert Burns is a James Joo-Jin Kim professor in the Health Care Management Department at the Wharton School. He is also the Co-director of the Roy and Diana Vagelos Program in Life Sciences and Management at the University of Pennsylvania. He has authored and co-authored many textbooks, scientific articles and publications.

Gordon G. Liu is a PKU Yangtze River Scholar Professor of Economics at the Peking University National School of Development, and director of the PKU China Center for Health Economic Research. In addition to that, he is a member of China’s State Council Health Reform Expert Advisory Committee. He has served as an associate editor for many academic journals.

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Steve Lau and John De Lucy (eds.) (2017). *Chinese Labour Corps: Photographs from the WJ Hawkings Collection*. Myosotis Books. 96 pp., ISBN-10: 1999806603.

This new work, published in English, French and Mandarin, draws upon recently-discovered photographic evidence to cast a fresh light upon the work and role of the Chinese Labour Corps (CLC) on the Western Front during the First World War. At its core lie the photographs taken by William James Hawkings in China and France between 1917 and 1919 and rediscovered by his grandson, John De Lucy, in 2014. These images formed the core of *A Good Reputation Endures Forever*—the first UK exhibition to focus exclusively on the volunteers of the CLC—and now, thanks to the efforts of John De Lucy and Steve Lau, highlights from the collection are available to a wider audience.

William James Hawkings was born in Somerset in 1883, and moved to China in 1908 to work for the British American Tobacco Company. A fluent Chinese speaker, he travelled to the CLC recruitment centre in Weihaiwei in early 1917,

and was appointed Superintendent of Number 4 Party CLC. He arrived in France in August 1917, and was posted to Calais with No. 12 Company CLC to work in the busy docks. In late 1917 W.J. Hawkings travelled to China to collect more recruits, returning to France seven months later. He subsequently served with No. 103 Skilled Trades Company at Noyelles-sur-Mer, prior to taking over command of the No. 30 Unskilled Labour Corps at Bourbourg. He was demobilised in August 1919 and returned to China in early 1920. Throughout his time with the CLC, Hawkings used his camera to record the lives of the men under his command. His ability fully to engage with his subjects—and their obvious ease with their chronicler—allowed him to capture a series of images of military life that are remarkable for their informality and humanity.

The photographs have been arranged to cast a light on various core aspects of the experiences of the 96,000 Chinese volunteers who served under British command during the Great War. They thus reflect the lives of an extraordinary group of Chinese working men during a period of tumultuous change. At the outbreak of the First World War, China was in the process of transforming from Empire to Republic. The Chinese government was keen to develop its place on the world stage, and saw support for the Allies as a route to both recovering German possessions in Shandong Province and countering the increasing influence of Japan in the region. By mid-1916 Britain was suffering from an acute shortage of labour, as the nation struggled to deal with the losses incurred on the Western Front. Many jobs at home were taken over by women, but the British government was eager to find a means of releasing the numerous troops employed on vital labour duties behind the front lines to serve in the trenches.

The recruitment of Chinese workers offered a solution to this problem. It also offered the Chinese government an opportunity to align itself with the Allied cause. From early 1917, large numbers of Chinese labourers were hired in the north of the country to serve with the British army. Recruitment centred on Weihaiwei in Shandong Province. The region's poverty and the relatively high wages offered by British recruiters ensured that there was no shortage of volunteers.

It is within this contextual landscape that the images captured by Hawkings are firmly located. The bulk of the book's narrative takes the form of quotes

from contemporary letters, newspaper reports, diaries and other written sources, whilst all of the photographic captions reproduce Hawkings's own descriptions. Thus armed, the reader is taken on an astonishing visual journey from Weihaiwei to the CLC's main camp at Noyelles-sur-Mer in Northern France.

The arrangement of the book is essentially thematic, commencing with an outline of Hawkings's life and then moving on to explore the experiences of the men who served under his command in a range of settings: recruitment and transport, military life, working life, off-duty life, and finally sickness and death. Photographs taken at the point of embarkation reflect the mixed emotions of smartly-uniformed young men setting off on an epic journey to the battlefields of France and Flanders. In marked contrast, many of the images of CLC members at work capture the ill-concealed anxiety on the faces of men engaged in the perilous processing of unexploded munitions.

