

InterDisciplines

Journal of History and Sociology

Volume 8 - Issue 1

Postcolonialism and China

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Journal of History and Sociology

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Postcolonialism and China

Issue editors

Marius Meinhof (Bielefeld University)

Junchen Yan (Bielefeld University)

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Managing editor: Melanie Eulitz (BGHS)

Copy editor: Sandra Lustig

Layout: Anne C. Ware

Cover picture by Marius Meinhof

Coverdesign: deterringdesign GmbH Bielefeld/Thomas Abel

www.inter-disciplines.org

www.uni-bielefeld.de/bghs

ISSN 2191-6721

This publication was made possible by financial support from the German Research Foundation—Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).

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On the issue's cover photo:

Marius Meinhof: *No Title*

The image on the cover shows Chinese »Western-style« middle-class housing, symbolizing the ambivalence of China's position of power and powerlessness around which the contributions of this issue of *InterDisciplines* revolve. Around the world, traditional European architecture symbolizes the lasting influence of the era of high colonialism. In China, however, it is local Chinese companies that build new »European« houses to cater to the taste of the Chinese middle classes. Is this a sign of newly achieved wealth and power aimed at transforming former colonial cultures into commodities? Or is it a sign of an ongoing colonization of the mind?

Postcolonialism and China

Some introductory remarks

Marius Meinhof, Junchen Yan, Lili Zhu

In 2013, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, Xi Jinping, gave a speech at the 12th National People's Congress. The speech introduced his vision of the »China Dream« that was to become the slogan guiding his political program. In the course of the speech he made a series of proposals for the future of China:

Our goal is to build a moderately well-off society, to create a prosperous, democratic, civilized, harmonious, socialist, and modern country, and to realize the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese people. In order to do so, we must create prosperity for our country, a prospering nation, and happiness for the people. This goal deeply reflects the ideals of today's Chinese people and our ancestors' glorious tradition of relentlessly pursuing progress. [...] To accomplish the Chinese Dream we have to take a Chinese path. This is the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. This is not a path that opens up by itself, but it is the outcome of thousands of years of history: over 30 years of great practices and experiences; over 60 years of continuous explorations since the establishment of the People's Republic of China; the hard lessons of over 170 years of developing the Chinese nation in modern times; the heritage of 5000 years of history of the Chinese civilization. The sum of these experiences provides this path with deep historical roots and realistic foundations.¹

1 Translation by the authors. The original quote goes: »实现全面建成小康社会、建成富强民主文明和谐的社会主义现代化国家的奋斗目标，实现中华民族伟大复兴的中国梦，就是要实现国家富强、民族振兴、人民幸

Readers familiar with Chinese political rhetoric will recognize many claims typical of the official discourse of mainland China: Xi affirms the aims of previous general secretaries to create a »moderately well-off society« that is meant to be prosperous, civilized, and harmonious, and both modern and socialist. But he insists on connecting this aim specifically with Chinese culture and history. Not only is the term »well-off society« itself a concept derived from traditional Confucian texts, but Xi also stresses that this aim reflects the tradition of China's ancestors, and he roots it in a continuous history that reaches back for thousands of years. These historic roots, however, are not limited to ancient tradition. Xi refers extensively to the history of the nineteenth and twentieth century, and notably makes references to colonialism by invoking the Opium Wars in the 1840s in his reference to 170 years of »hard lessons.«

This speech, in our opinion, shows us the vital need to understand the entanglements of modernity and colonialism in contemporary Chinese thought. It articulates and reaffirms the desire to »develop« and to »become modern« that has been debated in postcolonial and post-development studies for a long time (e.g., Chakrabarty 1992; Escobar 1995; Quijano 2000; Ziai 2006). But this »becoming modern« is not about repeating the history of Europe, as Chakrabarty (1992) has described for India. Rather, Xi stresses the notion of creating a distinctive and self-determined Chinese future. He seems to depart from the discourse that Vukovich in his analysis of representations of China in the beginning of the twenty-first century has described as a discourse on China »becoming-the-same as the West« (Vukovich 2012, 9). Rather, Xi's speech raises anew the question of the nature of modernity, and he ties this to the problem of Chinese identity and culture within the world. At the same

福，既深深体现了今天中国人的理想，也深深反映了我们先人们不懈追求进步的光荣传统。[...] 实现中国梦必须走中国道路。这就是中国特色社会主义道路。这条道路来之不易，它是在改革开放30多年的伟大实践中走出来的，是在中华人民共和国成立60多年的持续探索中走出来的，是在对近代以来170多年中华民族发展历程的深刻总结中走出来的，是在对中华民族5000多年悠久文明的传承中走出来的，具有深厚的历史渊源和广泛的现实基础。「

time, Xi's speech is clearly concerned with the experiences of colonial history and the question of Chinese self-determination. Its worldview thus fits well with postcolonial theory: it mirrors a similar concern as developed by Barlow (1997a) in her concept of *colonial modernity*, where she stresses the fundamental relevance of colonialism and colonial experiences for modernity in East Asia.² Chinese political rhetoric, as presented in Xi's speech above, precisely underlines this relationship of modernity and colonialism. But it also expresses a desire for this modernity, and even an entitlement to be modern rooted in China's historic experiences. The »China Dream« therefore tries to envision not an alternative to modernity, but an alternative modernity shaped by the concerns of Chinese elites. Because the »China Dream« combines all these concerns in a single political vision, it is in every respect a postcolonial dream: it can be placed in a long history of debates on the »question of modernity« (Wang 1998; Zhang 1994b) and China's place in the world (Karl 2002; Shih 2001). And it articulates a desire to successfully practice a modernity different from Western liberalism that will entangle rather than contrast tradition and modernity and that will overcome the humiliation of being colonized.

The »China Dream« is a political slogan designed within an institutionalized discourse produced by the state. But it is not simply a part of an elite discourse disconnected from other parts of society. Concerns with modernity and colonialism go far beyond the realm of state discourse. However one may evaluate the lines above, it should be clear that they are typical of the way colonial memories appear in Chinese discourses. Be it in political speeches, online debates, or daily conversations in the streets—the nexus of colonialism-modernity-identity may appear almost anywhere: in official and unofficial memories on national humiliation, Japanese invasion, and American imperialism meddling with Chinese sovereignty; in debates on who is backward or modern as well as in the various movements and government interventions aiming to modernize China; in the paradoxical and highly emotional relations to the West and

2 This argument strikingly resembles the concept of modernity/coloniality in South American decolonial scholarship, as debated in Meinhof's contribution to this issue.

the ambivalent notions on Chinese national characteristics. These concerns are overlooked far too often by Western observers, because—just as in Xi’s speech above—they are usually discussed without explicitly using the word »colonialism« and without explaining what is implied by it. But they are there, and they matter in daily life and in political practices.

The entanglement of modernity and colonialism in China

This issue of *InterDisciplines* tries to deal with this unnamed entanglement of modernity and colonialism on an empirical as well as a conceptual level. By debating »postcolonialism and China,« we would like to show how postcolonial approaches can be used as sensitizing concepts that help us to explicate and translate the concerns that structure this quest for modernity and sovereignty. This is certainly an experimental intellectual journey with an uncertain outcome. But it is surely worth undertaking. Xi Jinping’s quote above shows more impressively than any theoretical argument that postcolonial concerns matter for China, and that they must be reflected anew with respect to this country: they matter because the desire to be modern is obvious in a wide variety of discourses and practices in China, and they matter because this desire for modernity is connected to colonial history and memories of colonialism. But the quote above also reminds us that postcolonial arguments have to be reflected and problematized in a specific way in the context of China, because they are similar to, or even part of, the official government discourse in China. Unlike the European context, postcolonialism and the state cannot be separated nor seen as opposing forces with respect to China. Research on China—and we would argue that this is true of the rest of the world—requires a specific, localized version of postcolonialism.³

Such a perspective is of relevance for European historians and sociologists, not simply due to the Western urge to make sense of China’s »rise« or »return.« Postcolonial perspectives, and especially their challenge to established notions of modernity, are rapidly gaining relevance in history

3 For a similar argument for Indian and Latin American subaltern studies see Pinto (2013).

(Chakrabarty 2000; Conrad and Randeria 2002; Epple 2012; Stoler and Cooper 1997) and very recently also in sociology (Costa 2005; Go 2016; Reuter and Villa 2008; Rodriguez 2010). But East Asian colonial and postcolonial perspectives—and especially Chinese perspectives—are often overlooked in these debates. This is surprising because China is obviously a perfect place to study such issues.⁴ Indeed, thinking about postcolonialism and China provides an inspiring challenge for postcolonial thought: China was not colonized by one single power or in one single fashion, but suffered from multiple overlapping and sometimes conflicting colonial agendas (Goodman and Goodman 2012). This fact has inspired many attempts to make sense of colonialism in China: Marxists have talked about semi-colonialism (e.g., Mandel 1985) in order to point out a colonial dependence of a formally independent country. Gallagher and Robertson (1953) suggested the term »informal empire« to describe an imperialist domination that reaches beyond the sphere of formal colonies, while Barlow (1997a) talks about a »colonial modernity« that entangles colonial logics and projects of modernization in all of East Asia and comprises multiple forms of colonialism. This unique form of colonialism has numerous consequences for postcolonial thinking about China: unlike the regions mainly debated in postcolonial studies, China was never entirely subject to coherent colonial cultural policies. Even after the Opium Wars, Chinese officials did not simply receive foreign influences, but they actively traveled abroad, investigating the Western powers and relating their findings to much older discursive concepts (M. Wang 2014, 6–7). Accordingly, many discursive shifts were actively designed and promoted by Chinese who conceived of them as strategies to rescue the country and (later) the nation. These discursive shifts thus rarely constituted absolute discontinuities or »catastrophes« in the Chinese discourse, even if they produced many results strikingly similar to those in other colonized countries.⁵ Furthermore, China's decolonization was strikingly successful, making it much harder to claim an unbroken legacy of colonial modernity. In the 1940s, China

4 For a more detailed argumentation on the relevance of postcolonial perspectives see Daniel Vukovich's afterword to this issue.

5 See, for example, Wang (2014, 101–14) on Chinese nationalism.

broke free from political and economic dependency, gaining considerable »soft power« and influencing anti-imperialist movements in all three »worlds« of the Cold War. Today, China is without a doubt one of the most powerful countries in the world, with the ability to undermine the »global standards« of Euro-American hegemony to a considerable degree. Hence, considering postcolonialism and China forces us to reconsider if and how heterogeneous forms of colonialism could produce a relatively coherent colonial modernity and how the legacy of this colonialism could work even after the end of political and economic dependency. Reconsidering postcolonialism for China raises some decisive questions: How can postcolonial critical thought be possible in a context where the state uses similar concepts in its own discourse? Can the postcolonial narrative prevail if a country actually does break free from dependency, or will we find that postcolonialism invariably needs its victims? In other words: can the postcolonial mode of thought be useful for understanding China at all, or do we need something else?

This issue of *InterDisciplines* is the result of two workshops on »Postcolonialism and China« held in Bielefeld in 2016 and in Cologne in 2017.⁶ We initially started to organize the workshops out of a feeling of dissatisfaction toward our disciplines, especially sociology: we were dissatisfied with research on China that was often based on only superficial regional knowledge and an application of ready-made methods or theories developed in the West, and that was largely conducted in ignorance of the depths of already existing sinological research. But we were equally dissatisfied with many works from (Anglo-American) China studies, which we perceived as often patronizing and dismissive toward Chinese scholars as well as hostile toward the government of the People's Republic of China. In contrast to such perspectives, we hoped to experiment with new narratives that could help us move away from what we felt to be the »old« framework of thought: the sociological idea of diffusion and convergence that Vukovich has termed the discourse of »becoming-

6 The workshops were funded by the Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology and the Global South Studies Center in Cologne, respectively.

sameness« (Vukovich 2012); the political idea of a clash or confrontation between a liberal »world« and an authoritarian, local, and all-too-often »evil« Chinese state; and the narrative of a mysterious »middle kingdom« that believes itself to be »everything under heaven« and can only be grasped within an ancient local history. Instead, we hoped, postcolonial approaches could help us focus on simultaneities of (asymmetric) entanglement (Randeria 1999) and difference (Bhabha 2012, 49–51) in a way that takes Chinese claims to change the world order of modernity seriously without depicting it as threat to »Western civilization.«

The articles assembled in this issue clearly show that colonial modernity and the urge to overcome it can be seen as the common thread that has connected various systems and regions in China since the Opium Wars—a thread that allows us to connect attempts to »learn« or »create« modernity and nation, to secure self-determination and dignity, and to enunciate Chinese identities in the modern world. It can also connect China’s history with global history by regarding the Opium Wars as colonial wars, informed by exchanges of knowledge and power practices between various colonial projects, thus placing China within a colonial and later within a postcolonial world. In short: postcolonialism, if reflected and adapted properly, may allow us to link various different disciplines and areas of interest with each other as well as with important concerns of many people in China, and it can also reconnect historical, sociological, and sinological knowledge.

Postcolonial concerns with China

Our aspiration to use a postcolonial perspective raises the question what such a postcolonial perspective might actually be. Postcolonialism is clearly not a finished and coherent »theory« in the sense of a system of concepts such as Marxism or systems theory, and it cannot be reduced to any one theory or attributed to any single scholar. Rather, postcolonialism is a shared *concern* that revolves around a struggle to point out the social and epistemic legacies of colonialism and informal empire in order to overcome it.

To put the postcolonial concerns of this issue in a nutshell, it might be best to understand them as revolving around three central topics: Firstly, a *heritage of colonialism* structures modernity even after the fall of the colonial empires. This means on the one hand the influence of memories of colonialism in China and on the other hand the power of colonial modernity (Barlow 1997b) as forces that shape the structures of modernity until today. Postcolonial scholars believe that modernity was born from and shaped by colonialism that connected the globe long before the industrial revolution (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992; Cooper and Stoler 1997; see also Pomeranz 2000) and that it still carries and reproduces at its core asymmetries grounded in this colonial origin (Moraña et al. 2008; Quijano 2000). The contributions of this issue reflect on this heritage of colonialism from a postcolonial perspective. For example, both Lili Zhu and Marius Meinhof try to make sense of the deep impact of colonialism on Chinese modernity: They show how colonialism has given birth to new discourses that are not entirely »Western« or »Chinese,« but that nevertheless transport a heritage of colonialism and keep it alive in modern Chinese society.

Secondly, this issue tries to deal with the asymmetric, often Eurocentric structure of *knowledge production* in the world. Postcolonial scholars argue that colonial power was and is rooted in the production of orientalist knowledge and its internalization by the colonized (Chakrabarty 2000; Said 1978), including the academic problem of »asymmetric ignorance« (Chakrabarty 1992) and the tendency to build theories of modernity solely on Euro-American experiences (Comaroff and Comaroff 2012). This is true for China, too, as the power to define scholarly »truth« in international debates is still held by authors in some centers in the Anglo-American world. If any group in China wants to enunciate a modernity with Chinese characteristics, then they must do so within a world still dominated by an Anglo-American discourse. Both Yan's and Sandfort's contributions deal with this problem and reflect on the role of academia in it. They focus on different strategies through which Chinese deal with orientalist knowledge in a subversive or complicit way, and in

doing so highlight the entanglements of knowledge production between China and »the West.«

Thirdly, a concern with *modernity* is present in all contributions to this issue of *InterDisciplines*. This concern with modernity makes our articles connect to other postcolonial debates on a fundamental level: most postcolonial scholars understand postcolonialism as a new approach to understanding modernity—they aim to contribute to a new postcolonial description of the world that challenges the old story of an ideal-typical modernity invented in Europe and disseminated around the globe. They understand modernity as an intrinsically »colonial modernity« (Barlow 1997a) as well as asymmetrically »entangled modernities« (Randeria 2002) that can neither be reduced to one single ideal type nor be separated into multiple national or regional modernities. All the contributions in this issue approach the question of modernity in a way that more or less explicitly relates to this postcolonial perspective. They all challenge to some degree the distinction between »modern« on the one side and »non-modern,« »traditional,« or even »backward« on the other. Most of them agree on a perspective that understands »modernity« as an ideological discourse rather than an analytical concept that fits reality: they ask what modernity means for China and what kind of local experiences of modernity became relevant for people in China (Zhu, Meinhof). They ask how the discourse on »modernity« is rooted in colonial notions of temporality (Meinhof), and how power asymmetries were negotiated in China before this colonial temporality was internalized (Zhu). They ask how identity can work beyond the dichotomy of tradition/modernity (Sandfort) and how it can be subsumed under a universalist ideology of modernization (Yan). And all contributions argue that articulations of modernity and modes of belonging are constructed through entanglements between different places and positions, rather than within singular cultures.

We do not claim that this is a »Chinese« perspective. *InterDisciplines* is published within the dominant (or semi-dominant) position of academic knowledge production: in English and by academics who are affiliated with the German university system, even if some of us speak Chinese as our native language. Postcolonialism is easily knowable within German

universities only because it was previously taken up by Anglo-American scholars. And it appears to us that »Postcolonialism and China« is new territory because it is marginal in the US—even though a broad discourse exists within mainland China. However, we do assert that the articles assembled here revolve around postcolonial concerns, and that these concerns connect them with concerns about colonial modernity in China. And we do claim that these concerns are shared with public debates and concerns about everyday life in China. Our postcolonial approach may view these topics from entirely different perspectives. But they still view them, and therefore share a basic concern with many Chinese.

Existing debates on postcolonialism and China

This issue of *InterDisciplines* is certainly not the »first step« in the direction of a postcolonial approach on China. Rather, a number of scholars both in China and in Anglo-American China studies have already started debates on this topic. Our issue can build on and connect to these emerging but still largely marginal debates on colonialism, postcolonialism, and colonial modernity. Postcolonialism was debated in China at the same time, or even a little before, its popularity skyrocketed in the US in the mid-1990s—and far over a decade before German scholars started to pay attention to it. Postcolonial ideas were articulated in China during the late 1980s by authors such as Zhang Yiwu, Wang Fengzhen, and Wang Yichuan, who sought to distance themselves from the occidentalism of the New Enlightenment Movement. Edward Said was first introduced by Chinese literary theorist Wang Fengzhen (1988) in his collection of interviews with fourteen renowned contemporary literary critics such as Frederic Jameson. The most intense debate about postcolonialism in China, however, emerged in the mid-1990s (Sheng 2015, 119). It started with the publication of three essays introducing postcolonial criticism in the journal *Dushu* in 1993. Zhang Kuan's (1993) *The Others in the Eyes of Europeans and Americans* pointed out that the Chinese discourse on modernizing the nation is the same as the discourse of Enlightenment, and the latter is complicit in colonialism. Zhang criticized that Chinese intellectuals' self-criticism took on a derogatory form while romanticizing and idealizing the West at the same time (see also Zhang 2000). Qian

Jun's (1993) *On Said's Review of Culture* debated a postcolonial understanding of Chinese culture. He argued that

China's history has its own experiences, but other historic experiences are not irrelevant to it. Thus an understanding of culture is necessary to be wary of an essentialist orientation toward »difference,« but also to be wary of the interpretation of a rupture of modernity that ignores all continuities in history.⁷

Lastly, Pan Shaomei's (1993) *A New Trend of Criticism* argues, with references to Spivak, that a combination of postcolonialism with Marxism and critical feminism is needed in order to understand how Western imperialism, local masculinism, nationalism, and class struggle are interrelated.

Following these three publications, an intense debate of postcolonial theories and postcolonial topics took place in China, often only loosely related to Said and the early articles in *Dushu* (Sheng 2007; see on this: Song 2000). Today, the postcolonial discourse in China is so vast and heterogeneous that it cannot possibly be introduced here. For example, in the database of China Academic Journals alone, we found 391 hits for »postcolonial« (后殖民) in articles published in 2016, and some related articles from the turn of the millennium have been cited hundreds of times and downloaded thousands of times. A large number of Chinese scholars devoted themselves to a comprehensive study of postcolonial studies (Luo and Liu 1999; Wang 1999; Wang and Xue 1998, Xu 1996; Zhang, Jingyuan 1999). In addition, numerous translations of Anglo-American works have been published since then.

Soon, this debate left the confines of the works by Said, Spivak, and Bhabha, and started to include concerns within Chinese academia, so that new (or partly new) topics could emerge. The most influential and controversial topic among them was probably that of Chineseness. Several famous postcolonial scholars presented the idea that Chinese should give

7 »中国的历史有其自身经验，但亦非同其它历史经验毫不相干。因而对文化的理解既要谨防本质主义差异取向，又要谨防割断历史的断裂性现代诠释.«

up the Western colonial concept of »modernity« and rather search for their own »Chineseness« as a new model of improvement and desire for change, embedded in everyday practices rather than in Enlightenment theory (Zhang et al. [1994] 2003, see also Meinhof in this issue). The ideal postcolonial scholar should strive to become a »post-intellectual« who does not advise the people, but observes them from the margins, trying to help put in words the Chineseness they articulate in their daily practices (Zhang 1994a, 1994b). A second important topic was that of self-colonization of Chinese intellectuals. For example, Lydia Liu (Liu 1999) criticized negative depictions of Chinese national characteristics during the May Fourth Movement for reproducing colonial stereotypes. In a more nationalistic fashion, Cao Shunqing bemoaned the loss of Chinese intellectuals' ability to articulate themselves in their own language and based on their own theoretical concepts, which would make it impossible for Chinese to have a »voice« that can be heard in the world (Cao and Li 1996). In a similar fashion, but less concerned with international politics, Zhang Yiwu criticized intellectuals for self-inflicted othering (他者化), which would emerge from describing Chinese culture entirely by references to a Western culture: this would, Zhang claimed, compel Chinese to place themselves at a spatial and temporal distance to modernity (Zhang 1994b) and to portray themselves in a manner adapted to Western stereotypes and tastes (e.g., the critique of Zhang Yimou's filmmaking by Zhang, Yiwu 1993). There are many more important topics in postcolonial debates in China, such as postcolonial debates on translation theory and the Chinese language (Ge 2002; Luo 2004).⁸ Recently, new topics seem to emerge, such as the question whether China can be seen as »colonial« (in the Qing Dynasty) or »neocolonial« (today). For example, a recently published paper by Yue Shengsong (2017) uses postcolonial approaches to analyze descriptions of China as a »neocolonial power« as a discourse aimed at affirming US hegemony and neglecting the possibility of symmetric South-South cooperation between China and Africa. Due to the immense number of publications and diverse debates, we cannot give an overview over these topics. However, we find that

8 See also a brief debate in English by Chan (2004).

much of the debates revolve around concerns of orientalism, Chineseness, self-colonization, and China's »voice« in the world, for which the above-mentioned topics provided foundational impulses.

These debates have been highly contested and criticized from the beginning. Chinese scholars publishing in English have criticized Chinese postcolonial critique for being nativist and affirmative to the existing regime (Sheng 2007; Wang 1997; Xu 2001; L. Zhang 1999). Within mainland China, this criticism has been voiced, too, but paradoxically its main thrust was directed against importing theory from Western academia (Shao 1994; Zhao 1995, 2000). Authors such as Said, and more so Spivak and Bhabha, were seen as conducting a discourse of Anglo-American academia that debated migrants' problems in the West and that were not to be applied in China.⁹ Unfortunately, these often polemic critiques have disguised the strengths of the postcolonial discourses in China. Postcolonial works have indeed influenced popular nationalist literature such as »China can say no« (Song et al. 1996) and »Unhappy China« (Song 2009), which polarized scholarship and loaded postcolonialism with strong emotional elements. But they have also influenced the non-nationalist critical discourses of the »new left« (e.g., Wang 1998, 2014).¹⁰ However, almost none of the original postcolonial works have been translated into English, and they are largely ignored both by postcolonial studies and China studies. The authors of this introduction have met several renowned China specialists who believe that China has had no postcolonial debate at all. Even the writings of the overseas Chinese scholars mentioned above have almost never debated postcolonial arguments in detail, but rather issued one-sided critiques aiming to affirm the authors' liberal positions. These critiques often obscure the fact that many of the Chinese postcolonial authors debate on a very high level of intellectual reflection and with a critical stance toward the established ideas of Indian and Anglo-American

9 This style of criticism was also employed in English-language publications and some translated works, for example by Chen (1995), Lei (2012), and Zhang, Longxi (1999).

10 The new left is discussed briefly by Vukovich in the afterword.

postcolonial authors.¹¹ This complete marginalization of Chinese postcolonial debates in Western scholarship cannot possibly be justified with the valid critique of postcolonialism's alignment with neo-conservative nationalism. Hence, from the point of view of a German (or Anglo-American) audience, there is a lot of work yet to do on postcolonialism and China—and much of it may be translational work.¹²

Given this weak reception and insufficient translation of postcolonial works from China, it is not surprising that pioneering Anglo-American works on postcolonialism and China have often overlooked these Chinese debates. However, these perspectives from »outside« of China, too, have often revolved around concerns similar to those of the Chinese debates. Especially three topics seem to be of main concern within the Anglo-American literature. Firstly, a large debate has emerged around the concept of colonial modernity (Barlow 1997a; Dube and Banerjee-Dube 2006; Shin and Robinson 1999) as an (Asian) modernity shaped and structured by colonial encounters. This debate, which was triggered in 1993 in the journal *positions*, has made a debate about postcolonialism and China possible in the first place because it was the first to explore the possibility of using the concept of »colonialism« in respect to East Asia and specifically to China. Most importantly, the concept of »colonial modernity« has introduced the idea that even without one single, coherent

11 We found just one article in English that discusses the substance of postcolonial works rather than the political alignments of its authors (Xu 1998)—this article, too, is written from a classical »Enlightenment« perspective directed against postcolonialism, but it outlines the arguments of postcolonial works in China before criticizing them.

12 Authors writing on postcolonialism in China who were translated into English include Wang Hui (1998; 2014) and Wang Ning (2010). They have, however, attached their writing more closely to the »classical« leftist argumentations of the so called »new left« in China. Nevertheless, especially Wang Hui's translated works may provide a glimpse of the way in which Chinese postcolonial and critical authors argue, as he, too, is concerned with the questions what »China« is (e.g., H. Wang 2014) and what new kind of modernity this China may approach in the future (e.g., H. Wang 1998, 2009).

colonialism at the »national« level in China, colonial structures could be understood as the broader context in which the multiple, contradicting forms of empire were shaped. Secondly, some influential scholars have explicitly picked up postcolonial approaches in order to debate the origin of Chinese historicist and modernist narratives (Shih 2001; Yang 2011) as well as their relationship to Chinese nationalism (Duara 1995; in comparison to India: Seth 2013). Thirdly, there are many works debating orientalism and China. On the one hand, works on the production of orientalist knowledge within China have contributed to a theory of orientalism, for example by showing that self-orientalization can be a strategy of empowerment for Chinese elites (Dirlik 1996), or that the glorification of the West can sometimes serve as a counter-discourse against local governments (Chen 1995). More recent research has warned against a hasty application of theoretical concepts by showing some majority-minority relations in China's history for which the notion of orientalism is actually not appropriate (Wilcox 2016). On the other hand, there is a long tradition of critiques of Western representations of China, which stretches back even before the time of Said's orientalism (e.g., Isaacs 1958; Jones 2001; Vukovich 2012). In addition to raising critical awareness of the political ideologies underlying Western representations of China, these works have shown the shifting and often ambivalent nature of orientalist discourse: orientalism has not created generations of exoticizing depictions of China that are always the same, but rather a discursive power structure in which images of China could shift according to political and economic demands within the centers of knowledge production—including, as Vukovich has famously argued, a shift from exoticization toward discourses of »becoming-sameness« (Vukovich 2012).

These existing debates provide a basis for debating postcolonialism and China. We nevertheless feel that the works accessible to Western scholars are scarce and fragmented, spread across various disciplines, and rarely represented in historical and sociological debates. The Chinese works are large in number, but many of them are not yet recognized in Western academia. As of now, debating postcolonialism and China in European

academia therefore remains pioneering work that cannot yet build on an established discourse. Hence, »postcolonialism and China« remains a concern with a still open, vague path to be taken—a path on which we aspire to take another step, and to which we hope to draw some attention especially in European academia.

