

The Chinese Exotic

Modern Diasporic Femininity

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“At first glance, Square Word Calligraphy appears to be nothing more unusual than Chinese characters, but in fact it is a new way of rendering English words in the format of a square so they resemble Chinese characters. Chinese viewers expect to be able to read Square Word Calligraphy but cannot. Western viewers, however are surprised to find they can read it. Delight erupts when meaning is unexpectedly revealed.”

— Britta Erickson, *The Art of Xu Bing*

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Introduction: The Chinese Exotic

Gong Li, poster girl of Fifth Generation Chinese films, swore after being lampooned by the media for her first Hollywood film *Chinese Box*, that she would never again star in another American production. With a further three English-language films released, and more in production, her comment to the Chinese media appears to have been all but forgotten.¹ In these new roles, playing strong and successful women, Gong Li seems finally able to relinquish the unforgettable image of herself as the lipstick-smearing forsaken lover of Chinese cinema, which she burnt onto the screen in Wong Kar-wai's *2046*. Gong Li has reinvented herself. Just over a decade after adorning the cover of Rey Chow's *Primitive Passions* (with an equally arresting still from Zhang Yimou's *Judou*), Gong Li is no longer 'primitive' but now articulates another mode of representation that I define as belonging more accurately to the diasporas.

For almost a decade now, I have anticipated, often with delight although sometimes with horror, my favourite Chinese stars appearing in lead roles in Hollywood films in seemingly eccentric casting choices: Gong Li as a Chinese-Cuban leader of a drug cartel in Michael Mann's remake of the US television series *Miami Vice*, or with Michelle Yeoh and Zhang Ziyi as rivalling Japanese geisha in the screen adaptation of Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*. Similarly, when Maggie Cheung appeared in Olivier Assayas's *Irma Vep*, her first role outside Asia, the question "Why a Chinese actress?" asked by everyone on the set in Paris, was echoed in the minds of critics, reviewers and audiences around the world. In the field of literature, Amy Tan's novel

The Joy Luck Club, was published to astounding success in the United States and spent forty weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list in 1989. Two years later, Jung Chang, a Chinese woman living in Britain, gained unprecedented international attention with her family memoir *Wild Swans*. Translated into thirty languages, the book sold over ten million copies and spent sixty-three weeks on Great Britain's bestseller list.

While there is a long history of Asian representation in the cinemas and literatures of the West, what was now appearing seemed very different. Why indeed *are* Chinese actresses being used to 'update' popular television series like *Miami Vice* and *Charlie's Angels*? And how these new representations producing (if not being produced by) a changing landscape of popular culture in the West whereby, from the early 1990s, items such as Chinese boxes (drawers, chests, as well as take-away food containers) became almost ubiquitous in fashion magazines, furniture stores and trendy restaurants? What seemed particularly distinctive about these new representations was how they represented a modern *diasporic* femininity. This new mode of representation, which I call the Chinese exotic, is a product of the emergent diasporic Chinese modernities in the Asia-Pacific. These modernities have been produced through the rapid economic development of nations in the region over the past two decades. The Chinese exotic can be distinguished from earlier representations in that it is self-consciously connected to the capitalist success of the region. Within this regional development, China is also playing an increasingly major role. No longer seen as 'backward' or 'rural', China is arguably being 'centred' again in cultural understandings of Chineseness. Rather than replacing one centre, the West, with another, China, my aim is conceive how we might utilise a diaspora politics, informed by the West (including the history of the West in Asia), and by China and Asia, to locate the new intersections between these various sites in the context of a regional development. In an attempt to account for these (often eccentric, often messy) movements constructing the Chinese exotic, I employ four related tropes: the fold, the cross over, the ornament and the region. These are not mutually exclusive but work in tandem to explain the phenomenon of the Chinese exotic from different perspectives; the exotic is always a question of point of view, although it no longer belongs only to one perspective, that of the dominant West, or to a re-centred China. Instead, the Chinese exotic shifts between perspectives to displace the 'self' and 'other' binaries assumed in orientalist understandings of the exotic. Although exotic discourses now appear in new, updated forms, their orientalist underpinnings haven't entirely disappeared. What *have* appeared are sources of potential empowerment, or agency, in these representations, which are a product of their modernity.

In this introduction, I analyse the concept of exoticism, tracing its recent re-emergence from the rise of diasporic Chinese modernities and their cultural productions. I explore the Chinese exotic's manifestation in images of Chinese femininity since I argue that the exotic travels in a form that is feminised. Despite the embeddedness of exoticism within heterosexist models of desire, little has been written, theoretically, on exoticism as a gendered mode of representation. Similarly, while there has been important work produced on Chinese masculinity in diasporic contexts, the diasporic Chinese female remains a relatively neglected phenomenon.² By analysing images from the diaspora in their newly exotic form, I seek to define alternative modes of visualising modern Chinese femininity that are distinct from previous representations such as primitivism.

Alternative Visions of Modern Chinese Femininity: Exoticism and Primitivism

In *Cultural Identity and Global Process*, Jonathan Friedman suggests that exoticism and primitivism are the two main metaphysical results of European (Western) hegemony.³ He argues, “colonialism’s culture should not be seen as a singular enduring discourse, but rather a series of projects that incorporate representations, narratives and practical efforts”.⁴

Primitivism, as a particular representational practice, constructs its objects as the subalterns and the oppressed classes, whereas exoticism mythologises and reifies the more positive and successful, enviable and utopic, aspects of Other societies. Nicholas Thomas believes, “although the ‘primitive’ and the ‘exotic’ are sometimes conflated, exoticism has more to do with difference and strangeness than an antithetical relation to modernity”.⁵ Exoticism is imbricated in the condition of modernity, and is constituted by it.

