

Eros of International Relations

Self-Feminizing and the Claiming of Postcolonial Chineseness

Chih-yu Shih

HONG KONG UNIVERSITY PRESS COPYRIGHT MATERIAL

Hong Kong University Press
The University of Hong Kong
Pokfulam Road
Hong Kong
<https://hkupress.hku.hk>

© 2022 Hong Kong University Press

ISBN 978-988-8754-04-5 (*Hardback*)

All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed and bound by J&S Printing Co., Ltd. in Hong Kong, China

Contents

List of Illustrations	ix
Preface	x
Acknowledgments	xii
Introduction: Postcolonial Feminism and China	1
• Significance: Binaries, Genders, and Colonialism	1
• Background: China and Chinese in Postcolonial Feminist Perspectives	4
• Theme: Self-Orientalism and Self-Feminization as a Practice of Globalization	6
• Topics: Leaders, Citizens, Professionals, and Their Strategic Femininity	9
• Methodology and Caveats	12
1. Becoming China: Feminine Sovereignty in the Beginning of Modern Time	14
• Sovereignty as Gendered Relation	14
• Pre-sovereign China: Territory Unbounded, Indefensible, and Reimagined	16
• China's Way to the Sovereign World: A Failing Attempt to Rival	20
• Chinese Sovereignty during World War II: Clutching Alliance, Practicing Exclusion	25
• Sovereign China as an "Other" for the United States: To Care or Not to Care	29
• Feminine Sovereignty and Masculine Sovereignty	34
• Conclusion	38
2. The Eros of Foreign Policy: Madame Chiang Kai-shek during World War II	40
• Prelude	40
• Madame Chiang in the United States	41
• Who Is Madame Chiang?	43
• On the Stage	45
• Personal Characteristics	46
• What Did She Say?	48

• The Symbol of Common Cause	50
• Europe versus Asia	52
• Reactions of the Congressmen	58
• A Success?	59
3. An Exotic City: A Relational Theory of Gender as Social Site	63
• More than Seduction	63
• Expanding the Horizon of Critical International Relations	65
• Ambivalence between Seduction and Modernity	67
• Cheongsam and the Identity of Shanghai	70
• Cheongsam as a Practice of Shanghai	73
• Self-Romanticizing in International Relations Theory	76
• An Unassertive but Self-Content Way	80
4. Navigating Globalization: Femininity, In-betweenness, and Emancipation	81
• Approaching the Binary through Professional Femininity	81
• Practicing Self-Feminizing by Taiwanese Financial Controllers	83
• Professional Women in Postcolonial Taiwan	85
• Self-Feminizing as Relating to Both Sides	90
• Feelings for the Business	94
• Illustration: International Relations of Taiwan	96
• Emancipation: How Plausible?	100
Conclusion: A Revisionist Engendering?	103
References	105
Index	124

Illustrations

Figures

I.1: Self-Orientalism vs. self-feminization	8
---	---

Tables

1.1: China discourses	19
1.2: Feminine and masculine sovereignties	38
4.1: Background of the interviewees	87

HONG KONG UNIVERSITY PRESS COPYRIGHT MATERIAL

Introduction: Postcolonial Feminism and China

Significance: Binaries, Genders, and Colonialism

The rise of China in the twenty-first century and the intensification of the US-China rivalry do not immediately reveal the inferior, vulnerable self-image that has been deeply ingrained in the pedagogic tradition of modern Chinese history (Pu 2019; W. Wang 2019). The lauded notion of “the great rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation” in Chinese President Xi Jinping’s crafting of a “China Dream” and promotion of the “Shared Future for Mankind” has indeed been anything but inferior. Even so, “pessoptimism” is the term that William Callahan (2012) employs to portray a complexity that reflects what the literature otherwise calls status anxiety (Larson and Shevchenko 2010; Onea 2014); here, it emerges from an uncertain enthusiasm for the imagined return of the Middle Kingdom after 150 years of humiliation at the hands of Western imperialism. It is almost like growing masculinity inside an effeminate body (G. P. L. Chong 2017; Rosyidin 2019); however, reaching manhood has never been a familiar concept to the Chinese leadership (Blanchard and Lin 2016; Ling 2019). This book traces the earlier history of Chinese modernity from a postcolonial feminist perspective. Such a re-reading and engendering exercise enables a critical and gendered interpretation of China’s rise that means more than a masculine rebalance of power.

This book argues that the institution and identity of sovereign nations are typically gendered, theoretically as well as practically (Parashar, Tickner, and True 2018). International relations literature, premised upon sovereign independence constrained by relative power, value-laden regimes of governance, and security strategy, generally involves a masculine discourse that practically requires a feminist other to dominate, save and protect, transform, punish, teach, develop, desire, consume, exploit, and possess (Aggestam, Bergman Rosamond, and Kronsell 2018; Enloe 2014; Ling 2002; J. A. Tickner and True 2018). Wherever feminizing is inappropriate because the actors are too weak to commit othering, self-feminizing can occur. It is the practice of self-feminizing that is worth further review and reflection, because this phenomenon is both discursively deconstructive of feminist critique and yet productive to the extent that it reconstitutes the relational identities of all. In other words, if *feminizing* refers to the use of gendered discourse and division

of roles to establish or reproduce naturalness of dominance and exploitation, *self-feminizing* (in contrast) refers to engaging in understanding and caring to oblige interdependent relations (Doi 1973; Ishii and Eisen 2016). The latter is consciously a relational strategy. Compared with the critical endeavor to manifest the differences, agencies, and subjectivities of feminized others, the self-feminizing that seeks to deconstruct these characteristics is revisionist. Even so, the relational differences, agencies, and subjectivities remain intrinsic to the self-feminizing agenda.

Explaining international relations premised upon national identities can be spurious without a critical deconstruction along gendered lines (Åhäll 2018; Hutchison 2019; Zalewski 2019), which reveals those processes prompted by benevolent sensibilities and relational improvisations. These processes do not proceed alongside generalizable principles of security, interest, and power, nor do they appear to have an interest in theoretical implications beyond being merely idiosyncratic. In the same vein, reflections on and analyses of the strategizing of an international self cannot be seriously critical or emancipative without an appreciation of the gendered relations that transcend the power dis/parity as well as the sovereign binary (Jansson 2017; Karim and Beardsley 2017; Parashar, Tickner, and True 2018). While—from the international systemic point of view—feminizing is a generally available discursive technique for promoting the naturalness of those who are dominant and usually exploitative, self-feminizing is a similar technique that all are capable of enlisting in the right context to improvise self-restraint, care, and dependence instead.

Strategizing gendered identities is neither intrinsically good nor bad. Rather, being aware of the practice of engendering and self-feminization can challenge international relations theory and national studies (here, China studies) in order to move beyond them. In fact, engendering can involve lethal, ugly, and confrontational, rather than exotic, scenes (Jensen 2019; Kandyliis 2019). These gendered processes can reveal how physically female bodies play those roles that are usually enacted by males (G. P. L. Chong 2013), although male players are likewise capable of creating and adopting dependent or caring roles while female players can acquire and internalize the patriarchal identities that conventionally constitute male players. As they represent nations (Chapter 2), cities (Chapter 3), and firms (Chapter 4), however, woman leaders are socially better prepared than their male counterparts to exert a reversed engendering to the benefit of both parties to the interaction, with the subaltern side probably experiencing a stronger enhancement.

The deliberate engendering in these practical scenarios aims to ensure the dependence of one party (composed of men and/or women) on the other (also composed of men and/or women) and oblige the latter to exert care. As such, dependence creates a relation that includes the relational identities of all to nullify the imagined autonomy and separatism of the two mutually estranged sovereign sides (Jenkins 2013). This process can proceed without their mutual dependence having been consciously registered. The intention of this book is to engender and then reconstruct

and re-world China as a name/identity/sovereignty/category without inquiring of everyone their gender consciousness. The three empirical chapters include (a) the First Lady Madame Chiang Kai-shek, who represented the Chinese nation during World War II; (b) cheongsam (or *qipao*) wearers, who represent the city of Shanghai in modern and contemporary history; and (c) professionals, especially women in international firms, who represent the local branches in Taipei.