It is, however, the photographs of CLC volunteers at leisure that are perhaps the most astonishing. Here, within the mundane surroundings of camp life, Hawkings has captured something special. Unlike so many official images of the war, his photographs appear to be populated by real people with whom the viewer can immediately connect. The excitement of receiving mail from home is evident in one group shot, just as the pride of a horticulturalist shines through in a photograph of a labourer tending the perfectly laid-out hospital garden at Noyelles-sur-Mer. Elsewhere, a portrait of a man with his pet songbird conveys a special sense of intimacy; and the supreme confidence of a naked young man posing shamelessly for the camera whilst waiting to shower serves as a reminder of the universal and timeless optimism of youth.

But such optimism was often misplaced, and Hawkings did not hesitate to chronicle the sacrifices of the CLC workers. Although members of the Chinese Labour Corps did not serve on the front line, some 3,000 lost their lives whilst serving in France and Flanders. Their role in maintaining Britain's military infrastructure made them prime targets for German artillery and aircraft, whilst their dangerous work with munitions and explosives also led to many casualties. Others died in industrial accidents, but the biggest killer was disease, particularly the deadly influenza epidemic of 1918-19.

Given this context, it is unsurprising that many of the images reproduced reflect upon sickness and death. The work undertaken by the British medical staff based at Noyelles-sur-Mer is chronicled, with particular emphasis being given to the strict regime of inspection and treatment undertaken to minimise the risk of the spread of trachoma and conjunctivitis amongst the closely-packed CLC workers based there. Moreover, in these images we also find reminders that not all of the Chinese volunteers based there were drawn from the labouring classes. Here we also see the faces of young members of China's intellectual elite—many linked to the YMCA—who had travelled to France to evangelise and to educate their fellow countrymen.

But if these photographs are enlightening, it is a group of images recording the funeral of a CLC member that engenders the greatest emotional impact. As we look upon the funeral party escorting their dead companion's Union Jack-draped coffin to his final resting place, we witness both British and Chinese warriors walking—albeit momentarily—in step.

The story of Chinese labour during the Great War has long been ignored by scholars and historians. Some recent works have gone some way towards casting a fresh light upon this shamefully neglected story, but it is through works such as this that we are perhaps best able to breathe fresh life into the stories of those who travelled so far to serve in a foreign war. The time has come to remember the “forgotten of the forgotten”.

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Kristin Stapleton (2016). *Fact in Fiction: 1920s China and Ba Jin's Family*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 296 pp., ISBN 978-1503601062.

There are few resources amongst contemporary Chinese literary criticism that manage to weave such insightful literary readings and incisive historical research as Kristin Stapleton's *Fact in Fiction: 1920s China and Ba Jin's Family*. The book accomplishes three feats, as set out by Stapleton in her introductory

chapter, simultaneously incorporating a history of twentieth-century Chengdu (and its relevance to the developments in China during this period, more broadly) alongside the author's biography of Ba Jin's formative years in the city and the historiographical context of his novel *Family*. Such an undertaking by a less skilled author would have, perhaps, produced a work which simplifies the rich historical underpinnings of Ba Jin's *Family* to supplementary readings of the novel, coupled with incidental evidence of the political and social machinations of the city in which its author grew up. Not so under Stapleton's careful guidance. By reading the social and economic development of early twentieth-century Chengdu as much as its fictional counterpart in Ba Jin's *Turbulent Stream* trilogy, Stapleton provides a perceptive reading of *Family* which invites the reader to consider how fiction can enrich and enliven our understanding of history.

Fact in Fiction is divided into seven chapters which each shine a light on the various social, economic and political contexts of 1920s Chengdu. The book organizes its chapters thematically, centring around topical discussions of "patriarchy and the 'Confucian' family, militarist politics and Chinese cities, the nature of the revolutions in cultural values and social structure during the early twentieth century, and their effects on Chinese families and on Chinese cities" (p.7). This thematic approach allows Stapleton the flexibility to manoeuvre her discussions across the broad timeframe of early twentieth-century China, whilst remaining faithful to the book's primary focus on the historical record of Ba Jin's youth, the period in which *Family* is set, and the social and political situation of 1920s Chengdu.

At the forefront of Stapleton's inquiry throughout, however, is the novel *Family*; although she also offers incidental analysis of its sequels *Spring* (*Chun* 春) and *Autumn* (*Qiu* 秋)—published in 1938 and 1940, respectively—which constitute Ba Jin's *Turbulent Stream* trilogy (of which *Family* is the first part) and which, she emphasizes, "[have] played a major role in shaping how China's history in the first few decades of the twentieth century has been understood, both in China and abroad" (p.2). Consequently, Stapleton employs the use of characters from the trilogy as her starting points for each chapter, analysing how "Ba Jin's description of him, her, or them corresponds to what the historical record tells us about real people in similar situations" (p.14). Overall, this

approach works well and it provides Stapleton a rich canvas of characters whose stories throughout *Family* she uses to underpin the thematic discussions within the book.