The structure of this issue

The contributions to this issue of *InterDisciplines* are related to these postcolonial writings in different ways. Some build extensively on parts of this literature, such as Meinhof's and Yan's contributions. Others, such as Zhu and Sandfort, have only adopted a general postcolonial perspective without debating the above-mentioned works in detail. However, all the contributions are brimming with the feeling of »discovery«—discovering a new perspective, a new theoretical concept, or a new concern, or putting something we have tried to articulate for a long time in a nutshell. As editors, we have embraced this feeling of »discovery,« and we have encouraged the authors to make bold theoretical claims and to dare to go against the mainstream of argumentation in sociology and history as well as in China studies. The result of our work—those articles that passed the processes of paper selection and peer review—are four independent articles on different topics and different times.

The first article by **Lili Zhu** points at the probably most important yet often ignored aspect of colonialism in China: the ability to use violence. She argues that after the end of the first Opium War a sudden shift in the perception of war took place among officials in the coastal provinces when they tried to make sense of their country's defeat in war. They attributed their loss mainly to the Western powers' superior weapons—and in consequence tried to buy stronger weapons and later to »Westernize« the military. While today many scholars call these officials' reform attempts »modernization movements,« the nineteenth-century officials did not interpret the conflict as an encounter between a modern and a backward civilization, but as a question of weapon technology and violence. This argument has a wide range of implications for the overall

narrative of this issue: Zhu not only shows how the impact of colonial war and violence structured Chinese experiences of modernity, she also shows how the victims of colonial violence could make sense of asymmetries without references to temporality or modernity and beyond colonial discourses of »civilization.«

This directly connects to the contribution of **Marius Meinhof**. Meinhof draws attention to »colonial temporality« as a discourse that interprets inequality in wealth and power in temporal terms, such as »modern« and »backward.« This colonial temporality, Meinhof argues, is pervasive in Chinese discourses and constitutes a continuity throughout the many reforms and regime changes of the twentieth century. Meinhof shows three main features of this notion of temporality: It is produced not from one single center but among different groups with differing ideologies. It places China in the middle of history, thus labeling it as backward but also creating a hope for improvement that triggers agency. And it is rooted in ideas of Chinese deficiency, which compels authors to constantly compare China to the West. Its great success comes from its ability to merge with all kinds of power projects. In arguing like this, Meinhof draws a line from the discourses of the early twentieth century to contemporary Chinese debates, transcending established binaries such as East/West or socialism/capitalism. This line connects several of the contributions to this issue: On the one hand, the notion of colonial temporality asserts the persisting relevance of Zhu's insights on colonial violence and modernity. On the other hand, it prepares the stage for Yan's following argument on the cooperation between ideological discourses in Anglo-American and Chinese political sciences.

Yan Junchen's article leaves the topic of colonialism and takes a closer look at entangled modes of knowledge production in Chinese and Anglo-American social sciences. Through an in-depth analysis of a small number of texts, Yan shows how Western liberal political scientists and Chinese social scientists supporting the government could cooperate in constructing a group of »waiqi white collar professionals.« The Western scholars constructed and essentialized this group, because their concern with democratization in China required them to have »groups« with »values«

that could be for or against democracy. Chinese social scientists took up these Western works because the idea of essentialized groups with healthy or harmful values was helpful for their concerns with regulating individuals and integrating them into the existing regime. Thus, while both groups have opposing political ideologies, they nevertheless both essentialize the »waiqi white collar professionals« and ascribe »values« to them. More than the former contributions, Yan reflects on the modes of knowledge production and on the construction of categories that accompany it—including the categories of »Western« and »Chinese« discourse. His idea of a cooperation between the two discourses reminds the authors of this issue of the futility of contrasting and separating »Western« and »Chinese« discourse, while he insists on the fact that the seemingly »same« concepts can be connected to entirely different political projects in different contexts.

Taking a different perspective on a similar problem, **Sarah Sandfort** describes the artist Hung Keung's digital artwork »Dao gives birth to one,« which attempts to break through colonial dichotomies of »Western« »modern« art versus »Chinese« »traditional« art. The Hong Kong-based artist does so by employing what Sandfort calls a »self-conscious deconstructive hybridity« that ultimately creates an individual experience of the artwork for each of the visitors, who are encouraged to position themselves in relation to the work. In doing so, her article corresponds with the other contributions on two levels: it challenges the pessimistic positions of Meinhof and Yan by showing ways in which Chinese artists invent new modes of identity and new forms of negotiating modernity beyond the poor alternatives of Western modernity or Chineseness. Interestingly, by focusing on work based on transforming Chinese characters, she shows practices beyond text that are nevertheless related to and entangled with practices of writing. This shows how the Chinese language and writing system may provide possibilities for writing multiplicity and hybridity that may in some ways be employed to undermine the fixed and essentialized concepts that colonial discourse works with.

With this, the articles in this issue cover a relatively wide range of postcolonial topics and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of a

postcolonial world. Far away from ideas of total Western domination or Chinese subjection to Western hegemony, the contributions insist on Chinese agency and even on a political desire to change the current, US-dominated world order. This agency, however, does not necessarily point in a different direction than the colonial discourse: while Zhu and Sandfort describe cases where colonial discourse was either not yet internalized or consciously challenged, Meinhof and Yan describe cases in which Chinese agency is complicit to Western and/or colonial discourses. In many of these contributions, one can clearly recognize differences in discourses that can best be expressed by references to »Chinese« and »Western« positions. But China and the West are more often entangled than separated, cooperating as often as opposing each other. Therefore, insisting on »difference« does not imply dichotomy or total separation. We hope that these various contributions can give readers in sociology and history a glimpse of a multiple and steadily contested world whose global entanglements go beyond »diffusion« and that has a future not controlled by laws of modernization or world society—a world full of conflicts and negotiations that cannot possibly be grasped by dichotomies of East versus West, but that are nevertheless shaped by stable asymmetries that all too often still revolve around advantages of the former colonizers/the West over the formerly colonized/the non-West.

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Marius Meinhof, Faculty for Sociology, Bielefeld University:
marius.meinhof@uni-bielefeld.de.

Junchen Yan, Faculty of Sociology, Bielefeld University:
junchen.yan@uni-bielefeld.de.

Lili Zhu, Department of History, Bielefeld University:
lili.zhu@uni-bielefeld.de.

From »the art of war« to »the force of war« Colonialism and the Chinese perception of war in transition

Lili Zhu

Colonial wars and Chinese modern history

»Imperialism opened China's door by using its sturdy warships and strong artilleries.«¹ (帝國主義用船堅砲利打開了中國的大門) This expression can be found in many Chinese schoolbooks,² describing the starting point of China's modern history, which is paralyzed by the history of imperialist aggression in China. This narrative of China's defeat by the West not only defines the violent encounter with Western weaponry as the beginning of Chinese modern history, but also produces an explanation for the failure of China in the wars against foreign powers and the subsequent more than 100 years of »National Humiliation.«³ According to this, it was the Western »sturdy warships and strong artilleries' which

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- 1 A more common translation for this would be »advanced cannons and warships.« This is however a problematic translation. As I will argue in the second half of this article, temporal interpretations of the defeat in war emerged only much later, so that the translation into »advanced« is in fact anachronistic. Therefore, a direct translation is used here in order to leave out the temporal dimension in the English translation, which does not exist in the Chinese wording.
 - 2 For example, school history books: 人教版全日制普通高級中學教科書(必修)中國近代史現代史上冊, 人民教育出版社歷史室, 2003年。Or 普通高中課程標準實驗教科書(必修)。人民教育出版社。2007.
 - 3 It is called the »Hundred-year national humiliation« in official Chinese historiography, referring to the intervention and imperialism by foreign powers in China since the middle of the nineteenth century until the 1940s.

brought both the advent of modernity and the beginning of China's degrading from a sovereign to a semi-colonial country.

Indeed, Western military forces were the most striking feature of foreign powers to the Chinese officials who took part in the Opium Wars. Recent Chinese scholarship has proved that some Ming dynasty officials who had contacts with the Portuguese were already impressed by Western countries having strong war machinery. However, it was not until the time of the outbreak of the Opium War that the strength of Western weaponry was acknowledged and discussed in the imperial court (Huang 2010; Pang 2016). During the First Opium War (1839–1842), »sturdy warships and strong artilleries« (船堅砲利) became a popular term which was widely used and became semantically conventional in the imperial court (Pang 2016). According to Wang (1978), around the time of the First Opium War, there were at least 40 people connecting the Qing's failure in the war with the more powerful English weaponry in their official memorials and private writings.⁴ Despite a few differences in their understandings of the extent of the relevance, they all pointed out the fact that the Chinese weaponry was inferior to Western armaments. This impression was formed first in the circle of the Qing ruling class through their confrontation with the English in the war. It was then discussed and further spread to the broader Chinese population as a common explanation for the Qing's failure in protecting the country from losing its sovereignty against foreign powers. Thus, the lack of

4 This rough calculation is based on the period from Emperor Xianfeng and Emperor Daoguang's reign. It includes a wide range of people who either belonged to the leading class of the Qing dynasty, e.g., Emperor Daoguang himself, or state officials who directly confronted the questions of the war against foreign powers, e.g., advanced governmental officials such as Viceroys of Liangjiang Lukun (盧坤) and Yuqian (裕謙), Viceroy of Liangguang Lin Zexu (林則徐), or gentries and literati elites such as Bao Shichen (包世臣), Wei Yuan (魏源) and Li Bingkui (李炳奎).

powerful weaponry was seen as the most relevant aspect⁵ for the Qing's defeat in the war.

Seen from today, such discourses that the Qing's defeat by England was due to its undeveloped weaponry did not necessarily reflect the reality of war. Recent research has shown that Western war forces and weapons were not the sole reason for the victory of Western powers. As He Libo (2004) illustrates, after conducting a comparative study of the Chinese and the English war weapons being used at the time of the Opium War, the power of the English firearms did not surpass the Chinese fire bows by much. As a result, according to He, »the failure of the Qing dynasty was first the failure of institution, and then failure of technology« (He 2004). While pointing out that guns and bombs were invented in China, and that China also continued to innovate in gunpowder technology through the early eighteenth century, Andrade (2016) argues that the main reason of Qing's defeat was because its army was out of practice of fighting in wars, for Qing had enjoyed nearly a century of relative peace since 1760. From another perspective, but coming to a similar conclusion, Mao Haijian (2016) makes observations on different aspects of the constellation of the two sides of the war, from military equipment to military training and the transfer and distribution of the soldiers. He demonstrates that it was not difficult to come to the conclusion that the Qing government was about to lose in the war. However, the defeat of the Qing government was due to a variety of reasons. Nevertheless, in the nineteenth century, Chinese officials mainly used superior weaponry to explain Western abilities to impose their practices of informal (and sometimes formal) empire (Gallagher und Robinson 1953) on China. Hence, the most immediate consequences that they drew from the Opium War were related to weapon technology.

In this article, I will argue that the experience of war with Western colonial powers fundamentally changed the Chinese understanding of ways of waging war, creating an idea of war which was based on armaments and

5 The incompetence of the Qing statesmen was blamed as well. See e.g., Mao (2016).

technologies, rather than military strategy and tactics, because contemporary Chinese saw the Qing's defeat in war as a result of the lack of weaponry and weapon technology, rather than insufficient institutions. This led to the rise of a discourse on significant factors of waging war, focusing on the ability of using technological violence for defense and conquest, for which weapons (and much later efficient military command structure) constituted the main metaphor. Weapon technology that could guarantee a superior ability to exercise violence became the leading narrative on how to win a war and how to achieve sovereignty. Due to this, the aftermath of the Opium War saw a sudden rise of armaments purchased as means to »rescue the nation«⁶ in the late Qing period, and learning about Western weapon-building technology has become a fundamental driving force of Chinese reform efforts since then. The perception that the development of strong military forces, especially the possession of the *most* powerful war devices, was the only way of regaining and securing the integrity of Chinese territory and sovereignty started to gain more popularity among larger groups and has become a dynamic narrative ever since. In consequence, Western weapons have played a significant role in organizing the state machinery in China since the Opium Wars, and may still have an influence until today.

Yet at the time of the First Opium War, this was not understood as a motive for modernizing China in institutional, cultural, and other fields, but as a motive for purchasing weaponry and weapon-related technologies from other countries that had a stronger military force than China. The defeat in the war against foreign powers gave rise to a new desire, but it was, at first, not a desire for Western culture. It was a desire for powerful weapons which was not rooted in notions of »modernization,« but expressed as a difference in military strength between China and foreign countries. As for the aftermath of the First Opium War, it was a pragmatic and particularist discourse on the strength of an army that should not be confused with the universalist discourse on »progress in history« that

6 A series of movements in the late Qing period such as the Self-Strengthening Movement and the Hundred Days' Reform are generally also called »rescuing the nation movement« (救國運動).

today's historiography projects onto historical actors or the colonial powers used to justify their aggression. Even the most reform-minded Qing officials (and the Emperor Daoguang) did not yet use the temporalized narrative of »progress« and »modernization,« which dominates contemporary depictions of reform movements after the Opium War. In short: the way in which the Qing officials made sense of the Opium War prepared the ground for the desire to purchase Western weaponry, which was visible in China for a long time thereafter—but their discourse was nevertheless distinct from the discourse of »modernization« that was to structure many later reforms. They considered cannons, not »Western culture« or »modernity,« to be the force that could beat China and force it into the dependencies of an informal empire.

In depicting the Opium War as a turning point for the Chinese understanding of waging wars, I accentuate the cultural influence the colonial war experiences had on China, particularly on Chinese military culture. I argue that this change was caused by the pressure of the colonial powers, which was then established as a coherent historical narrative for Chinese modern history by Chinese authorities. It brought about the Chinese discourse on Western technology, particularly weaponry and war technology, as a representation of the modern »force of war.« This discourse replaced the former Chinese discourse, which believed in strategic doctrines as the most determinate means of waging wars, and which descended from the famous military strategist Sun Zi in his work »The art of war.« This Chinese admiration of weaponry further moved to other aspects of reforms and societal changes in China. It then built up the foundation for technocratic ideologies which could be seen regardless of the frequent regime changes in the years after. This frames the relations between China and foreign powers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in which the weapons trade played an essential role.

Having said that, I do not want to fall back to old patterns of description, where agency is attributed only to the West while China merely reacts to it. Newer works on global history have argued that, in spite of acknowledging the various forms of domination and oppression in the wake of colonialism, the agency of the colonized and the persistence of the

»traditional« ways of making sense of the world should not be overlooked (Conrad and Randeria 2002; Epple 2011; Randeria 2002; Werner and Zimmermann 2002). Indeed, Qing officials did actively make sense of the Opium Wars within their own framework of thought and in their own intellectual debates. Nevertheless, the violence of war and the asymmetries of the informed empire were also real. Furthermore, by paying attention to the change in the understanding of war in China, this article reveals that the agency between China and foreign powers was not equal. The two Opium Wars (and the following colonial wars between foreign powers and China) took place in the context of a colonial world order and were started by colonial powers, which used this context to establish practices of an informal (sometimes formal) empire in China. Contemporary Chinese were forced to react to and cope with these events, however much of their reaction might be actively negotiated in Chinese discourses.

The transition in the understanding of war

When the First Opium War shook the ruling class of the Qing dynasty from its dreams of »the Middle Kingdom,« it also induced dramatic changes to the official discourse, adding a new but crucial theme as a decisive factor for the fate of the country: the theme of strong weaponry. While other changes in Chinese society took place gradually and in varying degrees with the deepening of foreign colonialization in China, the conceptual change in war took place first and remained dynamic and of central importance in the course of Chinese modern history. When talking about Western influences on China, most scholars stress cultural imaginaries such as nation-state and democracy, modern disciplines such as mechanical engineering and natural science, or ideologies such as capitalism and communism. However, as William Kirby (1997) puts it, »Western militarism (in Soviet, German and American national forms) was undoubtedly the single most successful cultural export from the West to China« (Waldron 1991, 2002). The Chinese version of militarism that emerged from this was marked with the belief in Western machineries, particularly in Western weaponry—in combination with the power of extensive industrialization of the entire country.

The new significance of weaponry in official discourse constituted a major shift in the way Qing scholar officials argued publicly. Chinese culture certainly cannot be conceptualized as a monolithic, not to say static, tradition. Like cultures in general, it was constantly changed, contested, and re-invented through readings of texts from the past. Furthermore, as a highly multi-cultural and multi-ethnic country, Qing China would not be seen as a homogeneous »culture«⁷ by the time of the Opium Wars. However, without claiming that there ever was »a Chinese tradition,« one can nevertheless see that the discourses of Qing officials revolved around certain sets of assumptions about the world. This included certain legitimate ways to speak about war, which were dominant in Qing officials' discourse around the time of the First Opium War. These discourses on war as an »art« largely displaced violence and played down the relevance of weaponry. They described their own tradition—the same tradition which had invented gunpowder and bombs and had conquered vast territories—as a peaceful, intellectual civilization striving for balance and harmony. For example, Sun Zi's »The art of war,« the oldest Chinese military book, written in the fifth century BC and the fundamental work for Chinese military thought, underlines ethics and human factors in war, promotes »non-attack« and »righteousness in war,« emphasizes war strategies, and advocates asymmetric capabilities for the weak to defeat the strong. However, this does not mean that the Chinese dynasties have always been pacific and wars were seen as a kind of beautiful art. Nor does it reflect the reality of Qing dynasty: even though scholars studying Asian international relations have pointed out »that East Asia's pre-Western history generally seems less violent and its wars less epochal than early modern Europe's,«⁸ wars on its northern and western borders were nevertheless much more frequent and by no means non-violent

7 For arguments why this hybrid and shifting culture should still be seen as »China,« see: Wang (2014), and Jian (2016, 30–43).

8 For further literature on this topic, see Chanda (2006), Kang (2012), and Tang (2010).

(Kelly 2011). As Li (2017)⁹ and Perdue (2005) have argued, Ming and Qing rulers were keen to import or develop new strategies to win their frontier wars. Similarly, as scholars of the New Qing History have demonstrated, until the beginning of the nineteenth century, »an intense focus on military affairs was one of the Qing state's most distinctive characteristics« (Waley-Cohen 2006). However, in their understanding of war, weapons did not play such a central symbolic role, and violence would not be at the center of attention in waging war. In contrast to many European Enlightenment philosophers, they did not produce a discourse on Realpolitik which would focus on violence as a means for political ends. But however idealistic and counterfactual this discourse was, and however contested and fluid its assumptions were in the years before 1840—the way of writing about war was nevertheless fundamentally different from the discourse that would emerge after the Opium War.

Even in the beginning of the First Opium War, the Qing Emperor and officials in the imperial court were actually very confident in their war strategies which they believed to be the most significant factor for waging a war. However, after the first confrontation with the English military, worries concerning their weaponry started to spread. They believed they were nevertheless still able to succeed against the Westerners by using strategies. In the nineteenth year of Emperor Daoguang's (道光) reign (1839), Lin Zexu, the Viceroy of Liangjiang, asserted that even though

9 In this book Li discussed the major characteristics in the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, which are firearms, representing a new kind of violence and the purchase of business interests. In this period, Qing rulers did pay attention to weapons. They were even the best equipped in East Asia at that time. However, as in his talk about »Technology and the destiny of the nation—different results of two Chinese-European wars« (技術與國運—中歐兩次戰爭的不同結局, last accessed February 26, 2017, http://www.bjd.com.cn/sy/llzk/201702/20/t20170220_11052971.html), Li explained, with the heritage of the Ming dynasty, that the Qing dynasty did not have enemies in East Asia for a long time, and this is why Qing rulers were not interested in improving their weapons. As a result, China won the war against the Netherlands (1661–1668) and lost the war against the British (1940–1942) due to the strength of their weapons.

the English have »sturdy warships and strong artilleries«, these are a disadvantage when they move onto the land (The First Historical Archives of China 1999). Emperor Daoguang adopted this view from Lin and wrote in his edict one year later: »These foreigners barely rely on their sturdy warships and strong artilleries. However, the moment they get on the land, they will lack skills« (清宣宗实录). As a result, various endeavors, particularly war strategies such as »huo gong«¹⁰ (火攻) and »jianbi qingye«¹¹ (坚壁清野) (The First Historical Archives of China 1987) had been suggested by Qing officials against the advanced English weaponry. As the war went on with more defeats for the Chinese, some Qing officials gained a more concrete understanding of the limits of war strategies against Western weaponry. They started to consider adopting Western weaponry. One of them was Yu Qian (裕谦), the viceroy of Liangjiang. He claimed in his report to the Daoguang Emperor that it was of great importance to build ships following the Western methods if the Qing dynasty wanted to have peace for long (The First Historical Archives of China 1987). Similarly, but emphasizing the weaponry aspect, Yi Shan (奕山), the Jingni General, advocated that the cannons should be built according to Western methods. At the end of the First Opium War, many observations of the war were made by Qing officials, and Western weaponry became more and more a significant factor equivalent to the art of war. For example, Lin Zexu (林则徐) who witnessed the war, wrote about his experiences in the war: »Their cannons can function for a distance of ten Chinese miles, but ours can't do that. Our cannons cannot reach them, but theirs can reach us first, this is because our machines are not good enough. Their cannons fire like our rows of guns, which make continuous noises. Our cannons fire one time and then again after a while. This is because we are not skilled. [...] To summarize, the English are not much better than we are, except for their good weapons and

10 War strategy: fire attack.

11 War strategy: scorched earth.

military training« (Lin 2002; *Opium War I*, 567).¹² This all shows that during the war, Western weaponry was first considered to be less important than the *art* of waging war, but was later considered equally important.

In consequence, some Qing officials also started to develop a strong interest in weapon technology. They showed their interests in Western weapons (Fei and Liu 1985) by introducing Western military technologies and arms, to name just a few works written in the course of the 1940s: Zheng Fuguang's »Illustration of Steamboats« (鄭復光: 《火輪船圖說》), Wang Shenyang's »Building A Cannon« (江伸洋: 《鑄炮說·附台炮》), Ding Gongchen's »Illustration of Cannon Practicing« (丁拱辰: 《演炮圖說》), and Chen Jieping's »Imitation of Western Gunpowder Production« (陳階平的《請仿西洋製造火藥疏》). This was obviously an unusual phenomenon because in the first 150 years of Qing rule, not a single military book specialized in firearms was ever published (Huang 2004). All these books were evoked by the belief that Chinese warcraft was inferior to Western warcraft, which caused the defeat in the war, which could then be made up by introducing more powerful armaments from the West (Hu 2015). Because these officials believed that weapons were the reason for British victory in the Opium War, they also believed that they needed Western weaponry in order to defend against foreign as well as domestic forces. Western weaponry was desired as a means to break free from the bonds of colonialism and the informal empire imposed on China by colonial powers.

Moreover, domestic power struggles caused by the war also reinforced the Qing officials' understanding of the importance of Western weaponry. The Qing military needed Western weapons to fight against the rebels of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, who themselves also purchased Western weapons. This, again, was an outgrowth of the defeat in the Opium War. After the war, the Qing government had to pay the reparations for the war according to the unequal treaties. This greatly intensified the poverty

12 Original text: »彼之大砲遠及十里內外，若我砲不能及彼，彼砲先已及我，是器不良也。彼之放砲如內地之放排槍，連聲不斷。我放一砲後，須輒轉移時，再放一砲，是技不熟也。求其良且熟焉，亦無他深巧耳。«

of the Qing population because of the tax increases. Besides, the disruption of shipping patterns as a result of Qing's defeat in war left many people out of work. Under these circumstances, a state oppositional to Qing, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, was established by Hong Xiuquan (洪秀全) and others in 1861, claiming to overthrow the Qing dynasty, which was too weak to defend its population from Western powers. Hence, Taiping leaders started to buy Western weapons as a consequence of colonial influences. They were able to buy Western weaponry due to the enforced opening of Chinese markets and the interest of Western powers in the weapon trade with various power groups. As a witness of the Opium War in Guangzhou, Hong Xiuquan referred to the unequal treaties as an extreme humiliation. Although the claims of the rebels were anti-colonial and directed against »foreign demons,« Western arms were seen as crucial for achieving their goal of liberating China. Taiping rebels—most of whom were peasants—were among the forerunners who used Western weaponry extensively against the Qing authority and foreign powers during their rebellion from 1851 to 1864 (Su 1998; Wang 1954; Wang 2007). Again, Qing officials interpreted the strengths of the Taiping rebellion as a consequence of Western armament. Zeng Guoquan (曾國荃), the Qing official sent to quell the rebellion, made the following comments on the war against the Taiping army: »Their firearms are a hundred times better than ours, [...] in the past when we had wars against rebellions, there were never foreign armaments. In recent years, there is not a single rebel not equipped with foreign weapons.« (Guo 1935)¹³ Zeng Guofan (曾國藩), another important Qing official, also concluded that the rapid success of the Taiping Rebellion was »in fact the force of Western arms« (Zeng and Li 2012).¹⁴ This was an impulse for the further implementation of Western armaments by the Qing authority. As a result, both the Qing army and rebels competed to equip themselves with Western armaments in wars against each other. It is apparent from this that the

13 Original text: »賊之火器精利於我百倍之多，又無日不以開花大砲打壘年，洋槍隊多至兩萬桿。«

14 Original text: »實賴洋砲之力。« (May 8, 1854)

Opium War had not only resulted in the reform-minded Qing ruling class's desire for Western armaments for self-defense, but also in its domestic enemies, who were subject to them, believing that the possession of Western arms was a fundamental factor for waging wars and (re-)gaining sovereignty.

The eminent importance of weaponry in reform movements is most clear when looking at the Self-Strengthening Movement (自強運動), also Yangwu Movement (洋務運動) in Chinese, which means Westernization movement. This movement was not a coherent movement, but a set of different attempts made by reform-minded Qing statesmen between 1861 and 1895. But the various, often at best loosely connected officials and their different ideas of reform shared the common notion of strengthening China in order to defend its sovereignty from foreign powers. And they did so primarily by buying Western weaponry. This can be exemplified by looking at individual people who were active in this movement. Although the majority of the ruling class in the Qing dynasty still subscribed to a conservative Confucian worldview and insisted that learning from the West was absurd, the imperial prince and important Manchu statesman Gong and Han state officials such as Zeng Guofan (曾國藩) and Li Hongzhang (李鴻章) believed that it was necessary to adopt Western military technology and weaponry to strengthen China. Li, for example, had contact not only with foreigners, but also had a group of employees who had studied abroad and were highly impressed by Western military forces. Li believed that Chinese systems were all better than the Western ones, claiming that it was only Western military force which China could not surpass (Zhang, Yong 2005). His primary objective was to preserve the traditional Chinese culture and institutional system as the basis, and to optionally adopt Western technologies, particularly in the military sphere. Accordingly, building Western standardized shipyards and arsenals as well as training Chinese soldiers with the help of Western advisers were considered as the most important arrangements of the movement. Beiyang Fleet, Hanyang Arsenal, Jiangnan Machine Central Factory, for instance, were important achievements made at this

time under the supervision of Western countries such as England, France, Germany, and the USA.

The end of the First Opium War was the beginning of a series of colonial wars between China and many foreign powers. The signature of the Treaty of Nanking, the first unequal treaty in modern Chinese history, was also merely a precedent for even more unequal treaties. The voice for reforms became stronger with the unfolding of and the defeat in each war. The change in the understanding of how to wage war from emphasizing the strategy to the force in the time after the Opium War can be observed by looking at the reform efforts made by different groups of reform-minded Chinese in the second half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, in which stronger armaments were seen as the most essential element for overcoming foreign oppression. From the Self-Strengthening Movement (1861–1895) to the Hundred Days' Reform (1898) in the late Qing period, from the arms race of the warlords during the Warlord Era (1916–1928) to the militarization in the Republic of China (1928–1945), along with frequent changes of political powers, Chinese modern history has experienced a great number of movements, reforms, and revolutions. Hardly was one reform completely declared a failure when another wave of reform ideas arose. It is true that the major goals of these reforms differed from each other, from admiring Western machinery and technology to undertaking institutional and ideological reforms according to Western models. But to whatever extent the reformers disagreed with each other, they all agreed on the idea that China had to possess Western weapons. The importance of the art of waging war, however, faded out of the Chinese discourse.