These cases show an image of China opposite to that of a menacing nation on the rise in the twenty-first century to overtake the United States; however, the sharp contrast between the familiar past feminine image of a dependent China and a perceived masculine China threat reinforces the strength of the latter (Roy 2019; Wry 2020). It is convenient for the contemporary who subscribes to the theme of the China threat to forget the feminine image of China, in which all sides once colluded in naturalizing (Ling 2002). Feminine China was neither sovereign in its practical interactions with all of the other sides, autonomous in its internal policy-making, nor independent in terms of its national defense and growth. On the one hand, it was a feminized alter ego external to the world of leading nations, but on the other it was a dependent that contrarily constituted the progressive national identities of its Western counterparts, whose leaders had to consider their obligations as well as prerogatives vis-à-vis China.

Instead of grumbling over China's past treatment or built-in psychological inferiority at the moment of its joining the world of nations (Okamoto 2019), this book critically reviews how the notion of China is analytically an obsolete category, if not also because its users practically invoke the category to subdue the subaltern population everywhere that lives in undecidable uncertainty, fluidity, and intersectionality. Feminizing at various levels, especially self-feminizing, creates a bridging mentality that weaves Chineseness into contexts and relations, to the extent that territorial, legal, and autonomous China yields to a kind of post-China and post-Chineseness that is subject to re/appropriation each time the name is enlisted in practice (Aryodiguno 2020; Codeluppi 2019); China can remain a meaningful category only as a relational self-/identity in a context that abides by no binary on the whole. China's relationality acquires characteristics (e.g., postcoloniality, tributary ritual, ancestor worship, rice as a staple, Socialism, Sino-phonetics, etc.) that resemble those characteristics of actors acting on behalf of other names. Each is peculiarly coupled with the so-called China through a certain point of resemblance to develop their self-identities.

As a result of these post-Chinese identities, China was both a strategic and civilizational dependent of the United States and an equal member of democratic solidarity, in the words of Madame Chiang Kai-shek. However, China can emerge in a metaphoric cheongsam, which is the social home of confident service providers who romanticize Shanghai's capacity to form an unalienated part of its visitors' biography. In addition, China can adopt the in-between identities of professional women of international firms to conjure patience and allow the perpetuation of

non-solutions to the incongruity existing between head offices and their local branches in Taipei. Before navigating these seemingly unrelated sites of self-feminization, some historical and theoretical background notes are useful. These notes are about a kind of feminism that is constrained, informed, and inspired by the postcolonialism of both China and Taiwan.

Background: China and Chinese in Postcolonial Feminist Perspectives

Once symbolized by the Emperor, the quintessential Chinese character can no longer be represented today through such a concrete, subjective being. The historical background of imperialism/colonialism, coupled with the openness to globalization since the 1980s, assures that China and the West can never again pretend to be two distinct, mutually exclusive cultural systems. Whoever call themselves “Chinese” have, each in their own way, been simultaneously practicing those conventions, values, and discourses stereotyped as Western. Anglo-Chineseness probably makes slightly better sense than Chineseness as an identity, although the former is still apparently problematic and prejudiced. However, the preference for an objective—not subjective—China has become increasingly apparent during the intensification of the US-China rivalry, once in the early 1990s and currently into the 2020s (e.g., Allison 2017; Huntington 1993 Pillsbury 2015). The loss of a clear Chinese other incurs anxiety among self-regarded Chinese as well as China-watchers who acquire and reproduce their sense of observational objectivity/superiority by believing in the necessary existence of a separate, Orientalized China (Bui 2019; Cho and Hwang 2020; Vukovich 2012); they are driven to rescue China from being conceptually obscured in the multiple processes of globalization.

On the other hand, the expansion of Chinese influence prompts the theme of China being a civilizational state, romantically as well as antagonistically (French 2017; Grant 2019 Jacques 2009), which makes a peculiar binary of self and other meant for one to absorb the latter. These civilizational sensibilities likewise attract the attention of authors who write on behalf of China or in defense of an essentialized Chinese identity. Consequently, an atmosphere of China-West binary first powerfully emerged in the polemic of “China Can Say No” (Song et al. 1996) in the 1990s and has continued through the Belt and Road Initiative into the 2020s (Y. Wang 2016; W. Zhang 2014). Earlier, this subset was concerned that the policies of reform and openness toward the outside world in the last two decades of the twentieth century could Westernize China through the introduction of Western capital, human resources, institutions, and commercial products. With an imagined China on the rise, different themes have fermented in the twenty-first century—a desire to maintain exotic Chineseness and a celebration of China’s greatness (Callahan 2012; H. Liu 2016; Pu 2019).

Similarly, the realization of the mutual constitution of Chinese and other identities (e.g., the American identity) defies the longstanding idea of American

exceptionalism (Katzenstein 2012; Shih 2013). This acknowledgement incurred policy debates among Washingtonians in the 1990s and culminated in an official call for America First and a decoupling from China in 2020 (Boyer and Cameron 2021). With the category of China being obscured in globalization, the deconstruction of the imagined authenticity of China frustrates fundamentalists on multiple fronts, in part because their indiscriminate reliance on the binary cannot afford such Chineseness to spill over (hard and soft) borders. To that extent, ironically, the perception of a physically powerful Chinese rival can be easily understood and even comfortably confirm the imagined exteriority of China, whereas the threat of losing an intellectually bounded China makes ontological security an issue (Shih 2011). The intellectual threat of this kind—that is, intellectual incapacity—shields policy-makers or think-tank analysts from the challenge of post-Chineseness in practical life. Instead, it gives rise to a sense of being deceived by a malicious China in action (O'Brien 2020; Pillsbury 2015).

Feminist and postcolonial scholarship can assist everyone in understanding more fully the practice of globalization in the intertwined context of Chineseness and the post-identity of everyone at the level of their own choice. Here, *globalization* refers to the processes of moving resources in and out of any territorial boundary. According to some analyses, those transnational globalizing agents (bankers, managers, journalists, intellectuals, etc.), who are presumably free to travel and are epistemologically equipped with a certain universal lens to observe and compare, are accustomed to feminizing their local encounters in discourse as well as role making, resource allocation, and the use of feminine symbols (Barker and Feiner 2010; Marx 2006; Reyes 2019; Sassen 2002). Other analyses point out that former colonial powers have tended to feminize their colonies in a similar manner, with the effect of sexual relations composing the “core of tension” (Donaldson 1992; Fredman 2019). On the other hand, the indigenous elite resists by redirecting feminizing toward local transnational agents, as if the latter were weak and disloyal toward certain homegrown identities. Even so, nations and regions can be neither completely indigenous nor globalized. The resistance to globalization cannot help but reveal the vulnerability of all parties to postcolonial relations (Cui 2013; Duara 1997).

The all-round substitution of post-identities for self-other boundary is why adopting the position of postcolonial feminism must be specific and conspicuous at the beginning of this book, to alert readers to the fact that they will not read for the purpose of better understanding an object, China. *Postcoloniality* refers to the undecidable identity politics caused by the imposition of imperialist and later globalizing values on the indigenous psyche. Postcolonial feminist literature recognizes that globalization aggravates the frustration of losing pure indigenous identities, the reconstruction of which become virtually impossible because they depend almost exclusively on techniques and discourses acquired through globalization (Han and Ling 1998; X. Huang 2006; H. Li 2011). The symbiosis of a nostalgia for the lost

past and the postcolonial identities constituted by globalization parallel gender androgyny in the sense that the clash between indigenous forces and globalizing influences disallows any total victory by either party; on the contrary, the encounter reformulates both. A postcolonial epistemology would thus require one to empathize with the intrinsic instability of everyone, each living at a peculiar intersection, to face the impossible mission of establishing an internally consistent self-identity according to the liberal cliché (Young 1995).