Thomas makes a further distinction between primitivism and exoticism concerning their relationship to the concepts of ‘otherness’ or foreignness. He suggests that primitivism is constructed in relation to groups that are indigenous to a particular place. On Kevin Costner’s appropriation of Sioux culture in the film *Dances with Wolves* (1990), Thomas argues, “the force of the primitive in Costner’s appropriation, and in similar operations in Canadian, Australian and New Zealand culture, derives precisely from the fact that the native is not foreign but indigenous: self-fashioning via the Sioux or the Aborigines does not exoticise oneself, but makes one more American or more Australian”.⁶ Susan Stewart also alludes to a distinction between primitivism and exoticism in terms of the way narrative constructs its objects through

these two paradigms; to primitivise is to ‘miniaturise’, to exoticise is to ‘giganticise’ through fascination.⁷ The point in making these distinctions between ‘exoticising’ and ‘primitivising’ practices is more than simply a matter of terminology; it suggests that there are differences in the ways certain subject positions are either created or subsumed, and thus how they can be read differently over time.

In distinguishing exoticism from primitivism in a Chinese context, it is necessary to reconsider Rey Chow’s concept of ‘primitive passions’, which concerns the Chinese primitivising other aspects of Chinese culture (as seen from the perspective of Western spectatorship). In doing so, it is important firstly to note that Chow’s ‘primitive’ does *not* have an antithetical relationship to modernity. It is, however, the product of a mainland modernity, tied to the emergence of the filmic medium.

Rey Chow’s ‘primitive passions’ is a significant critical intervention into the representational formation and new politics of visibility brought about by China’s ‘Fifth Generation’ filmmakers — the first group of filmmakers to graduate from the Beijing Film School after the Cultural Revolution. Chow’s ‘primitive’ emerges as a result of rapid changes in the technologies of signification brought about by the formation of Chinese modernity. The previously dominant literary or linguistic sign becomes displaced by the visual sign in a culture now structured by a new paradigm of visibility. There is, however, more than a simple intersemiotic shift from the sign of writing to the visual sign. The displacement of the previously dominant sign also becomes democratised (‘freed’) by the omnipresence of the new visual sign. Attendant upon this democratisation is the playing out of fantasies of origin — the need for something to stand in for an ‘original’ that has been lost. For Chow, this goes beyond a mere nostalgic yearning; the impulse to primitivise forms part of modernity’s ruptures. Chow suggests that the primitive emerges at moments of cultural crisis whereby the past is re-interpreted and re-constructed as a commonplace; that is, a “*pre* that occurs in the time of the post”.⁸ What is substituted, in China’s search for its own Others, are its own socially oppressed classes — women, peasants, other subalterns, and nature.

There are specific historical and political resonances relating to China’s modernity that manifest themselves in the particular phenomenon of contemporary Fifth Generation Chinese films. When China re-opened its doors to the world again in the 1980s, after thirty years of closed rule, it was necessarily on display. Regardless of their personal intentions, Chow notes that the Fifth Generation became their country’s ethnographers. What they presented in their films was viewed as how China really was. Chow argues, however, that there is in fact a “self-packaging” of these films for an overseas

market, a “staging and parodying [of] orientalism’s politics of visibility”, presenting to the West what it wants to see about China as the central marker of the ‘Orient’.⁹ She calls this the “Oriental’s Orientalism” as a way of reading the impulse to primitivise. Chow’s examples relate only to China’s Fifth Generation filmmakers. I argue that there is another politics involved in diasporic interventions in relation to self-enactment that requires a different way of reading. A shift from a colonial or imperialist exoticism to a new form of exoticism emerges through the modernity of the diasporas.

In the following sections, I trace how exoticism, as a mode of representation, has shifted from an emphasis on aesthetic perception to the consumption of spectacularised images of Chinese femininity, produced through the capitalist development of diasporic Chinese modernities. Chinese femininity will be taken to refer to a gendered, discursive construction inscribing a range of cultural forms and practices such as films, novels, food and fashion. It is not, however, merely or only a discursive construct, but is also constituted out of difference and gender, retaining an engagement with real diasporic Chinese subjects, although my primary concern is with representations, and how they materialise as embodying the ‘reality’ of these women.

Models of Exoticism: From Colonial Exoticism to a Chinese Exotic

Exoticism, as a dominant mode of colonialist representation, has its foundations largely in nineteenth-century European artistic endeavour. In *Exotic Memories: Literature, Colonialism and the Fin de Siècle*, Chris Bongie defines exoticism as “a nineteenth-century literary and existential practice that posited another space, the space of an Other, outside or beyond the confines of a ‘civilisation’”.¹⁰ Within the nineteenth-century exoticist project, writers and artists were concerned with rediscovering values lost with the rapid modernising of European society; thus they sought to find ‘experience’ and ‘value’ elsewhere. Exoticism is a form of classification that is contained by one’s own culture and institutions; different historical and cultural situations produce different exoticist discourses.

The epistemological underpinnings to popular notions of exoticism in relation to Asian femininity generally and Chinese femininity in particular, can be traced to the Romantic ‘voyages of discovery’ heralding European expansion. These novels of adventure (*récits de voyages*) are the major discursive sources of the exoticist project, and provide nineteenth-century exoticism with much of its intellectual apparatus, such as the distinction between primitive and civilised. Pierre Loti, the pen name of the sailor/writer Louis

Marie Julien Viaud, produced novels that are paradigmatic of an exoticist praxis. In these stories, Loti conflated exoticism with eroticism; the European traveller becomes fascinated, and is then seduced, by a woman from the culture he is visiting, but then returns home without further thought or questioning of his own cultural values or placement. The story of Madame Butterfly, popularised by Puccini's opera of the same name, was based on Loti's novel *Madame Chrysanthème*. It has since been rearticulated in numerous forms, although retaining the stereotype of the submissive, suffering Asian woman. Specific forms and tropes of exoticism in the West have shared histories that employ recurrent narrative structures — for example, the sacrificial death of 'Madame Butterfly', repeated in the popular musical *Miss Saigon*.