From Westernization to modernization

All of this shows that a shift in discourse happened in the 1840s, and that this shift was intrinsically bound to foreign colonialism in China in this period. It was, however, not so much the colonial discourse that influenced the thinking and writing of contemporary Chinese, but rather the colonial war—the experience of being defeated by a foreign power, that Qing officials had to make sense of within their own discourse and

according to their own terms. There is a wide range of literature on Chinese adoption of Western colonial discourse on history and progress.¹⁵ However, the new discourse on weapons is not such a case. The idea of »modernity« was largely absent from the debate on weapons because its ideas were not translated from colonial discourse, but developed by Chinese officials in order to interpret their experiences of defeat. Unlike other perceptual changes, this change in the perception of war was not an outcome of slow discursive shifts or knowledge exchanges with Western countries or Japan. Instead, it was a shift caused by an »unusual« war experience that Qing officials had to make sense of. Two observations can be pointed out here: firstly, the change took place in the circle of witnesses of war and it was too abrupt to be considered a gradual process of absorbing Western colonial discourses. As is shown, even during the war, some Qing officials started to talk about the power of Western weaponry. In the aftermath of the war, the possession of Western armaments became the main reference of military strength. War stratagems, however, accordingly became a subordinate element in the Chinese discourses on war. Secondly, this change happened in different social classes at the same time: not only the statesmen from Qing government who were marked as the reform-minded elites, but also the Taiping Rebels in the 1860s, the majority of whom were peasants and other low-ranked members of society, committed themselves to the new understanding of war, in which powerful armaments were considered to be the decisive element of winning in war. This happened too fast to be explained as a trickle-down process of new ideas from Westernized elites to the peasantry. In short: after the first experiences of war with the Western power, people in the late Qing period from varying social classes started to argue for the urgency of having Western armaments in order to secure sovereignty or to rescue China. This, therefore, was not an adoption to colonial discourse, but an interpretation created within the Chinese discourse, attempting to make sense of the encounter with the military force of colonial empires.

15 See, for example, Marius Meinhof's contribution (2017) in this special issue.

The colonial idea of civilization and modernization did not play a central role in these attempts at sense-making. Instead, contemporary Chinese interpreted the Opium War as an encounter between forces from different regions of the world that differed in strength at the time. This means that the Qing's defeat in colonial wars was not seen as a temporal difference between Western modernity and Chinese backwardness in the first place. Overall, the different positions of England and China, as well as the reform attempts within China, were interpreted according to geographical metaphors, and not by the temporal metaphors that the colonial empires used. In consequence, the reforms in military spheres, particularly in the fields of weapons, were depicted as »Westernization« (西化) in the first place, before a colonial discourse on temporal differences between China and the West took place.

This had mainly two consequences: firstly, the Qing's defeat in the Opium War as well as subsequent defeats during the nineteenth century were not considered proof of an overall backwardness of Chinese civilization. Rather, they were considered proof of the urgency to »borrow« powerful weaponry, and maybe even to learn some skills to use this weaponry, from the geographical West. Secondly, even for the most reform-minded Qing statesmen and elites of the nineteenth century, not all spheres of the Chinese society were to be reformed. Chinese reforms started with the aim of »Westernization« of some spheres, particularly the military sphere. Accordingly, the desire for Western weaponry was not fueled by an admiration of the West, nor did it contain a desire to emulate Western culture. The »West« depicted in this discourse was not the »hyperreal Europe« described by Chakrabarty (1992), but rather a description of the geographical location of countries which had stronger weaponry. Accordingly, China was not seen as a place »backward« in relation to this geographical West. In consequence, the strengthening of China was restrained in the military sphere. Throughout the various different positions that different officials had on Western weaponry and military reforms, the idea of a holistic »Chinese culture« that might be »unmodern« in its entirety remained unfamiliar to them. Such an idea, which Hu Shi (Hu 2001) called »a wholehearted modernization,« proclaiming an attitude

of learning modernity from Western culture, was articulated only much later, after the collapse of the Qing dynasty and the falling apart of political power in China, when the exclusive »Westernization« of the weaponry proved unsuccessful in »rescuing the nation« (Luo 2008).

It is impossible here to give an extensive account on the question how the discourse on a »Westernization« of the weapons/military would shift to and be implemented in discourses of modernity and modernization. One important factor here certainly was China's defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894), which buried the hopes of the Self-Strengthening Movement and in the meanwhile pushed the reforms further to an institutional layer. As Li Hongzhang, perhaps the most pioneering representative of the Self-Strengthening Movement, summarized after the Qing's defeat by the Japanese: »What I have done in all my life, the military training, the [strengthening of] the navy, they are all tigers made of paper [...]« (Wu and Liu 2008). The full concentration on the military sphere did not lead to freedom from foreign powers. As a result, new reform attempts were made to »rescue the nation.«

After the defeat in the Sino-Japanese war, the reform-minded Emperor Guangxu undertook the Hundred Days' Reform (1898) with the help of his supporters. This reform concerned many aspects, involving institutional and ideological changes as well as the intention of a complete change to the military buildup. Yet the reform only lasted about 100 days. With the help of other oppositional forces, the Empress Dowager Cixi forced the Emperor Guangxu into seclusion and Cixi herself took over the control of the Qing court. After the Hundred Days' Reform was aborted, major supporters of the reform went into exile. For example, Liang Qichao, one of the most influential contemporary intellectuals, fled to Japan. There he had access to a wide range of Japanese translations of Western literature, particularly those dealing with the questions of »modernity,« which would greatly influence his writings and make him import various concepts—including the very word »modern« (現代)—into the Chinese discourse (Gao 2016; Luo 2009; Zhang, Haipeng 2005). It was also at this time that Western social Darwinist and historicist writings were translated and introduced to China by Chinese elites. From many first-

hand translations of Western colonial scholarship, a highly elaborated narrative explaining of why Westerners would constantly win wars and be able to subdue other civilizations was generated in China. But even in this era of increasing interests in the West, the term »modernization« itself was not adopted by a broader circle of intellectuals until the 1930s, when the special issue »Questions on China's Modernization« (中國現代化問題號) of »Shen Bao Yue Kan« (申報月刊)¹⁶ was published. This special issue¹⁷ published 26 collected articles by highly influential contemporary Chinese intellectuals in which the word »modernization« was used 347 times—the highest frequency and concentration ever (Wang 2012). However, military reforms and comprehensive industrialization remained of central importance.

Conclusion: Scars of war¹⁸

In this article I have argued that the defeat in the Opium War and the way in which China was »degraded« from a sovereign to a (semi-)colonized country changed the Chinese understanding of waging war. This, in turn, kicked off reforms and movements which aimed at improving the weaponry according to Western standards. I explained that this change was rooted in colonial acts on the one hand, and on the other it was an active form of making sense of the colonial war by concerned Qing officials. This belief in the necessity of possessing strong weaponry was deeply engraved in the hearts of contemporary Chinese intellectuals in

16 Published from 1932 by Shen Bao Publisher, which was the most influential newspaper at its time. Shen Bao Yue Kan had close ties to the most famous contemporary Chinese intellectuals such as Lu Xun, Ba Jin, and Zhu Kezhen. This enabled Shen Bao Yue Kan to be the most influential journal in the 1930s in China.

17 Special issue of July 1938.

18 This title is inspired by the book title *Scars of War: The Impact of War on Modern China* by Diana Lary and Stefen MacKinnon. It has little to do with the content of the book because the book concentrates on the impact of the Second World War on China, especially the impact of the Japanese denial of the Nanjing Massacre and the refusal to apologize to the Chinese victims.

order to »rescue the nation« since the middle of the nineteenth century. As a matter of fact, strengthening China's military force was constantly at the center of reforms in China since the first defeat in colonial wars. Even when the reform measures sometimes did not solely emphasize weaponry, one of the ultimate goals—if not the ultimate one—of these reforms was always to change the state machinery into one that could facilitate a war in a Western sense. Together with the development of nationalism in China, this became the most important concern of the Chinese authorities. Countless big names can be listed for their contributions to discourses, efforts, and achievements regarding China's military reform. For them, waging a war was no longer mastering the better art of war, but rather possessing the more powerful weapon. In other words, the essential factor of winning a war, for them, changed from strategy to objects (weapons). This technocratic notion of war remained a powerful imaginary in the course of Chinese modern history.

Colonialism was central for this change because it was China's defeat in colonial wars against foreign powers and the subsequent establishment of an informal empire in China which evoked the thinking that war machinery and military technology are not only essential to the development of the nation and to national self-determination, but also to the existence of the nation. The efforts to reform China's military by buying and building weaponry shows that weaponry was seen as crucial not only to win wars against foreign powers, but also, in consequence, for »liberating« China. Weapons would become the guarantee for national self-determination and the basic notion of war to be something won by the force of weaponry, rather than by war strategy. Thus, even though the discourse on weapons was increasingly embedded in the overall discourse of civilization, modernity, and national sovereignty, the central experience of colonial war and the importance of powerful weapons remained central concerns for the Republic of China as well as for the Communist Party. The desire for »Western« weaponry—largely understood as »modern« weaponry since the twentieth century—continued to shape the relations of the Chinese Government to Western/foreign countries.

This desire for Western weaponry created a predicament: Western weaponry was purchased by Chinese authorities to wage wars, and ultimately to reconquer Chinese sovereignty. However, buying Western weapons made these groups, despite their anti-colonial alignment, dependent on Western weapon traders. This change in the understanding of the war, which then led to an admiration of technology and modernity, already contained elements that would prepare a later adoption of colonial discourses on Chinese backwardness. The intended military modernization was not enough to liberate China. The foreign powers' colonial activities and imperial aggressions in China were not held back because the progress of arsenal-building or the setting up of an industry in China from scratch could not fulfill the mission of »rescuing« the nation from being colonized. Embedding the desire for strong weapons into a discourse of »modernity« even deepened these asymmetries: the more the notion of differences in strength between regions became a notion of differences in modernity between more or less advanced nations, the more could weakness in war and economic dependency be disguised, legitimized, and used as a reason for a more cultural subjection (Zhang 2006).¹⁹

Furthermore, in contrast to the colonial discourse that was translated and adopted in China, the new understanding of war was brought to the Chinese through the experience of colonial war. It thus constitutes a logic which is slightly different from the notion of a rather »symmetric« self-colonization, which seems dominant in contemporary discourse on (semi-) colonial China. Cultural studies of the reception of Western ideas in the era of the May Fourth Movement has created many important insights, but its focus on literature and philosophy sometimes resulted in the impression that semi-colonial China was mainly interested in Western intellectual achievements. This mirrors, however, more the research

19 This problem was also criticized by a few contemporary Chinese intellectuals such as Zhang Naiqi (章乃器). Zhang called this excessive admiration for Western weaponry »overstress on weapon theory« and this way of looking at history a historical view of »overstress on weaponry.« He demonstrates that weaponry is not the only most significant element for winning wars.

focus of the disciplines studying this specific timeframe than the interests of Chinese elites after the Opium War. First and foremost, long before the notion of »modernity« became persuasive for so many Chinese, colonial wars created a desire for Western weapon technology, which was born from experiences of defeat. This was not seen as »advanced« weaponry from a temporally »modern« civilization, but as »strong« weapons from a geographical »West.« For state officials, it was technology rather than literature, Mr. Weaponry rather than Mr. Democracy, that triggered the deepest desires for reforms. In the ideology of war we find a much more violent, more obviously asymmetric form of entanglement, and therefore something much closer to the classical notions of »colonialism.« A general notion of a need for war technology, as well as the specific form of making sense of the defeat in the Opium War, remained powerful in Chinese discourse until today. As is stressed in history books in Chinese schools today: »Imperialism opened China's door by using its sturdy warships and strong artilleries.«²⁰

20 See footnote 3.

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Lili Zhu, Department of History, Bielefeld University: lili.zhu@uni-bielefeld.de.

Colonial temporality and Chinese national modernization discourses

Marius Meinbof

This essay introduces the concept of *colonial temporality* to make sense of Chinese modernization discourses. Although institutional discourses on modernization and development in China are largely nationalist and tightly entangled with state authority, they nevertheless draw on conceptions of temporality that are colonial in character and origin. I will introduce three features of this temporality that make it colonial and highly ambivalent for the Chinese state: Firstly, it was created by colonial encounters in history in which it was used and co-produced by various groups that used it for various power projects. Secondly, it provides China with a »story« of future progress by placing it in the middle of history. And thirdly, it revolves around discourses of deficiency that compel Chinese institutional discourses to constantly compare China to the West. In consequence, the »quest« for a Chinese modernity also includes a search for narratives of a better future that can imagine improvement but are not based on colonial temporality. Paying more attention to this problem would permit scholars to better understand the positions of the Chinese state and of Chinese intellectuals within modernization discourses, and to better conceptualize the historic and transnational character of these discourses.

Making sense of colonial temporality

Since the mid-1990s, a growing number of works have analyzed social change in the contemporary People's Republic of China from a poststructuralist perspective, often related to subjectivation or governmentality (i.e., Sigley 1996). One of the key aspects of these works—and the aspect this article will focus on—is the rejection of »modernization,« and in some cases even »modernity,« as an analytical concept. Instead, these

works have understood modernization/modernity as a kind of ideology or belief system. To them, the assumption that China is not adequately modern has given birth to a discourse of modernity that helps normalize state social engineering projects (Rofel 1999, 13). For example, several authors have shown how this idea of »modernization« legitimizes and promotes various state interventions such as reeducating »backward« subjects (Yan 2003; Yi 2011), restructuring urban space (Zhang 2006), and constructing a modern population (Anagnost 2008; Greenhalgh 2003; Tomba 2004). Furthermore, they have shown that large parts of the population accept the idea that they have to modernize themselves, for example in fields of consumerism (Rofel 2007; Yan 2000) or labor markets (Hoffman 2010; Hsu 2005; Lin 2013). In short: Poststructuralist and governmentality-oriented research has shown impressively how »modernity« is not simply a structure analyzed by the social sciences, but an ideological discourse that helps in the governing of Chinese subjects.

However, most of these works share two problematic assumptions: Firstly, the idea that this modernization is processed and controlled by the Chinese party-state. Many poststructuralist authors write about the Chinese state as the entity that creates the project of modernization, especially by depicting the state as appropriating neoliberal discourses and practices in order to create a new regime of governance (e.g., Hoffman 2010; Ong 2007). Secondly, and partly as a consequence of the first point, a vast majority of these works assume that the project of modernization is to be understood as a reform-era phenomenon. They tend to portray the discourses of modernization as postsocialist (Rofel 1999; Smith 2012), late socialist (Zhang 2006) or neoliberal (Anagnost 2008; Rofel 2007; Yan 2003), and therefore as part of a radically new technology of governance in reform-era China.

By contrast, I will argue that contemporary discourses of modernization in the People's Republic of China are rooted in a certain conception of temporality which is based on a rather old and global notion of »colonial modernity« (Barlow 1997) and the related concern of creating a sovereign Chinese future. This *colonial temporality* makes sense of differences as different stages of progress framed by a linear notion of time. Accordingly,

economic and political changes are perceived as moving either forward or backward in time. In consequence, colonial temporality constructs a hierarchy of places that frames differences in politics, the economy, and sometimes even in culture in a temporal way, as either »advanced« (发达) or »backward« (落后), and therefore imagine the »time-lag of cultural differences« (Bhabha 2012, 340)—a »colonial time« (Wilk 1994) in which the periphery must catch up to a modernity that is already in existence elsewhere.¹ This colonial temporality is visible in a wide variety of concepts such as modernization, (societal) development, or progress, and of course it underlies the very notion of »modernity« itself.

As I will elaborate, colonial temporality has three important features: Firstly, it was and is produced in an entanglement of various Western, Japanese, and Chinese discourses. Secondly, it provides China with a »story« of future progress and self-improvement by placing it in the middle of a history which is still progressing. Thirdly, it revolves around discourses of deficiency that compel Chinese institutional discourses to constantly undertake comparisons with the West.

This does not mean that these discourses are destined to be hostile to Chinese traditions, or that they strive toward total Westernization. As a general idea of time, colonial temporality is not controlled by any single power group or ideology, and it is certainly not one-sidedly favorable or unfavorable to the Chinese government. It allows for shifting and contested positions toward traditions, ranging from projects that would entirely destroy the »old« to those that would preserve or even invent

1 The term »colonial temporality« was inspired by Wilk's term »colonial time.« The latter was, however, elaborated only with respect to media and commodity consumption. Here I will use it to describe the entirely different field of institutional discourses in China. As far as I am aware, the term »colonial temporality« is my own invention, translated from the German term »koloniale Zeitlichkeit.« Pinto (2013) talks about a »temporality of colonialism,« but means the different times and paces at which colonization and decolonization developed. However, the idea of an ideology of temporality as part of colonial discourse is widespread in postcolonial studies, as I will show below.

traditions as sources of modernization (Gransow 2006). Similarly, colonial temporality allows for visions of a Chinese alter-modernity that challenges Western domination. But because it is rooted in colonial temporality, China's modernization project—no matter what its specific content is—responds to problems that arise from perceiving China as backward and in need of catching up to other, more modern places.

I describe this conception on temporality as *colonial* for two reasons: Firstly, because it is a temporality created in the context of China's colonial history. Historians have described the ideology of modernity in China from the late Qing Era on, and they have shown its strong associations with experiences of colonialism (Duara 1995; Gransow 2006; Shih 2001). Secondly, because colonial temporality is rooted in a concept of linearly progressing time strikingly similar to that of colonial discourses. As various postcolonial authors have argued, colonial conceptions of temporality constitute a crucial dimension of domination that has become a key pillar of (post)colonial hegemony in various contexts (Chakrabarty 2000; Fabian 1983) and that constitutes a developmentalist governmentality not necessarily produced by or in favor of local governments (Escobar 1995). For China too, I will argue, colonial temporality allows Chinese institutional discourse to imagine a historical agency of »China« only at the price of placing China in a position of being backward and inferior to the West. There can be no doubt that Chinese institutional discourses understand modernization clearly as a project of *national modernization* that will create a distinctively *Chinese* modernity in which China is supposed to achieve national wealth and strength (Gransow 2006, 163). By no means is it understood as imitating the West. On the contrary, it often implies becoming strong enough to defend itself against Western and Japanese imperial aggression if necessary (Wang 2012). However, institutional discourses have not yet found a way to articulate a discourse that allows one to imagine development into a Chinese, self-determined modernity, without portraying this development as a form of surpassing or catching up to the already modern West.

In order to place colonial temporality in its context of power relations, I will draw on Anibal Quijano's work on *coloniality* (Quijano 2000; Quijano

2013). Quijano argues that power asymmetries in the world cannot be reduced to relations of economic exploitation. Instead, as Mignolo argues in his discussion of Quijano's work, four dimensions of coloniality must be analyzed in their specific entanglement: the economy, authority, knowledge/subjectivity and race/class/gender (Mignolo 2011, 8). As I will show, the third dimension of this colonial matrix, the *coloniality of knowledge and subjectivity*, is of special importance when dealing with China's modernization project. This is especially true of the »new temporal perspective« (Quijano 2000, 541) of colonial knowledge that locates the colonized in the past of Western colonizers. I will focus on colonial temporality as a coloniality of knowledge and its relationship to the dimension of authority. Its relation to the economy and to categories of race/class/gender will have to be discussed in later works. Of course, the four dimensions cannot be separated. But the complex issue of economic power is too easily reduced to a simplified idea of adaptation to the rules of the Western economy, and the multi-layered Chinese discourses on ethnicity are similarly often narrowed down to stereotypical depictions of the Han discriminating non-Han minorities. I believe it is better to leave these issues aside for now rather than to run the risk of portraying them in such an overly simplified manner.

Of course, colonial temporality in China is not a new empirical discovery. Sinologists have known about the ideology of »backwardness« and »modernization« for a long time (e.g., Duara 1995; Lin and Galikowski 1999), and postcolonial scholars have long elaborated the idea that coloniality implies a discourse on linear time used to legitimize the subjection of cultures deemed »backward« (Chakrabarty 1992; Fabian 1983; Wilk 1994). What I attempt to do in this article is therefore simply to use these classical theoretical ideas in postcolonial studies in order to provide a better and more abstract conceptualization of the existing sinological knowledge—a conceptualization that will hopefully help poststructuralist authors to better account for the legacies of colonialism in their analysis of modernization projects in China.

Entangled production of colonial temporality

The first feature of colonial temporality is its entangled production. The term »entangled« is inspired by Conrad and Randeria (2002). It indicates that colonial temporality is not simply a discourse attached to one specific power project, e.g., British colonial power, but rather that this discourse takes place in »cooperation« between different, sometimes contradicting power structures. For example, liberal discourses on development and democracy as well as discourses on socialism with Chinese characteristics often appear to be opposing powers, but at the same time they do cooperate in their story of China's still-ongoing development. They cooperate in reproducing colonial temporality because it can support the arguments of all kinds of political discourses.² This is also the reason why colonial temporality could survive until today: if it had merely been a discourse of colonizers, or if it had been strictly tied to one specific center of power, it would certainly not have been able to survive the various deep changes in political authority over China during the last century.

Colonial temporality originated in the context of colonial occupation and in an asymmetric exchange between Western, Japanese, and Chinese discourses, without being strictly tied to a single colonial authority. In fact, colonial rule in China was so fragmented that some have suggested that one should speak of colonialisms in the plural (Goodman and Goodman 2012). The various colonial powers held only incomplete authority over China and they were constantly fighting each other. However, the colonial powers were able to create a relatively coherent colonial discourse because they recognized each other as different from the colonized, and because they exchanged ideas based on shared notions of civilization and modernization. Furthermore, Chinese intellectuals actively interacted with and appropriated these discourses within their

2 In fact, I already overly simplify the global and entangled character of these discourses here by focusing mainly on »Western« and »Chinese« discourses and largely leaving aside the very important Japanese and Soviet discourses and translations as well as these countries' imperialist projects.

own agendas, and further helped to reproduce colonial temporality as a dominant concept of time and history. Therefore, the idea of colonial temporality could spread and become effective relatively independently from colonial authority, and could constitute a relative coherent system of knowledge despite the fragmented nature of colonial rule.

During the time of semi-colonialism in China, colonial temporality was in many respects produced by Chinese intellectuals themselves. This does not mean that colonial rule and colonial violence were not crucial for this process. Lili Zhu's contribution in this issue indicates that images of (technological) modernization became plausible in China due to experiences of defeat in war, but that this defeat did not immediately lead to the internalization of colonial temporality (Zhu 2017). As Zhu indicates, colonial temporality was a specific form of making sense of this defeat in terms of civilizational progress or backwardness that emerged in the early twentieth century after several defeats of China by various colonial powers. However, when colonial temporality emerged, it was no longer simply the technological imagination Zhu writes about, and neither was it simply a Chinese experience: it had become a new discourse on civilization, produced in exchanges between Western and Chinese knowledge, mediated mainly through Japanese translations. This new discourse was embraced by all sides because it helped the colonial powers disguise their superior ability to use violence as a higher level of modernity, and because Chinese elites understood it as a theory helping them to reach the level of modernity necessary to fend off this violence. Because of this, various Chinese groups with different political agendas for liberating China appropriated the very same discourse on temporality used by colonizers to legitimize their rule. Chinese intellectuals and political activists started to study European Enlightenment literature and Western history to gain an understanding of modernity. In doing so, they swiftly picked up orientalist discourses originally designed to naturalize colonial power and appropriated them for their own discourses on strengthening and modernizing China. Most obviously, the intellectuals of the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement relied very explicitly on ideas of colonial temporality and Chinese backwardness

in their discourses (Lin 1979; Shih 2001). The existence of multiple and fragmented colonialisms in China did not weaken the coherence of such a coloniality of power. On the contrary, it created a situation in which it became difficult for Chinese intellectuals to envision an imperialist »enemy« they could struggle against (Shih 2001, 373).

Through its appropriation into Chinese intellectual discourses, colonial temporality was not only separated from its context of colonial authority, but also re-embedded in a new project of state authority in the process of nation-building. During the late nineteenth century, discourses on colonial temporality were still by and large discourses on ways of strengthening the Qing Empire. But roughly since the beginning of the twentieth century, colonial temporality became an essential part of Chinese nationalist movements that was directed against the Qing dynasty and that demanded that China become a nation-state (Lin 1979; Wang 2014). In the context of nationalist movements, colonial temporality was used by various kinds of political groups, and the topic of becoming a nation and the progressing temporality of the nation became deeply entangled (Duara 1995). This is true of socialist anti-imperialist movements, too. For example, Chinese socialist discourses at the time were clearly rooted in the idea of a (socialist) modernization of China and the third world. Visions of revolutionary modernization were nurtured not only by European ideas but also by engaging with decolonizing movements from all over the world (Karl 2002). Thus, it is not surprising to find that the construction of temporality as »modernization« appeared together with discourses that motivated and legitimized the centralization of authority into one nation-state.

The fact that colonial temporality could be separated from colonial authority and become part of Chinese nationalism and anti-imperialism is an important reason for its continuity throughout the process of decolonization. There can be little doubt that a form of de-colonization had taken place by 1945 with respect to colonial authority and by 1949 with respect to the economy. But even though 1949 constituted decolonization in many respects, the pervasive and persuasive power of colonial temporality did not disappear under Mao. On the contrary:

thanks to its entanglement with nationalism and decolonization, colonial temporality after 1949 could more than ever before create a coherent effect. The Chinese state that was striving to become a modern and centralized »nation-state« would take on the project of modernization and articulate it as a coherent theoretical and political agenda. Thus, similar and often much better-organized forms of modernism were visible after 1949, too. For example, Yang (2011) and Duara (1991) describe extreme and sometimes brutal regimes of self-modernization during and after the Mao era, tracing their origins back to Chinese attempts to deal with colonial experiences. This is not to say that Yang is right in portraying Maoism as entirely anti-traditional. But under Mao, the desire to modernize China, and to achieve self-determination based on this modernization, finally connected with a fully coherent state discourse and state authority that could enforce it on all of China. After colonial temporality had informed discourses of becoming a nation, it was backed up by the institutional power of an accomplished state authority from 1949 on.

This new, coherent, and state-led version of the Chinese modernization discourse continued to play a role, although within a different overall framework, in discourses after 1978. The cooperating partners may have changed, and the imaginary »center« of modernity may have been renegotiated. But the cooperation and mutual appropriation of discourses between Western development discourses and Chinese discourses of national modernization remained obvious. In fact, this change was not very big: although Chinese and Western institutional discourses had perceived each other as the socialist/capitalist »other« for a certain time, they had never ceased to agree that China was in need of modernization—yet the aims and means of this modernization differed between socialist and capitalist modernity. For example, contemporary Anglo-American literature on development is obviously reproducing colonial temporality when it talks about stages of development (understood as GDP levels or even a »human development index«) and about isolable nation-states as the units of analysis. In this respect, Daniel Vukovich has pointed to the rise of a discourse of »becoming the sameness« (Vukovich 2012): while

old colonial and Cold War discourses stressed China's »otherness,« newer ones point to the »sameness« to the West that China *will achieve in the future*. In doing so, they ironically reproduce the same colonial temporality used by the Chinese state they seek to oppose.

This does not mean that the project of modernization never transformed or was never contested. It transformed constantly and was contested between varieties of different political positions. Throughout the entire twentieth century, it oscillated between modernization through »revolution,« notions of step-by-step »modernization,« and a technocratic notion of »development.« Even though the latter position seems to have become dominant in the political sphere from the 1990s on, this decade also saw an explosion of pluralistic and theoretically innovative schools of thought beyond the state (Lin and Galikowski 1999; Wang 1998; Zhang 2001). But after all, throughout all these transformations, and through all the different innovative ideas about what modernity might be, the basic idea of temporality remained the same. It was reproduced by the different power groups within the Chinese state and by independent intellectuals, and not only within China, but also by Western social scientists, including many China-specialists, before, during, and after the Cold War. At times it had such hegemonic power that both institutional discourses and intellectual counter-discourses adhered to it, as Chan Xiaomei's call for anti-official Occidentalism shows, for example (Chen 1995). In this sense, even though China's future was constantly contested, its vision remained rooted in a temporality that originated from colonial entanglements.