Social scientists are trained to study individual human actions from a sample and then draw general principles governing these actions throughout an entire population. These principles refer to objective, structural conditions, leaving aside the question of how actions are motivated (Barry and Hardin 1982; Olsen 1965). The methodology of this book concedes the scientific values of parsimony, operationalization, and consistency to nebulous elements, such as relation, meta-theory, and discursiveness. To save China from obfuscation and nuance is, therefore, less relevant than saving China-watchers from their territorial or civilizational ontology, embedded in scientific binary (C.-c. Huang 2020a; 2020b; Ngeow 2019). For this reason, this book extends the discussion to encompass how a postcolonial feminist reading of Chinese women's encounters with international relations and globalization may aid and clarify observations about China-watching. In the words of a nascent string of degrowth scholarship that appeals to decolonial feminism:

Such a framework exhibits integrative and relational ontologies of societal embeddedness in nature and de-ontologizes false dichotomies. On epistemological grounds, it is sensitive to context specificities and decidedly acknowledges its own partiality and situatedness. It tries to counteract the arising blind spots by striving for 'epistemic interculturality' on a methodological level. (Dengler and Seebacher 2019, 251)

Theme: Self-Orientalism and Self-Feminization as a Practice of Globalization

Postcolonialism and feminism join forces to resist social science epistemology; however, the latter lingers on in the former. Social science epistemology is particularly relevant in one aspect: objectively informed individualism. Some feminist epistemologists, for example, claim the possibility of multiple scientific interpretations, depending on one's perspective. To include all possible perspectives would make scientific objectivism more objective, and thus stronger (Harding 1991). The search for "strong objectivity" denies the possibility of generalization by asserting that both scientists and the people they study clearly occupy different social positions that define the perspectives. Moreover, some determined feminists propose the coexistence of femininity and masculinity in one social entity, hence androgyny (Millett 1970). The methodological development can bifurcate at this point: (1) to continue the quest for self-actualization through trivializing differences and privileging

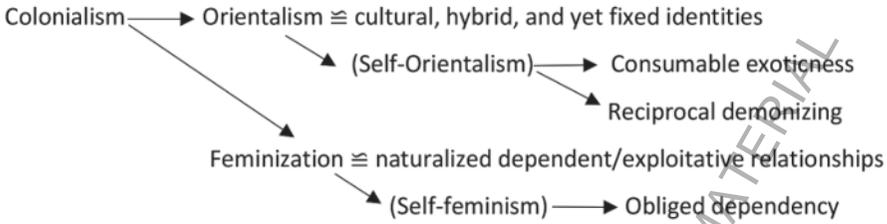
nuances that reproduce and likewise celebrate ontological individualism (H. Zhang 2013), and (2) to explore the practice of relational coupling that yields discrete or unwavering individuality to the encountered context and the strategically incurred network (R. Yang 2020). Between the two, this book adopts the relational approach.

Emancipation in terms of self-actualization (the first approach described above) backfires easily with the pressure of allegedly decolonial selves seeking recognition of such self-identities. Recognition can be ironically achieved either through (1) exotic recognition, that is, annexation and ghettoizing by the former colonial forces; or (2) antagonistic recognition, that is, reciprocal demonizing between the former colonizing and colonized identities. Ghettoizing provides individualized shelters and rewards to those who appear naturally and exotically different or unique, consumable, and therefore appreciable, but this means committing self-Orientalism, i.e., practices that satisfy and reproduce the exoticness, dependence, and inferiority expected of the Orient (Kobayashi, Jackson, and Sam 2017). Alternatively, demonizing might stabilize a postcolonial self-identity through mutual denial, but entails abandoning the transformation of the former colonial forces and embedding self-identities in the reproduction of a perceived natural binary, informed ironically by unnatural colonialism. Constituted thus by former colonial dominance, neither exotic nor antagonistic recognition can be ultimately decolonial in the long run. In short, the colonial processes of recognition have two wings—Orientalism to fix a cultural identity and feminism to reproduce the naturalness of a dependent relationship.

Self-/Orientalism is by no means equivalent to self-/feminizing, though (Clisby and Enderstein 2017). First, self-Orientalism is about actively seeking a substantive identity that can be desired by the former colonizers; self-feminizing is about contriving a caring relationship. The latter depends on femininity rather than post-coloniality. Given that self-Orientalism is substantive, its success actually relies on a prior relation evolving out of colonial dominance and designation. Self-feminizing is instead a role relation that is improvisational, since dependent relationships arise in practice and in context. Second, self-feminizing is so complex that the decolonial self can be involved in reconciling, bridging, and buffering between more than two parties to create a fluid mix of bilateral relationships. Self-Orientalism has a clear, albeit different, identity to assert, but self-feminizing adapts to the coming forces without premising upon an allegedly innate identity. The latter's adjustments in context to reduce or dissolve dominance proceeds by forging a proper relational identity for the time being. Finally, self-Orientalism can nonetheless be useful in the practice of self-feminizing as long as the former functions to oblige the duty of the dominant side to care and to transcend the binary identity (Kushigian 2016).

The postcolonial populace often survives the squeezing pressure between globalization and nationalism in their own ways, taking advantage of the images thrust upon them by transnational capitalism, the media, or intellectual thought. The more practiced can even embody themselves in feminine images, meeting the

Figure I.1: Self-Orientalism vs. self-feminization



Source: Author

masculine sensibilities of the globalizers who find their postcolonial objects irresistibly appealing, and contribute to the maintenance of their relationships accordingly (Chisholm 2019; Elbelazi and Alharbi 2020; Le Grice 2017). Unfortunate indeed are these self-feminizing exercises that relegate postcolonial societies to the inferior alter ego. In actuality, however, self-feminizing crafts a certain relational identity that re-constitutes the self-identities of all relevant sides (Ishaque 2019; Mohanty 1991; Shih 2020). The globalizers' investment in the human capital of the colonized population also unavoidably enlarges the latter's capacity for resistance and reappropriation. The indigenous, feminine cooperation enjoyed by the globalizers does not necessarily benefit them unilaterally in the long run (Ong 1987). In fact, defining the account balance becomes difficult, as premising thinking upon the self-other binary loses relevance under the conditions of postcolonial feminism.

In brief, postcolonial adaptation allows numerous interpretations of globalization to coexist in the same society. No matter how submissive they may appear in fulfilling the globally constructed (and imported) images, it is a psychological necessity for anyone in the non-Western world to accept certain indigenous assumptions about their own identities (Hamington 2004; Ling and Shih 1998). Signs of behavioral incongruence would naturally prompt anxiety in globalizers, who are impelled to distinguish compradors from resisters, but the latter two may well be the two faces of a single body. There are always pragmatic intermediaries, who are patient and practiced in adopting non-solutions to incongruence. Their promise hides in the inevitability that even compradors can still appreciate and display nationalist sentiments at times, and the resisters never totally jettison everything Western (Soguk 1993). Facing this complexity, the globalizers' tactics to divide and rule are hard to enforce, for everyone can look attractive on one occasion but threatening in a different context. In reality, as this book will show in the cheongsam as well as the globalization chapters, post-Cultural Revolution re-feminization reinstates a soothing capacity of Shanghai and Taipei women to buffer both resisters and globalizers (K. Robinson 1996) and soften the imposing masculinity of the globalizers (Duara 1998).

For whatever social constructive reasons, the females' need for subjectivity is not as strong as the need of their male counterparts (Oxford and McLachlan 2018; Yaghoubi-Notash, Mohammad, and Soufiani 2019), but a lower need does not indicate that women do not pursue subjectivity. Entering the process of globalization intensifies the females' sense of agency relative to the indigenous males, because the indigenous patriarchal psyche may not allow men comfortably to succumb to globalizers (Judd 1990). If globalizers appreciate the continued feminization of the former colonized population, females who carry an indigenous (i.e., Chinese) identity are desired. Arguably from a revisionist point of view, a way to avoid masculine rivalry between the globalizers and the indigenous elite is for someone in between, presumably a feminized local agent, to absorb their contradiction (W. Cheng 2016; Lim 1990), allowing the globalizers to utilize the feminine comprador stratum to meet their vision of a feminine China and the indigenous resisters to see the same comprador stratum in a non-threatening, inferior position as well (Fujita 1987). Therefore, females who do not strongly demand an independent identity will adapt relatively well to jobs in the comprador sectors.

Topics: Leaders, Citizens, Professionals, and Their Strategic Femininity

Before China's rise in the twenty-first century, the national image of China continued to encounter feminization despite globalization. Even when struggling with the negative Yellow Peril or Waking Lion themes, the image of China nonetheless poses a threat to the globalizers that few other former colonies can match (Baker 1996). Although a feminine China could diminish this perception of threat, the globalizers, who move resources across territorial boundaries in pursuit of a transnational life, are presented with a difficult choice between a dependent China and a menacing China. Although the latter image has a wide range of versions, the bottom line consistently comprises a civilizational *qua* illiberal threat and has entered its high cycle in the 2020s. One convenient double-focal lens is to divide China into the dependent Chinese people and the menacing Chinese Communist autocracy (Diamond 2019; Lam 2019; Lei 2018; Pei 2016; Wry 2020). Both lenses contribute to masculinity of the beholders, who are strong enough to exploit and care for the former and confront the latter.