The interest in Asian femininity, when traced to its exoticist origins, is usually motivated by, and marketed as, a (hetero)sexual encounter, whereby any difference becomes a violent, yet sublime, part of that encounter. Lisa Lowe offers a formalistic look at the imbrication between exoticism and eroticism. She suggests:

masculine romantic desire is often introduced as an oriental motif ... [and] such associations of Orientalism with romanticism are not coincidental, for the two situations of desire — the occidental fascination with the Orient and the male lover's passion for his female beloved — are structurally similar. Both depend on a structure that locates the Other — as woman or oriental scene — as inaccessible, different.¹¹

This imbrication of sexuality and the exotic is formed through histories of colonialism and colonial fantasies of power, where women from exotic lands were portrayed as being freely sexually available. The Asian female exote is both determined and devised through a structure of recognition (for example, through repetition), in which certain objects, tropes, symbols or narratives connote, often synecdochically, ideas already anticipated about Asian femininity and sexuality. Anticipation functions as a circular, repetitious formation, which yet 'works' within the logic of its own visibility. The Oriental scene, described by Lowe, is a particular economy of exchange between gazes, albeit an exchange that operates hierarchically and unidirectionally.

The term 'exotic' is popularly used to describe that which is different and strange ('foreign'), yet fascinating because of its peculiarity. This fascination is not simply innocent, but forms part of a problematic within cross-cultural politics whereby cultural difference is constructed according to entrenched systems of power and authority. Similarly, the unproblematic consumption

of difference in fact negates the people who are the source of interest. As Graham Huggan notes, “exoticism describes a political as much as an aesthetic practice. But this politics is often concealed, hidden beneath layers of mystification”.¹²

Given its pernicious history, the use of the term ‘exotic’ around which to frame a specific mode of representation — the Chinese exotic — may seem fraught. I argue, however, that it is useful to retain the term in a deployment against its very foundations. The term ‘ex-otic’, meaning (etymologically), that which is *outside* (systems of signification and classification), is able to question the underlying mechanisations of representation itself, particularly, its historical connection to imperialist power. It therefore seems apposite to retain the word exoticism while at the same time providing some disclaimer or appellation to its use in situating it more critically in contemporary global conditions. Other approaches to exoticism have located it within global or postcolonial frameworks but have not adequately dealt with the issue of gender or the cultural products of diasporic Chinese modernities. While ‘Asia’ and Asian femininity are typically created through the collapse of various nationalities in *fin de siècle* exoticist representations, I focus on the cultural representations emerging from diasporic Chinese modernities in the last fifteen to twenty years.

In order to conceive of a *Chinese* exotic brought about by the formation of diasporic Chinese modernities in the Asia-Pacific, a re-engagement with Edward Said’s thesis of ‘Orientalism’ is also necessary. Orientalism, as defined by Said, concerns

a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident’. In short, Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.¹³

That is, Orientalism refers to the forms of ‘knowledge’ that constitute the Orient. Said argues that there has been a feminisation of the Orient throughout the history of colonialism such that a rhetoric of ‘feminine penetrability’ is linked steadfastly to the gendering of Asian nations.

Although Said’s *Orientalism* centres largely around the body of scholarship associated with a particular geographic location, the Middle East, it seems that in recent understandings the term ‘the Orient’ has in fact shifted from the Middle East and Africa to the Southeast Asian region or Pacific Rim (or, if not shifted, then in fact made to encompass this region). The term ‘Asia’, as popularly synonymous with the ‘Orient’, is now also being informed by

discourses surrounding the rise of industrial East Asia. Said does, however, posit that the ‘Orient’ is not referential to any particular territory, but is a (European) construction produced in the process of cultural domination. Through cultural texts about the Orient and the Oriental subject, these constructions have been infused with an essence or authenticity.

Ien Ang and Jon Stratton suggest that “Orientalism in the West is not dead; on the contrary ... classical Orientalism has now been transformed into a neo-Orientalism, where it is no longer a powerless, colonised Asia which is the subject of othering, but an empowered and, to a certain extent, threatening *modern* Asia.”¹⁴ Given these recent global realignments and the growth of diasporic Chinese modernities, it seems necessary to examine how modernity complicates the Orientalist narrative and furthermore how femininity becomes figured in these new accounts.

There have been a number of restatements of the concept of Orientalism by various postcolonial scholars, including Edward Said himself, in order to account for its shifting discursive formations.¹⁵ Lisa Lowe’s analysis most significantly creates a category for the Chinese exotic within a regional rise of Asia. Lowe conceives of Orientalism as a particular tradition of representation which is intersected by, and which implicates, other forms of representation; that is, Orientalism is a field of implicated discursive terrains, and not a monolithic concept that has created one ‘Orient’ as the other of the ‘Occident’. Different orientalist situations exist, illustrating that the historical development of Orientalism is not homogeneous or monolithic at all, but is marked by internal conflict, ambivalence and fear, and not just self-possessed control.¹⁶ Both within and between each situation are contradictions and complexities that render the discourse of Orientalism unstable. It is precisely because of this that Orientalism becomes vulnerable to forces of resistance and open to critique and contestation. Similarly, this also enables new forms of ‘orientalism’ and ‘orientalist situations’ to proliferate. The Chinese exotic, emerging from diasporic Chinese modernities, is one such example. However, whereas Said’s notion of Orientalism requires a fixed East and West, the Chinese exotic depends upon a flexibility in their construction, in order to account for the movements that occur between the Chinese diasporas and the West, and the Chinese diasporas and Asia.

The Chinese exotic is no longer merely an object and pure projection of Orientalist fantasy. Rather, it frames the nascent subjectivities constructed through transnational discourses where agency is struggled over within regimes of competing modernities. To re-theorise the exotic in accordance with these developments, I employ the term ‘ex-centric’ as the exotic’s necessary appellation.