In the middle of history

The second feature of colonial temporality is that it places China in the middle of an ongoing history. Of course, again, different authors reproducing colonial temporality may imagine an entirely different outcome of this history: becoming like the USA, establishing global communism, creating a self-determined future for each country, and so on. Nevertheless, and disregarding the imagined destination of the journey, they largely agree on the fact that China is still on the journey—not at the end, but in the middle of a course toward improving society. In saying that China is

»in the middle« of history, I am not referring to Fukuyama's (1992) liberal modernization theory, but rather to Vattimo's (1987) postmodern »End of (Hi)Story.« Vattimo's argument that intellectuals have lost their belief in a course of history and a continuous improvement and perfectibility of society is certainly not true for China, not even for the majority of Chinese postmodern authors. But this idea of being »in the middle« is not tied to the idea of »Westernization« or the spread of liberal democracy. On the contrary, almost all reformers in China have, albeit to varying degrees, insisted on preserving some Chinese characteristics, and the official Chinese version of this discourse does not refer to liberalism but rather to socialism. Being »in the middle« simply means that there is a linearly improving development of history in which China is imagined to be in the very middle.

Chinese institutional discourses can therefore use colonial temporality to imagine and mobilize agency: they place China in the middle of a progressing history with an end that is not yet set in stone. This idea allows one to reconnect colonial temporality with a new project of authority of the Chinese state, because it makes possible what Simon calls »acting upon a story that we can believe« (Simon 2017): it allows one to articulate visions of and hopes for a Chinese future by telling a »story« about improving all of society, not just about economic indicators. It is a story that creates a desire as well as the imagined destiny to improve through advancement. This story is certainly empowering state authority at least at a symbolic level: it can justify painful reforms as well as the re-education of backward behavior. It can create a mandate for direct interventions into all kinds of areas in order to modernize them. For those anxious or dissatisfied about the current society, it creates a hope for a better future (Latham 2002). At the same time, it corresponds with promoting a self-enhancing and self-improving subject that lies at the center of many newer technologies of subjectivity (Yan 2003; Yi 2011). It relates individuals' search for improvement with national belonging, as the modernization of the nation is both a precondition and a result of a better life for every subject of its population. It can therefore, as a story, call for reforms and at the same time defend China against criticism,

because the position in the »middle of history« allows both, the imagining of a different path yet to be taken and pride with respect to the steps already achieved.

Furthermore, this story is able to integrate a wide range of ideas and specialized discourses. Seemingly »capitalist« developmental discourses on improving economic growth rates or increasing foreign investment are mixed with aims of »building socialism« (建设社会主义) and with nationalist and culturalist speeches on a Chinese »great rejuvenation« (伟大复兴) or Confucian civilization (儒家文明). These diverse ideas can be brought together by a colonial temporality that allows them to become united in a discourse on a Chinese modernity: socialist modernization and developmentalism can be united under the common aim of modernization, and socialist modernity and ideas on Confucianist culture can both be read as part of the quest for a distinctively Chinese modernity.³ Rather than being an assemblage of seemingly contradictory neoliberalism and non-liberalism (Ong 2007), they in fact constitute a relatively coherent system of modernist ideas. By doing so, Chinese institutional discourses express not only a concern with industrialization or economic growth, but also with civilization and human development—and they connect all of these concerns through a common underlying idea of temporality.

Therefore, the story about being in the middle of history fundamentally challenges »Western« hegemony in development discourses. However, discourses on the end and on the middle of history both envision one point in a linear history that can have an end and a middle, and therefore they »cooperate« in reproducing colonial temporality. Due to this cooperation, colonial temporality cannot possibly be understood as a Chinese state project (or, even less true, an anti-Western project). But neither can it be seen as a domination of the West, as some post-

3 See, as an detailed example, Yan Junchen's (2017) article in this issue on the »cooperation« of American and Chinese political scientists in constructing and essentializing the group of »waiqi white collar professionals,« even though different scholars adhere to different political ideologies.

development discourses seem to imply (Escobar 1995): Chinese discourses are certainly encouraged and inspired by Western ideas of development, but frame these ideas within an entirely different historic-national narrative: a history with an outcome yet to be negotiated, rather than a world culture that is already institutionalized—a Chinese modernity yet to come.

Discourses of deficiency and constant comparisons with the West

The third important feature of colonial temporality is that it revolves around discourses of deficiency that compel Chinese discourses to constantly compare their own country with a hyperreal West that serves as the reference for modernity. The story of being in the middle of history still transports ideas from colonial discourse, most visibly in the fact that it revolves around *discourses of deficiency*. The »story« that colonial temporality can produce places its historic subjects in a position where they lack something that more modern people already possess. Discourses on how to transform Chinese subjects thus start with the self-evident idea that Chinese subjects are somehow in deep deficit, that they are underdeveloped subjects requiring further development guided by the state and/or social scientists.

A good example of this is the reform-era debate on »Suzhi« (素质), a term awkwardly translated as »human quality« in the scholarly debate. Debates on the assumed low Suzhi of Chinese people have been part of modernization discourses at least since the 1989 New Enlightenment movement, and the term continues to appear in debates on how to modernize or develop the country. Suzhi is frequently evoked in debates on population quality (Anagnost 2004) or educational programs both for students (Kipnis 2011) and workers (Yan 2003). Several (Western) authors claim to have identified a neoliberal Suzhi discourse used by state institutions to create neoliberal subjects in China (Woronov 2009; Yan 2003). However, as Kipnis (2007) and Yi (2011) have argued, there is no consistent »neoliberal« use of the word Suzhi. The authors in question have failed to demonstrate how Suzhi could be considered a neoliberal *concept*; rather, what they actually could show was the ways in which neoliberal policy makers use the *word* Suzhi within their discourse. Rather

than being tied to neoliberalism, the definition of Suzhi depends on the political position of those using the word. In neoliberal discourses Suzhi may be defined as entrepreneurial spirit, while it may denote morality or civility in conservative or Marxist discourse, and in the sense commonly used by the public, it often refers to morals and honesty.

There is, however, one idea shared by most references to the term Suzhi in institutional discourses, regardless whether they are neoliberal or not: it is the idea that »Suzhi«—whatever it may mean—should be increased. Together with other words such as civilization (文明), reasonability (合理性), and all-around development of people (人的全面发展), Suzhi is used as an element within discourses on the *deficiency of Chinese subjects*. What constitutes Suzhi as an element of these discourses is not an inherent meaning of this word, but its position within argumentative structures that deploy the term to describe people whose Suzhi has to be improved. In consequence, the idea of a lack of Suzhi contributes to an overall discourse of deficiency that attributes a *subjectivity in need of development* to Chinese people. For this reason, various policy makers can use the idea of lacking Suzhi to push for the development they want: more entrepreneurial spirit, more piety toward one's parents, more moral compassion, and so on. Whatever political reforms or ideal subjects they desire, they can define having Suzhi accordingly, and use the discourses of deficiency in order to urge the promotion of these abilities.

Such discourses of deficiency are, again, deeply rooted in colonial temporality, specifically the orientalist notion that Chinese people are *not sufficiently modern* and therefore *need to be developed*. Such ideas were a fundamental part of colonial discourses almost from their beginning: they have been used by colonial powers in order to construct China as despotic and inferior and to legitimize its forceful opening (Jones 2001, especially 67–98), and they have been used by Chinese reformers to push for reform. Their effect for domination lay and still lies in the fact that they can bind together various topics and relate them to a common problem of overcoming backwardness: consumer practices, public behavior, family life, creativity, education, work ethic, and many other matters can all be found to be either modern or backward. When seen through the lens of

discourses of deficiency, all of these matters and practices belong to a bundle of things that must be improved to achieve the goal of becoming a modern society. Once the interconnections are created, it becomes the whole »bundle« of things that needs to be governed—because all the things related under the problem of colonial temporality are potentially lacking and in need of improvement, and because their improvement matters for the future of the nation. Suddenly, and thanks to the idea that something is lacking, virtually anything can be subsumed under the category of things that must be governed in order to improve China and the Chinese people.

However, within the framework of these discourses of deficiency, modernity is defined by reference to an already existing modernity elsewhere, beyond the experienced reality of those talking about it. In Chinese institutional discourses, China's modernity is described through *constant comparisons with the West* that constitute a binary worldview of China/West and at the same time (or rather because of this) allow the West to be the place where »the clock is set« (Wilk 1994, 103). The West of these discourses is, of course, a hyperreal West that serves as an imaginary reference point for talking about modernity, just as Chakrabarty (2000) described for Indian discourses. Various authors constantly compare China with the West in terms of how far away China is from this modern metropolitan West, or how long it will take to surpass the West. Becoming modern therefore means first and foremost catching up to and subsequently overcoming the former colonizing powers. This does not imply a definite opinion toward the West—one can find all kinds of opinions, from glorification of the West to its condemnation, to more nuanced opinions or even views that differentiate between individual European and American countries. But even those works that actually reject the West/USA as evil depict it as a superior modern evil, as the development stage that must first be reached in order to overcome it in the future.

Most importantly, by debating modernity through comparisons with the West, Chinese authors have come to reproduce the colonial style of universalism. In the post-Mao era institutional discourses perform, once again, what Shih Shumei has called a »particularization of Chinese culture

and universalization of Western culture« (Shih 2001, 131). Even in the Mao era, the Western regime was depicted as the standard model of capitalism, but at that time, it was countered by a counter-universalism of Maoist socialism. In today's China, however, the West seems to have achieved the status of the only universalized model. This is visible, for example, in development debates, which may describe China as becoming like the West or may explain why China is not becoming like the West, or at which development level China is in comparison to Western countries. In such discourses, pro- and anti-Western authors as well as Chinese and Western scholars all use a language of locality to describe China. That is, they are marking events in China as »Chinese« and attributing singularity to them when comparing them to the West. The West, in turn, is frequently portrayed as the only »other,« as if modernities outside of China(local)/West(global) did not exist, and in many cases it is not even described as a place: »developed countries« or »global standards« might serve as placeholders for US/European countries. In effect, events in Chinese history are portrayed as specific, while events in Western history constitute the universal framework against which the Chinese events are compared—and, due to the discourses of deficiency, they are often compared in terms of what China lacks.

All in all, the discourses of deficiency and the external references they use create an idea of Chinese inferiority. Chinese discourses on modernity are compelled to constantly observe »the West« and compare their own country to it, and they are compelled to do so by the colonial temporality they themselves construct in order to imagine historical agency. In consequence, statements on »modernity« and »global standards« as well as practices of »modern governance« become more credible when they are articulated from within Western institutional settings—including such statements that depict Chinese institutions as inferior. Because of the constant comparisons to the West they invoke, discourses of deficiency show an ambivalent position for the Chinese state. All they do is create a drive for »change« that can be used by all kinds of policy makers, and for all kinds of political ends, including those hostile to the Chinese government. Indeed, opponents of the state have systematically used discourses

of deficiency in order to articulate their critique of the state, or in order to construct a Western utopia they want China to emulate (Chen 1995). The very same colonial temporality that legitimizes the state's modernization projects, and the same discourses of deficiency that encourage reeducating the population, simultaneously nurture resistances and counter-discourses—because all they basically say is that China is not sufficient as it is, but has to advance on a linear temporal path. At the end of this path, however, one can place the Western »end of history« or the »Chinese modernity yet to come« or any other idea, depending on one's political position. The irony of the Chinese national modernization discourse is that in its current framework, it produces visions of modernity only through external references—the »story« of modernization is at the same time the pitfall of coloniality that grants historic agency only to those who are content with »catching up.«

Searching for alternatives

By this point, it should have become clear that colonial temporality is neither solely invented nor entirely controlled by the contemporary Chinese state. It is just as much a historical legacy of colonialism as it is a narrative invented by the state. It is used just as much in Western neo-institutionalist discourses of »becoming the sameness« as it is by Chinese state institutions to legitimize their policies. And it is just as much subjecting China to external references for modernity as it is providing a story of national modernization. This insight makes certain, frequently described nationalist struggles within Chinese intellectual discourses easier to grasp: at least some of the »nationalist« outcries in China seem to be attempts to struggle against colonial temporality rather than claims of Chinese superiority. This is especially true of many works that attempt to uncover a national culture or Chineseness.

This might be exemplified best by looking at the Chinese postcolonial discourses that are institutionalized, but not part of the political sphere in the narrow sense. These discourses took (and are taking) place in an era of ideological reorientation. The 1980s had brought a disenchantment with both the Maoist discourse and, after the Tiananmen incident, of the

radical liberalist discourse (Wang 1998). This gave way to a multi-layered debate during the 1990s, often revolving around the search for new paradigms and new theoretical languages. Aside from (and sometimes within) the widely recognized struggle between the »new left« and »(neo)liberals« (Kipnis 2003), various debates on Chinese identity and Chinese self-determination emerged. These debates were nationalist and culturalist in character, but they clearly described their search for Chineseness' as attempts to articulate a specifically Chinese vision of the future, and often as quests to overcome the dilemma of coloniality.

This is most obvious in works demanding a new discourse to describe social change and future in China. For example, during the 1990s, Cao Shunqing and Li Siqu (Cao and Li 1996) diagnosed Chinese cultural theory as suffering from a state of »aphasia« (失语症状). According to Cao and Li, Chinese theory had become »unable to express anything outside of the language and concepts of Western discourses« (除却洋腔非话语, 离开洋调不能言). If Chinese theory were ever to play a role in the world, they concluded, it would have to develop its own theory formulated in the language of its people. Diagnosing a similar problem, Zhang Yiwu engaged in 1993 in constructing a new, hybrid language that was intended to reconnect Chinese intellectuals with classical modes of expression that were merged with new words and concepts derived from many other languages (Chan 2004, 36–38; Zhang 1993).

For many Chinese postcolonial scholars, this attempt to decolonize discourse included a new way of imagining time and development and overcoming most of the basic structures of colonial temporality. For example, Zhang Yiwu, together with Zhang Fa and Wang Yichuan, argues that the discourse of »modernity« (现代性) should be replaced with a discourse of »Chineseness« (中华性) (Zhang Fa et al. 1994). They root this idea of Chineseness in a critique of the discourse of modernity that had been promoted mainly by Zhang Yiwu.⁴ For Zhang, the discourse of modernity has compelled Chinese intellectuals to reflect

4 Zhang Yiwu also sometimes talks about a knowledge of modernity (»现代性的«知识»; Zhang 1994, 105).

upon themselves entirely in categories of thought imported from Western colonial discourse and which place China in a time and place that is backward and distant from their own reference points for modernity (Zhang 1994).

Zhang et. al. (1994) introduced »Chineseness« as an alternative to this discourse of modernity. This new »discourse framework« (话语框架) was supposed to help people negotiate China's development instead of following a predestined path of »catching up.« Chineseness would still uphold the notion of development (发展) in the sense of an improvement and of people striving for the „highest degree of humanity« (人类性的最高度). But other than modernity, which is rooted in a linear narrative with an already predetermined direction of development, Chineseness would understand development as a contested process with endless possibilities and many possible models and paths. Consequentially, this »Chineseness« was—in contrast to what the name seems to suggest—not understood as rediscovering an essence of otherness in contrast/conflict with the West, but as a hybrid and fluid concept. Zhang et.al. insisted that Chineseness could not be realized by rejecting the West or by opposing it with reference to Chinese tradition. Rather, »Chineseness« would not deal with differences such as Chinese/Western, new/old, or socialist/capitalist, but would simply »take what is beneficial« (有利的就拿来) from these various cultural systems.

There can be little doubt that such works produce a discourse of cultural exceptionalism. Chatterjee (1993) and Duara (1995) argued that such references to one's own culture are typical for third world nationalism, and subsequently criticized such discourses for their nationalist-culturalist assumptions. Chinese postcolonial authors seem to be just another case of discourses on national culture: they portray China in search of its Chineseness and in need of a specific Chinese »language« for itself. Also, the choice of words such as »Chineseness« reminds one of a conservative culturalism that grieves over the decline of the original language of a culture, defending it against »Westernization« or »Americanization.« Therefore, Sheng Anfeng (2007) has rightfully argued that the works of Cao and Zhang have appropriated the theories of postmodernism and

postcolonialism within a nationalist discourse. Similar claims are made by Zhang Longxi about Chinese postcolonial discourses in general (Zhang 1999) and, more polemically, by Chen Xiaomei (Chen 1995): due to the specific situation within China, both authors argue, the rejection of Western theory in Chinese postcolonial discourses would contribute to existing power structures rather than helping to reflect or criticize them.

However, authors such as Cao Shunqin and Zhang Fa, discussed above, make perfectly clear that they understand this nationalism as a remedy to the »aphasia« created by discourses that do not allow one to articulate »Chinese« problems in a »Chinese« discourse framework. Seen in the light of my argumentation above, this seems to rise up against the discourse of colonial temporality that enables historical agency at the price of subjection to coloniality. This is especially evident in the attempts of Zhang Fa to reject modernity without rejecting development. »Chineseness« attempts to embrace the concept of development and improvement in the course of history, but tries to reject the idea that this development must happen according to the trajectory described in Western theories. Zhang et al. try to shift attention from »catching up« with a modernity that is defined by external references to a discourse of improving current society without a model or a known direction. In doing so, they try to open up a space of possibilities and »decision« instead of a linear path of modernization, while trying to maintain the »story« of improvement and the agency it creates. They thus articulate not only a plausible alternative to modernization discourses, but also to Western postmodern discourses that entirely give up any notion of improvement.

Undertaking the enterprise of constructing a new language within the framework of cultural nationalism is perfectly understandable. Although colonial temporality is constructed within Chinese discourses, Cao und Zhang are not entirely wrong when they describe it as non-Chinese. It is, indeed, constructed in a transnationally entangled discourse, and it does, indeed, favor the former colonizers. Calling this »Western« and putting it in opposition to »Chinese« might be a simplification. But what other choice does one have when suffering from »aphasia«? If Chinese institutional discourses largely work within a framework of colonial

temporality, and if the concepts they provide cannot escape from this framework, then these intellectuals must face the problem of writing about, as well as in, a language that does not yet exist. They seek to describe a discourse framework outside of colonial temporality which they argue should be created—but because it has not been fully invented yet, they must do so within the »old,« still colonial framework of language they seek to overcome. And it seems rather obvious from the content of such writings that they are trying to solve the problem by »appropriating« existing ideas: the ideas of nationhood and national cultural authenticity, which are both parts of the dominant framework of modernization and which are both recognized as arguments in Chinese institutional discourses as well as internationally. In short, those who believe they lack a »language« attempt to use the language of Chinese culture to construct different visions of temporality.

In this sense, we are facing two forms of nationalism, although they are inseparable in reality. On the one hand, there is a nationalism within colonial temporality that understands the nation both as telos and as a subject of history and that requires China to become a nation in order to achieve a self-determined modernity. On the other hand, there is a »nationalism« of Chineseness that is articulated in search for alternatives to colonial temporality. It focuses less on the linear progress through history than on the question what kind of modernity »China« seeks to achieve—it is not even entirely clear whether this should indeed be labeled as »nationalism,« because Chineseness is not confined to the boundaries of the People's Republic of China.

This, I believe, clearly exemplifies the pervasiveness of colonial temporality, or rather: its power to find its way even into discourses that try to challenge it. Zhang Fa, Zhang Yiwu, and similar authors indeed articulate a feasible alternative vision of improving China, a vision that does not require the ideology of modernity. But they articulate it in the language of locality, as a Chinese exceptionality, that gains its uniqueness mainly in comparison with a hyperreal »West.« To Zhang Fa et al. (1994), Chineseness is not lacking anything. But it is still local and specific, in contrast to the universal notion of »modernity« to which it is supposed

to constitute an alternative. Here, too, Western modernity as a generalized reference is put in contrast to something that is portrayed as local and specifically »Chinese,« effectively constructing a binary worldview of China/the West, even if the two poles are not understood as incommensurable.⁵ The multiplicities of cultures neither Chinese nor Western are pushed aside to the margin of attention, and the story of »Chineseness« does not attempt to speak to these cultures. It is, after all, questionable whether such theories could ever allow China's discourse to be heard in the world, as Cao Shunqin, for example, envisioned. In fact, their own argumentative structure effectively prevents these theories from applying to other countries—after all, their arguments are bound to a specific Chinese identity.

Conclusion

The concern of institutional discourses in China is *national modernization* because China is supposed to modernize in order to *achieve national strength*, and China is supposed to *be(come) a nation* in order to modernize. In this article I have argued that the concept of temporality underlying this national modernization is, however, a product of a history of colonialism that continues to be structured by a coloniality of knowledge and subjectivity. The discourses on national modernization and the search for alternative languages of development are not just part of a technology of subjectivation created by the state, but a problem the technologies of the state are trying to solve. This problem, however, was not invented by the contemporary Chinese state; it is a transnational discourse as well as a legacy of colonial history.

Inspired by Anibal Quijano (2000), I have argued that the relationships between authority and colonial temporality as a form of knowledge are

5 The same could be said about neo-Confucian authors such as Jiang Qing, who also construct a narrative based on a perceived Chinese tradition. However, in contrast to Zhang Yiwu, these neo-Confucian authors insist on an essentializing notion of Chinese culture, therefore fitting much better into the framework of the theory of »self-orientalization« set out by Arif Dirlik.

complex: colonial temporality emerged as coloniality of knowledge in the context of colonialism and became appropriated by Chinese intellectuals who, at the same time, internalized the colonial temporality and re-embedded it outside of its context of colonial authority in a new context of nationalism. Because of this, colonial temporality strengthened the emerging nationalism and was subsequently institutionalized by the state authority after the establishment of a Chinese nation state.

Despite this close relationship between colonial temporality and Chinese state authority, critical scholars are misled when attributing »modernization« and its effects to the »Chinese state« alone. Colonial temporality was and is produced in an entanglement of various discourses in the West (Anglo-America), Japan, and China. The fact that China has long since attained considerable political and economic power is no valid argument for ignoring the pervasiveness of colonial temporality because it is not a problem of neocolonial interventions in China's sovereignty, but a problem of *coloniality of knowledge and subjectivity* that is connected to, but not entirely determined by, economic and political power: it creates its power effects through its hegemony in the domain of »time« and therefore of the horizon of expectable futures, and because it can attribute a certain subjectivity—a subjectivity in need of development—based on this knowledge about time.

However, traditional post-development critique would be equally misleading if it assumed that colonial temporality entirely subjects China to a Western hegemony that forces it to assimilate to »global standards.« Rather, colonial temporality has a double effect of subjection and empowerment. It *subjects* institutional discourses to a clock set by the Western metropolis, but at the same time *empowers* them to conquer their own history and their own future. It allows the imagining of a self-determined Chinese historical agency, and therefore holds the potential to create the possibility of »acting upon a story that we can believe« (Simon 2017). Moreover, it can bind together nationalism, modernization, economic growth, socialism, and Confucian traditions—concepts that are often misunderstood as contradictory by Western authors—because

they become part of a larger project encompassing them all: the project of national modernization.

But as long as its story is told in the language of colonial temporality, it continues to portray China as lacking modern qualities. In fact, its hopeful story of progress can only be told as long as China constructs itself as not yet fully modern and grants »full modernity« to other countries. The Chinese discourse on national modernization holds ambivalence for the Chinese state because it is rooted in colonial temporality: it envisions national self-determination, but it is also a legacy of colonialism. It empowers the state, but is also a resource of anti-government criticism. It creates a national narrative and also strengthens the notion of an inferior Chineseness. In short, focusing solely on its function for naturalizing state power means misunderstanding the historic and transnational character of modernization discourses that stem from its drawing on colonial temporality. Hence we should not hastily discard as state propaganda the recent struggles to find a history beyond colonial temporality, one that takes away the notion of »lack« and at the same time leaves hope for a better future. Rather, we should take it seriously and analyze it as ways of dealing with a colonial temporality, a story of »backwardness« that is part of the difficult legacy of coloniality in China.

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Meinhof, Colonial temporality...

InterDisciplines 1 (2017)

Marius Meinhof, Faculty for Sociology, Bielefeld University:
marius.meinhof@uni-bielefeld.de.

Construction and politicization of *waiqi* white-collar identity

Traveling knowledge about Chinese professionals in multinational corporations in China

Junchen Yan

Introduction

It is well-known that Orientalism (Said [1978] 1979) refers to the manner in which the essentially functional distinction between Orient and Occident has been constructed. While the »Orient« involves categorizations of »foreignness,« »exoticness,« »backwardness,« »irrationality,« and »femininity,« the »Occident« carries a significant amount of contrasting properties that are attributed to Western civilization and modernity. However, orientalist knowledge about non-Western societies is not a simplified racial discrimination of the other, but an effective means of exerting an impact on the way in which the »Orient« perceives itself as being different. Carrier (1995) pointed out that the construction and interpretation of the essential attributes of »Orient« and »Occident« is affected by political-economic relations within and between Western and non-Western societies. This critique of Orientalism has been taken up by several scholars in order to critically reflect the knowledge production about China by Anglo-American academics and publishers (e.g., Mackerras 1989; Jones 2001; Hung 2003; and Vukovich 2012). These works, however, show that there is not a single simplified Western representation of China as a primitive society, but rather representations that vary with the period (Mackerras 1989) and that often are a matter of the changing political economy of the world system that manipulates the images of China (Hung 2003). Vukovich (2012) has even argued that the characteristic mode of knowledge production about China has already shifted from a focus on »otherness« to a focus

on »becoming-sameness« during the last decade, which comes as a result of the dynamics of global capitalism and the efforts of Chinese government to position China within it.

This, however, is not to be mistaken for »overcoming« Orientalism. Like before, Western knowledge production tends to essentialize groups, identities, and cultural difference in order to fit them into a political and ideological agenda. Vukovich argues that the new form of Orientalism, unlike the classic orientalist discourse that focused on distinguishing by negation, postulates China's convergence to the West. According to Vukovich (2012, 1), not only China's convergence to the West but also China's impossibility of being the West is the focus of »Sinological-orientalism.« Echoing Derrida (1982), we can say that a necessary dis-jointure between »being no longer« and »being not yet« has become a new resource for maintaining the superior position of the West over China. If taken seriously, we can even go so far as to say that »the becoming-sameness of China« (Vukovich 2012, 25) is what Raymond Williams (1977) called the »structure of feeling,« suggesting »a communal way of seeing the world in consistent terms, sharing a host of reference points which provide the basis for everyday discourse and action« (Edensor 2002, 19).

However, Vukovich mainly focuses on exploring the relationship between the represented and its representation in the process of knowledge production in the West, failing to discuss the Chinese transformation of this Western knowledge. That is, how Western knowledge is not discounted and delegitimized, but co-produced within the Chinese context. The aspect of Chinese co-production of orientalist knowledge is crucial for understanding how a new Orientalism is produced in China. This calls to mind Dirlik's (1996, 99) suggestion that Orientalism is not a Western ideological product, but rather »the product of an unfolding relationship between Euro-Americans and Asians, that required the complicity of the latter in endowing it with plausibility.«

This article seeks to fill this gap in Vukovich's argumentation by exploring a specific case of knowledge production in Anglo-American and Chinese academia: the knowledge produced on highly qualified Chinese working in multinational corporations (MNCs)—the *waiqi* white-collar professionals.

In the 1970s, multinational corporations—*waiquo qiye*, in short *waiqi*—were again allowed to invest in China. Since Deng Xiaoping's southern tour in 1992, the importance of foreign direct investment has increased substantially for the Chinese modernization process. These foreign direct investment flows exert a positive and significant impact on Chinese employment. According to Zhan and Li, the number of persons employed by foreign companies was 2 million in 1990.¹ It rose to 17.5 million in 1997. According to the statistics published by the Ministry of Commerce, total employment in foreign invested companies reached a new high of more than 42 million in 2008.² At that time, MNCs offered highly qualified Chinese the highest salaries in China and access to personnel training as well as to technological and managerial skills, and became a strong competitor to established Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) for the best-qualified Chinese employees. For a long time during the reform process, they were considered to be the best places to work (Schmidt 2011).³ In this context, the significance of white-collar professionals working in these *waiquo qiye* triggered the interest of the Chinese mass media as well as Western scholars studying China. As this article will show using the example of Margaret Pearson's (1997) work *China's New Business Elite: The Political Consequences of Economic Reform*, the conceptual framework of the Western scholarship on *waiqi* white-collar professionals was derived from the discourse of becoming-sameness. As I will show, Pearson's work was largely informed by a liberal ideology and an interest in China's democratization dominant in US policy so that *waiqi* white-collar professionals as an object of research are imposed onto the space between the imaginaries of the past and the future. Accordingly, their collective quality is amplified,

1 Guoqu Zhan and Zhengping Li, »Zhongguo ruhe xiyin waizi« [How does China attract foreign investment], *Economic Daily*, January 6, 1998.