The beginning of the Chinese state in 1911 did not win respect from any imperialist powers; not until Madame Chiang Kai-shek's visit to the United States in 1943 did the US Congress ever sincerely wish to help China. Through Madame Chiang, the leading Westernizer in Republican China, the imagination of a feminized China becoming modern found a real-world testimony. The truth is, however, that Madame was politically submissive to her husband, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, and by no means any authentic representation of the reality on the Far East battlefield. Even so, the amalgam of the exotic, the feminine, and the Western within her proved too powerful to resist (Miller 1943; Palm and Chiang 2018).

Madame Chiang fulfilled the dream that the masculine side of the West once had but later aborted in Emperor Guangxu, who sympathized with Westernization even as a feminized victim of court politics, and in Emperor Puyi, a totally impotent last emperor of China—but one whose imagined feminine character Western film directors and audiences still embraced half a century later (Chow 1991).

In contrast to weak, dependent Guangxu, the Empress Dowager Cixi represented the irrational, capricious feminine character of old China; and Puyi, the anachronistic representative of China in the 1990s Oscar-winning film *Last Emperor*, reflected the Western producers' and viewers' frustration at their failure to draw feminized submissive cooperation from the Communist regime over the preceding four decades. In the film, Puyi is made to become the modern spokesperson for the Chinese people who, in the Western imagination, have an inexpressible dignity oppressed by the still politically primitive regime. To sympathize with Puyi's experience with the purging Communists insinuates a criticism of the uncooperative, masculine Beijing authorities and alludes to the rescuer role that the Western elite has been striving to enact (for a case outside China, see Enloe [1989] 2014). In this ongoing context, to welcome Madame Chiang means to ridicule the Empress Dowager for the latter's fear of Westernization. It is unclear, empirically, whether the position/name of the Chinese has been better off vis-à-vis the West's position/name due to Madame's efforts or Puyi's film portrayals.

It is without question that Western media and political circles remember the Old China very well, and constantly recall the feminine figures associated with that era. In fact, Chinese filmmakers were able to craft postmodern styles of those female images once popular in the 1930s to attract a Western audience (W. L. Chong 2003; Chow 2000; J. Yang 2014); however, the globalizers also view contemporary women as a significant symbol of China. For example, Chinese women seem indispensable to the image of anything romanticizing internationalness, regardless of the nature of the products being presented (Ling 1996). In addition, the 1980s birth control policy molded the feminization of survival into a token of the Chinese people (Goeking 2019; Greenhalgh 2001). Furthermore, so many observers who are fond of the Chinese people yet alienated from the regime marry Chinese women, practicing a feminine China domestically. Finally, prostitution has thrived dramatically under China's jurisdiction, but involves the international trespassing of all races in all directions under globalization (Gates 1989).

Hong Kong and Taiwan are useful illustrations of these dimensions. Economically minded people conceive the dependence on the Chinese economy as a necessary, rational option and do not waste time preaching to the Chinese Communist Party about privileges and exemptions. Their political rivals, however, find political and military dependence on the United States a vital choice for survival in the battle for the exclusion of Chinese influence. The two styles of dependent autonomy—economically on China and politically on the United States—collude in mounting a masculine pose toward an imagined China, the regime as well as

the society. In their initial encounter immediately after the reform and openness, Taiwanese and Hong Kong businesspeople developed a second household that adopts a Chinese companion while doing business in China. The ensuing, stronger trend has resulted in the migration of Chinese wives to Hong Kong and Taiwan; typically, these households have had children. The question of when and how these children can permanently join their parents has been a constant controversy in both places, because the political correctness there conversely pushes for the youngsters' exclusion to symbolize political and legal autonomy from China. The extreme example of this tactic occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic when the Taiwanese authorities refused entry to children who only held residential certificates and were still queuing for their passports, on the pretext of quarantine policy, virtually compelling their Chinese mothers (who already had Taiwanese passports) to stay with them. While the Chinese authorities celebrate the economic statistics that attest to the dependence of Hong Kong and Taiwan on the motherland, their postcolonial politics of autonomy, embedded in British and Japanese colonial modernity respectively, regards dependent children as an unwanted connection with China.

The symbiosis of China's dependent and menacing identities has further trickled down to liminal and subnational populations to repeat the same irony that plagues the relational identities of national China and its international others. These assertive attitudes loom strong in the quest for political autonomy respectively in the name of Uyghurs, Taiwanese, Hongkongers, and even Tibetans or Mongolians. These identities are all culturally hybrid and postcolonial in various degrees; they are generally ambivalent to, but capable of, both feminizing the Chinese people and self-feminizing their identities for the intellectual consumption of the Global North. Within these complex relationalities, China can instead represent a bridge to the global market, a resource to be exploited, as well as a pot of globalization where Hongkongers and Taiwanese are less alert to the weakening of the binary. The complex globalizing agents located in the two former colonies are apprehensive about the consequential spheres of influence that a sovereign China imposes on them and, therefore, prefer them to remain dependent on the Western powers. On the one hand, the Hong Kong and Taiwanese businesspeople freely moving in and out of the Chinese sovereign territory are the agents of globalization. On the other hand, both the American and Chinese authorities can collude in conceptually considering them dependents of an authentic China.

As Chinese people, both self-regarded and other-regarded, began to spill over their sovereign boundaries in response to the 1990s' call for globalization, it may appear that a greater China was in the making (Shambaugh 1995), which would include Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and, perhaps, Chinese Southeast Asians, who would bandwagon economically. Nevertheless, the post-Chinese communities are unambiguously global in the twenty-first century. They cause anxiety; after all, a longstanding image of a dependent China does not fit into its nascent global image.

Still, the image of Chinese women emerging during globalization present no fundamental challenge to either the indigenous or international patriarchal conventions. Career-oriented women are cautious about continuing, painstakingly, to fulfil their reproductive role expectations (e.g., child rearing), and perfectly aware that the virtues they display in their traditional roles deeply influence their professional images. Patience, non-solution, a bridge, inconsistency, and dependence are their stereotypical feminine qualities that will nevertheless continue diverting the practices of masculine values from their imagined courses.

Methodology and Caveats

This book adopts interpretative as well as descriptive methods. The interpretive methods further lead to critical methods, aiming to transcend the current ideologies and principles in the studies of international relations and globalization. Moreover, its revisionist interpretation reads certain emancipative possibilities into the practice of self-feminizing. By *emancipation*, I mean to stress the capacity not to abide by given rules or values, nor to assert substitutes, but to remain undecidable. The materials to be analyzed include both speech scripts and interview scripts; narratives of movies and novels are occasionally relevant, too. These analyses engage not only postcolonialism and feminism, but also international theories and globalization in general—and relational theory, role theory, and post-Western theory in particular. The analyses also have dialogues with China studies, cultural studies, and history studies, providing nuanced provocations on which the readers may reflect.

Three caveats deserve mention. “Femininity” as used in this book consistently connotes some kind of inferiority, dependence, or even lack of subjectivity. In this sense, femininity reflects uncritically a social stereotype, but it is methodological femininity (referring primarily to strategizing of identities) instead of biologically innate femininity. The notion of femininity is rendered in the book as an epistemological dimension, which is gender-neutral in its application, so both men and women are socially ready to take feminine roles and attain contextually relevant femininity. Besides, such femininity is not intrinsically inferior or weak unless a typical patriarchal value criterion is adopted to appraise it. However, such a criterion is not taken for granted in this book. Since femininity mainly informs a strategizing style or a relational resource, the ensuing use of the term will not refrain from embedding it in an inferior kind of role-making and -taking.

Second, given that China has not been a typical colonized country in the modern historical sense, designating postcoloniality to China risks ignoring the dominance carried out as well as justified in China’s name by those who deftly contrive, evoke, and exploit political correctness of its use. Postcoloniality may be an especially precarious term for those who suffer, or enjoy, the image of a magnificent Chinese tributary history. In fact, the same qualification may apply to any former colonized or war-defeated society whose population submerged in a certain glorious past when

trying to regroup. Even so, postcoloniality as a critical concept in this book that aims to transcend the binary of colonizing regimes and colonized population would perceive the study of any colonial, glorious, or rising regime as a legitimate agenda. After all, with China reconceptualized as post-China, the distinction of colonial, noncolonial, and postcolonial entities would be redundant and counterproductive. The postcolonial feminist relationalities of this book are meant for all parties of colonial and patriarchal relations to engage in critical self-reflections.