Globalisation and Ex-centric Exoticism

The Chinese exotic emerges as an effect of the collapsed distances of globalisation, which have profoundly reconfigured cultural representations in the last half-century. As Malcolm Waters observes, “the new global culture has produced a kind of commercialized pleasure- and consumption-oriented cultivation of difference”, which in part is referable to a mode of exoticism.¹⁷ Adding to this sentiment, James Clifford remarks: “the exotic is [now] uncannily close”.¹⁸ Exoticism emerges as a fascination with (gendered) difference whereby the breakdown of boundaries through globalisation allows differences to appear closer than they ever have.

To account for the rapid movements and exchanges of globalisation marked by difference, Arjun Appadurai has suggested a model of the current global configuration based on the concept of flow, suggesting the fluid movement of different social and cultural capital across national borders. Appadurai refers to five dimensions of global cultural flows — those of people (ethnoscapes), money (finanscapes), media (mediascapes), technologies (technoscapes) and ideas (ideoscapes). Together, these form the “building blocks” of what Appadurai terms “imagined worlds, that is, the multiple worlds which are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe”.¹⁹ Drawing from Appadurai’s view of the world as a complex, interactive system of heterogeneous sites, I argue that in the case of the Chinese exotic, rather than being unified or centred, these flows are *ex-centric*.

Linda Hutcheon describes *ex-centricity* as a typical modality characterising postmodernism. The *ex-centric* or the *off-centre* is the ‘paradox of the postmodern’ since it still requires the centre for its definition. For Hutcheon, however, the *ex-centric* is able to function as an alternative to the concept of ‘otherness’, which instates binarism and hierarchy, since “to be *ex-centric*, on the border or margin, inside yet outside is to have a different perspective”.²⁰

Hutcheon discusses Maxine Hong Kingston’s novels *The Woman Warrior* and *China Men*, where difference in language is an example of *ex-centricity*. She recalls the following statement from *China Men*, where the protagonist, a new immigrant from China, “wants to find out how we landed in a country where we are eccentric people”.²¹ Within the representation of the Chinese exotic, *ex-centricity* does not function to reinforce the categories of centre-periphery. As an ‘*ex-centric*’ formation, the Chinese exotic ruptures its points of origin as it spreads: from the imperialist underpinnings of colonial exoticism, it also works to decentre mainland China as the epistemological and cultural

centre of ‘Chineseness’ through the diasporic flows of globalisation. As with Hutcheon’s concept, however, there is still a reliance on the centre: the ex-centric “questions centralized, totalized, hierarchized, closed systems: questions, but does not destroy”.²² The centre is still desired, as are nostalgias and yearnings for the homeland. Like its near homonym ‘eccentric’, the ex-centric is linked to tropes of movement that imply ‘deviancy’ from some origin or norm, spreading as it leaves the centre. There is a fear, manifested in some cultural representations, that not only will Chineseness spread through the diasporas, but also that it will corrupt the authenticity of mainland ‘Chineseness’, or on the other hand the purity of whiteness in the West. Aihwa Ong and Donald Nonini suggest that there is a certain “wildness, danger, and unpredictability [to the mobility of diaspora Chinese] that challenges and undermines modern imperial regimes of truth and power”.²³ In their account, however, the experiences of women are relegated to the margins of the narrative of international capitalism, held to be “oblique, ex-orbitant to the general story”.²⁴ Far from existing in the margins of global capitalism, it is through the flows of globalisation that images of Chinese femininity have become ex-centrally disseminated, in a contemporary and globally popular form.

In *Reading the Vampire*, Ken Gelder uses the term the “global exotic” to characterise the vampire as a mobile figure, one who is able to cross spatial/national and temporal boundaries. The “global exotic” establishes the ways in which the figure of the vampire “functions as a kind of internationalised, cosmopolitan tourist” who has a globalised “panoramic perception”.²⁵ While the ideas of crossings and several visions (or modes of perception) remain important to the conceptual framework of the Chinese exotic, based as it is on ex-centricity and the diasporas, the Chinese exotic functions more as a question of point of view or positionality at any particular time or place, than as panoramic. Mentioned only briefly in *Reading the Vampire*, Gelder’s “global exotic” features more as a way of ‘being in the world’ (for unearthly creatures), than as a specific mode of contemporary cultural representation, or critique, for diasporic subjects.

Postcolonialism and Exoticism

Another recent formulation of the exotic attempting to account for new flows of globalisation is Graham Huggan’s “post-colonial exotic”. Huggan defines the “post-colonial exotic” as a category that links postcolonial productions (literary texts, theories and knowledges), to the hypercommodifying processes

of postmodernism, whereby postcolonial literature, as well as postcolonial criticism itself, become consumable or exchangeable. Huggan argues that there is a trading of difference within postmodernism where even the language and rhetoric of postcolonial resistance become absorbed and are created as consumer products as part of a global “alterity industry”; that is, the postcolonial exotic concerns the *global* commodification of cultural difference. The mode of resistance that Huggan reads into these processes in order to render some form of agency to postcolonial writers is in his conception of a “strategic-” or “meta-exoticism”.²⁶ Reading within these modes, it can be argued that postcolonial writers participate self-consciously in the commercial ‘packaging’ or commodification of their novels as ‘different’ or ‘exotic’. This is similar to Rey Chow’s notion of the “Oriental’s Orientalism”, discussed earlier, although it is a view uncomplicated by inflections of gender or specific (local) or cultural formations.²⁷ Huggan also continues to rely on a centre-periphery model of globalisation even as he privileges the margins as his object of inquiry; he argues, “if exoticism has *arrived* at the ‘centre’, it still *derives* from the cultural margins, or perhaps more accurately, from a commodified discourse of cultural marginality”.²⁸

As a mode of representation emerging from the rise of the Asia-Pacific region, the Chinese exotic is more accurately described as a regional rather than global formation. Regions are, however, dependent upon the forces of globalisation and are implicit within the globalisation project although not reducible to it. Similarly, the Chinese exotic is a product of diasporic Chinese modernities rather than a product of a postcolonial era. The distinction between the two is sometimes politically tenuous, but always ideologically significant.