Chapter one, entitled, “Mingfeng: The Life of a Slave Girl”, for example, deals not with the most powerful of *Family*’s characters, but “with the most vulnerable members of the traditional household structure, slave girls” (p.17). Whilst Stapleton concedes that “evidence to document the lives of slave girls in China in the first decades of the twentieth century is hard to come by” (p.18), her exposition of Mingfeng among the other characters illustrated by Ba Jin is convincingly coupled with historiographic evidence to suggest why slave girls’ status had changed so little in the first half of the twentieth century; despite Ba Jin’s sympathetic portrayal of Mingfeng in *Family*. Stapleton provides a translated “Slave Girl Contract from Chengdu, 1919” to evidence the legal apparatus for the ownership of slave girls in the city and notes that, although Ba Jin’s “position in the social order was far removed from theirs” (p.18), there were many slave girls in Chengdu in the early 1920s whose experience and status, she argues, would likely have been reflective of their fictional portrayal in *Family*. It would be easy to criticize Stapleton for assuming that Ba Jin’s worldview—particularly in relation to chapter one’s concluding discussion of the “liberation” of slave girls in the May Fourth era—was reflective of the wider political and economic reforms sweeping China between the 1910s and 1940s. Indeed, as she argues throughout the book, Stapleton asserts that Ba Jin was “unusual ... in Chengdu in the 1910s and 1920s” (p.56) being, himself, in many ways, a pre-emptive “[advocate] of social change in China” and “[calling] for the abolition of slave girl status and concubinage” (p.44). Not content with unravelling the legal and social context of slave girls in early twentieth-century Chengdu, Stapleton concludes her analysis of Mingfeng by considering the city from a slave girl’s perspective, providing an insightful analysis of the experience of slave girls in Chengdu, as well as the experience of slave girls from various locations traversing the threshold of rural China to the city, more widely.

The book’s successive chapters (two-seven) successfully chart the development of Chengdu alongside their fictional counterparts in *Family*, whose professions or public profiles Stapleton employs in detailing the various social and economic contexts of the novel. While chapter two and three’s discussions

of “Chengdu’s Gentry” and “The Chengdu Economy”, respectively, undoubtedly provide a significant contribution to our understanding of how Ba Jin’s work reflects the early social and economic development of Chengdu, Stapleton’s insights into the lives of everyday citizens in chapters four-six provide her greatest contribution to debates around the lived experience of individuals during the May Fourth era. Moreover, her contribution (as in chapter one) to historical debates on Gender Studies in China—as exemplified by chapter six’s exploration of “Chengdu and the ‘New Woman’”—helps shed light on why, as a result of its “stifling conservatism”, eastern cities like Shanghai, Guangzhou, and even Beijing, “became magnets that attracted many revolutionary youth away from interior cities like Chengdu” (p.183). Stapleton’s approach in this effort to unravel women’s experience in early twentieth-century Chengdu is akin to Leta Hong Fincher’s *Leftover Women: The Resurgence of Gender Inequality in China* (2014), whose comparable use of personal stories to illustrate the challenges faced by women in contemporary China suggest that more research is needed to bridge the gap between the new conceptions of women’s education and roles in society in the late 1910s and early 1920s, and the experience of women in China today.

In *Fact in Fiction*, Stapleton has undoubtedly succeeded in producing a highly detailed and rich study of how the social and political situation in 1920s Chengdu intersects with *Family* as fiction. If there is one criticism that might be levelled about sections of the book, it is that Stapleton’s keen enthusiasm for the social and economic development of Chengdu as a growing city in early twentieth-century China does, at times, overshadow her astute analysis of *Family*. Chapter three’s lengthy exploration of the 1909 Chengdu census, for example—while no doubt an invaluable resource for social anthropologists of early twentieth-century China—loses its focal character, Gao Juexin’s, experience of 1920s Chengdu amongst Stapleton’s intricately detailed description of the city which, she concedes, Ba Jin “based ... pretty much entirely on his memories of his childhood and stories he heard from others” (p.88). Stapleton can be forgiven such indulgences, however, as the chapters which focus more prominently on her literary analysis of Ba Jin’s work (notably chapters one, two and six) are instructive illustrations of how to read literary sources whilst also considering their motivation and historical context.