2 »商务部办公厅关于2008年全国吸收外商投资工作的指导性意见,« Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), last modified 2008, accessed October 11, 2017. <http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/article/b/f/200804/20080405490869.shtml>.

3 However, it seems to have changed during the last ten years, especially with the growth of Chinese domestic enterprises (e.g., Schmidt 2011).

and they ultimately become an implement to demonize communism in China as well as to celebrate Western superiority. Nevertheless, Pearson's idea of China's business elite is incorporated into the Chinese social and cultural circumstances, gaining the power to extend the existing social categorizations and to strengthen the political legitimacy of social control in China. This idea was taken up by Chinese scholars who did not subscribe to this liberal ideology at all, but rather appropriated Pearson's work for their own ideological project of modernizing and governing urban China. Although these authors disagreed on basic political positions, they nevertheless cooperated in essentializing the identity of *waiqi* white-collar professionals and in reproducing the notion that »China« can be described and understood through the framework of classical Western social science. In effect, both American observers such as Margaret Pearson and Chinese social scientists co-produce a primordial social identity of *waiqi* white-collar professionals, even though they do so based on very different political ideologies.

In exploring the knowledge production about *waiqi* white-collar professionals, I will not only criticize the essentialization of *waiqi* white-collar professionals that is cooperatively produced in Western and Chinese scholarship, but also contribute to a deeper understanding of the new modes in which the Anglo-American and Chinese academic discourses relate to each other in reform-era China. Particularly, the pursuit of Chinese modernity during the May Fourth Period was closely associated with the Western post-Enlightenment tradition of modernity, which was accompanied by a process in which China adopted the prescribed identity as »Orient« and conformed to Oriental attributes. In contrast, the Maoist modernization project primarily stressed the self-sufficiency and the functionality of a Chinese political and social order, which was directed against Western modernity, but did not ultimately challenge its very notions of emancipation and progress. In the case of contemporary China under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, the economic reform and the policy of opening up to the outside world staged a comeback to occupy China's rightful place in the world (Hulme 2014). Barabantseva (2012) has even argued that China's modernization thinking relies on the rejection of other possible development

paths within China and subsumes Chinese development experiences under those of the generalized West. This ideological shift led to a fundamental rearticulation and reinterpretation of the West. In the Chinese Imagination of the world order and in Chinese semantics, the West is considered to be »developed, industrialized, urbanized, capitalist, secular, and modern« (Hall 1992, 277). The Chinese project of modernization, which may be seen as the modernization of man and culture in order to catch up with the West, has consciously adapted images and concepts of modernity created in Western discourse in order to make sense of social change in China. Exploring the Chinese transformation of Western knowledge is intended in exactly this sense to illustrate the social material process of »China's becoming sameness.« Going beyond Vukovich's otherwise excellent study, I would thus like to suggest that if »becoming-sameness« has already become a new ideology in the West to understand and incorporate China and at the same time also has become a structure of feeling, which is leading Chinese to an infinite desire for self-identity, more attention must be paid to the interrelated knowledge that is no longer bound to fixed space either in the West or in China. For this purpose, I would like to echo Said's argument that an idea moving across different contexts gets partly or fully accommodated or incorporated and is »to some extent transformed by its new uses, its new position in a new time and place.« (1983, 227) It is thus of significance to explore the political-institutional reception conditions that allow Chinese scholars to circulate Western knowledge in order to fit the local agenda.

The object of research and the epistemological and political context

After the Cultural Revolution, foreign enterprises were introduced in China again. Since the 1990s the importance of foreign direct investment has increased substantially for the Chinese modernization process. The politically controlled promotion of foreign investment is aimed to facilitate economic growth and China's modernization (Guthrie 2001). Foreign investments allow China access to foreign exchange, advanced technology, management know-how, and higher value products. The practice of capitalist industrial relations in foreign companies is the laboratory experiment

for Chinese labor reform (Gallagher 2004). Foreign companies implement »modern« human resource management, recognize individual performance, and support vocational training. By importing Western management models, the capitalist ideology »Time is Money, Efficiency is Life« (ibid.) has gained momentum in China, so that the capitalist labor reform in China is legitimized and justified (Li, Yu Yang, and Yue 2007). The societal self-description and the belief in the rise of China through catch-up modernization gave the idea of becoming modern great importance for the Chinese population and have, in the words of Michel Foucault (1991), their effects on the production of the disciplinary society (for empirical evidence see, e.g., Hansen 2015; Woronov 2016; Lin 2013; Bakken 2000). With modernization as the master signifier for Chinese desires since the 1980s, the Chinese state regime and the intelligentsia have promoted the idea that the Chinese must adopt new patterns of behavior and social attitudes in order to be modern citizens (Anagnost 2004; Farquhar and Zhang 2005; Hoffman 2010; Keane 2001; Yan 2003), and it was against the background of the project of achieving national modernization that highly qualified Chinese working in foreign enterprises receive considerable attention. In the popular discourse controlled by the state-owned mass media, the »social character« of highly qualified Chinese working in foreign enterprises is highlighted especially. As I argue elsewhere, there is a process of developing and crystallizing the symbolic meaning of highly qualified Chinese working in foreign enterprises by journalists and other cultural entrepreneurs who often regard them as the new standard of modern Chinese. For example, in 1993, Chinese director Qi Xing filmed a 20-episode TV series »Chinese staff« that made the melodramatic imagination of intercultural working life of highly qualified Chinese working in foreign enterprises accessible to a wide Chinese urban population for the first time. Further ciphers of being modern, such as a Western-oriented lifestyle or the consumption of Western products, were invoked in the representation of highly qualified Chinese working in foreign enterprises: from their favorite places for leisure activities, such as cafés, bars and fitness centers, to their favorite magazines such as Elle, Time, Forbes, and Fortune, or their high brand awareness of fashion and leather goods such as Gucci and Louis Vuitton, jewelry and watches such as De Beers,

Rolex, and Omega, or perfume such as Chanel and Dior (Zheng 2001). In 1995, the first representative survey of the group of highly qualified Chinese working in MNCs was published in the state-owned newspaper *Youth Daily*. The social scientists Xu Jinquan and Li Zhigang (1995), who conducted the survey with 1,000 highly qualified Chinese working in MNCs, stress the social meaning of highly qualified Chinese working in foreign enterprises for Chinese modernization by endorsing the argument of the US sociologists Inkeles and Smith that »a nation is not modern unless its people are modern« (1974, 9). This discourse, and above all the media discourse, however, does not simply aim at representing an existing group, but is a performative discourse that aims to impose a new definition of Chinese subjects denoting a qualitative change in different spheres: from employment to consumption behavior. The act of representation reinforces essentialization, functionalization, and mystification of highly qualified Chinese working in foreign enterprises, and this process reaches a point where these people are described by the name: *wai qi bai ling* (literally: *waiqi* white-collar professionals). Within the context of China's decolonialization (Chen 2008), in particular after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Chinese working in foreign enterprises of the treaty ports in China were condemned by the party as »class enemies.« According to Chinese writer Liang Xiaosheng (2011, 151), Chinese working for foreigners in China during this time were publicly perceived as a »despicable category of human being« (literally: *chou lei*). But in the new ideological context, the label *waiqi white-collar professional* relieved the negative, normative connotation of the past and simultaneously described highly qualified Chinese working in foreign enterprises in China as the new semantic figure of a neoliberal state-subject. The official media significantly places *waiqi* white-collar professionals in contrast to the *comprador bourgeoisie*, as the following example indicates (Tie 1999, 16): »the policy of reform and opening up in urban China has contributed to the emergence of a new social group: They are *waiqi* white-collar professionals.« Consequently, foreign enterprises, particularly western MNCs, appear to be imagined as the incarnation of Western modernity. *Waiqi* white-collar professionals have accordingly been stylized as the protagonists of China's modernization project. They are the modernizers, the innovators

of Chinese economic life; they present the conviction of efficiency, competence, and Chinese individualism. According to Renmin Wang (*People's Daily Online*), the label *waiqi white-collar worker* was one of the most popular terms during the 1990s.⁴

Hence, current literature on *waiqi* white-collar professionals tends to adopt foreign enterprises as a new opportunity structure for the formation of an upcoming collective identity and advances *waiqi* white-collar professionals as the epitome of Chinese modernization and globalization. At times they are considered a privileged political group for political liberalization in China (Pearson 1997; Tang, Woods, and Zhao 2009); at others they are recognized as a manifestation of globalization (Duthie 2005, 2007; Zhang 2005, 2006; Ong 2008). However, the remarkable fact is that numerous academic writings about *waiqi* white-collar professionals manifest a wide array of what Vukovich (2012) calls »Sinological-orientalism« which serves as a template for interpreting who *waiqi* white-collar professionals are and what they do. From this point of view, calling *waiqi* white-collar professionals »China's new business elite« (Pearson 1997) as well as »self-fashioning Shanghainese« (Ong 2008) is the result of situated representation and translation. In other words, *waiqi* white-collar professionals labeled as »China's new business elite« (Pearson 1997) as well as »self-fashioning Shanghainese« (Ong 2008) are to some extent haunted by the Western experiences in China.

***Waiqi* white-collar professionals in Anglo-American perspective**

The way in which *waiqi* white-collar professionals are constructed in the Anglo-American discourse can best be understood by looking at the most extensive work written on them so far: the work on the political impact of the new business elite in China by American political scientist Margaret Pearson in 1997, which asked whether *waiqi* white-collar professionals would become a political force for democratic reforms in China. Pearson's

4 Renmin Wang, »55 Economic Terms Since Founding of PRC—Part One,« *People's Daily*, 2004, accessed February 15, 2017, http://en.people.cn/200411/15/eng20041115_163921.html.

work was certainly placed within a general Western discourse on Chinese reform in the 1990s: against the background of Deng Xiaoping's policies of modernization and the reopening of China to the West after 1979, it is not surprising that Western observers often demarcate and create categories for understanding Chinese contemporary transformation emphasizing modernist historiography.⁵ The primary framework of this knowledge production was, however, mainly a discourse of what Vukovich (2012, 1) calls »becoming-sameness«: an idea that questions whether categories describing Western history can be applied to China precisely because China is becoming like the West due to processes of modernization. From the modernization theoretical point of view, as critically reviewed by Jean-Louis Rocca (2015, 1), »Societies supposedly conform to evolutionary rules that China cannot escape. Economic development causes them to converge, from one stage to the next, on a common model—modernity—that combines the dominance of markets, electoral democracy and the triumph of individuality.« Since these Western observers presume that China could not be able to elude this fate, they also conclude that China presents nothing new, as Rocca (*ibid.*, 2) comments critically: »The Chinese are like us; it's just that they are taking longer to reach the universal condition.« Hence the modernization paradigm privileges the Western observers to simplify the complexity of historical events in China and to characterize the Chinese transformation process according to an evolutionary conception of histories. It manifests itself in a kind of »imperialism of the same« (Levinas 1969), reducing the other in the categories of the same in order to possess the other.

The Anglo-American discourse of the 1990s displayed a specific mode of this becoming-sameness discourse, which was often based on an essentializing notion of strategic groups enacting modernization and democratization. As Vukovich (2012) has reminded us, what distinguishes the thought collective of American political scientists in the 1990s is that they seemed dizzy with the success of the Western model of democracy as the only

5 For a general critique of the modernization paradigm applied to analyze the social, economic, and political transformation of Chinese society, see for example, Alpermann (2011, 2016) and Gransow (1995).

successful way to prosperity. From the very popular doctrine of »no bourgeoisie, no democracy« hypothesized by Barrington Moore (1966) to Fukuyama's claim in *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), the middle-class revolution has become the given common sense or *doxa*. Extending this middle class *doxa* to »the Chinese case,« there have been many studies of the Chinese middle class and its relationship to democracy (for an overview and critique see Alpermann 2016). What is important to note here is the performative construction of Chinese social groups as avenues for political engagement in contemporary China. This group-based approach is indeed rooted in the study of Chinese political transformation that was first applied by Gordon Skilling (see overview in Brødsgaard 2013). Although the recent research activities seem to designate and assign various political groups, there is little agreement regarding ontological and methodological issues about the nature of these groups. A constructivist view that may ask how group identities are constructed or how individuals identify with such groups is largely absent from studies on Chinese reforms, even though a few exceptions exist (e.g., Alpermann 2013). Rather, the discourse is characterized by materialism and rationalism assuming that people living in similar circumstances will also develop a similar political consciousness. The performative search for the Chinese middle class coheres with the very premise which suggests, as Rocca (2017, 17) comments, that

»in China as elsewhere, economic growth should lead to the emergence of bourgeoisie, which is capable of pressuring the ruling class and the state to democratize society. If things do not work out that way, it is because China is a victim of despotism that prevents China from entering the world of political modernity.«

Margaret Pearson's work must be understood in this discursive context. Pearson chose *waiqi* white-collar professionals under the assumption that their similar working environment—that is, foreign enterprises—produces a similar political consciousness. Even though several Western China specialists doubted whether it makes sense to start with the assumption that *waiqi* white-collar professionals should be at the forefront of political reform (Guthrie 1999, 503; see also Goodman 1998; Perry 1998; Wank

1998), they did not question the instrumentalist interpretation applied in Pearson's pursuit of knowledge about *waiqi* white-collar professionals. To me, Perry's review would seem to justify Pearson's findings, as she wrote: »If Pearson (like most of us!) is prone to inflate the significance of her object of study, her findings about the attitudes and actions of the contemporary Chinese business community are highly valuable nonetheless.« The problem for me is the error that the knowledge about *waiqi* white-collar professionals produced by Pearson collapses into the belief about *waiqi* white-collar professionals. Pearson's argument undermines a reductive position: *waiqi* white-collar professionals are a new strategic group if and only if it is useful to believe they are a strategic group. With discursively controlled referencing and signifying, *waiqi* white-collar professionals are positioned in the binary opposition between socialist despotism and capitalist liberalism and are identified as a sign of democratization in China. From the beginning, the Chinese subject labeled by Pearson as »China's new business elite« is understood as a Chinese equivalent to the European solution to a special European question of democratization (Brook and Blue 1999). It is epistemologically problematic when Pearson argues:

»If we find that members of these most autonomous segments of the business elite have not in fact converted their economic position to political influence, or have done so under very limited conditions, then it is unlikely that other members of the business elite who are more bound to the status quo of the state, or other non-elite economic groups, will be able or willing to do so either.« (Pearson 1997, 8–9)

No wonder, according to Pearson, that »China's new business elite« is characterized by a very weak democratic orientation. She comes to the conclusion that the Chinese economic reform is not leading to political democracy, and she explains this by drawing on the structural entanglement of the Chinese economic system with the state, a state-society relationship expressed as »state corporatist strategies« (ibid., 60) and »clientelism« (ibid., 60, 87). However, Pearson cannot convince us how corporatism works exactly in this case in order to repress China's new business elite, and it does not seem necessary to do so, because corporatism and

clientelism are preexisting knowledge about contemporary China which Pearson's audience was already aware of. For this reason, Pearson's explanation proves to be what Vukovich (2012, 83) calls »empty platitudes.« Here Pearson follows a very typical new Orientalism narrative: positioning the Western experience as the normative starting point for the production of general knowledge about *waiqi* white-collar professionals, reducing this group to an analytical category, then measuring their performance in terms of the Western ideal; and finally articulating their lack of the »proper« convictions. Eight years after Pearson, in an article by He Li titled »Emergence of the Chinese Middle Class and Its Implications,« highly qualified Chinese working in MNCs have even been stigmatized (2006, 72):

»With the large inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) and expanding of the market economy, the ranks of the middle class have grown with the inclusion of middle-level managers working in the private sector, joint-venture, and foreign-owned enterprises. Their compensation packages are higher than those in the public sector. Yet, unlike their counterparts in the public sector, they do not enjoy a strong sense of security. They are interested in three *zis* (*fangzi*, *chezi*, and *piaozi*, i.e., house, car, and money), and few of them have any interest in politics.«

Now, we need to think about how the essentialization of *waiqi* white-collar professionals works. To make this political agent intelligible, Pearson devotes a lot of space to historicize *waiqi* white-collar professionals. As she notes, »China's post-Mao business elite is part of a contemporary international phenomenon—the emergence of an international managerial bourgeoisie.« (Pearson 1997, 44). For Pearson, the false start of Chinese capitalism at the end of the Qing Dynasty lies in its strong entanglement with the structure of Chinese feudal society, resulting in a lack of independence of the development of a new social space. Pearson emphasizes the role of Chinese Merchants in the Qing Dynasty's (1911–1927) treaty ports for capitalist economic development and identifies them as predecessors of Chinese corporate executives in the post-Mao era. Pearson, however, hardly mentions the interweaving of China's foreign trade history with European colonialism. The historic period from 1920

to 1945 is consequently oversimplified as a decline of capitalist development, implicitly assuming the absence of liberal democracy. Then Pearson goes directly to Maoist socialist China, where the ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism is considered to be the feature of this phase in Chinese history. Pearson contrasts the isolation policy toward foreign investment, especially during the Cultural Revolution, with the policy of openness since the 1980s, and argues that a new independent social space is created by global capital expansion in which a »new Chinese« is nurtured. Privileging the idea of »becoming-sameness,« *waiqi* white-collar professionals are thus expected to be like the Western self—a knowing subject. Their emergence, according to Pearson’s narration, is an effect of Chinese modernization that is brought out by external conditions. Consequently, the current Chinese transformation is interpreted merely as »a gentle, natural process of sensuous, cultural absorption,« both implicitly and explicitly as a process in which »the inferior learned to desire to emulate the superior« (Barlow 1993, 380). Here it is worth noting that Pearson’s historicizing and contextualizing of Chinese professionals leads to a trivial parallelization of the so-called »Western impact and Chinese response« approach of Chinese historiography that was explicitly implemented by Teng and Fairbank (1954) and others (Fairbank, Reischauer, and Craig 1965; Clyde and Beers 1966). According to Cohen ([1984] 2010, 11), the essential problem of this approach lies in its distortion of Chinese modern history in a way in which it only addresses »Western-related facts of the history,« and the Chinese transformation of traditional society was only considered to be a response to external conditions. A typical example is shown in Fairbank’s historiography of treaty ports in which the treaty ports, according to Barlow (1993, 385–94), were characterized primarily as a hybrid culture between a »Chinese« and a »British« culture. From the point of view of postcolonial criticism, there is an unequal relationship instead. Fairbank privileges the role of the West in the administration of treaty ports based on having superior knowledge, and trivializes colonial violence and imperialism for the life of the treaty ports in Shanghai. He contemplates the opening of the treaty ports in comparison with the American westward movement and considers traditional Chinese society as the problem:

»The opening of the treaty ports in the early 1840's, like the contemporary opening of the American West, was adventurous pioneer work on a frontier. The problem of the frontier in China, however, was not now to overcome nature but how to deal with the ancient Chinese way of life. Like his cousins on the Great Plains, the Western frontiersman in Shanghai had to adjust himself to the local scene while still pursuing his expansive and acquisitive ends. The treaty ports were the answer to this problem; they can also be fruitfully compared with the trading posts and mining camps, the forts and pony express stations of the American West.« (Fairbank 1969, 155)

For Fairbank, nationality and ethnicity had no effect on the treaty community, both Chinese and Westerner are so-called »Shanghailander« (ibid., 466), working in a harmonious and liberal teacher-student relationship. What we know today is exactly the opposite: despite shared consumption, the Western »Shanghailander« indeed discriminated against the local »Shanghaiese« using an ethnic distinction (Clifford 1991). They sought to represent themselves as alien community with cosmopolitical mentality, and avoided social integration in Chinese context (Lamson 1936). Similarly, Pearson determined the Chinese Merchant to be modern and cosmopolitan, but with considerable limitations: »even as [the Chinese merchants] became progressively more modern and cosmopolitan in their outlook, traditional forms of group organization and behavior remained at the core« (Pearson 1997, 62). For Pearson, *waiqi* white-collar professionals seem to be comparable with »Shanghailander«—they are modern and cosmopolitan not only in their outlook, but also at their core; and MNCs, incorporating a very romanticizing nature, seem to be analogized to treaty ports in which democratic domestication of Chinese people takes place. Yet we know today that the expansion of MNCs is increasingly seen as the continuation of neo-colonialism and that they are criticized as agents of new imperialism (e.g., Boussebaa and Morgan 2014). Indeed, Pearson argues that *waiqi* white-collar professionals often employ a strategic motive in identifying with MNCs: »Many foreign-sector managers choose jobs in foreign business precisely in order to escape

politics, with several citing this as the primary reason for their job choice« (Pearson 1997, 93). It is not hard to see that this notion of *waiqi* white-collar professionals as »escapees« condenses these people into a liberal feature, and at the same time is meant to amplify their collective quality. From Pearson's point of view, democratic awareness among Chinese professionals grows once they get contact to »the outside world« (see *ibid.*, 94).

This cultural essentialism goes hand in hand with a structural reductionism, as Pearson argued that since the Chinese economic policy of openness, foreign companies have gained large autonomy in China in comparison to Chinese SOEs. According to Pearson, autonomy means »the absence of structural ties to the state and the independence from the predominantly reformist line of the post-Mao era« (*ibid.*, 66). In her opinion, Chinese professionals' economic autonomy causes them to develop a new relationship with the communist state in order to represent their political interests. Pearson reverts to reproducing Andrew G. Walder's explanation in his study *Communist Neo-traditionalism: Work and Authority in Chinese Industry* (1988) suggesting that a power dependence relationship in Chinese SOEs can be observed using four indicators: »the dominance of the party cell within the enterprise; the influence of personnel dossiers in the lives of employees; the constraints on labor mobility; and the reliance of employees upon the factory for welfare benefits« (cited in Pearson 1997, 67). Based on Walder's suggestion, Pearson argues that *waiqi* white-collar professionals are more autonomous than the Chinese managers working in SOEs: First, ideological control does not play a role in foreign companies because »there is no Chinese state participation in these businesses« (*ibid.*, 71). Secondly, even though the personnel file is officially created for all citizens, its influence on corporate personnel policy is different in the foreign investment sector. It depends on the forms of ownership, but plays a smaller role than in SOEs. Thirdly, *waiqi* white-collar professionals have experienced extremely high mobility compared to members of the state sector. The legal guarantee of independent recruitment, the establishment of industrial parks with their own job centers, and the weakened role of personnel files have significantly

promoted the professional mobility of Chinese employees. In foreign companies, status as a party member or political performance can hardly provide privileges (ibid., 81, 83). All of these points indicate from Pearson's point of view a decoupling of state control and increasing individual freedom. *Finally*, Pearson claims that *waiqi* white-collar professionals are less reliant on the Chinese social services than the Chinese managers working in SOEs. There are other possibilities, such as the high income and travel abroad, which are to compensate social benefits that are exclusively distributed within China's labor institutions (ibid., 85). For Pearson *waiqi* white-collar professionals thus are typically these Chinese »[...] who are relatively young and see alternatives, have chosen a riskier route in exchange for the chance to earn higher salaries, travel abroad, and manage relatively free of Chinese state authority« (ibid., 86). Obviously, Pearson's claim of MNCs' structural autonomy, which is predominantly based on negating control mechanisms in Chinese SOEs, cannot explain the process of group formation. However, it is not Pearson's aim to engage in a scholarly inquiry into group formation or evolution, but rather, as we have suggested, is given an example of Western bias toward contemporary China. Hence, the essentialization of *waiqi* white-collar professionals goes hand in hand with the functionalization of their group identity.

***Waiqi* white-collar professionals in the Chinese perspective and the metamorphosis of »China's new business elite«**

Having investigated the essentialization and functionalization of the group identity of *waiqi* white-collar professionals in the Anglo-American discourse, I now turn to the discussion about *waiqi* white-collar professionals in the Chinese context since the 1990s. Within the cultural discourse of modernity, as we will see, Pearson's construction of the Chinese business elite as a new strategic group is removed from its US intellectual environment and placed in a Chinese one in which the questions of how to stabilize the political system and how to modernize the nation are the key issues.

Particularly since the late 1990s, Chinese public attention to *waiqi* white-collar professionals has gained a new aspect by being embedded in the emerging academic discourse on the Chinese middle class. As several Western scholars have pointed out, the emergence of the Chinese middle class is not the »natural« result of Chinese catch-up modernization, but a discursive formation of a new social group attempting to create an ideal society (Rocca 2017; Anagnost 2008; Tomba 2004). In 2002, General Secretary of the Communist Party Jiang Zemin introduced the idea of a Chinese middle class as a new social force for Chinese modernization in his speech at the 16th Congress of the Communist Party of China. Ever since then, one can recognize an ongoing process of referring to the Chinese middle class in which a new subject, to borrow Foucault's phrase, »is gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted« (Foucault and Gordon 1980, 97). In the course of the public focus on the middle class since the end of the 1990s, particularly in official documents, academic articles, and media productions, however, Chinese social scientists have increasingly turned their attention to the middle class as a double-edged sword facilitating the modernization process and simultaneously challenging the political system in China. A discursive shift from the one-sided emphasis of economic importance of middle class toward problematization of the middle class's political participation is clearly visible (Rocca 2017). From the standpoint of the idea of social engineering (literally: *shehui zhibi*), the Chinese social scientists formulate an agenda for research into the political behavior and attitudes of diverse subgroups of the Chinese middle class in their relationship and function for modernization and system stabilization (for an overview of the discussion among Chinese social scientists, see Rocca 2017, 69–100).

It was against this background that *waiqi* white-collar professionals were actively involved in the academic discourse on the emerging Chinese middle class (e.g., Li 2005; Wang 2007; Qi 2010; Wang and Che 2011; Sun and Lei 2012). As mentioned above, in the 1990s, *waiqi* white-collar professionals were often portrayed in newspaper articles as cosmopolitan subjects and ideals for the modern Chinese self. However, since the growing discourse of the Chinese middle class has become dominant,

the social meaning of *waiqi* white-collar professionals as representatives of modern Chinese has dwindled in importance. One important reason is no doubt that the Chinese middle class has become a generic term for modern Chinese, and is generally viewed as an ideal class that determines Chinese economic development and Chinese modernity. Even though *waiqi* white-collar professionals still enjoy a certain special status in the public mind (Xue and Zhu 1999; Zhou 2002, 2005), they have increasingly been replaced by and subsumed into the construct of a Chinese middle class. Moreover, they are not only seen as merely a part of the new middle class, but their internationality is even perceived as a risk factor for development. The social scientists who engage in portraying *waiqi* white-collar professionals conceptualize them as social beings whose integration into the Chinese project of modernization might be prevented. As the prominent sociologist Li Youmei (2005, 107) pointed out,

»there is a great disparity between the value orientation of Chinese white-collar professionals and the system of social values advocated by the mainstream ideology. Chinese white-collar professionals tend to internalize consumer attitudes and behavior of the West, to hold individualistic values and to seek personal growth and freedom. *Waiqi* white-collar professionals have been influenced by the Western business culture and thus have a rather reserved attitude to mainstream social values like responsibility and sacrifice.« [translation by the author]

In this context, some Chinese authors have taken up Pearson's statement concerning *waiqi* white-collar professionals as a political group (Zhou 2002, 2005; Lü 2008). These indigenous scholars suggest with reference to Pearson (1997) that more research should be directed toward evaluating and assessing the political attitudes of *waiqi* white-collar professionals. Chinese sociologist Zhou Xiaohong, prominent researcher of the Chinese middle class and translator of Charles Wright Mills's (1951) book *White Collar: The American Middle Classes*, also addresses *waiqi* white-collar professionals in his article »Middle Class: Why and How can they grow?« (2002). Zhou considers *waiqi* white-collar professionals as having a new

social identity that is located within the contradiction between modernization and industrialization. He understands them as part of a global phenomenon which is the reason for the growing Chinese middle class, and of a local social-cultural transformation which is the context and the way in which the Chinese middle class is growing. He argues, following Pearson, that Chinese modernization and industrialization accelerated by the expansion of foreign investment has resulted in the development of *waiqi* white-collar professionals. Further, Zhou emphasizes that the political socialization of *waiqi* white-collar professionals—the ways of learning to be Chinese middle class—is one important issue of Chinese modernity. As long as this tension between global universality and local particularity exists, as Zhou argues, it is reasonable to facilitate risk calculation. Especially interesting is also the remark of Lü Peng, a young scholar from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. In his article »Top Chinese Managers in Foreign Enterprises: A New Social Class Far From Politics?—An Investigation of Top Chinese Managers in Top World 500 Foreign Enterprises in Beijing« (2008), Lü Peng notes, even though Pearson (1997) found that *waiqi* white-collar professionals are characterized by their lack of political awareness, that there is still, however, a strong basis for the further development as a political group. Their capability to serve the capitalist class and to influence the government's political decision-making is therefore not unlikely. Thus, it is an urgent objective to regulate their interests, to direct the development of their political consciousness, and to approach valid measurement in order to predict their visibility and capacity in Chinese public life.