Aihwa Ong suggests that postcoloniality is a term that is now deployed loosely and is used to cover what was formally referred to as the ‘Third World’ or developing countries. Ong argues that “many Asian countries are not interested in colonialism or in postcolonialism — having in their leaders’ views successfully negotiated formal decolonization — and are in the process of constructing alternative modernities based on new relations with their populations, with capital, and with the West”.²⁹ According to Ong, Asian tiger countries, such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea, regard themselves as belonging to a *post* postcolonial era, and consider their involvement in global capitalism not as postcolonial but as based on an equality of power requiring mutual respect. Often, these countries are themselves ‘colonizing’ countries — either through military invasion, or else through economic colonisation. Thus, Ong suggests that the concern of most Asian countries is with the “post-postcolonial” era.³⁰ Although it would be erroneous to suggest that the effects of colonialism can ever fully be eradicated,

or that postcoloniality is no longer an important issue for several Asian nations, the self-construction by these nations of themselves as independent, successful modernities, also requires acknowledgment — particularly as it is played out in new cultural representations.

Ineluctably tied to modern Chinese diasporas within a regional framework, the Chinese exotic is therefore distinct from the global exotic and the postcolonial exotic. The Chinese exotic is also differentiated from colonialist or imperialist exoticism in that it conceives of women and femininity, not as the oppressed, but as forming part of the new visibility of Asia, connected with the region's economic rise and emergent modernities. What is exotic now is no longer the old (primitive) China within Asia, but the idea of a new Asia (Asia the cosmopolitan, the rich, the modern, and the technological). Similarly, what is exoticised about new images of Chinese femininity are precisely these things. These formulations are not meant to deny the continuing oppressions against Chinese women or the forms of violence inherent in enduring representations of Chinese femininity. Rather, I will highlight the fact that the Chinese exotic consists of both subject and object positions, whereas the old exoticism consisted only of object positions. This switch in positions is enabled by a diasporic perspective whereby the Chinese exotic locates new intersections between China, the Chinese diasporas, Asia and the West, in the context of the regional development of alternative Asian modernities.

Alternative Modernities: Diasporic Chinese Modernity

If, as Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar suggests, it is common to think of modernity as a way of interrogating the present, the question that immediately springs to mind is: whose present are we concerned with? Rather than conceptualising the current time-space framework of Asian modernities using a model produced by the West, it seems more productive to engage with a concept of alternative modernities. While the term has been deployed in a number of different ways, most commonly, it is defined against a homogenising definition of Western modernities.³¹ Modernity is present across many specific cultures but it unfolds at different times, and it is these different starting points in the transition to modernity that produce different outcomes.³²

Aihwa Ong uses the concept of alternative modernities to describe the specificity of alternative Asian modernities arising from the late 1980s and early 1990s with the accelerated growth of economies in the Asia-Pacific. Ong writes:

I use the term *alternative* not to suggest that these ideological positions represent an absolute moral or epistemological difference from ones held in the West. Asian modernist imaginations that insist upon their cultural and spiritual distinctiveness are contradictory, self-Orientalizing moves. ... *Alternative*, then, is used here to refer to a dynamic that is oppositional to existing hegemonies, a counterforce arising from other sites that are not without their own particular mix of expansive and repressive technologies.³³

Although proposing that the project of modernity may be inescapable, alternative modernities also suggest that they are multiple and global, and no longer governed by a Western centre. Alternative Asian modernities are tied, for example, to postcolonial independence, nation-building, and economic prosperity. This does not mean, however, that it is possible to simply reject Western discourses on modernity. The history of the West in Asia, as coloniser and more recently as trade partner, requires that the impact of the West be necessarily taken into account; similarly, China's relationship to its diasporas.

Theorists of mainland Chinese modernity (writing from within Western academic contexts) have examined China's post-reform modernity from a variety of different angles. Of the most relevance to the Chinese exotic is how this modernity has been framed within the formation of a transnational China or "trans-Chinese" ideology.³⁴ Such theories aim to account for China's increasing transnational interactions within the region, however, very few of these attempt (adequately) to account for Chinese diasporas outside of Greater China (that is, the PRC, Hong Kong and Taiwan).³⁵

Mainland-centred discourses, on the other hand, evoke culturalist explanations for the development of diasporic modernities in Asia and in the West that ultimately reinvolve the mainland as the centre. What will become clear, through a representative survey of existing theories of Chinese modernity, is that none are adequate in attending to contemporary cultural representations of diasporic Chinese femininity — either because they are tied to a statist project or the homeland myth, or because they are not concerned with the issue of gender in representation.

Mayfair Yang's edited collection, *Spaces of Their Own: Women's Public Space in Transnational China*, focuses on the gender politics of transnational China's public sphere. According to Yang, the transnational public sphere of China is "a new sphere established in modernity as the space of public discourse and debate, cultural and ideological production, and mass-media representation".³⁶ Transnational China is defined as an increasingly integrated entity "comprising mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and overseas

Chinese communities around the world”.³⁷ Despite this definition, the collection does not concern itself with overseas Chinese communities around the world, including communities in the West, that do not utilise Mandarin language as their form of common speech. The book is explicitly “predicated on a Chinese-language public sphere cutting across political and international borders”.³⁸ Yang states, “this book focuses on Chinese-language public space so that, instead of following the usual anthropological procedure that treats the Other as the periphery or minority of the West, we will take China as the core and treat the West and its Chinese minority as its periphery”.³⁹ The characterisation of Mandarin as linguistically constitutive of Chineseness merely reinstates China as the fixed centre in discussions about Chinese ethnicity. Rey Chow has argued against the lack of theoretical scrutiny into the connections between the possession of Mandarin language skills, ethnicity, and cultural value in asserting what constitutes Chineseness. Ien Ang’s article “On Not Speaking Chinese” poses a diasporic viewpoint on similar questions of value.⁴⁰ As the Chinese exotic is predicated on the Chinese diaspora’s history of encounters with the West, the mainland (and Mandarin language) is not given epistemological or ontological privilege in defining what constitutes Chineseness. This is similarly without wanting to privilege the diasporas (or the use of English) as a new hegemonic centre in discussions about Chineseness. It is, however, to account for the messy ex-centricity of the Chinese exotic, which references the history of the West in its construction.