Third, as the book critically reflects upon the constructive nature of China as being a sovereignty, a territory, and a political system, the narratives continue to invoke its name as such, especially in Chapter 1, which reviews the gender character of China, the name, against the background of a macro history. China appears on all pages. This linguistic compromise risks reducing nuances and multiplicities to a national narrative, and reproducing these discursive foundations of colonialism and the patriarchal values of independence, competition, dominance, power, modernization, and hierarchy. Perhaps the incurred names of other nations suffer greater abuse since no reminders, qualifications, or reservations that sometimes come with the name “China” are present to caution readers against the constructive and political nature of other names. Even so, national names can be minimally functional in the important sense that their incurrence makes it possible to discuss the gender and gendering of nation.

The Eros of Foreign Policy: Madame Chiang Kai-shek during World War II

Prelude

Given the discursive practices that indirectly and yet powerfully distinguish sovereign identities into masculine and feminine kinds, a feminine sovereign actor represented by female can provoke a range of things—in no small part because the practices of masculinity and femininity in international relations reveal the irony that the pursuit of security and interest engenders the symbiosis of autonomy and dependence. Accordingly, relations between masculine and feminine nations are mutual and, therefore, defy the separatist, autonomous, and estranging masculinity that informs the ideal type of sovereign identity. This chapter argues that the physicality of a female leader can satisfy the imagination of a feminine body politic with relative ease if she can craft the dependent role of her nation and boost the morale of a significant masculine other in a dyadic relationship. On the other hand, she can certainly cause anxiety if she acts upon the masculine identity that is unexpected of her nation. Both ways appear collusive in reinforcing the desirability of the sovereign system. Often in actuality, she does not have to reproduce sovereign identities though. A practiced actor may actually make room for mutual dependence with the other parties.

Because of their mutuality, a dependent identity that raises an irresistible request, reduces the intensity of rivalry, or enables strategizing in accordance within a given context can oblige the concession of the other parties in the relational loop. This cultivated mutual dependence is different from the familiar quest for self-empowerment even in the critical literature, feminist as well as postcolonial, which adopts the same binary of self and other and seeks to privilege the power of self as opposed to that of the other. On the contrary, a consciously contrived self-feminizing approach is relational empowerment as opposed to self-empowerment. It reminds the other parties of the nuanced mutual constitution and engulfs the other side of the imagined binary to begin or restore caring for the identities of its “relational self” as well as the “relational other” that constitutes the self through self-restraint and even self-sacrifice.

The precise purpose of the following three chapters is to collect pieces of evidence that such self-feminizing strategy can take place at various levels and be

based on various incentives. In sum, feminizing has endless iterative rounds. At the international level, the first round that constructs and practices feminizing of postcolonial sovereignty under the disguise of sovereign equality and autonomy proceeds into a second round, in which a post-sovereign world emerges to emancipate, strategize, and eventually decolonize through an underestimated practice of self-feminizing. This process is doomed to enter later rounds, as self-feminizing is conveniently cross-leveled to incur romanticizing, improvising, and certainly back-firing. These rounds may cycle by stages, albeit at different levels and in different communities. The following three chapters, respectively, discuss rounds that are at the national level during the 1940s, the city level during the 1910s and 2010s, and the company level during the 1990s.

Madame Chiang in the United States

This chapter focuses on an example of civilizational imagination or mutual dependency through a feminized body politic, and it reveals relational empowerment by highlighting a dependency narrative (Tseng 2003). A metaphor of feminine sovereignty, enacted by an eloquent female speaker, undergirded and strengthened this relational empowerment. The relational empowerment made up for the loss of masculinity in the dependent image of Chinese sovereignty, which Madame Chiang put on and won credit for among her audience with a degree of success. The policy ramifications of such an inter-civilizational relation lasted for decades; the US's China policy went through the cycle of romanticizing China and relative deprivation due to unfulfilled femininity of China, in association with a policy cycle of engagement and confrontation with China (Mavroidis and Sapir 2021; Thurston 2021).

Madame Chiang Kai-shek (born Mei-ling Soong) is the representation of feminine China in this chapter's case study. Having grown up in the United States, she exemplified how her Americanized Chineseness could earn respect in both China and America, despite the mutual alienation of these two populations from each other. Essentially, she enhanced the reputation of Christianity in China through the construction of schools, orphanages, hospitals, and churches, making Western civilization a worthy and welcome element. Her greatest challenge was to likewise make Chineseness a welcome source of assimilation to America. She accomplished this by contriving an equivalence between her own Americanness and China's Americanness (Schiavenza 2013; Sebastian 2015–2016). Her power of persuasion was built in her strategizing of her own femininity; as such, to save China was to save her and to save her was to save America.

At an event on February 18, 1943, Madame Chiang Kai-shek visited the US Congress and gave a speech in each house, urging the US government to re-evaluate its strategic priority in Europe (Soong 1943). Considered one of the greatest speeches in Congressional history (discussed later), her remarks aroused enormous concern

among the audience, including political leaders as well as news commentators. In fact, the content of Madame Chiang's speech reflects the struggling mentality of Chinese leaders as a new and late comer to world politics, and the response it drew reveals the position and presumptions that US leaders held with regard to China. A review of this exchange of views between Madame Chiang and US opinion leaders sheds light on the state question still lingering in contemporary China today, and on the relationship between Beijing and Washington in the twenty-first century.

In her speech to the US Congress, Madame Chiang Kai-shek presented an Asia-first strategy. Although her speech was critical of US strategy to end World War II, she received enormous praise. This chapter examines how the American media reported her speech and concludes that her feminine appearance, her Americanized perspectives, and the self-conceived role of her American audience as a rescuer could explain the emotion her speech aroused in American society. Madame Chiang portrayed China as an about-to-be-Westernized society experiencing the threat of annihilation under Japan's invasion. To save China was to save the hope of American civilization in Asia, and she herself was the testimony that there was no difficulty in mixing American and Chinese values.

The American audience listened to Madame Chiang's speech from a standpoint fundamentally different from her presumed position about China, which was now to be interpreted according to the needs of the American audience. People might agree or disagree with the reasoning in the speech, but on the whole, most expressed sympathy toward Madame Chiang, the person. The sympathy had a great deal to do with her American-educated background as well as her ability to display it; this allowed the audience to fantasize that China might become American, and thus it created solidarity with the Chinese people under fascist Japan's tyrannical invasion.

The sympathy may have benefited from Madame Chiang's feminine appearance, which easily won compassion from a masculine rescuer, a timely image for America's self-styled leadership during World War II. Madame Chiang actually manipulated this need for masculinity among her audience. Caricatures printed in the next day's newspapers conveyed her success in that she was portrayed becoming stronger by shaking hands with an American figure, which indicated the strength of the helper. It is therefore understandable why some observers worried that an Asia-centered perspective could undermine the US global strategy of ending the war in the sequence of Germany first, then Japan. No one questioned, though, that Madame Chiang had soothed the American psyche by presenting China as a pupil of American civilization as well as its strategic ally.

This chapter examines the media reports following Madame Chiang's speech published on February 19, 1943, to show that what constituted this great strategic appeal was, in a deep sense, an indirect yet adequately positive response to a fantasy, a projection, a construction of one civilization in search of an inferior "Other" to confirm its self-perceived superiority. The two geographically and culturally dissimilar countries were able to relate to each other with Madame Chiang's enactment

of an in-between role that created the imagination of resemblance of the two to feel each other inside of themselves. The making of a relational self, greater than each self alone, was the result of successful construction of solidarity embedded in an imagined bond of common value. Moreover, China as the imagined other was a dependent other of the United States at the same time. She achieved this dependent relation not least because of her body politics, which romanticized a feminine quality of China. Reports on her speech turned out to be strong evidence of how much, in the capacity of the masculine sovereign actor, narrators needed to relate to her and oblige the United States to support her qua China.

Who Is Madame Chiang?

Madame Chiang was the First Lady of China, wife of the Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, the highest commander of the Far Eastern war zone during World War II. However, “First Lady” status alone was culturally uninteresting to Americans, since there had been a good number of first ladies in the world by that time. In fact, Madame Chiang arrived in the United States without any official title; her stated purpose was to treat an injury caused by an accident years earlier. What attracted the host society seemed to be her Oriental background and appearance, her gender, and the American psychological and ideological values she voiced.

No reporters were blind to her feminine characteristics. To begin with, her cheongsam seemed exotic. The style was clearly Oriental for the American taste and arguably Chinese; some were able to discern its Shanghai style, but most could only report its ebony color. Almost all noted the split on the sides up to her knees, which “set off her figure admirably . . . with a graceful walk” (*Chicago Tribune*).¹ Usually, the more detailed the description, the clearer the subject-object relationship implications become as columnists enjoyed her look:

Her small body, richly covered in a long side-slit Oriental dress of black, moved slowly down the green-carpeted center aisle.