In arguing in this manner, both Zhou Xiaopeng and Lü Peng successfully appropriate Pearson's thesis into a new political agenda by reframing the social character of *waiqi* white-collar professionals and then mediating it into Chinese public policy. This dissolves the binary opposition between Western democracy and Chinese despotism as well as the »Western impact—Chinese response« framework that is inherent to Pearson's knowledge production of *waiqi* white-collar professionals. However, they do so without any epistemological and methodological discussion of Pearson's idea and her statement explaining *waiqi* white-collar professionals.

The fundamental identity of *waiqi* white-collar professionals across individuals and over time hypothesized by Pearson has become the very precondition of the Chinese sociologists' belief about these people. It becomes an aspiration, suggesting the way of thinking, supplying the Chinese theorization and rationalization of the relationship of *waiqi* white-collar professionals to the state. In other words: the essentialization of *waiqi* white-collar professionals in the West is attaining the power to categorize and to name *waiqi* white-collar professionals in China, which is linked to the micro practice of social control (Hacking 1986). What this Chinese reception in its conspicuous way nicely enacts is on the one hand the tendency among Chinese scholars to use »Western« references to legitimize their own research as »science,« and on the other to reframe the Western idea, having become a scientific category, which is meant to engage with the ambitious programs of social engineering. It cannot be understood apart from the revival of sociology in post-Mao China, which has been established as a positive discipline with US sociology as its great role model (Steinmetz 2005), that is, more specifically, echoing the Western declaration of the death of class analysis, referring to Weberian analysis, and implying an awareness of social tension inherent in the current political modernization project (Ngai and Chan 2008, 76–78). From a historical point of view, it is also similar to the regulation approach of *Polizeiwissenschaft* that Foucault (2007) sketched out (for overviews of the history of sociology in China, see Wong 1979; Chu 1983; Gransow 1992). In my opinion, the transformation and reformulation of such Western knowledge in the Chinese academic discourse is given as an example of the current debate whether theory building and development in a non-Western context such as China challenges Eurocentric knowledge production. While the rebirth of social scientific thinking is celebrated by Roulleau-Berger (2016) as the decline of Western hegemony, my micro study of knowledge production and reproduction across geopolitical borders, particularly the traveling process of *waiqi* white-collar professionals, turns out to be somewhat disillusioning.

Conclusion

As Vicente L. Rafael (1994, 96) commented, most area studies in the United States were developed »at a moment in American history when liberal ambitions for enforcing a global peace necessary for capitalist expansion coincided with liberal anxieties over desegregation, spurred by the successes of the civil rights movement.« Put in highly simplified terms, Chinese Studies, which is imbued with the politics of othering, is no exception in this respect (Barlow 1993). Hence, research on China is inspired by a »why/why not« logic (Kim 2004); to name just a few examples: why the scientific revolution did not take place in China (Sivin 1982), why China did not respond to the Western challenge (Fairbank, Reischauer, and Craig 1965; see also Cohen 2010), or why China is not a democratic country—a question raised by Margaret Pearson's (1997) study *Chinese New Business Elite*. The problem inherent in such research programs is, as Wang Hui (2008) once criticized, that China always remains silent and cannot speak. We are confronted with the same problem in the case of Pearson's representation of *waiqi* white-collar professionals. In this article, I began with a critical realist reading of Pearson's study, examining the specific ways in which Pearson essentializes »Chinese business elites« as other's other in order to measure these elites against what Mizoguchi (2016, 516) called »the world's standards.« These people were defined and essentialized by Pearson because it provides a compelling way of theorizing the agency of becoming-sameness. Grounded in the notion of »structural autonomy« derived from a »Western impact and Chinese response« approach, a new social group was constructed by reference to MNCs which are assumed to reflect the ideal of democracy. I suggested that Pearson's research on *waiqi* white-collar professionals, constrained by modernization theory, does expose its deficiency and the inability of Western imagination to capture the social-cultural changes in contemporary Chinese society.

Nevertheless, the knowledge about *waiqi* white-collar professionals is not simply produced by the West and forced upon China. Rather, Chinese scholars have appropriated this discourse within their own political agenda, without challenging the fundamental assumption that *waiqi* white-collar

professionals are indeed a group with coherent values. They thus have cooperated in essentializing this group, even if they did so from a different position and within a different political ideology than Pearson. The Western idea of *waiqi* white-collar professionals is, as I have shown, introduced by Chinese scholars and adapted to a new socio-cultural specificity to meet the Chinese desire of modernization and national stability. Hence, the essentialization of *waiqi* white-collar professionals in the West is attaining the power to categorize *waiqi* white-collar professionals in China. Because the political interest, characterized by technocracy, meritocracy, and achievement orientation, inhabits the construction of the identity of *waiqi* white-collar professionals and justifies its social recognition, this gives birth to a social entity and acts as a hegemonic practice. The *waiqi* white-collar professionals are therefore not, as Pearson would have us believe, agents of democratization and resistance against domination, but their construction as a group is rather part of hegemonic knowledge production in which Western and Chinese social scientists cooperate. Following Spivak's (1988) critique of Indian nationalist representation of *sati*, it might be concluded that the Chinese *waiqi* white-collar professionals cannot speak either, because there is no representation of *waiqi* white-collar professionals in the Chinese academic discourse that allows one to account for the possibility that this group might be contradictory, inconsistent, or fragmented. However, there is no need for us to be unduly pessimistic due to the fact that unlike Hindu women who were burned, Chinese *waiqi* white-collar professionals are still alive and can indeed speak. However, any attempt to recover the authentic voice and to excavate the true identity of *waiqi* white-collar professionals is fruitless, from a radical point of view. Rather, further research must address the self-identification of *waiqi* white-collar professionals, which is dialectically implicated in social categorization. It appears to be even more necessary under the current circumstances. For several years we have been able to observe an increased thematization of Western MNCs and the group of *waiqi* white-collar professionals again that is embedded in the societal discussion about the changing position of China in the global political and economic hierarchy, which can be summarized under »The Chinese Dream« (for an explanation, see, for example, Mahoney

2014; Wang 2014; Bislev 2015). In this context, the Chinese media are talking, for example, about »the post foreign companies epoch« (literally: *hou waiqi shidai*) in which the image of the Western MNCs and their role as promised guarantors of social advancement for highly qualified urban Chinese loses its credibility in China (»后外企时代,« 38–39). These circumstances are repeatedly mentioned as a cause for anxiety among *waiqi* white-collar professionals. It can easily be seen from the emotionally charged language used in the headings of reports such as »What’s Wrong with Foreign Enterprises?« (Yang 2012) or »White Collars of No Permanent Estate, Determination and Career« (Hou 2003). It is reasonable to assume that the discursive change in current Chinese society has a dysfunctional impact on the authenticity of *waiqi* white-collar professionals. An investigation of the capacity that the *waiqi* white-collar professionals have to mediate the contexts within which they are embedded and the social control approached through categorization would make an interesting contribution to the research on the state-citizen relationship in contemporary China.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the participants of the workshop »Postkolonialismus und China« held at Bielefeld University in 2016 for helpful feedback, particularly Professor Felix Wemheuer, Dr. Marius Meinhof, and Lili Zhu. I would also like to thank Professor Ursula Mense-Petermann and anonymous reviewers of the earlier versions of this article for their constructive comments and suggestions.

Funding

This article builds on research carried out in the project »Expatriate Manager: A New Cosmopolitan Elite? Habitus, Everyday Practices and Networks« that was funded by the DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft/German Research Foundation, Project Number: ME 2008/5-1) and hosted by the Institute for World Society Studies at the Faculty of Sociology, Bielefeld University, for the duration of May 2011 to April 2015. The research team consisted of Ursula Mense-Petermann (principal investigator), Anna Spiegel (postdoctoral researcher), Junchen Yan and Bastian Bredenkötter (doctoral researchers), and Gert Schmidt, Ruth Ayass, Kathleen M. Park, and Dellvin Williams as cooperation partners.

Junchen Yan, Faculty of Sociology, Bielefeld University:
junchen.yan@uni-bielefeld.de.

Hung Keung's *Dao Gives Birth to One* (2009–2012) as a postcolonial critique of modernist art history

Sarah Sandfort

In 2008, Hong Kong-based artist Hung Keung (洪強, born in 1970) began his digital media artwork series *Dao Gives Birth to One* (道生一, *Dàoshēng yī*) (2009–2012). The artist combines new media such as digital programs and displays with traditional Chinese art forms such as ink painting and calligraphy in specific arrangements to invite the audience to participate in his artworks or even to become artists themselves. For *Dao* Hung took up the concept of the »Yellow Box,« which was developed in 2004 by Chang Tsong-zung, Gao Shiming, and Qiu Zhijie. They intended to create—for the Chinese art scene—a critical alternative to the internationally dominant (Western) modes of art museum and gallery display known as White Cube and Black Box.

This paper discusses Hung's artwork *Dao Gives Birth to One* as an instance of self-consciously deconstructive hybridity in contemporary Chinese art in Hong Kong, created for and implementing the alternative exhibition mode Yellow Box. It questions whether the Yellow Box concept could establish an alternative to Euro-American shaped exhibition modes, which were formed by »modern art«¹ and art history in the nineteenth and

1 Usually, European and American nineteenth-century and early to mid-twentieth-century avant-garde art forms are referred to as »modern art« not only to designate its time frame, but to denote an emphasis on simplified form and color and a development of abstraction. During this time modern artists in Europe and America came into contact with »non-Western art« because of colonialism. In postcolonial approaches the comparison of Western art with non-Western art is seen as a construction that is based on this »modern« period.

twentieth centuries. As I will show, it is important to establish a hybrid understanding of culture in order to analyze Hung's artwork: *Dao Gives Birth to One* includes notions about traditional Chinese thought and art such as Daoism and Chinese ink painting and calligraphy, and at the same time influences from a global art discourse about participation and individuality.

I begin the analysis with a description of Hung's artwork series and its connection to ink art and Daoism, which I will deepen in separate subsections. Integrated in cultural changes of Hong Kong, for instance, Hung rethinks influences of the »New Ink Movement« and the possibility of contemporary ink art as a Hong Kongese art form. The Chinese philosophy of Dao enables Hung to develop an opposition to modernist (Western) time lines and narratives. Finally, I will embed Hung's attempt in the Yellow Box concept.

Hung Keung's *Dao Gives Birth to One* (2009–2012)

An integral part of Hung's artistic oeuvre is the digital media artwork series *Dao Gives Birth to One* (2009–2012), in which he investigates digital art as an appropriate and effective medium for the communication and deepening of Chinese cultural awareness. The series deals with three topics that Hung described as follows in 2013:

I investigate how the Chinese philosophy of *Dao*, the manner of handling time and space in early Chinese thought and art—i.e. in traditional Chinese painting, sculpture, and the fine art of Chinese calligraphy—and the idea of the Yellow Box can together provide a novel approach to the concepts of time and space for digital art history. (Hung 2013, 1)

The following discussions will address the important aspect that Hung wants to look back in order to create something new: through an investigation of »early Chinese thought and art«—Daoism and traditional Chinese art forms—Hung hopes to establish a novel approach to »digital art history.« This approach is supposed to have validity not only for Chinese art history but for art history in a global understanding. The

Yellow Box as a recently developed Chinese art exhibition concept connects Hung's ideas with the global and international art market. Yet in a postcolonial perspective, the question is whether Hung takes up colonial thinking patterns about cultural differences to establish Chinese art as a counterpart to Euro-American art: Daoism and traditional Chinese art forms such as calligraphy are typical aspects of orientalizing identity discourses. An analysis of the digital media artwork series will illustrate Hung's demands and the embedding of the concept of the Yellow Box in postcolonial studies.

Four versions of *Dao Gives Birth to One* exist. They differ in the number of monitors (from three to 12), the installations of these monitors in the exhibition room, and the contents shown with their elements of interactivity. Beside the artworks, Hung published three texts on the series² to which I refer in the following. According to Hung, the main theme of the series is the visualization of the cycle of vigor and vitality of Dao in the universe with the assistance of digital media technology (Hung 2016a, 83). Therefore, Hung's basis for the contents of the videos shown is the beginning of chapter 42 of the *Dao De Jing*: »Dao«; »Dao Gives Birth to One«; »One Gives Birth to Two«; »Two Gives Birth to Three« and »Three Gives Birth to All Things.«³ In consideration of the Chinese characters Hung explored the concepts of *shēng* (生, gives birth) and *yī* (一, one) and concluded that *yī* in the concept of Dao represents the »unity« of the universe (Hung 2016a, 84).

In Hung's visualization the different videos present different stages of the cycle: The first scene on the first screen shows the animated and

2 Hung published *How the Traditional Chinese Idea of Time and Space Can Be Applied through Digital Moving Images* in 2013 and again in 2016 with certain amendments; he also published *Re-Appropriating the Concept of »Play-Appreciation«* and *Dao's Cyclical Sense of Time and Space through Chinese Typography in Digital Media Format* in 2016.

3 The translation of the Chinese characters differs depending on the edition. In the translation of the *Dao De Jing* by Ju Yanan in 2008 the sentences are: »The Dao produces one. One produces two. Two produce three. Three produce all creatures and things« (Zi and Ju 2008, 42).

three-dimensional Chinese character 一 (*yī*, one) flying or moving on the white monitor surface. Hung and the imhk lab⁴ developed a program for »flying animated Chinese characters« (FACC) that enables them to create different digital Chinese characters from animated brush strokes for the artworks.

Hung sees the white surface as a white virtual space or as a metaphor for the universe. He refers to the tradition of the color white in the pictorial space of Chinese rice paper which has been regarded as a »void«—an empty space rather than a color:

The concept of *void* in traditional rice paper suggests not only a sense of endless time, but a sense of infinite space as well. (Hung 2013, 6)

Hung makes the void a subject of discussion as an aspect of traditional Chinese calligraphy. According to Yuehping Yen, the recognition of the dialectic between ground (*bai*) and figure (*hei*) or, in other words, between the white paper and the black or the inked part, was articulated in essence by Chinese calligraphers around the seventeenth century (Yuehping 2005, 101). Until very recently the interpretation of this relationship as the dialectic of the void (*yin*) and concreteness (*yang*) was the way most Chinese calligraphers thought about the figure-ground relationship; but now they are often influenced by the writing of Rudolf Arnheim and have begun to adopt the (Western) figure-ground interpretation (Yuehping 2005, 102). Hung, in contrast, continues to base his work on the dialectic of void and concreteness. A possibly preliminary work of *Dao* is *Layers of Bled Ink: Time Passing* (2004–2010), in which Hung experimented with Chinese calligraphy and digital media, the white digital screen as a simulation of the concept of the void, and the opportunity to experience narratives in temporally and spatially non-linear ways.⁵

4 In 2005, Hung founded the »imhk lab« (*innov+media lab*) as a research lab which focuses on new media art and design practice in relation to research on Chinese philosophy and interactivity.

5 Hung Keung, »Layers of Bled Ink: Time Passing (2004–2010),« 2014, accessed April 7, 2017, <https://hungkeung.wordpress.com/video-screening/layers-of-bled-ink-time-passing-2004-2010/>.

The second screen represents the human impact, following how Hung understands the Chinese tradition that linguistic characters are meaningless without human involvement (Hung 2016a, 84). In the video the artist integrated human body parts such as limbs, noses, or heads in interaction with the flying animated Chinese characters 一 (*yī*, one) that generated subsequent characters such as 二 (*èr*, two) and so on. Additional screens represent different numbers of flying animated Chinese characters in interaction with human body parts. The last one occupies a special status: the characters »move on their own track with a certain system, which simulates our human activities in the chaos of the universe« (Hung 2016a, 84). In the final seconds of the digital video, everything returns to white again »with only one Chinese brushstroke left, which implies the system of our human life cycle in this universe« (Hung 2016a, 84).



Fig. 1: Dao Gives Birth to One, photograph of the installation at the exhibition Hong Kong Contemporary Art Biennial Awards, Hong Kong Museum of Art, May 21, 2009–August 1, 2010. Source: Hung Keung, »HKMA 2010,« accessed May 5, 2017, https://hungkeung.files.wordpress.com/2011/06/hk_1.png.

These explanations about the series illustrate what the concept of Dao as an ancient Chinese understanding of the emergence and the balance of the universe means to the artist. It seems to me that the delimitation of the (Western) concept of a linear timeline or development is an important point: for Hung Keung, human life in Chinese understanding is cyclic and similar to the production of art. In this sense, his artistic position is postcolonial, as postcolonial studies criticize notions of historical progress

and development and the (Western or imperial) idea of a »linear timeline.«⁶ This idea is closely linked with the Euro-American understanding of »modern art« or »modernism,« and postcolonial approaches propose thinking about the historical circumstances of art in more diverse ways. The concept of cyclic time emphasizes an indeterminate nature of progress, which gives artists more liberties in recognizing the diverse entanglements of different cultures.

Hung Keung's relation to ink art in the cultural context of Hong Kong

Hung Keung himself traces his interest in Chinese ink painting and calligraphy back to his introduction to these art forms through his parents, both of whom were literati and painters, educated in Indonesia and Mainland China in the 1950s (Hung 2015). Furthermore, Hung became familiar with the heritage of the »New Ink Painting« of the 1960s during his studies at the Department of Fine Arts, Chinese University of Hong Kong, which he completed with a BA in 1995—a time of increasing anxiety about political autonomy and cultural identity against the background of the imminent handover from Hong Kong to China.

The heritage of New Ink Painting in Hong Kong is based on artists such as Lui Shou-kwan (1919–1975), who began teaching art at the Chinese

6 In 2011 Rachel B. Jones named as the distinctive theme of European and American colonialism »a specific sense of linear time that informs the writing of history. Within this linear framework, humankind has been on an upward, evolutionary journey from the primitive cave man through to the industrialized, modern world. [...] The height of this linear timeline of history is European and American modernity, with the focus on objective, scientific, secular thought and a drive toward automation and industry.« (Jones 2011, 86) For art history, the (Western) avant-garde art movement in the twentieth century promoted tensions »between the developed and the underdeveloped, reactionary and progressive, regressive and advanced [...]. Such a discourse, however, is a heritage of classical modernity [...].« (Enwezor 2003, 58) See also Marius Meinhof's contribution (Meinhof 2017) in this special issue on the idea of linear time in mainland China.

University of Hong Kong in 1966. The movement of New Ink Art was deeply connected with concepts of modernity and modernism; Hong Kong-based curator Chang Tsong-Zung (or Johnson Chang)—one of the inventors of the Yellow Box—explains that Hong Kong after 1949, unlike »China's socialist modern experiment, [...] officially set out on a course of modernism piloted by the new Hong Kong Art Museum that was inaugurated in 1962« (Chang 2012, 18). Thus, the increasingly abstract New Ink Art was not only welcomed in the university program but also in the recently opened City Hall Art Gallery (forerunner of the Hong Kong Art Museum) at Edinburgh Place. The artists of the New Ink Painting attempted to integrate Chinese and Western art styles by using a wide range of forms and materials (Man 2011, 97). As art historian David Clarke emphasizes, the art of Lui Shou-kwan and his many students and followers was often concerned with East/West issues:

Consciously hybrid at a time when hybridity had yet to become valorized in theoretical discourse, their art sought to balance Chinese and Western elements, and even to harmonize them. (Clarke 2000, 89)

The artistic harmony, however, was disrupted because of the colonized state of Hong Kong: The people did not want to identify themselves with the »West« or Great Britain and searched for alternatives. Art historian Frank Vigneron points out an important change in the exhibition policies of the Hong Kong Art Museum from the 1960s to the 1990s: while in the beginning an interest in European and North American art and modernism was emphasized, i.e., artists such as the above-mentioned Lui Shou-kwan, in the 1990s their connection to traditional arts of China such as *guobua*,⁷ calligraphy, and ink painting was

7 In Chinese painting history, twentieth-century *guobua* (traditional Chinese painting) was discussed as antithetical to *yanghua* or *xihua* (Western-influenced Chinese painting); but then *guobua* resulted in a »neo-modern« genre of literati painting (Zheng 2016, 169). In particular in the 1950s and 1960s a reform of *guobua* took place in mainland China that followed socialist realist directives (Andrews and Kuiyi 2012; Andrews 1994).

pronounced, »something that would strictly be seen as inherently Chinese« (Vigneron 2011, 39).

Through this change, the multilayered and floating concept of Chineseness appears. It should be taken into account that mainland China, Hong Kong, and Britain as the colonizer have all had a part in defining what Chinese or Chineseness mean.⁸ The Hong Kongese revival of traditional Chinese art forms between the 1960s and 1990s is connected with the resistance against the colonizer: Hong Kong searched for proximity with mainland China to establish an indigenous culture. But nearly at the same time China and Britain signed the Joint Declaration agreeing to the return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, which initiated a time of increasing anxiety in Hong Kong about political autonomy and cultural identity. Hong Kong art of this time participated in the »desire to affirm Hong Kong identity or subjecthood and even to some extent helped give birth to it« (Clarke 2000, 91).

Additionally, in the 1990s, the art scene of mainland China pushed forward with experimental ink painting and triggered a debate between Ink Painting and the New Wave Movement⁹ about the modernization of Chinese art: on the one hand, the New Wave artists derived inspiration from Western modernism, and the very notion of an avant-garde movement came from the West; on the other, the goal of experimental ink painting was to revitalize an indigenous art tradition (Wu 2013, 23).

8 Ien Ang sees Chineseness as discursive construct: »Central to the diasporic paradigm is the theoretical axiom that Chineseness is not a category with a fixed content—be it racial, cultural, or geographical—but operates as an open and indeterminate signifier whose meanings are constantly renegotiated and rearticulated in different sections of the Chinese diaspora. [...] There are, in this paradigm, many different Chinese identities, not one.« (Ang 1998, 225)

9 The '85 New Wave Movement (*'85 xinbao yishu yundong*) linked several artist groups across China, many of whom challenged the conventional discourse on modern art. This discourse in the 1980s incorporated new fields of art practice, in particular installation and performance (Berghuis 2006: 76; Gladston 2014; Minglu 2011; Minglu 1998).

In this context the question arose whether the New Ink Art was to be understood as a local phenomenon in Hong Kong or as branch of the Chinese tradition (Man 2011, 101). The imminent handover of Hong Kong to mainland China caused a kind of absorption of Hong Kong, and Eva Kit-wah Man highlights the contemporary consequences in her studies: that »some recent publications on Contemporary Chinese art still do not include a chapter recognizing the artistic achievements [on Ink Painting, S.S.] of the Hong-Kong-based group« (Man 2011, 96). In a postcolonial view the voice of Hong Kong may have been suppressed by a new colonization.

Potentially as a countermovement, the British government intended to nurture a »Hong Kong identity« in the colony and supported the opening of the new City Hall in the 1960s which provided exhibition space for the artists of the New Ink Art (Man 2011, 97). In the 1980s, the agreed handover of Hong Kong from the United Kingdom to mainland China altered the situation and alerted local artists to the need for an indigenous culture. Although the abstract ink art of Hong Kong

was *not* initially claimed by its artists to be a sign of Hong Kong culture, and indeed was more often discussed by them in reference to Asian philosophy or an Eastern (*dongfang*) aesthetic, the curators and critics who determined its position in the artistic canon eventually discussed it in terms of Hong Kong identity. (Andrews and Shen 2012, 236)

In the 1990s, Hong Kong art was oriented toward the post-handover future and

it often used the strategy of disaffirming notions of Chinese national identity in order to open up an alternative space of Hong Kongness. One common way of doing this was to make use of language as a marker of the local. Given the considerable difference between Cantonese (the spoken language of almost all Hong Kong people) und Putonghua (the official national spoken language of China), a ready way of signifying Hong Kongness was available to artistic mediums employing the spoken word. (Clarke 2000, 90)

Following Clarke, artists such as Antonio Mak returned in the 1990s from their studies in London and made »extensive use of verbal references in an art concerned with identity issues« (Clarke 2000, 90). At that time, in 1995, Hung completed his BA in Hong Kong and strongly experienced questions of Hong Kong identity.

Subsequently, Hung experienced the handover in London while he studied abroad and completed his MA in Film and Video in 1998 at the Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design. During his residence in London between 1996 and 1998 Hung closely followed news on the handover of Hong Kong and observed the change of its public sentiments toward this event. He queried his cultural embedding and questioned whether he was Indonesian Chinese, Chinese, a Chinese-born Hong Kong person, or Hong Kongese (Hung 2015). Later, in 2015, Hung explained for his work *Catharsis: Real but Not True*:

The transition of Hong Kong from being a British colony into a Chinese city nurtured my future direction of creation in an irrevocable manner. [...] In fact, Hong Kong has developed a unique culture that can be seen and felt from different perspectives. (Hung 2015)

Hung experienced a cultural hybridity and searched for a definition of identity—for him and for Hong Kong society. The recognition that a tradition—for example the Chinese tradition of ink painting and calligraphy—bestows, as Homi K. Bhaba wrote in 1994, is a partial form of identification: »In restaging the past it introduces other, incommensurable cultural temporalities into the invention of tradition« (Bhaba [1994] 2012, 3). For Hung, the digitalization of Chinese calligraphy constitutes a contemporary way to deal with his search for identity—both personally and generally. He reassures himself about his position about the revival of Chinese and Hong Kongese traditions which are seemingly indigenous and counterparts of Western concepts. A further aspect of this self-reassurance is Hung's thematizing Daoism.

Hung Keung's relationship to Daoism and the linear narrative of the West

The struggle with Hung's cultural embedding intensified in 2002 with a residence as a visiting scholar at the Center for Art and Media (ZKM) in Karlsruhe, Germany. In an interview produced by the Schoeni Art Gallery Hong Kong in 2012, the artist remembers his decisive experience:

I went to Germany for a year to study new media. When I returned, I realized that there was a fifteen to twenty year gap between the development of German media art and ours. [...] I did not want to return to painting or making installations. (Schoeni Art Gallery and Hung 2012)

In a postcolonial perspective, the two interesting topics in this quote are firstly, the idea of linear progress and development in (modernist) art or art history, and secondly, Hung's assessment of painting or installation art within this development.

In relation to the first topic, in his comparison of Hong Kong and German media art, Hung underlines a temporal »gap,« thereby accepting »backwardness« as a reading shaped by (neo-) colonialism, as Birgit Hopfener and Franziska Koch analyzed for contemporary Chinese art in 2012: the works of Chinese artists are often regarded uncritically as »belated« modernism or as »derivative« of or »epigones« to previous artistic processes originating in Europe and America. The authors recognize:

Such a superficial and at times neocolonialist reading ignores not only the historical entanglements and imbalances between modern China and the rest of the world, but also the restrictive premises Western modernism operates with. (Hopfener and Koch 2012, 14)

The underlying condition of traditional, modernist, or Western art history is that of a linear timeline which enables one to organize artists working in similar spaces and time periods (Jones 2011, 97) and which provides narrative coherence to the complex and often confusing set of events it seeks to describe. The exclusive fields of interest of this art history are

usually Euro-American art production and art theory. Postcolonial approaches attack the hegemony of Western concepts, values, and methods in the interpretation of works of art (Howells and Negreiros 2012, 78). Hung himself reflected the assumption of backwardness or belatedness for his own artistic creation in the following years and stated in retrospect in 2012 that digital media »in East and West spawned from different needs and aspirations. Therefore you can't tell who's quicker and who's slower« (Schoeni Art Gallery and Hung 2012). Perhaps Hung's classification depends on the continuing problem of the East/West dichotomy because it is still alive in thinking about Hong Kong art, mostly evident in the promotional materials published by commercial galleries and in the thinking of non-local critics and curators (Vigneron 2011, 31).