Although deployed by the West and by diasporic Chinese groups in Asia, Tu Wei-Ming’s notion of ‘Cultural China’ again utilises a centre-periphery model that reinstates China as the hegemonic metanarrative in discussions about Chineseness. The metaphor of the ‘Living Tree’, taken from the title of Tu’s book on cultural China, invokes the notion of roots and origins, and a return to an essential China.⁴¹ Cultural China remains fixated on the mainland, albeit notionally along cultural and not national lines. Tu characterises Cultural China as a new phenomenon whereby “*the center is nowhere and the periphery is everywhere*”.⁴² The subtitle to Tu’s article, “the periphery as centre”, proclaims that the periphery of the diasporas has become a new cultural centre. A practice of privileging marginality (within a core-periphery model) merely sustains a position that ultimately reverts back to, and supports, the centre it seemingly displaces.

Similarly, although Aihwa Ong and Donald Nonini’s *Ungrounded Empires* aims explicitly to “decenter the Middle Kingdom as the ultimate analytical reference for an understanding of diaspora Chinese”,⁴³ they too continue to rely on the concept of the ‘centre’ even as they seek to dismantle the

hegemonic sites of mainland Chinese modernity and Western modernity. The displacement of China and the West is effected only to create a new centre in East, and especially Southeast, Asia. The Chinese exotic does not seek to replace one centre with another but asserts that diasporic Chinese modernities are ex-centric in their representation. Chapter 4 problematises the diaspora's relationship to the region Asia so as to further mark this ex-centricity.

Diaspora China

The concept of diaspora, whereby a group leaves its original homeland and forms a community in another, has been viewed as a useful and productive notion in thinking beyond nationality and race, and as offering an alternative to that of the bounded nation-state.⁴⁴ Khachig Tölölyan suggests that diasporas are transnational formations that mark communities across space and represent dispersion, mobility, reproduceability and flow across national boundaries.⁴⁵ Diaspora highlights transnational processes, ethnic commonalities, difference and diversity, thereby posing a challenge to the normative homogeneity tied to the nation-state. As Floya Anthias argues, however, there is often a tension between these suggestions of what diaspora can do, and what it in fact does.⁴⁶

This tension over the theoretical efficacy of the concept of diaspora can be traced to its various deployments according to what can loosely be termed 'old' and 'new' discourses. An old diaspora model, according to Vijay Mishra, "deploy[s] a notion of ethnicity which privileges the point of 'origin' in constructing identity and solidarity".⁴⁷ Ethnicity becomes produced in the form of a yearning for a homeland or 'centre'. New diasporas, on the other hand, emphasise movement, border cultures and 'hyphenated' or ex-centric experiences, which bring with them another set of complications that lead us to ask: what is so 'new' about the new diaspora model?

Across the various disciplines that have sought to study the Chinese diaspora, in area studies, economics and political science, anthropology or sociology, for instance, old and sometimes new approaches to diaspora have been employed, albeit for very different purposes. In order to distinguish my own project from these other treatments of the Chinese diaspora, I will employ the term 'diaspora China' to demarcate my (sometimes distinct, sometimes overlapping) theoretical areas of interest. I use the term diaspora China in preference to Chinese overseas (*huaqiao*), or various other terms that have been offered, to avoid the connotations associated with these discipline-specific works, particularly regarding the status of 'origins', the

notions of homecoming or nationalism, and the masculinism these terms often connote.⁴⁸ Although diaspora China can be classified as a ‘new’ approach to diaspora in the way it eschews the place of origins (specifically, mainland China) as the ultimate signifier, it does not seek to establish a new triumphalist centre in Southeast Asia as other economic models have done.⁴⁹ Instead, I use the term diaspora China to mark out another entity, constructed through visibility and the popular culture industries, while at the same time retaining some connection with a *decentred* China.

Diaspora China is not a monolithic category but an ex-centric, regionalised modernity; in other words, it is an alternative Asian modernity. As an ex-centric formation, diaspora China encompasses many things. First, diaspora China is a regional conceptualisation that consists of modernised diasporic Chinese communities throughout the world. It is tied to the Asia-Pacific region’s self-conscious formation, produced through the visible and variegated processes of late capitalism. It is important to stress the formation of communities (and hence real people) within these processes. Second, diaspora China is created through ethnicities that engage new *experiences*, as will be discussed in Chapter 1. Rather than conceiving of Chineseness as a race, and hence biologically fixed, I characterise the Chineseness of diaspora China as a ‘new’ ethnicity (created through new experiences) that can be produced, mimed, repeated, and performed. Third, despite a concern with community, diaspora China cannot be mapped as a distinct geographical area; its boundaries reach beyond nation-state borders and as such it is transnational in its scope. Constructed in part by other forms of ‘Asianness’ that impinge upon it, the Chinese exotic also encompasses representations that are not strictly products of the Chinese diaspora as it has hitherto been conceptualised. For instance, Hong Kong, which is included in some accounts of the Chinese diaspora but not in others, is one of the main cultural producers of the Chinese exotic and as such belongs to the category diaspora China.