Most Westerners thought her garb the essence of simplicity. But to those who know Mme. Chiang, she was “dressed up.” Across her chest she wore the three Chinese “buttons,” bediamonded pieces of jade. Her earrings were jade and one of her rings was jade. By her heart was the pin she nearly always wears, the bejeweled wings of the Chinese air force, which she founded and once directed. The yoke and cuffs of her dress were sequined in jet. (*New York Times*)

1. All the ensuing reports were printed on February 19, 1943. Due to the traditional archivist style at the Society of Kuomintang History (*dangshihui*), previously at the Grass Mountain Villa, Taipei, before closing down to meet the political correctness of twenty-first-century Taiwan and ultimately dismantled officially by the Ill-gotten Party Assets Settlement Committee, no pages could be identified in these clipped papers. It was also unlikely that retrieval of reporter names and article titles would be possible given the denial of public access on the eve of publication. Even so, the author would like express his gratitude to the Society for generously allowing access for two entire days in Spring 1996 to a complete stranger from the academic world.

The strength of her speech was easily felt against the feminine frailty thus embedded, hence “a slight woman . . . as fragile as an ivory figurine” could speak in “compelling manner and poise” (*Times Union*, Rochester, New York). Thus, a gesture which could have been amusing absent conscious sympathy became a dramatic and irresistible demand when Madame Chiang, “short, pert and vivacious, who, with her small fist clenched in emphasis” (*Globe and Mail*, Toronto), raised her voice and moved the heart of the audience, and “electrified” the Senate during her first speech (*Times Picayune*, New Orleans). Madame Chiang was critical of the American grand strategy and clearly hopeful that Congress would amend the thinking of the Roosevelt administration. Surprisingly, her criticism bothered few; indeed, she personally did not meet anyone who seemed to oppose her. All of those who had been critical commented on or reported her performance with enthusiasm!

There was one—and perhaps only one—sarcastic comment on her decoration because it just did not fit into China’s perceived scarcity, the premise of her speech:

Mme. Chiang was dramatic in a slim black Chinese brocade gown with its side-slit skirt lined in scarlet, mink coat and sequin-spangled black head scarf. The wife of the Chinese generalissimo walked on high-heeled platform black sandals studded in gold.

Whatever anguish the Chinese are suffering the Chiang family seems to be doing right well. (*Chronicle*, Abilene, Kansas)

Attitudes of this sort reappeared later on. Stories about Mei-ling Soong in the 1980s and 1990s, in English as well as Chinese, reported the anxiety of those who once witnessed her lifestyle. Even so, this kind of criticism misses the civilizational implications of her speech at the time and was unlikely to be important to those contemporaries of the 1940s.

Madame Chiang’s educational background is worth noting here to fully demonstrate her American appeal. In her younger years, she spent over ten years in American schools and received her degree from Wellesley College with a major in Western philosophy. Coming from a Christian family long before she moved to the United States, she was culturally an American by the time she returned to her home country. The fact that she moved back to the United States in her final decade suggests that she felt comfortable with American life; likewise, a similar feeling of “returning home” could have well accompanied her during the 1942–1943 trip. She did not become China’s First Lady without effort: for example, she studied Chinese right after returning to China. Twenty years later, she returned to America with a plea for support for her new (and old) home in China. This coming-home-American atmosphere was detected by the more discerning pen, but while her quest was for help, the reporters seemed to be celebrating her personal triumph:

No one could be better qualified to present the case for China to the American people than Mme. Chiang Kai-shek, wife of China’s generalissimo, who set it forth in addresses before the Senate and the House. Reared and educated in America, she

Navigating Globalization: Femininity, In-betweenness, and Emancipation

Approaching the Binary through Professional Femininity

Gender is a relational category that people often incur to imagine the binary of man and woman and the ensuing self-norms and norms of interaction, usually leading to dominance. Engendering, on the other hand, is a relational strategy that adopts a gender lens either to reproduce or deconstruct those binaries that naturalize dominance, including those existing between nation states (Boris, Dawson, and Molony 2021; Fletcher 2019; Prügl and Tickner 2018; True and Hewitt 2018; Zalewski and Parpart 2016). That said, the process of feminizing usually deconstructs binaries instead of reproducing them (Baltes-Löhr 2018; Liinason 2018; Reddy 2016).

Using gender as a metaphor for relational strategizing and benefiting from feminist scholarship, the notion of self-feminizing in this chapter continues to adopt a gender-neutral approach to include relevant practices of all actors, male as well as female. It refers to the practices of understanding and caring to oblige interdependent relationships so that interconnection and mutuality emerge between estranging actors, regardless of their biological sexes. According to this definition, femininity is by no means equivalent to the stereotypical characteristics of a biological or social woman, although these alleged characteristics inform the construction of femininity. The process and practice of self-feminizing can be motivated by exploitative as well as emancipative purposes (e.g., Kim 2020; Ling 2002; Seppälä 2016). The latter purpose motivates this book. Given the book's intended gender-neutrality regarding femininity, *emancipation* specifically refers to the transcendence of those binaries that lead to dominance, and also to the decoupling of women's choices and opportunities with regard to gendered roles and duties. Moreover, in the field of international relations, self-feminizing specifically aims to achieve emancipation from national sovereignty, which is embedded in liberalism and realism and their masculine values of subjectivity, autonomy, power, wealth, freedom, and self-determination on all sides. Engaging in self-feminizing emancipates people from the need to comply with the binary correctness that obliges rule-observing, taking sides between rivals, or enforcing justice through the sacrifice of nuances in a relational context. Emancipation succeeds in the implausibility of—as well as the failed insistence on—binary correctness.

As such, self-feminizing offers a remedy to patriarchal dominance (Noble 2017), in which only those men and women who collude in privileging masculine values and reproduce the self-other binary are qualified to be leaders. Instead, emancipative self-feminizing eases the obsession with the subjectivity, autonomy, and self-determination of all sides. Self-feminizing alludes to global policy because globalization, even as it traverses binaries, simultaneously backfires where agitated protectionism reproduces border consciousness and restores binaries.

Emancipative feminizing is almost certainly self-feminizing, as opposed to other-feminizing, which seeks to reproduce dominance in a relationship. This chapter continues the relational concern of Chapter 3. Emancipation is consequential when the substitution of relational concerns for the binary adjusts the behavior of rivals (Chodorow 1986; Jaggar 1995; Redshaw 2013; F. Robinson 1997). For the purpose of the ensuing discussion, it is best to consider "relation" as imagined (usually consensual) resemblance (Harrison 2003) in terms of kinship, membership, comradeship, citizenship, partisanship, neighborhood, civilization, mission, and ideology, as well as any other experiences and endeavors that can be evoked to connect or disconnect people in their contexts. A mutually acknowledged relation leads to a sense of solidarity, which in turn leads to the self-restraint of the resembling parties, whose identities' imagined resemblance constitutes an obliged reciprocity. The previous chapters have consistently argued that self-feminizing as well as self-romanticizing can improvise as well as evoke relationships between two sides across a seeming divide, wherever such a process enacts a common bodily denominator as an imagined and broadened interconnection to constitute each of their relational identities.

For example, Aung San Suu Kyi, whom the Western powers used to romanticize as a dependent liberal, could increase their patience with the recalcitrant Burmese military junta, in whose eyes she was the daughter of the nation (Sengupta 2015). Her arrest by the military, in contrast, can immediately enhance sympathy for her despite her suspicious human rights record. Likewise in Chapter 2, Mme. Chiang Kai-shek was able to neutralize the strategic incongruence between her Western aficionados and the Chinese Generalissimo, whose legitimacy relied on her double roles as the mother of the nation and a democratic dependent. Such a denominator, once transcending the self-other binary of those divided, enables the imagination of a shared project or mission, a common identity at a higher or deeper level, or mutual constitution through intersubjectivity.

Specifically, this chapter explores how the femininity of Taiwanese professionals' bridging roles manifest between the head and branch offices of multinational firms in Taiwan, as well as between an allegedly universal ethos in science, the market, and globalization on the one hand and humanist concerns for emotion, relation, and nuance on the other. The discussion now moves from improvising femininity in a bilateral condition, as in Chapters 2 and 3, to strategizing femininity in between two seemingly incompatible others. I argue that the femininity of local professionals,

who practice with certain international credentials, demonstrates how adopting a non-solution toward a rivalry can be conducive to improvising caring relationships for the mutually estranging forces. The discussion then extends to international relations, informed by the US-China rivalry. The subsequent discussion alludes to international relations that are divided by an allegedly universal (usually conversational) and an indigenous (usually resistant) force in terms of value, institution, relation, or identity. The chapter uses the local branch office *qua* the indigenous, the head office *qua* the universal, and the professionals who bridge between them as metaphors for China, the West or global forces, and Taiwan, respectively.