In addition to this idea of linear progress and development in (modernist) art or art history as the first topic, the second topic in Hung's position concerns the valuation of painting or installation art and is closely intertwined with modernist art history, as mentioned above, as Hung did not want to »return« to installation art. In postcolonial approaches the term installation art is reflected as »a solely Western art-historical construct« (Suderburg 2000, 10). Frank Vigneron stated in 2014 that in Hong Kong or mainland China, if

an installation will generally be seen as something »western« [*sic*], a painting made with the Chinese brush with Chinese ink on Chinese paper will, not surprisingly, always be seen as »Chinese« if not »Eastern«. (Vigneron 2014, 35)

Anne Ring Petersen adds in her studies that postcolonial artists

are often deeply entangled in the institutional and economic structures of the Western art world and draw on movements in Western mainstream art as [*sic*] conceptual art, institutional critique and installation art. (Petersen 2014, 131)

Retracing Hung's presentations of the digital artwork series *Dao Gives Birth to One* is interesting in relation to his entanglement with Western concepts, his involvement in the above-mentioned art scenes, and the

tendencies to maintain East/West dichotomies. In 2008, Hung exhibited his digital media series for the first time in the presentation *Mind + Soul / Sensibility x Sensation: Straddling the Emotional/Digital Divide* at Yuanfen New Media Art Space, Beijing. Curator Tony Chang invited the American artist Joe Diebes and Hung Keung to illustrate »the different perceptions of *Yuanfen* in the East and the West« (Chang 2008, 1). In Hung's work Chang saw »a bit of the Lao Tzu/Chuang Tzu Taoist concept of the »extremely profound and abstruse as a doorway to all things,« an illusory lyricism that carries on the elegant poeticism of the Eastern aesthetic« (Chang 2008, 4). This quote refers to the curator's planned comparison of Eastern and Western art which linked up with Hung's considerations in the 2000s: as explained, Hung thought for many years about a »temporal gap« and different developments of art in the East and the West and was searching for a solution.

It is noteworthy that Hung developed the digital media artwork series *Dao* parallel to his Ph.D. project completed in 2014 at the Zurich University of Arts, Switzerland, and the University of Plymouth, United Kingdom. In his dissertation, Hung discusses experimental and theoretical research approaches of digital media, design, and interactive art around the year 2000 to recognize possibly new and innovative concepts. At the same time, Hung was likely embedded in a discussion about »conservative native« and »contemporary« art, as Vigneron highlights 2014:

Even in the Fine Arts department of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, where a great deal of the techniques of Chinese painting are being taught as something »traditional«, anything else—like oil painting, »mixed media«, video works for instance—is still presented as »western« [*sic*]. (Vigneron 2014, 35)

At the beginning of his PhD research, Hung reconsidered the (colonial) dichotomies and decided to examine the concept of Dao. For instance, he participated in the exhibition *The Origin of Dao: New Dimensions in Chinese Contemporary Art* at the Hong Kong Museum of Art in 2013 and the presentation *Lui Shou Kwan & HUNG Keung: 吾。心即宇宙* at D3E Art Limited, Hong Kong, in 2014. In relation to the latter, the curators

wrote that both artists—Lui Shou-kwan and Hung Keung—were interested in exploring the notion of Daoism because for »them, Tao is not merely a philosophical model, but an in-depth world-view and a guiding moral principle of self-discovery and self-revelation« (D3E 2014). And for the context of ink painting in general the curator Maxwell K. Hearn emphasized Chan Buddhism and Daoism as »important sources of inspiration for contemporary Chinese artists« (Hearn 2013, 66).

Hung's interests mirror a kind of revival of ancient Daoist concepts that is mainly rooted in Hong Kong culture, as postcolonial film scientist Martha Nochimson stated in 2007 in relation to the film genre of gangster films in Hollywood and Hong Kong. Since the 1960s, art historical approaches demand that analyses go beyond »high culture« or »high art« and include popular movements and influences as well. Nochimson clarified in her study that in Hong Kong »the gangster genre creates a mass culture experience of an often denied perspective on modernity« (Nochimson 2007, 3). The Hong Kong gangster film genre in the 1980s took up the Daoist spirit and created the gangster protagonist as the direct descendant of the Daoist Kung Fu hero of the 1950s (Nochimson 2007, 22). Nochimson concluded that the concept of Daoism is one way to encounter the disorientation caused by modern life and to create a potential balance as »an omnipresent reality behind the illusions of materialist inconsistencies and paradoxes« (Nochimson 2007, 22). Additionally, in the Kung Fu and gangster films, the balanced Daoist view of the universe is taken up as an opposition against the dichotomies of the materialist Western world (Nochimson 2007, 71).

In that respect, Hung's considerations of Daoism could be analyzed as an attempt to break with the Western art system or to propose an alternative understanding of art. Yet it is not only opposition against the Western art scene, but also against the Chinese art scene. As curator Tony Chang emphasized in 2008, Hung's artworks reflect the tension when traditional Chinese concepts confront the »unique pop culture of Hong Kong« (Chang 2008, 1). He further notes that Hung is heavily influenced by (Hong Kong) pop culture and design. In 2010, Hung exhibited with other Hong Kong artists in the show *This is Hong Kong* at

Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, curated by Alvaro Rodrigues Fominaya. According to the curator, the exhibition presented

a selection of artists from Hong Kong that reflect on the idea of politics, history, architecture, postcolonial issues and daily life in this territory. The moving image has been one of the areas favored with [...] intense research in the creative practice of the Hong Kong art scene, and mark [*sic*] a stark difference with [*sic*] that of mainland China, reflecting on differences in cultural background and academic training. (Fominaya 2010)

Hung's artwork *Upstairs/Downstairs: Stories of Human Activities Told in the 1,440 minutes of a 24-hour Stretch* (2010), which was presented in the show, moved close to cinematic art and in this way became part of artistic production since the 1990s in Hong Kong. Hung based the work on his experience of wandering the Hong Kong communities of Yau Ma Tei, Tsim Sha Tsui, and Mong Kok. The protagonist of the work is very important: a woman who embodies different identities by wearing six different outfits that represent twelve unique characters in the video, and leading the audience through the streets in the above-mentioned districts. Hung explained that he played »with the idea of multiple identities.«¹⁰ In this way the work *Upstairs/Downstairs* is related to the experiences of Hung as a Hong Kong artist in a hybrid cultural sphere and the question which identity is his own.

Equally, Hung makes the question of identity a subject of discussion in *Dao Gives Birth to One*. He uses simplified Chinese characters in the videos, complementing the moving images with a soundtrack of people talking. In an interview in 2012, Hung explained that he recorded everyday dialogues in Cantonese and Mandarin in Hong Kong and throughout China in order to contrast the different languages. To him, this is important because Hong Kong and China »share the same writing,

10 Hung Keung, »Title: Upstairs/Downstairs; Stories of Human Activities Told in the 1,440 Minutes of a 24-Hour Stretch,« 2012, accessed January 31, 2017, <https://hungkeung.wordpress.com/video-screening/upstairs-downstairs-project/>.

but we have a different language« (Hung in Huston 2012). Thus he picked up the tendency of negotiating difference with respect to language as it was an important topic in 1990s Hong Kong art.

As stated above, Hung's artwork *Dao* is in my perspective best described with the term installation art. Understanding the artwork series as an installation also explains Hung's attempt to break up dichotomies of modernist Western art. The point is that Hung »installs« the monitors and/or projections of *Dao Gives Birth to One* in different exhibition rooms for every presentation. Depending on the spatial conditions he arranges the screens on one or more walls and just above the floor or at the top of the wall. »Installing« is not only the gesture of hanging or positioning the work, but an art practice in itself because the site of installation and its visitors become a primary part of the work (Suderburg 2000, 5). According to the understanding of European art history, the characteristics of installation art include its immanent dissolution of limits, its framelessness, and a strictly de-centered understanding of the subject and the viewer (Hopfener 2012, 65–67). The latter topic is very important for Hung's interactive and digital video installations as he expanded the fourth version of *Dao Gives Birth to One* at the Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art (CFCCA) in Manchester in 2012 to include the concept of »play-appreciation« (*wan shang*) through an increased role of the audience. The artist allocated four screens out of 12 to real-time interaction with the audience by installing digital cameras that captured viewers as they entered the exhibition rooms, integrating their images into the artwork and the moving images:

Thus, on the one hand the audience can simply enjoy the spiritual atmosphere created by the video installation through viewing the movement of the flying characters. On the other hand, they could also act as participants, merging into the virtual space and interacting with the flying Chinese characters.¹¹

11 Hung Keung, »HUNG Keung: Dao Gives Birth to One,« 2012, accessed January 31, 2017, <https://hungkeung.wordpress.com/exhibition/dao-gives-birth-to-one-version-iii/>.

According to my analysis of the artwork, Hung places particular emphasis on processual and transformative qualities such as different video contents and durations (between two and 20 minutes) or the interaction of the audience with the artwork through cameras. In this way, he breaks up the dichotomous relationship between the artwork and the spectator. The static, objective, and uninvolved representation of reality is questioned in favor of situations that can be inhabited by an involved and activated viewer (Hopfener 2012, 67). But in Hung's digital artwork series the viewer is not only involved and asked to participate by sharing the artwork's time and space. Moreover, viewers are themselves part of the artwork because they become figures in the interactive video and triggers for the play of the flying animated Chinese characters.

In postcolonial discourses the traditional subject-object paradigm is questioned as a Western mode of the duality of subject and object. As Eva Kit-wah Man explains in 2012:

The [Western, S.S.] discourse is different from those of traditional Daoist and Confucian aesthetics, which present the aesthetic process as a stage before the differentiation of the subject and the object and which happens in the realm of the Dao with subjective engagement. [...] Systematic aesthetics like that in Western philosophical discourse is absent in both Confucian and Daoist aesthetics, as is the separational mode of subject and object. The subject and the object are interactively involved in a functional form [...], and are ontologically dependent on each other, never polarized. (Man 2012, 168)

With the installation of *Dao Gives Birth to One* and the digital animated videos, Hung generates a situation in which the viewer is an inherent part of the artwork. Hung resolves not only the opposites of viewer and artwork or subject and object but also a static understanding of meaning. Instead the artist offers a performative understanding or concept of (cultural) meaning production insofar as every individual person construes her or his own interpretation of the artwork. Hung relates this so-called »open-ended artwork« to Czech art historian Frank Popper who in his 1975 book *Art: Action and Participation* highlighted the change in the

relationships between artist, work of art, and spectator on the basis of virtual art forms and participation (Hung 2016b, 5; Popper 1975). Yet, in my view, it should be considered that Popper constructed a timeline of (digital) works framing advances in electronic practices, thereby following a traditional perspective of art history with a narrative of invention and development.¹²

Following this description of Hung's *Dao Gives Birth to One* as an installation of moving images, the work is part of installation art in China, as art historian Birgit Hopfener explains. In her 2013 publication, she emphasizes that moving images are a preferred medium of performative negotiation of cultural differences insofar as the spatialization of moving images challenges linear time-concepts. To Hopfener, installations in general refer to culture and meaning not as static and objective identities but as processes of negotiating differences (Hopfener 2013, 251). Furthermore, she underlines that in the traditional Daoist/Chinese understanding art has to articulate the constant moving of reality and to give viewers the possibility to participate in it (Hopfener 2013, 252).

Besides the subject-object paradigm, Hung scrutinizes the conditions of exhibition that are dominated internationally today by modes such as the White Cube and the Black Box. As an alternative, Hung relies in his installation of *Dao* on the Chinese element of play-appreciation (*wan shang*, 玩賞), which means a performative understanding of meaning production in the relationship between the viewer and the artwork (Hung 2013; 2016b). This element, too, is an important topic of the exhibition concept Yellow Box, as I will explain below.

The Yellow Box as a Chinese art exhibition concept

In 2004, the concept of the Yellow Box as an alternative exhibition mode for Chinese art was initiated by the Visual Culture Research Centre of the China Academy of Art, Hangzhou. Curators Chang Tsong-zung

12 Frank Popper (1993) expressed this development as the main argument in his book *Art of the Electronic Age*.

and Gao Shiming and artist Qiu Zhijie developed the Yellow Box as a curatorial project to present Chinese calligraphy and painting in the show *The Yellow Box: Contemporary Calligraphy and Painting in Taiwan* (2004–2005), which was held at the Taipei Fine Art Museum (TFAM). In 2004, chief curator Chang Tsong-zung elucidated the curatorial background, which is related especially to the (Euro-American) mode of art museum and gallery display known as White Cube and internationally dominant today:

The term »Yellow Box« is of course coined with respect to the »White Cube«, which is a viewing space designed to display artworks of modern western [*sic*] art. The »White Cube« is a pure, well-lit, unscented and neutral space. (Chang 2004)

Chang followed statements and research in art history and art criticism that understand the White Cube as a development of European and American modern art in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Art historian Maria A. Slowinska refers the concept back to Alfred Barr, the first director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. He adapted selected elements of exhibition techniques which he experienced during his travels in Europe in the late 1920s and early 1930s: a »vertical hanging of paintings [...] at eye level, further apart from each other, and on neutral (chiefly white, off white, or light grey) surfaces« (Slowinska 2014, 42). Furthermore, the paintings were arranged chronologically or thematically, no longer by size.

In 1976, the artist and critic Brian O'Doherty established the term White Cube and called for a critical reflection on this type of exhibition space. Following O'Doherty, the history of modernism or rather the history of modern art can be correlated with changes in the (Euro-American) gallery space. The aesthetics of modernism isolated the artwork from everything that would detract from its evaluation, and the exhibition space attained characteristics similar to those of the church, the courtroom, or the experimental laboratory: unshadowed, white, clean, artificial, and neutral (O'Doherty [1976] 1986, 14–15).

Since the 1980s at the latest, White Cube—and additionally Black Box with black or dark grey walls—have been important topics in postcolonial studies and art history as art exhibition concepts. Fundamental research originates from German artist and scholar Hito Steyerl, who locates the first ideas about the White Cube at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1908, Austrian architect Adolf Loos published his text *Ornament und Verbrechen (Ornament and Crime)*, in which he developed a »world in white.« In the context of modern art, Loos unfolded a contemporary and binary vocabulary and attributed the ornament to the primitive and the crime (Loos 1910). Following Steyerl, Loos's message in colonial times was—not surprisingly—that naked white walls were good, because they stand for progress, modernity, development, and fulfillment. Conversely, walls that were dark, colored, or »tattooed« with ornaments (as in the Black Box) signified the regression of humanity to crime, waste, animality, and the primitive (Steyerl 2008, 101). Although Loos did not refer to colonized people but to the so-called »Schwarzalben« in Vienna, Austria, his text and other sources¹³ established the cult of the white wall for the twentieth century, which leads to the White Cube, the dominant exhibition mode of art today. As O'Doherty wrote in 1976:

With postmodernism, the gallery space is no longer »neutral«. [...] The white wall's apparent neutrality is an illusion. It stands for a community with common ideas and assumptions. [...] The development of the pristine, placeless white cube is one of modernism's triumphs—a development commercial, aesthetic, and technological. (O'Doherty [1976] 1986, 76)

The White Cube functioned as an aesthetic guideline and defined what art is (Steyerl 2005, 135). With the development of new media such as motion pictures and movies, a new exhibition concept arose at the beginning of the twentieth century: the Black Box, based on mainly black walls, as the complete opposite of the White Cube (Steyerl 2008, 138). Associated with these terms is the Euro-American dichotomy of clean

13 For example, Le Corbusier: *L'art décoratif d'aujourd'hui*, Paris 1925 (collection of »l'esprit nouveau«).

and pure or »high« art in the White Cube as against an art of desire and mass culture in the Black Box. But contemporary (postmodern) artists and curators—as Steyerl underlines—are trying to penetrate this dichotomy by employing more complex arrangements (Steyerl 2005, 141).

Against this background and referring to contemporary (postmodern) strategies, Hong Kong-based Chang Tsong-zung considered in 2004 whether the Yellow Box—like the Black Box—could be a legitimate feature in the White Cube. He understands calligraphy and ink painting as radically different in its viewing practice to modern Western art. The exhibition *The Yellow Box* was an attempt »to discover configurations and rules for the Yellow Box, sort out theoretical parameters, and set out precautions against overly assertive curatorial interventions« (Chang 2004).

As the Taipei Fine Art Museum (TFAM) is mainly constructed like other contemporary museums—like a White Cube, following the above-mentioned characteristics—the curators experimented with the exhibition space and demonstrated different ways of exhibiting contemporary Chinese calligraphy and painting. For instance, they arranged a room with bamboo chairs besides the artworks or one with a large bed with tatami mats where the audience could peruse scrolls and folding books by the exhibited artists. A very interesting idea was a working studio where artist Yu-peng invited visitors to paint, write, or chat with him while he worked.¹⁴

Following Chang, the Yellow Box is »an interpretation of the spirit of literati art manifested in physical spatial installations« (Chang 2004). In 2015, in an interview with Lynne Howarth-Gladston and Paul Gladston, Chang added:

One of the most striking differences between the Yellow Box and the White Cube—and by extension the Black Box—is the implicit invitation to the viewer to handle and physically engage with the artwork, as opposed to the White Cube's tendency to sanctify by

14 Diana Freundl, »Thinking outside the »White Cube,«« *Taipei Times*, December 26, 2004, accessed January 31, 2017, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/feat/archives/2004/12/26/2003216855>.

putting distance between the artwork and viewer. [...] Connoisseurs treasure the seemingly casual playfulness of art-making and art appreciation, and the term most often used is *wan shang*—meaning »play appreciation«. (Chang, Howarth-Gladston and Gladston 2015, 95–96)

Hung adopts Chang's concept as explained above: through ink painting and calligraphy as traditional art forms of the literati, and the inclusion of *wan shang* through audience participation, Hung uses the Yellow Box concept for *Dao Gives Birth to One*. Furthermore, Hung expanded the Yellow Box concept with digital media and added lectures and workshops to the exhibition in 2012—comparable with the Common Room and Yu-peng in Chang's Taipei exhibition *The Yellow Box*. But considering the illustration of Hung's artwork at the beginning of this article (Fig. 1), the White Cube mode of his installation in this particular exhibition room is obvious. We also see the arrangement of wooden chairs or stools. Following Hung, these »Chinese chairs« are »one of the major elements to implement the concept of »play-appreciation«« (Hung 2016b, 2):

The function of these forty chairs helps to bridge the connection between the virtual space (on the screen) and physical space (in the exhibition venue) for the viewers. The spatial arrangement of Chinese chairs correlates to the empty space left in Chinese characters. [...] and their visual form is considered as the matching point between empty space (negative space—yin) and solid structure (positive space—yang), depending on the direction of one's perceptions. (Hung 2016b, 2–3)

Contrary to a highly polished black-and-white aesthetic that will inspire connotations of a modernist minimalist aesthetic, at least for Western viewers, Hung tries to apply the Yellow Box concept through virtual (cameras/monitors) and physical (chairs) involvement of the viewer. Nevertheless, we see a particular medium-related aesthetic in *Dao Gives Birth to One* that might have more to do with digital moving images, screens, and projections than with the traditional ink art and material that Hung is referring to. The medium-related digital appearance counteracts some of the calligraphic or painterly characteristics that he wishes to

expose. Perhaps Hung has to face the question whether the contemporary digital medium can be appropriate for transferring traditional Chinese ink art in the way he intends.

Hung himself stated in 2016 that the emphasis on the interrelation between artwork, artist, and audience »is not only found in traditional Chinese art practice, a similar idea [...] in performance and media arts has also been established in the West at least since the 1960s« (Hung 2016b, 4). His constant examination of Western, Chinese, and Hong Kongese art has led to a particular consideration of different influences. For instance, German art historian Söke Dinkla described in detail the development of Euro-American interactive art since the 1970s (Dinkla 1997), and Hung himself became familiar with a different approach in 2002 at the ZKM in Karlsruhe.

Hung's self-consciously deconstructive hybridity forces an analysis of his artwork to reconsider his relation to »contemporaneity.«¹⁵ As Paul Gladston emphasized in 2014, a current (post-colonial) way of analyzing contemporary art within differing local and international settings is to embrace »differing approaches in relation to geographically distinct experiences and representations« (Gladston 2014b, 2) of multiple modernities. In this way, Hung's transcultural experiences in London, Zurich, and Karlsruhe are perhaps triggers for the exploration of Daoism—from his studies of ink painting in local settings to international contacts with new media and contemporary theories during his studies in London as well as digital media studies in Karlsruhe. He definitely experimented with ancient Chinese art or calligraphy for *Layers of Bled Ink: Time Passing* (2004–2010) from 2004 on, two years after his residence in Germany. Very likely his interest in self-positioning as a Chinese foreign student led him to engage with ancient Chinese art and Daoism, while exploring the media-specific potential of moving image installations back in Hong Kong has transformed this engagement to become a more particular criticism of his current situatedness. During his examination of

15 As Wu Hung (2008) emphasizes, the discussion about contemporaneity in Chinese art is also influenced by Western topics.

digital media art and ancient Chinese art in 2004, he also became aware of the Yellow Box concept and the missing link between this concept and contemporary (digital media) art.

However, as Vigneron emphasizes, the culture of the Chinese literati has been involved in a discourse about redefining a »native« form of Chinese art for the last two decades (Vigneron 2014, 29). The (postcolonial) starting point of the Yellow Box concept is in this sense an opposition against Western culture based on »indigenous« or »native« Chinese culture. In this respect, Chang explains the decision for the term Yellow Box as follows:

The term »Yellow Box« refers to the saying in the *I Ching (Book of Changes)*: »Heaven is black, Earth is yellow«. The cosmological significance of the colour yellow as the »earth colour« underscores the human experience of nature [...]. (Chang, Gladston, and Gladston 2015, 95)

But are these aspects—the reference to the literati garden, to ink painting and calligraphy, to the color yellow as »earth colour«—in the end anything different from the restrictions and ideologies of White Cube and Black Box as art exhibition concepts of the so-called West? In 2016, Hung criticizes these limitations and tries to formulate his underlying idea:

In my Dao project, there is an opportunity for audiences to transform their own culture and story through the process of making their own hands-on animated letters (English/Chinese characters). A tangible touch is created through an appeal to their own experience, which allows audiences to express their own meaning and then encourages them to play (interact) with these together with other members of the audience later in the exhibition. This exhibition space is no longer a white cube, black box or yellow box; it works through participation, immersion, creativity, and gathering hands-on experience. (Hung 2016b, 5)

Finally, this paper shows that the self-consciously deconstructive and contemporary artist involves more a critical re-motivation of the underlying

principles of the Yellow Box than its direct acquisition. Hung's work is a general post-colonial critique of the institutional paradigms such as White Cube or Black Box, and furthermore a post-colonial critique of modernist Euro-American art history and its linear narratives. Based on his transcultural experiences, he developed a singular interpretation of multiple modernities which could only be analyzed through his artworks in the different cultural contexts.

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Sandfort, Hung Keung's *Dao Gives Birth...*

InterDisciplines 1 (2017)

Sarah Sandfort, Department of Art History, Ruhr-University Bochum:
sarah.sandfort@rub.de.

China and postcolonialism

Re-orienting all the fields

Daniel F. Vukovich

The essays collected here for *InterDisciplines* are most welcome, not least because they *are* interdisciplinary and this is absolutely something that postcolonial studies must always aspire to be. The sheer scale, complexity, and historical diversity of modern colonialism and empire demand interdisciplinarity, and not only their effects on the colonized but also the responses of the colonized to empire—e.g., nationalism, Occidentalism, nativism, socialism, liberalism—call forth any number of theoretical or interpretive questions that are clearly imperative and fundamental for the study of history, politics, society, and for the global academy in general. Still more subtly, there is at work in these essays the central concern of postcolonial studies: the connections between the colonial or imperial past (or present) and the present moment or present context and events. While the field's buzzwords may be more immediately familiar (hybridity, orientalism, imagined communities, and so on) postcolonial studies is always, if often implicitly, a historical and comparative pursuit: how does that colonial or, say, anti-imperial past live on in the present, and to what effect? How to amend this through decolonization of »minds« and societies and polities, and is that even a worthwhile goal today?

And yet postcolonial studies has mostly developed outside of the interpretive social sciences (and outside China Studies), which represents a missed opportunity indeed. The postcolonial field needs them, and vice versa. This is one reason why this special issue is a significant one. What is especially noteworthy is a shared emphasis in these essays on certain internalizations or assimilations of colonial discourse and problems and on clear, if challenging, case studies about the impact and subsequent response of China to the West: the relation to a modern (faster) temporality

and, I would add, a catch-up mentality (Meinhof); the embrace of new weapon technologies and the *re-articulation* (my term) of violence as essential to sovereignty (Zhu); a certain competition with liberal political scientists to »claim« Chinese white collar professionals as their own (loyal to the PRC and not »democratic«) (Yan); and the difficult and protracted and demanding efforts to articulate a hybrid and individualized identity that subverts »Chineseness,« itself a »gift« that arises from contact with the diaspora and the foreign and hence the empire (Sandfort).

It is worth noting at the outset that the »post« in postcolonial does not signify a break with or end of colonialism, as if all its effects and remaking of worlds simply disappeared on the morning after liberation and the exit of the Caucasians or, say, the Japanese. That »post« is akin to a fencepost that quite crucially keeps both sides of an edifice or a territory intact; it partakes of both sides. »Post« as a break or end is exactly what is in question within postcolonial studies, itself in many ways a response to the failures of decolonization and national liberation in a new age of imperialism or globalization. This is admittedly a counter-intuitive usage (and many people think colonialism is in the past), but that emphasis on continuity and change is a productive one and is, one should think, ripe for historical sociologies. After all, what is Edward Said (via Michel Foucault, Antonio Gramsci, Giambattista Vico, and of course Palestine) doing in 1978's *Orientalism* if not offering a kind of sociology of knowledge, in empirical and concrete though not »scientific« terms?

Wide-ranging and moving from the theoretical or generally abstract to the concrete or empirical, the essays here are all effective interventions into the question of China and postcolonialism. The Introduction to this volume has usefully and lucidly explicated the essays and situated them in the larger field of the postcolonial. The essays do not seek to persuade us that the postcolonial turn needs to happen—a debate at any rate—in China and the social sciences or Sinology fields abroad, though taken together they *do* suggest that this is a ripe and fruitful prospect indeed. I would thus like to use the space allotted me here to reflect further on why postcolonialism matters, and why China matters for postcolonialism,

as well as to reflect on why the social sciences need a postcolonial turn (and vice versa, to be sure).¹

And yet for scholars working within the humanities and to a lesser extent within the discipline of history, my posing of these questions will sound somewhat dated: the postcolonial turn, immediately following other »theoretical« turns following structuralism and post-structuralism in the 1970s (notably the work of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, and thence Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak) and the rise of multiculturalism and feminism, has transformed the study of literature and culture (including film) and—despite ongoing resistance in some quarters—history. At the risk of sounding triumphal (though surely this is all far more to the good than the bad), so self-evident is this academic transformation that there is no need to even debate the relevance of the post- or the full-on colonial to the study of national let alone world literature, culture, and history. One need only peruse the syllabi, course offerings, and publication lists and keywords of most sizeable universities and faculties across the world. Even the discipline of history, probably the most »resistant to theory« and interpretation of all the humanities fields, has long had a foot in the study of colonialism and empire, for the obvious reason that these last are arguably the major single story (»archive«) of modernity, alongside the rise of capitalism. Thus the subfield of world history has long had a small but brilliant, radical wing of scholars documenting the histories of the British and French empires, for example (Sydney Mintz, E.R. Wolf). Suffice it to mention, as well, names such as Walter Rodney and Samir Amin, Andre Gunder Frank and the world systems school, and many others.