Although Hong Kong’s status as a ‘Special Administrative Region’ means that it is now officially considered part of China, it is, in many respects, culturally and economically closer to a Chinese diaspora than it is a part of the mainland.⁵⁰ Due to its long history of British colonisation, its status as a port city, and its people’s record of emigration to places such as North America, Europe and Australia, Hong Kong has developed economically and culturally in very divergent ways to the mainland. But it is specifically the global popularity of Hong Kong’s culture industries that characterises its important role within diaspora China; in particular, the popularity of its music, television, and film, and the stars that create those media, to diasporic Chinese communities both within Asia and in the West.⁵¹ As such, several of my

examples refer to Hong Kong popular culture, and specifically to film. In many ways film is a privileged medium for the Chinese exotic because of its unique relationship to the visual economy, but also because it is inherently a transnational, collaborative medium and industry. Hong Kong's film industry in particular has long been described as a "transnational cinema".⁵² Given the necessity of co-productions (including an increasing number of these with China), and the highly fluid movement of film personnel (many to Hollywood, and others to Australia, Canada, and France), Hong Kong cinema is very much a part of the lives of many diasporic Chinese.

Within this broad definition of diaspora China, not only are forms of 'Asianness' included, but also diaspora China's relationship to the West, to account for the history of Western imperialism (economic and cultural) in Asia, and the formation of Chinese diasporas in the West. Predicated on eccentricity, diaspora China also engages with the concept of whiteness (as I elucidate in Chapters 1 and 3), and with other forms of 'Asianness' (as I explore in Chapters 3 and 4). Finally, diaspora China is a concept based on gender. As a gendered concept, it is formed through the alternative processes of nostalgia and a recoded signification of Asia, as I will elaborate upon shortly. The gendered nature of diaspora China is a necessary product of its modernity.

Visualising Modern Diasporic Chinese Femininity

Gender is formative of power relations in modernity, and is also inflected by, and intersected with, sometimes-conflicting categorisations of class, sexuality and race. Signs of the feminine operate as a specific trope of the modern such that a resurgence of the visibility of these signs is apparent in an era dominated by the formation of diasporic Chinese modernities. I argue that the predominant way that images of the exotic can travel globally, and popularly, today, is via the feminine. This hypothesis is grounded in the link between diasporic Chinese modernities and femininity, whereby tropes of the feminine function as nostalgic substitutions in an era of the rise of the Asia-Pacific region. The exotic offers an authenticity of experience tied to the past, to that which has been lost; thus modernity becomes essential to, and underwrites, the discourse of the exotic. Within this schema, the feminine operates as "an authentic point of origin ... a recurring symbol of the atemporal and asocial at the very heart of the modern itself".⁵³

Modernity, seen as progress, enterprise and industry, was thought to be antithetical to modern 'mass culture', which was characteristically feminised. Andreas Huyssen notes, "the political, psychological, and aesthetic discourse

around the turn of the century consistently and obsessively genders mass culture and the masses as feminine, while high culture, whether traditional or modern, clearly remains the privileged realm of male activities".⁵⁴ The term 'mass' has been more or less abandoned in favour of the term 'popular culture'. Since the Frankfurt School's redefinition of the term in the 1920s, theories of mass culture have ceased (explicitly) to gender mass culture as feminine. However, this way of thinking still emerges, albeit in a form where the link between femininity and mass culture is exalted, not denigrated.⁵⁵ What should be noted is that these comments are made in relation to Western modernities; popular culture based on images of diasporic Chinese femininity operates differently.

There has been a great deal of Western feminist revisioning of European modernity in terms of gender, but very little on the new Asian modernities.⁵⁶ This neglect is further foregrounded by the fact that several significant conceptualisations of Chinese or Asian modernity are so obviously gendered. For instance, the concept of Cultural China, discussed earlier, is male-biased since it is tied to the use of Confucianism as a way of explaining the development of uniquely Asian modernities. Even when it is recast as 'neo-Confucianism', the term remains, in its historicity, male-oriented, since it is based on the "male scholar-official discourse".⁵⁷ Chinese capitalists, in Aihwa Ong and Donald Nonini's formulations, are also either implicitly or explicitly gendered male.⁵⁸ What seems to be a marked omission is where women fit into accounts of these regional developments.

In *Gender and Power in Affluent Asia*, Krishna Sen and Maila Stivens explore the links between gender and economics, and note that "the modernising and globalising of East and Southeast Asia have been systematically gendered processes".⁵⁹ Sen and Stivens provide important sociological perspectives on how the modernising of Asia is feminised, yet theirs is more an economic rather than cultural look at the phenomenon. Economic changes have also influenced Asia's *cultural* construction. For example, the Asian nations of Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea have been referred to collectively as the 'tiger economies', referring to a species that is highly aggressive and predatory. Even with the economic collapse of the region, Asia was still characterised as the aggressor, a virus (with transnational vectors) able to spread, penetrate, and contaminate global markets.⁶⁰ Therefore, in relation to the history of the sign of 'Asia' (the feminisation of the Orient throughout the history of colonialism), its recent rise, and collapse, there is the suggestion of a sign in crisis.

Although Western modernities also figure woman as a sign of culture, diasporic Chinese modernities operate on a different, ambivalent structure,

accumulating a force that is compounded by the effect of the signs and representations already clustering around the idea of 'Asia'. The fact that stereotyped, clichéd images of the exotic continue to reappear again and again in cultural texts is a product of their inherent ambivalence. There is both the fascination with the foreign, as well as the fear associated with its rise to visibility. The current "over-articulation of the discourse of the feminine" bespeaks a sign in crisis: that of the sign of 'Asia', and of diaspora China's relationship to Asia within a global system of image production.⁶¹ Chinese femininity as characterised by the Chinese exotic therefore functions in two ways — firstly, within a rhetoric of nostalgia, and secondly, as a signifier of a sign, 'Asia' in crisis. The notion of nostalgia will be discussed here briefly, and diaspora China's relationship to Asia in more detail in Chapter 4. Taken together, these approaches seek to address, and redress, the current gap in theory on the relationship between diasporic Chinese modernities and gender.