In sociology, there is a peculiar literature on the phenomenon of self-feminization (Abidin 2016; Puzar and Hong 2018; Sundararajan 2015; Xie 2020) and a native Mandarin term for it: *sajiao* (T.-i. Chuang 2005; Y. C. Chuang 2011; Farris 1994; Yueh 2016), which roughly means a boyish or feminine performance that casts the other side as attending to one's own wishes. However, the purpose of the book is not to examine how the deliberate use of femininity assists actors in pursuing their own goals; that would merely reproduce the self-other binary. Rather, this book's take on femininity is as a cross-gender strategy for reconciling the incompatible needs of the other and, therefore, allowing all sides to find the continuation of certain relationships both plausible and rewarding. In brief, the research curiosity lies in the epistemological lens, informed and taught by female practitioners, that contributes to the attainment, preservation, and adaptation of the relationships that patiently restrain the incongruent sides from inflicting further harm upon their mutuality and even oblige them to reciprocate with good will. This strategy is far removed from playing cute to win sympathy for any specific desire; self-feminization is about body politics that offers practitioners a physical intersection to prevent incongruent expectations from causing further estrangement.

Practicing Self-Feminizing by Taiwanese Financial Controllers

Few in the postcolonial and patriarchal consciousness would passionately search for independence or subjectivity (Wolf 1972). This is true for Taiwan's (usually family) businesses, too. Nevertheless, Taiwan performs better than most other countries in terms of gender equality (C.-h. Chen and Mazzetta 2021),¹ and this relative equality is apparent in the finance and accounting fields. In terms of GNP, Taiwan's economy grew quickly during the Cold War to make it one of the Four Asian Tigers; however, its business style in the world market exhibits few of these stereotyped masculine attributes. The prevailing strategy always involves searching for loopholes, leftovers, sub- and sub-sub-contracts, emergency orders, low-profit-margins, door-to-door sales, fakes, and so on (H.-h. Chang 2004; Luo 1997). Few on the global stage attend

1. See, for example, C.-h. Chen and Mazzetta's (2021) article: "Taiwan Ranks No. 6 in World for Gender Equality: GEC."

Conclusion: A Revisionist Engendering?

Efforts to re-/engender international relations in the past few decades have focused on exposing patriarchal power and ideologies as well as the gendered role-making that reflects, reproduces, and arguably abuses gender differences. However, the practical improvement in international relations has been modest at best—if it even exists—because the national actors and their discourses are able to reappropriate gender consciousness and the ensuing reforms' potential to patriarchal power's advantage. As a result, the peace advocacy that arises from border-crossing solidarity and is embedded in living together, mutual empathy, ideological neutrality, aversion to violence, and environmental sensibilities yields to military threat, swagger, or clashes between political forces. In reality, the caring and mothering that deactivate exclusionary sovereign borders can give way to xenophobia, which seeks to monopolize resources and commit demonization, especially during a pandemic or an exodus of refugees. The responsibility to protect easily ends up politicized by national leaders, who purport to justify the confrontation, intervention, and exploitation mobilized by the trained masculine instinct.

All of this is truly disappointing. In adding to the critical engendering attempts of feminist literature on international relations, this book conveys little optimistic sense of its similarly critical intent. It nevertheless seeks to present an empirically plausible reinterpretation from a revisionist gender perspective—to detect how international relations are, in practice, not always engrossed in the masculine style of sovereign, national, and power-oriented platforms. Gendered biases in international relations can occasionally lead to certain results that are conducive to the easing of masculinity, and these results become visible at various levels: national, municipal, and corporate. In these instances, the actors—women and men alike, who have been conditioned by the patriarchal pedagogy and socialization—reveal a need and capacity to think and act differently. Moreover, exactly because intelligent actors detect this intellectual and emotional need among all people, including presumably the strong, they can trigger a degree of transformation within a given temporal span and at a certain site. This book embarks upon the realization of this sporadic emancipation.

Specifically, self-feminization can serve as a catalyst for emancipation that bridges the relations between rivals in context. The purpose of self-feminization is to oblige caring in order to make relationality a constituent of the identities of all interacting actors. It can peculiarly enhance the level of caring on the part of self-feminizing actors, who are the first to enjoy their own gendered image and therefore are emotionally capable of bringing enthusiasm for their service to their visitors. The epistemologically double-sided self-feminization creates plausible roles for a caring relationship either by obliging the self to care for others or others to care for the self. The two parties are epistemologically equal, as they need each other to practice the caring relationship, regardless of the asymmetry of power that often characterizes their imagined binary. Provided that the relationship is reciprocal, the rivalry between them becomes more negotiable, non-solution more appealing, and inconsistency more tolerable. As such, ostensibly universal rules and norms are neutralized.

International relations theory can benefit from treating social sites, composed of carefully crafted gendered roles in context, as the base of action. Social sites are subject to spinning and recombination, through which the actors readily attend to the instability of identity, appreciate their own agency for relating, and critically engage these sites' intersectionality, which constitutes different actors. Self-feminizing in this book relies on postcolonialism and feminism to discover how a subaltern, late-coming state, city, and corporation together reconstruct a practical thread of Chineseness, whose meanings vary according to the context, the perceived characteristics of the other relational self, and the strategy of those allegedly acting on behalf of Chineseness. This unstable Chineseness would bring forth a disquieting epistemological lens and prompt a quest for another kind of empirical agenda, one to retrieve and even reactivate an emancipation through gendered relations.

Index

- Abyssinia, 27
Allied Forces, 18, 27, 34
altercasting, 66, 78, 79
American Broadcasting Company, 93
Anglo-Chineseness, 4
Asia, 36, 42, 46, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 60, 64, 69
Australia, 28, 34, 54
Axis countries, 27, 34, 46, 64
- Beijing, 18, 22, 24, 25, 75
Belgium, 28
Belt and Road Initiative, 4
Biden, Joseph, 86
binary, x, 1, 2–8, 11, 13, 40, 50, 77, 79, 81–83, 86, 89, 90, 96, 97, 100–104
Bolivia, 28
Boxer Rebellion, 22, 24, 31, 33
Britain, 11, 21, 25, 27, 28, 30, 31, 34, 35, 37, 54, 56, 60, 61
Buddhism, 67
Burma, 25, 35, 55
- Canada, 28, 34
Chahaer, 25
cheongsam, 3, 8, 43, 63–80. See also *qipao*
Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation, 86
Chiang Kai-shek, 25, 26, 28, 29, 34–38
China, 4, 21, 22, 24, 30, 32, 42, 64, 68, 69, 72, 73, 74. See also *China's rise*
as civilization, 3, 4, 6, 9, 14, 16, 20, 21, 48, 50, 61, 89
as identity, 3, 5, 10, 11, 23, 27, 36, 37, 42, 43, 72
as name, 13, 17
as people, 9, 10, 11, 16–20, 23, 28–34, 38, 42, 49, 55
as territory, 9, 10, 16, 18, 20, 22, 28, 30, 31, 33, 49
colonialism in, 20, 23, 29, 34, 39
in World War II, 25–28, 34–8, 45, 50–61, 96
modernity in, 9, 11, 13, 19, 65, 67, 70
nationalism of, 18, 62, 89, 90, 97, 101
Shanghai and, 78, 79, 80
sovereignty of, 11, 14–29, 30, 35, 37–39, 96
studies of, 2, 6, 9, 12
Taiwan and, 86, 89, 90, 96–101
US and, 1, 5, 28–33, 35–37, 41–61, 83, 86, 89, 90, 97–102
- China Dream, 1
China threat, 3
China's rise, 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 54, 62, 71
Chinese Communist Party, 9, 10, 18, 30, 36, 37, 62, 68, 70, 99
Christian, 32, 41, 44, 54, 62, 67
Chung Cheng University, x
Churchill, Winston, 37, 57
Cold War, 30, 83, 96
colonial modernity, 11, 96, 99
Confucianism, 1, 19, 21, 22, 39, 51, 67, 70
COVID-19, 11, 90, 100
Cultural Revolution, 8, 70, 72–75
- Dao, 17, 18, 19
Democratic Progressive Party, 98, 99
Deng Xiaoping, 74