In sum, while specific academic disciplines are always, as disciplines, resistant to paradigm shifts and new rules of discourse, some few but noteworthy scholars working within global historical or world-spanning

1 Parts of this response draw on my forthcoming book *Illiberal China* (Palgrave) as well as Vukovich (2015).

studies never needed a postcolonial *turn*. They were already there. In fact post-colonial studies has always been remarkably open about what and who can be included under its umbrella—Rodney and Amin and all of the above, surely, and even the productive critics of the field such as Timothy Brennan. Even Edward Said always insisted that what he was saying about the impact of orientalism as a field of knowledge-power had long been known, if unremarked and made invisible, and the critique had long been made by others before him (e.g., Abdel-Malek). (I leave to one side here the historians who have themselves helped constitute the field of postcolonial studies, e.g., the Subaltern Studies historians of South Asia). None of this should be taken as a rebuke of postcolonial studies as a mere fad (and it is a few decades old now in any case), but as confirmation of the field's point, as against how universities typically organize and produce knowledge: the modern colonialism and empire are, and should be seen as foundational to almost everything we know about »the world« and »world history« as well as what we now call globalization, from the rise and spread of capitalism, to the flows of people and goods and problems and riches and ideas in and out of societies. In other words postcolonialism is not just an academic »thing« but a *worldly condition*, in fact a set of conditions and traditions bequeathed by a long history of modern empire and »globalization.« And it must also be said that postcolonial studies, as opposed to, say, more conventional historical or political economic work (as invoked above), represents a more theoretical and generalizing project.

China *as* postcolonial

Within China, as the authors of the Introduction note, »postcolonialism« as a critical or at least theoretical term is widespread, with hundreds of citations in, say, 2016. (In my own experience, the term itself and critique of the West are less popular in China's two former colonial enclaves, Macau and Hong Kong, or get inverted to mean critique of the Communist Party-state's otherwise undeniable sovereignty; this no doubt speaks to a certain attachment to the Western/liberal/colonial worldview stemming from the former era's educational apparatuses and political culture as

well as to China's difficult and epochal rise.) They also aptly describe postcolonial discourse in China as »vast and heterogeneous,« and I would like to amplify that a bit here. The mainland intellectual political culture (to use a phrase from Said) is itself in many ways postcolonial in two fundamental senses. It is deeply concerned with »becoming-the-same« as the modern, advanced West (if not outperforming it and »winning«) and with never forgetting—via education and propaganda institutions—the era of national humiliation, that is, the era of near-colonialism, the collapse of the dynastic system, disunity and chaos, and Japanese invasion. China's encounter with modernity came in the form of a very real imperialism, a professed and then militarily demonstrated Western »superiority« (as the contribution by Lilli Zhu makes clear to us). There simply would be no PRC and Chinese communist revolution without this; thus the typical liberal injunction to stop talking about imperialism in favor of the PRC's lack of democracy (»free elections«), liberalism, human rights, and so on in China always misses the point of continuing Chinese nationalism and the mainland's resistance to Western intellectual »aid.« That the »never forget the era of humiliation« slogan is indeed propaganda (a propagated truth sanctioned by the state and political mainstream) does not make it false, or less than true. It must also be said that anti-imperialist consciousness is strong in China even today, if in less political (internationalist, Marxist) and more starkly nationalist terms than some might like (including the present author). Given the sanctioned ignorance involved, the spread of the global/foreign media (English- and Chinese-language alike) in China has if anything only made nationalism more intense. »Imperialism and Chinese politics,« to borrow a famous title from the late »official« historian Hu Sheng, is still a real discourse and active historical narrative in the mainland, and in this sense China is arguably more connected to its anti-imperialist past than, say, India or many countries in Africa that typically count as the representative places of postcolonial studies (since they were completely colonized and lost sovereignty).

That the PRC has also been adamantly and enthusiastically embracing free, global trade for decades now does not actually contradict this, at least in the PRC's own terms and presumably many of its citizens' terms, even if

it defies conventional Marxist thought. That one place's contradictions or paradoxes (or even hypocrisies) may not be another's may not be understood or interpreted the same way, may sound a cliché, or alternatively, like a bad relativism in the face of certain universal truths. One version of this is a certain debate that will be familiar to anyone following media or even »expert« reports on contemporary China: »China has its own tradition/system/culture« versus »The CCP is an illiberal regime that only seeks to keep itself in power at any cost.« Neither side of this gets specific enough, and both present a number of monoliths (*the* tradition, *only* self-interested). But postcolonial studies must be defined as working against universalisms; this is in many ways the point of the field as a whole, and where it intersects with, say, post-structuralist theory, with radical historicism or pragmatism, and of course, a rather ancient and therefore fundamental and unavoidable—and compelling—debate over universalism versus particularism. While individual scholars may differ, naturally, the field as a whole does militate against universalisms (liberal, humanist, or otherwise) in no small part because colonialism itself always presented itself as a beneficent civilizing mission or, alternatively, as a white man's burden to help or contain the darker, different races (races being defined as universally true and actually existing). Provincializing Europe, as Dipesh Chakrabarty memorably put it years ago now, is the mandate but—as often goes ignored—that goal is also meant to be seen as an incredible challenge that is by no means easy to actually think. As with orientalism—think of the many lives and afterlives of notions of Chinese cruelty and Asian »despotism«—these structures of knowledge production do not just blow away with some corrosive wind from the mind.

Hu Sheng's work (which naturally became less radical over a very long and productive career) may represent an official academic line of some type (Hu was a significant Party member throughout his life) and a nationalist history; it may therefore scare off those Westerners who loathe the state on principle. But as any reader could see (his work has existed in English for decades), it is also serious, reputable scholarship. His massive two-volume study *From the Opium War to the May 4th Movement* (1991) is a monument to PRC (or Chinese Communist Party) political-

intellectual culture and academe, which is often thought, wrongly, to be akin to the former Soviet Union at its worst (e.g., Lysenko). That readers (of English) worldwide know, for example, Eric Hobsbawm—a genuinely great historian, to be sure—but not Hu, or have wrestled with the foreignness and complexities of, say, the Indian Subalternists but not Tsinghua's Wang Hui, is an index of Eurocentrism and the dominance of the Western academy, and is moreover something of a problem for a world that is quickly becoming multipolar again in some sense, with China a global factor and presence far beyond cheap exports and capital flight. Why *is* China in such a competition with the West, even as it embraces trade and US dollars, and why does it keep »resisting« or »not forgetting« the wars, hot and cold, of the past? Is it simply brainwashing and communist colonizations (to invoke two actually current terms amongst the Hong Kong intelligentsia)? That was a rhetorical question, if it needs said, and the point is that we cannot understand the PRC or its politics without recourse to the impact of and reaction against the West. In fact an awareness of not only this general imperial history – one that removed China from being at the center of the world system and its »intellectual political culture« to its periphery—but of Western intellectual and political arrogance (sanctioned ignorance) is practically common sense among many critical Chinese intellectuals and citizens (of course not all). This brings us to the Chinese left intelligentsia, new and old, and their lack of a comparable impact—as yet—within global academe.

If China were ever to have a globally influential school of historical and theoretical discourse akin to India's subaltern studies project (itself influenced by Indian Maoism/Naxalites at one point) or Western/French post-structuralism, then past works such as Hu's and older Maoists' as well as contemporary works—broadly leftist or heterodox if non-liberal-dissident writing—would be the starting point. It makes for a striking comparison. The Chinese experience involves Marxist intellectuals and »national« historians concerned with the relations between imperialism, the last dynasty, and the early Republic as well as rebellion and growing class and national consciousness, culminating in the rise of the Communist Party and eventually the 1949 revolution. One then has an actual revolution

and Sinified Marxist/Maoist movement that succeeds and must then get on with state building and reconstructing the national economy, preserving borders, and even somehow continuing the revolution—and supporting global anti-imperialism—after 1949. There was precisely no script for this, the Soviet and American paths having been declared off-limits by the late 1950s. But the South Asian project is in many ways writing *against* national histories and official (and Eurocentric) Marxisms and reductionist class analyses. They are concerned with colonialism's (and modernity's) *lack* of impact among the rural masses (»dominance without hegemony« in Ranajit Guha's phrase). The new Chinese intellectuals, after their revolution, were very much interested in modernizing and developing not only nationalism and class analyses/politics but also with transforming the countryside away from backwardness and feudalism and toward some egalitarian future. Both »schools« can in theory be construed as founts of postcolonial theory and post-orientalist historiography.

Yet while both are deeply informed by a Marxist-Maoism (more powerfully in the Chinese case), it is only the latter, South Asian-based work that has had an impact in global academe. And regardless of one's specific evaluations of such work, whether one agrees with e.g. Guha or Dipesh Chakrabarty in all the details, the bringing in of South Asian history and social and political problems, and the development of theoretical debates in response, has only deepened and widened the academic conversation in welcome ways. Maoism itself certainly had a great impact on Third World radical movements and thus on actually existing, anti-imperialist national liberation movements; it also impacted certain French Marxists such as Louis Althusser and Alain Badiou, as has been amply discussed elsewhere. But Maoism, as an explicit ideology and set of political-economic practices, has also been overthrown in the PRC for three decades now, and the former Chairman himself has been vilified in most academic and pulp biographies and histories. So while one might think that, for postcolonial theory, Mao Zedong might serve as a Chinese or »Asian« Franz Fanon, this has not been the case, certainly not outside of China at all. And yet, that anti-imperial, revolutionary discourse nonetheless lives on in a »Chinese« insistence that it can or is taking an alternative

path to liberal democracy of the Western type (a point also made here in the Introduction).

The New Left and other heterodox thinkers—including some version of neo-Confucian or neo-traditional thinking—in Chinese academe today, as lively and serious as they are, are likewise not well placed to have a Subalternist or British-historian, Hobsbawm-like impact on Western intellectual production. At least not yet. While it is true that they do not invoke postcolonial terms as much as other academics, and for that matter are, in contrast to the Western academy, more rooted in the social sciences, I would argue that they are nonetheless a significant, postcolonial or counter-Eurocentric development. They are best understood as both an indigenous Chinese intellectual movement or »scene« and a subtle but firm riposte to a political orientalism that demonizes the Chinese revolution in general and Mao era socialism in particular. This is precisely what is at stake in their equality-based or egalitarian and communitarian critiques of the reform era and the hyper-marketization (or privatization or commodification) of the Chinese economy. Both that »liberal« economic turn of the state away from state socialism and the global discourse of political liberalism as what China lacks and needs are the objects of their critique. Outside of a small but not insignificant number of scholars based in Western academe, it is only the new left (broadly defined) that is making such a critique of the reform era as such and China's turn to capitalism. Importantly, much of the Chinese new left also breaks with a major political plank in Western and global political thinking: it is resolutely pro-state and seeks to retain and enhance, not cut back or avoid, state capacity. Neo-liberalism, that American- and Austrian-based product, is of course anti-state in the name of the just and spontaneous order of the market, but this also resonates all too clearly with the general anti-statism of—it must be said—that very same French-inspired post-structuralism and quasi-anarchisms that inform the Western »left« intellectual political culture.

From a global standpoint, this pro-»statism« is as close to an older European social-democratic tradition as to a Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

But in any case it represents a welcome challenge to current state-phobic doxa nearly everywhere else. Yet one must note that theirs are not just economically or even sociologically based arguments (though they are that); they are also aimed at universalism and Eurocentrism, as the work of Wang Hui in particular makes clear.

Wang's work on the problem of Tibet as well as his volumes on Chinese modernity are particularly salient here. Wang argues that the Western fascination with Tibet and freeing Tibet from China is partly rooted in orientalism, a claim that is surprisingly controversial or somehow irrelevant to conventional China »experts.«² Moreover, the resolution of the crisis—and it is one, for Tibetans and China alike—would be better approached not through independence and modern (and Western) nation-state borders for Tibet, but through the Mao-Zhou Enlai formulations (from the 1950s) of relative autonomy under a more traditional, empire-era form of suzerainty. (This is not at all what the contemporary state has been doing, but rather the opposite: a type of de facto, planned assimilation through »development« and Han migration across a tight border.) There are historical or contextual grounds for this Mao-Zhou strategy as well as a more general or »theoretical« argument that it is precisely those modern notions of discrete, authorized borders, and of the illusory ideals of full autonomy and »real« sovereignty, not to mention the logic of purity and monoculture that subtends modern nation-states, that create as many problems as they solve in such situations of complex, overlapping territories. Wang's views on Tibet and on orientalism (or Western chauvinism) are fairly common within Chinese intellectual circles, though they are sure to bother others who would, in turn, speak for Tibetans in Tibet and who also want to gift them a sovereign, modern nation-state of their own. But Wang's focus on empire and suzerainty is nonetheless a challenge to what is undeniably a modern Eurocentric view of the necessity and normativity of modern nation-states

2 See for example Sebastian Veg's (2009) review of Wang Hui's essays on Tibet.

as opposed to empire states or civilizational states. China and its peripheries are no doubt a mix of both such entities, old and new, and therefore its socio-political solutions and forms must follow suit. What if the former, modern paths, in this Chinese case at any rate, create more problems than they solve? As for modernity, or proto-modernity, Wang locates it in the Song dynasty (960–1279).

He also posits Maoism as »an anti-modern modernity«—part of the global or world-historical movement away from ancient regimes but also against a universalizing capitalism and against the erasure of China’s own specificities and differences. This was the Maoist break with Stalinism after all, even if Stalin had to remain a proper name of the pantheon. This is to say, then, that the critique of universalism is alive and well in some spheres of Chinese intellectual political culture, beyond official pronouncements of the Chinese dream and the like. All of this is what makes it part of the general postcolonial world even if the specific keywords are not always in play. In sum, if one wants to truly engage China—the PRC, as opposed to its peripheries and the diasporic spaces which, however important, tend to dominate the conversation—then the postcolonial dimension, the ongoing encounter with the West, the historical baggage, the attempts to decolonize or counter Western discourses—has to be part of that engagement.

To the social sciences?

But if the postcolonial turn has happened in much of the humanities and to many historical inquiries, and if China is actually a compelling example of the historical and »actually existing« condition of postcoloniality, it remains nonetheless true that most of the social sciences (even the interpretive ones) as well as China Studies or Sinology have largely avoided that turn and kept to their traditional paths: a certain practice of (or claim to) »science« and objectivity, on the one hand, and a basis in language proficiency and empiricism on the other. As I have been suggesting, the fact of that turn does not suggest mere trendiness or faddishness but a useful, if rightfully contested and debatable, mini-paradigm shift about the impact and scope and scale of the colonial and

imperial encounters on the West as much as on the former colonized and the Third World. There are indeed such things as academic fashions and fads, or certain formations of discourse or knowledge that are not compelling or enduring. But the postcolonial turn, especially but not only its critique or »provincialization« of universalisms, seems more akin to something like feminism and the analysis of gender: a »discovery« far too large, and far too connected to the world as it was and remains, as well as too widely adopted already, to be usefully resisted by any one discipline for any good, as opposed to gate-keeping, reason.

But my point here is not to badger or browbeat China studies and the social sciences. The point I wish to make is that the postcolonial field sorely needs the social sciences as much as it needs to know more and do more with China. (One can say as well that the Chinese academe and intelligentsia need more engagement with the rest of the world, including Asia as opposed to the West; more postcolonial and global studies all around then.) The division between the humanities and the social sciences is a very powerful but also a very unfortunate and debilitating, ultimately arbitrary one. Speaking impressionistically as a long-standing literature, film, and humanities professor, I believe that all the texts have in a sense been more or less worn out, with diminishing returns in regard to the endless production of readings or studies or commentaries. (This may also explain a return, away from »theory,« to more formalist and arts-appreciation modes of textual analysis, as well as the influence of strictly empirical studies like those of Franco Moretti.³) The basic game in recent years has been to return to formalism and aesthetics as opposed to theory and cultural studies and critique, in addition to »discovering« non-canonical and »hidden« writers, film-makers, and so on. (The latter is indeed worthwhile and welcome, but often bibliographic more than anything else.) This downsizing of ambition is understandable as at the end of the day the truly compelling questions and pressing problems of the present and recent past—I am thinking of political and social ones

3 See for example Moretti (2013).

around new forms of power famously illustrated by Michel Foucault or Pierre Bourdieu, of things like the »Anthropocene,« of all the political failures in the current global conjuncture, the degradation of liberalism since the 1970s, the impact of immigration, the rise of terrorism, the demonization and failures of the state in general, and so on—are simply not best revealed or illumined through, say, the study of film and literature.⁴

What is needed, in other words, is what C. W. Mills (1959) enduringly theorized as the sociological imagination, just as, put another way, some of these big, interpretive, political problems and questions must also be empirical questions. The empirical (or concrete) materiality is precisely the Achilles heel of humanistic inquiry, which either expresses great disinterest in the empirical and broadly contextual (in favor of aesthetics and formalism and timeless truths) or which dismisses the social sciences as rationalist and narrow and »non-theoretical.« Let us take a quick Chinese example or two: the dissident figure or artist, be it the famed performance artist (and tax evader) Ai Wei Wei, the blind human rights lawyer (and devout Christian) Chen Guancheng, the blogger Han Han (never really a dissident but decidedly middlebrow), and so on. When such figures are singled out by humanists—their texts, or their personages as texts—they represent the PRC and what is wrong with it, and what it was and is really like. The critic or journalist only sometimes says as much explicitly. But regardless, the texts/figures simply *must* seem so in order to do the work they do as *representative* Chinese or China. Ai is certainly an adept and successful artist, but he is neither especially popular or especially controversial or compelling within China itself, and he speaks so much and so contradictorily that it would in fact be hard to make a coherent social critic or thinker out of him. Not unlike Andy Warhol, perhaps, but with Chinese and »global civil society celebrity

4 With notable exceptions of course (certain film-makers and novelists who are intensely interested in such things), that would in my mind only prove the general rule I am invoking.

human rights« characteristics. A liberal propagandist such as the novelist Yan Lianke—to take another example—can write a volume about the »great« famine of 1959–61 (*The Four Books*), and be celebrated abroad for great bravery and truth-telling, without any readers outside of China being aware of an intense debate in the mainland over the extent and scale of the famine as well as its causes (death estimates by Chinese academics range from 4 to 35 million).⁵ They stand for the truth of the PRC as revealed through »texts« of very particular individuals. This is in fact an old story, as when the anti-Maoist, pro-Dengist filmmakers of the 1980s and early 1990s (e.g., Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou) made memorable but historically tendentious and fantastical epic films decrying the Mao era as so much despotic feudalism and unmitigated misery. These were then taken by audiences abroad as directly representing recent Chinese history.

The postcolonial or anti-orientalist critique of such gestures can be done at the level of representation (that they do not represent the whole or the one truth, are not especially popular or subversive, and so on). But what is needed is also the sociological and contextual analysis and more empirical detail: what are the consensus views about the Chinese government by Chinese citizens, for example? Does China lack »rule of law« and »human rights« or does it have some other system by which it operates consistently and more or less coherently? What really happened during the Great Leap communalization to lead it into famine, how big was that disaster, and relatedly, why are Western academics and audiences so invested in making the death numbers as large as possible? In short, how can we characterize Chinese society now or in the recent past, and what does, say, the variety of nationalisms and attitudes toward the legitimacy of the government tell us about the encounters with imperialism?

5 See the discussions in Vukovich (2012) and Chun (2013) as well as Sun (2016), in addition to the more well-known high estimates by, e.g., Yang Jisheng (2013) Of course the foreign media and commentariat see the lower estimates as mere propaganda.

Some type of historical sociology seems imperative for not only understanding Chinese society in general but also Western societies' responses to the rise of China, and China's responses to Western dominance. These are not merely conceptual or speculative matters—they need to be researched in a social-science way but brought into the comparative and postcolonial problematic or frame. One can even go so far as to say that sociological or other empirical work is needed to test or falsify any number of postcolonial or other theoretically driven inquiries and concepts. But with the added proviso that social science—I am thinking of a field such as politics in particular—needs to drop its scientific pretenses. As if there really were objective and universal truths or »facts«—shorn of interpretation and evaluation/judgment, no less—to questions and problems of politics and society! If Max Weber were writing today, one can guess that he would engage the postcolonial problematic.

As for China studies, its institutionalization in the US and outside of Europe as »area studies« has, as is well known, been overwhelmingly social scientific, with the added »bonus« of linguistically defined areas and a certain fetish or cult of language as a skeleton key for immediate access through all the doors and gates of China. (This also belies a strident if unspoken liberal humanism or universalism: know the language and know the other.) This makes it almost by definition opposed to postcolonial and post-structuralist or other forms of anti-universalistic, anti-liberal critique. In this sense, Europe is to be commended for keeping an older Sinology alive, that is, a more generalist non- or anti-discipline, of course still based in language and a long view of Chinese history and »culture,« that lacks the scientific pretensions of area studies. But of course the old Sinology was precisely the type of writing and knowledge production that Edward Said, among others, posited as orientalism. It too was self-defined as a field by being not-colonial or not-imperialistic but part of some universal human connection, as if the encounters between East and West, and not just specific individuals, were entirely innocent or happenstance. It would now be hard to convince too many mainland intellectuals of this.

At any rate, much of this ground—the problems with area studies and China studies—has been debated before and I lack the space to add to it here.⁶ But there is one imperative that I think bodes well for the future of postcolonial studies as well as for the interpretive social sciences. This is not just the inexorable march of interdisciplinary studies, as individual disciplines realize their limits or run out of things to say and publish, nor the slow but sure dissemination of »theory« into all but the most resistant departments.

The real imperative is the rise of China, not least as expressed through mainland immigration into Western/global universities and greater intellectual and »knowledge« flows between the PRC and the rest of the world. What this inevitably brings with it is that historical postcolonial condition—and contact, and »clash«—of China and its own others (including but not limited to the West of course). This is not necessarily going to be a sweet meeting of minds and a calm and harmonious conversation of mankind, thankfully, but it will most certainly—insofar as it resists the forces of homogeneity and conformity—continue to be

6 There is also a growing literature on the social sciences and postcolonialism broadly defined. See for example Miyoshi and Harootunian from way back in 2002, though many of the pieces are not postcolonialist. See also Julian Go (2016) and the *Postcolonial Politics* series at Routledge Press. Systematic critiques of China studies specifically are relatively rare, as opposed to, say, South Asian studies or African studies, and so on. Again the China field has so far mostly avoided its postcolonial moment aside from critiques of an alleged Chinese colonialism of its own others and despite some others' best efforts (and publications). For the latter see, in addition to the present author, Adrian Chan and for a proper historian's approach to such questions, the work of James Hevia. More typical is the response that the China field needs to be even more social scientific. For that argument see for example Walder (2002). For a confused, ethnically-based argument that China studies does not need Said or postcolonial studies and theory, yet does still need to talk about orientalism, systematic misrecognition, Western imperialism, and othering—but somehow not in a political but only a »Chinese« way that excludes the rest of the world, see Gu Ming Dong 2015.

interesting and productive of knowledge. Unless China and its intellectuals and students just suddenly decide to stop insisting on their particularities and differences (in understanding any number of things, from Mao Zedong to democracy to Tibet to religion to...), or unless China decides to just »become-the-same« as the normative US-West, there almost *has* to be a postcolonial »moment« for China studies and the social sciences. If so, it may well displace—supplement—the past, chiefly South Asian and »bourgeois national liberations« that have largely made up the historical contexts and bases for postcolonial studies to date, alongside the chiefly British (and to a lesser extent French) empires. The USA has tended to get lost in that formulation of the postcolonial field, just as much as the PRC. The rise of a more multipolar intellectual, political, and cultural world—of a China that is if anything bigger and more complicated and multifarious than »the West«—also bodes well for the eventual weakening of the scientific and methodological universalism of much of traditional social science. This can in the end only be a good and productive thing for the academy in general and not just the social sciences. Alternatively there could be a return to an older form of orientalist knowledge production: a dominance of hostility and Sinophobic writings and sentiment, even beyond the general, political anti-communism of the foreign China field.

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Daniel Vukovich, Department of Comparative Literature, Hong Kong University:
vukovich@hku.hk.

Summary in Chinese

Lili Zhu, Marius Meinhof, Junchen Yan

中文摘要

本专刊收录了四篇经过专家评审的关于»后殖民主义与中国«的学术论文和一篇专家后记。这四篇论文选自二零一六年在比勒菲尔德大学和二零一七年在科隆大学举办的两次学术论坛报告，反映了德国历史学和社会学领域青年学者近期在使用后殖民主义视角研究中国问题上的有关成果。

在导言部分，本刊编者指出，关于»后殖民主义与中国«的讨论至关重要也意义深远，但却至今没有充分展开。在这样的背景下，编者提出了本刊围绕»后殖民主义和中国«尤其关注的三个问题：殖民主义的继承，当今世界知识生产的不对称性，以及寻求理解现代性的新方法。编者认为，殖民性和现代性，以及殖民主义以»国耻记忆«作为结构和话语的双重继承至今仍深深地印刻在中国的官方以及平民话语中。然而像在其他后殖民主义国家一样，殖民主义必须被放置在中国的特殊历史环境下进行理解和探讨。因此，在中国，后殖民主义不应理所当然地被理解为指控官方的话语。事实上，后殖民话语可以服务于不同的利益集团，其自身立场本来就具有多面性。

在本刊的第一篇论文里，作者朱丽丽指出，中国在第一次鸦片战争中的失败，使得战后的中国人在对战争的内涵理解上发生了巨大转变：他们把清朝的失败归咎于没有西方列强的»船坚炮利«。因此，»西化«武器和军事成为了鸦战后中国的主要努力目标。然而值得注意的是，尽管这些军事上的»西化«努力被后来的学者统称为»现代化运动«，19世纪的中国人并没有把西方列强发起的殖民战争当做是»先进«和»落后«文明之间的较量，而不过是武器力量对比的战争。

Marius Meinhof在他的文章中使用了»殖民主义时间观«一词，来解释诸如»现代«和»落后«这样具有财富和力量不平等性的时间性表述。»殖民主义时间观«作为一种意识形态在二十世纪的诸多社会和政治变革中延续

不断，并至今在中国话语中随处可见。Meinhof强调，这种»时间观«具有三个主要特征。首先，它并不是从一个中心，而是从有着不同意识形态的诸多团体的对话中产生出来的。其次，它将中国置身于历史发展的中间阶段，认为中国»落后«但是具有向»现代«发展的希望和驱动力。最后，»殖民主义时间观«强调了中国的不足，这使得中外学者把中国置于不断的中西对比的之中。

严骏臣通过观察中国和英美社会学界错综复杂的知识建构，论证了美国自由主义政治学家和中国政府官方学者共同构建出一个»外企白领«的身份认同。一方面，力图声援中国民主化进程的西方学者构建并本质化了这个他们认为可以推动或反对民主化的、具有群体价值观的团体。另一方面，中国社会学者也认同了西方学者构建的这个团体，因为在他们看来，这个团体的健康或有害的价值观有利于管理和促使个人融入现有社会体制。因此，尽管两个学术集团拥有截然相反的政治意识，但他们共同本质化了»外企白领«并把一定的价值观强加了给他们。

Sarah Sandfort在她的论文中描述了旅居香港艺术家洪强的数字化作品»道生一«。作者认为»道生一«是试图打破殖民二元性中的»西方现代艺术«和»中国传统艺术«对立的一种积极尝试。在这个作品中，艺术家洪强采用了一种被Sandfort称作»自觉解构混杂现象«的方法，让来访者自觉地把自已置身于和作品的不同联系中，进而可以使每一位来访者构造自己与众不同的个人体验。

在专家后记中，Daniel Vukovich呼吁后殖民主义研究、中国学研究和社会学研究迫切加强合作。他主张中国应当在后殖民主义研究中占有重要的位置。Vukovich认为，在中国，正是这种被殖民的痛苦过去催生了»西化«和»中体西用«这样的话语，以及»百年国耻«这样的集体记忆。因此，尽管当前许多主张批判性思维的学者很少直接涉足后殖民主义理论的讨论，但是他们的研究是富有后殖民主义批判性的。因此，中国学研究对后殖民主义理论的发展具有重要的意义，中国观点也可以帮助我们用不同的方法重新诠释现代性问题和后殖民性。

Lili Zhu, Department of History, Bielefeld University:
lili.zhu@uni-bielefeld.de.

Marius Meinhof, Faculty for Sociology, Bielefeld University:
marius.meinhof@uni-bielefeld.de.

Junchen Yan, Faculty of Sociology, Bielefeld University:
junchen.yan@uni-bielefeld.de.