Thus, while *Fact in Fiction: 1920s China and Ba Jin's Family* should be read by anyone with an interest in Ba Jin, his *Turbulent Stream* trilogy or the development of Chengdu in the early twentieth century, Stapleton's methodological analysis and engaging exploration of Chengdu's rich history *vis-à-vis* Ba Jin's *Family* should be considered a mandatory resource to any literary historian who wishes to produce a work of equal quality and insight.

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Bret Hinsch (2016). *Women in Imperial China*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. xiv + 255 pp., ISBN 978-1-4422-7165-4.

The vast scope of Chinese women's history throughout its two millennia-long imperial period invites sustained scholarly attention to their status, position, image, and a wide range of gender-related issues. Whereas recent years have witnessed an increasing interest in examining historical Chinese women in different dynasties, Bret Hinsch's new book offers a succinct, yet eloquent survey of womanhood in the shifting contexts of Chinese history, from remote antiquity to the end of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911).

The core of the study consists of seven chapters, appended by a brief conclusion that summarises the main arguments put forth in the volume. The chapters proceed, in a chronological order, to examine Chinese women's achievements, failures, restraints, and struggles. Instead of a mere outline of historic figures and events, Hinsch selects the most representative figures and events, including the warrior empress Fu Hao (d. ca 1200 BC), the only female emperor Wu Zetian (r. 690-705), the powerful empress dowager Cixi (1835-1908), and many other ordinary women who are less well-known. Based on this examination, he focuses on the different ways people in each period constructed female identity, and how different people accepted or contested it. Moreover, he traces the transformation of female social roles and the changing mechanics men deployed to control women, as well as the factual and imaginative tools women used to thrive in spite of the limits they faced.

Covering such a large time-span within merely 200 pages is certainly not an easy task, and Hinsch is fully aware that such an approach runs the risk of being “not only futile and boring but even counterproductive” (p.xiii), but he masterfully solves the problem by highlighting some of the most important themes that characterised each period. By situating Chinese women in larger historic trends in economics, social structure, thought, and other important topics, it enables a more comprehensive understanding of the evolution and transformation of womanhood throughout imperial China.

Although recent studies on Chinese women in particular dynasties or time periods are abundant, Hinsch’s volume invites readers to reconsider some of the established views about the history of Chinese women. Women’s personal freedom in imperial China, for instance, has been conventionally seen as subjected to a rigid patriarchal authority both in society and the family. Patriarchy is normally understood as male domination. However, Hinsch reveals that women often helped uphold patriarchal norms, and savvy women even realised that they could employ male-dominated institutions to obtain substantial advantages. Furthermore, Hinsch aptly points out that although Confucianism clearly distinguishes men from women and thus creates a defined social inequality, it also provides each sex with space to flourish. This perennial emphasis on separating the sexes kept women from attending schools or serving in public office, but such a parallel female realm also “fostered the development of spaces where women could act with a degree of autonomy” (p.204). Some even turned patriarchal ideas such as patrilinealism and filial piety to their advantage, as both Wu Zetian and Cixi have demonstrated. Because customs such as foot binding, reclusion, and widow chastity that favoured men also provided women with tangible benefits, they “often collaborated with men to construct and maintain patriarchal customs” (p.207).

Throughout the volume, Hinsch makes strenuous efforts in illustrating an extremely diversified picture of women in Chinese history, paying particular attention to the considerable change and development relating to gender and womanhood across the long sweep of China’s history. Hinsch’s keen observation of the different lives of women in the north and the south during the Northern and Southern dynasties (420–589) is refreshing and compelling. In particular, he examines how the Xianbei people “selected and modified Chinese

customs to suit their particular circumstances” and how the different lives of women in the north and the south “reflected the cultural division of these two eras” (p.63). Yet critical readers may expect a more elaborate analysis of women in the Khitan Liao (907-1125) and the Jurchen Jin (1115-1234), two non-Chinese neighbours to the Chinese Song in the south. Were the lives of Khitan and Jurchen women the same as their Chinese contemporaries? To what extent did ethnicity impact womanhood? How did the different acceptance of Confucian norms influence gender roles and identity? All these questions remain unanswered. Moreover, the period of the paramount Mongol Yuan dynasty (1368-1644) is neglected, leaving a major gap in Hinsch’s otherwise enormously cogent discussion of the formative impact of earlier times on later eras.