- Denmark, 28
Dismissal of Hai Rui, 74
- East Asia, 28
 emancipation, 2, 7, 12, 39, 64, 67, 68, 70,
 79–82, 85, 88, 100, 102–104
 Emperor Guangxu, 10
 Emperor Puyi, 10
 Empress Dowager Cixi, 10
 engendering, 2, 86, 102, 103
 Europe, 14–16, 20, 26, 27, 30, 34, 36, 38, 41,
 48–66, 72, 77, 79, 93, 100
- femininity, 6, 7, 9, 12, 27, 40, 41, 81–83, 87,
 88, 90, 101, 102. *See also* feminism
 feminism, 4, 6, 7, 12, 104. *See also* feminin-
 ity; postcolonial feminism
 feminizing, 1–3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 20, 39–41, 77,
 81, 82, 89, 97. *See also* self-feminizing
 Flowers of War, 63, 64, 68, 69, 71, 79
 France, 21, 25, 27, 28, 30, 32, 34, 49, 93, 94
- gender, xi, 3, 6, 12, 13, 43, 47, 63–89, 96, 103
 Germany, 34, 42, 49, 50, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57,
 60, 61
 Ginger Ching-chane Huang, x, xi, 86
 97–102
 globalization, 4–12, 81–85, 94, 96, 97
 Guidelines for National Construction, 25,
 27, 28
- Han (nationality), 5, 18, 19, 21, 38, 97
 Hangzhou, 26
 Hay, John, 30, 31
 Hebei, 25
 Hong Kong, 9, 10, 11, 72, 73
 Hong Xiuquan, 21
 Honolulu, 33
 Hundred-Day Rectification, 21
- imperialism, 1, 4, 5, 14–24, 28, 30, 35, 37,
 89, 97, 101
 India, 27, 28, 35, 36, 37, 54, 60, 74
 Iraq, 27, 93
 Italy, 28, 34, 60
- Japan, 11, 21–62, 63, 68, 85, 89, 92, 93, 94,
 96–99, 101
 Jiang Qing, 74
 Jiang Zemin, 17, 38
 Jinan, 26
- Kang Youwei, 22
 Kazakhstan, 74
 Ko, Wen-je, 98, 99
 Korea, 27, 64
 Kuomintang, 98, 99, 101. *See also*
 Nationalist Party
 Kyrgyzstan, 74
- Last Emperor*, 10
 League of Nations, 24, 25, 28
 Li Hongzhang, 21, 22
 Liang Qichao, 22, 33
 liberalism, 81, 96
 Ling, Lily H. M., x, xi, 1, 3, 10, 16, 65, 76,
 81, 86, 97, 102, 108, 110, 114
- Ma Ying-jeou, 98, 99
 Macau, 11
 Madame Chiang Kai-shek, 3, 9, 10, 26,
 37–38, 41–64, 82
 Manchuria, 23, 24, 25, 37
 Manchurian court. *See* Qing
 Mao Zedong, 74, 75
 masculinity, 1, 3, 6, 8–10, 12, 16, 27, 34–43,
 64, 68, 81, 83, 84, 86, 89, 97, 101–103
 May Fourth Movement, 24
 Mexico, 28
 Middle Kingdom, 1, 22
 Miller, John, 63, 64, 68, 71, 79, 80
 modernity, 1, 11, 19, 65–69, 75, 86, 96, 99
 Mongolia, 11, 16, 26
 Mount Yu, xi
- Nanjing, 25, 26, 63
 National Science Council, x
 National Sun Yat-sen University, x
 National Taiwan University, 84, 86
 nationalism, 7, 8, 18, 62, 89, 90, 96, 97, 100,
 101

- Nationalist Party/government, 24, 25, 26, 28, 34, 35, 36, 89. *See also* Kuomintang
- Negotiable Instrument Law, 84
- New Zealand, 28, 34
- Opium War, 17, 21, 30
- Orientalism, 7, 74–76. *See also* self-Orientalism
- Pakistan, 74
- patriarchy, x, 2, 9, 12, 13, 61, 66–68, 77, 82, 83, 84, 97, 99, 103
- People's Republic of China (PRC), 17, 18, 69, 74, 96, 97, 98
- Poland, 27
- Portugal, 28
- post-Chineseness, 3, 5, 11, 13
- postcolonial feminism, x, 1, 4, 5, 8. *See also* feminism; postcolonialism
- postcolonialism, x, 4–8, 11–13, 16, 26, 27, 36, 39–41, 64, 66, 76, 83–85, 90, 97, 98, 101, 104. *See also* postcolonial feminism
- post-Western, xii, 12, 65–67, 76–79. *See also* West; Westernization
- Qing court (Qing dynasty), 14, 15, 17, 20–24, 29, 30, 31, 33, 35, 74
- qipao*, 3, 65, 67, 72. *See also* cheongsam
- realism, 15, 81, 89
- Red Guards, 75
- relational theory, 12, 63, 65, 67
- Republican China (Chinese), 9, 15, 23, 29–31, 33, 38, 68, 69, 72, 97
- Republican Revolution. *See* Republican China
- role theory, 12, 65, 66, 78
- romanticizing, 3, 10, 41, 43, 48, 69, 73, 82. *See also* self-romanticizing
- Roosevelt, Franklin, 28, 29, 34, 35, 37, 28, 44, 54, 57, 58
- Roosevelt, Mrs., 45, 46
- Russia, 30, 34, 36, 37, 38, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 60, 74
- Russo-Japanese War, 23
- self-altercasting, 78
- self-feminizing, 1–3, 6–8, 11–12, 20, 40–41, 77, 81–83, 90, 96–97, 99, 102, 104. *See also* feminizing
- self-Orientalism, 6–8, 69. *See also* Orientalism
- self-romanticizing, 64, 65, 66, 67, 69, 73, 74, 75, 76–80, 82. *See also* romanticizing
- Shandong peninsula, 24, 33
- Shanghai, 3, 8, 26, 43, 63–65, 68–80, 98
- Shanghai Expo, 71, 74
- Shujuan, 63, 64, 80
- site, 4, 63, 65, 66, 69, 73, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 88, 89, 103
- sitedness. *See* site
- South Africa, 28
- Southeast Asia, 11, 97
- sovereignty, vii, 1–3, 11, 13, 14–39, 40–43, 58, 81, 85, 86, 89, 96–98, 102, 103
- Stimson, Henry Lewis, 31, 32
- subjectivity, 9, 12, 61, 65, 66, 79, 81, 82, 83, 89, 97, 99
- Sun Yat-sen, 20, 23, 36, 37
- Taipei, 3, 4, 8, 43, 72, 98, 100, 101
- Taiwan, x, 4, 10, 11, 16, 43, 62, 94, 82–86, 89–90, 93. *See also* United States
- Taiwan People's Party, 98, 99
- Taiwan Strait, 86, 89, 98, 100
- Taiyuan, 26
- Tajikistan, 74
- Tango Agreement, 25
- Tibet, 11
- Treaty of Westphalia, 15
- Twain, Mark, 33, 34
- United States, x, 1, 3, 4, 9, 10, 17, 22, 27–38, 41, 42, 72, 83, 86, 92, 93
- as civilization, 3, 29, 33, 42, 51, 52, 59, 61
- Madame Chiang and, 43, 44, 48–64
- Taiwan and, 89, 90, 96–102
- Vietnam, 25, 27, 64
- Waking Lion, 9
- War of Resistance, 25, 26, 28, 36, 60

- Washington (as place), 29
Washington (as policy maker), 5, 42, 48, 99, 101
Washington Conference, 24, 25, 28
Wenhui Bao, 74
West. *See also* Westernization; post-Western
as civilization, 4, 8, 9, 10, 20, 21, 22, 37, 41, 44, 45, 61, 62, 91, 93
as identity, 3, 10, 43, 68, 69, 71, 75, 100
as nation, 11, 16, 20, 22, 24, 27, 28, 30, 39, 60, 82, 97
imperialism and, 1, 22, 23, 83, 89, 99, 101
Westernization, 4, 9, 10, 21, 42, 62, 69. *See also* post-Western; West
World War I, 24, 31
World War II, 3, 25, 34, 40, 42, 43, 64, 70, 96, 98
Wuhan, 100
Xi Jinping, 1, 86, 98
Yan Geling, 63
Yellow Peril, 9, 32
Yuan Shikai, 21, 23
Zen Jize, 21
Zeng Guofan, 21
Zhang Yimou, 63, 64
Zhao Yumo, 63, 64, 68, 79, 80