This minor cavil aside, *Women in Imperial China* is a lucid, sharply-observed study that displays the impressive lives and achievements of women through China’s long history. At a time of a continuous revival of interest in Chinese women, Bret Hinsch’s new book is a fitting addition to the growing body of scholarship on women in traditional China and will surely attract academic professionals, students, and general readers.

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James C.S. Lin and Xiuzhen Li (2018). *China’s First Emperor and the Terracotta Warriors*. Liverpool: National Museums Liverpool. 152 pp., ISBN 978-1-902700-59-5.

In February 2018 a new exhibition entitled *China’s First Emperor and the Terracotta Warriors* opened at the World Museum, in Liverpool. Organised in collaboration with the Shaanxi Provincial Cultural Relics Bureau and Shaanxi History Museum, this did not of course represent the first visit of the Terracotta Army to these shores. In terms of public engagement, however, it was undoubtedly a major coup for Liverpool: a small selection of the figures drew some 225,000 visitors to the City Arts Centre in Edinburgh in 1985; whilst the British Museum’s blockbuster 2007-8 exhibition attracted crowds that had not

been seen since the ground-breaking Tutankhamun exhibition in 1980. The Liverpool exhibition showcased some 180 items, over half of which had not previously been seen in the UK. Given the range of material on display and the undoubted widespread popular interest in Qin Shi Huang's Terracotta Army, it is accordingly not surprising that National Museums Liverpool took the decision to produce a new publication to accompany the exhibition.

China's First Emperor and the Terracotta Warriors is divided into five individually credited chapters, each of which effectively represents a stand-alone essay. The first of these, authored by James C.S. Lin of the Ashmolean Museum, sets the exhibition within its wider historical context by providing a whistle-stop tour of early Chinese history from the Neolithic to the Zhou. This is followed by a similarly pithy introduction to the Warring States Period and the rise of the Qin, also authored by Lin. Both of these essays have undoubtedly been written with a general audience very much in mind. They are engaging, easy to follow, and benefit from the well-judged selection of supporting maps and images.

The third chapter is authored by Xiuzhen Li of the Qin Shi Huang's Mausoleum Site Museum. An expert on the First Emperor's tomb complex, Li is well-qualified to provide an overview of Qin Shi Huang's origins, achievements, palaces and peregrinations. The chapter concludes with an account of the First Emperor's death, providing a neat segue into Li's next contribution, which is entitled "The Terracotta Warriors". At some 40 pages in length, this is by far the most substantial section of the volume. The chapter's title is arguably a little misleading, as its focus extends well beyond the emperor's sculpted guardians. Rather, Li first focuses on exploring the location of his tomb through the lenses of both landscape and geomancy, before going on to discuss the logistics of construction and the nature of the layout of the wider tomb complex. Only then does discussion turn to the Terracotta Warriors and the other grave goods recovered from the site. Here Li plays to her strengths, and the section focusing upon the production of the figures and their weapons draws upon recent international research undertaken by the Qin Shi Huang's Mausoleum Site Museum in collaboration with UCL's Institute of Archaeology.

Thus far, the volume has covered much the same ground as previously covered by Jane Portal in *The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army* (2007) and Liu Yang in *China's Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor's Legacy* (2013). The final chapter, however, moves into fresh territory by taking up the story after the fall of the Qin. Here, James C.S. Lin turns the spotlight onto the Han, exploring both the Han royal tombs constructed to the north of the old capital Chang'an and the royal tombs of Eastern China. A judicious choice of imagery captures both the painstaking process of archaeological excavation and the vast and diverse range of animal figures that populated the breath-taking underground "cities" of the Western Han rulers. Less familiar to European eyes than the Qin warriors, these miniature sculptures are nonetheless mesmerising and serve as a poignant reminder of the Han belief in an afterlife as a continuation of the mortal world.

But after so long spent exploring China's tombs, it is perhaps with some relief that the reader emerges once again into the light, for the final chapter is not entirely dedicated to the afterlife. Rather, it seems timely and appropriate that the volume should end with a nod to the "Belt and Road"; using archaeological evidence to stress the importance of the land and sea links that connected Han China both to the rest of Asia and to the West.

In conclusion, *China's First Emperor and the Terracotta Warriors* seeks neither to serve as an exhibition catalogue, nor as a scholarly resource. Rather, it is a book that is unashamedly targeted at the non-specialist museum-goer. But, if we are seeking to expand public understanding and appreciation of Chinese history, such popularism is in itself no bad thing. Lin and Li have written an excellent and highly accessible introduction to the topic, and both the authors and their editor (Karen Miller) are to be heartily congratulated upon creating such a lively and readable text.

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