Nostalgia, as the longing for an idealised past, is often viewed pejoratively as political or moral weakness however, as Rita Felski notes, there is no reason why this should be so.⁶² Nostalgia is only a 'problem' (within a politics of identity) when it is figured as a nativist longing for pure, noncontradictory, and timeless ethnic identities which locate meaning in an idealised past. Although nostalgic impulses within representations continue (the exotic as timeless, idealised), the Chinese exotic also operates, paradoxically, *with* time (*contemporary*) and the new image of Chinese femininity is that of the cosmopolitan woman easily 'fitting' into Western roles, although she may be visualised through ventriloquial signs. Hong Kong actresses Maggie Cheung and Michelle Yeoh, discussed in Chapter 2, are examples of this new form of Chinese femininity. The Chinese exotic is able to create a distance from itself as that which is outside (*ex-centric* and ventriloquial), and in doing so can question the underlying assumptions and bases of power by negotiating with its preceding colonialist representations. The main dimension to these representations that requires interrogation is the 'interest' paid to Chinese femininity, which is most often invoked in sexual terms. The exotic is consistently marketed as a sexual encounter whereby difference is collapsed into and experienced as a heterosexual encounter, either violent or subliminal. This imbrication of sexuality and the exotic is formed through histories of colonialism and colonial fantasies of power, where women from exotic lands were portrayed as being freely sexually available. Exoticist narratives underscore these representations of Chinese femininity, conveyed in the link between female sexuality and desirability. While Chinese femininity does not equate to Chinese sexuality, the two are often implicated, particularly in the relationship between exoticism and eroticism.

Women are the carriers of tradition, culture, as well as disease.⁶³ It is the feminine that spreads, reproduces, multiplies, and procreates. Hence the feminine travels as the exotic. Although I want to avoid the easy trap of essentialising either ‘Chineseness’ or Chinese femininity, it is important to note how predominant representations have operated. I argue that the dominant way that exoticism travels globally and popularly today is via the feminine, harnessed to a notion of alternative Asian modernities, or more specifically, to a diasporic Chinese modernity.

Representation and Critique: Contemporary Visibilities and the Exchange of Gazes

In order to consider the manifestation of the Chinese exotic in images and representations of Chinese femininity, the status of visibility informing their construction also requires examination. The term ‘visibilities’ will be used to describe the operation of all of the senses in the creation and perception of exoticism, although vision maintains predominance. As Gilles Deleuze suggests, “visibilities are not defined by sight [alone] but are complexes of actions and passions, actions and reactions, multisensorial complexes, which emerge into the light of day”.⁶⁴ It is also important to note that visibility is not the same as visuality. Visibility includes an added component of apprehension — that which becomes graspable through understanding — as in a statement such as ‘I see’. Thus visibility refers to the recognition of subjectivity and the possibility of reversing object and subject positions so that they are no longer clearly differentiated. Deleuze comments, “visibilities are not to be confused with elements that are visible or more generally perceptible. ... Visibilities are not immediately seen or visible. They are even invisible so long as we consider only objects, things or perceptible qualities, and not the conditions which open them up”.⁶⁵ Visibilities can only be uncovered through an interrogation of the systems that produce them. I will analyse gender, the cinematic apparatus, popular literature and the publishing industry, and regional formations, as the institutionalised apparatuses of ‘seeing’ between diaspora China and the West, and diaspora China and Asia. Together, these systems locate and circumscribe the conditions that ‘open up’ modern visibilities of Chinese femininity. Framing the four tropes of movement organising the material in this book is the notion of performativity, which enables the switching of subject–object relations that have previously seen representations of Chinese femininity so debilitating in their fixity.

Judith Butler, probably cultural theory's most renowned proponent of performativity, uses J.L. Austin's theory of the performative to expose the constructedness of gender, despite the fact that gender so often appears in culture in a form that is essentialised. According to Butler, the performative only 'works' if it repeats that which is coded and draws on the authority of the original that is being repeated.⁶⁶ What is interesting about Austin's performative is that he locates language in the realm of pleasure and seduction; the marketing of the Chinese exotic is also figured within various economies of desire. A notion of performativity can also, however, challenge dominant representations that connect Chinese femininity monolithically and unproblematically to seduction and sexuality. Through the repetition of images of Chinese femininity in their current popularity, a force is accumulated that begins to take on a materiality of its own. The performative as a strategy of reading can expose the constructedness of these supposed essences. However, it is important to note that it is not always possible to completely control, or be responsible for, audience reception or contextualisation; these depend on specific social interactions, and the institutions in and by which the performances are structured. Performativity is both interactional and institutional, and oppressions are produced not only by individual acts but by the structures that underlie them. In the context of the Chinese exotic this would mean, for example, paying closer attention to the film industry that still promulgates images equating Chinese femininity with colonial exoticism and primitivism (Chapters 1 and 2), and the mainstream publishing industry that continues to promote predominantly autobiographical texts and family memoirs by diasporic Chinese women (Chapter 3). This would also involve an exploration of diaspora China's relationship to Asia within a regional structure of visibility that collapses differences (Chapter 4). It is these existing discursive practices and institutions that give the individual performances of Chinese femininity the possibility of intelligibility.

Together, these systems produce Chinese femininity as an 'inaccurate' or nostalgic memory, something that is constructed, and anxiously reproduced. The representational dynamics of early films and writings which thematised or visualised Chinese femininity represented an irreversible or 'contained' exoticism, since there was never any threat, in these depictions, of a 'real' or a/effective desire, or anything else, by the Chinese woman or figure of femininity. The contained exoticism of this premodern period was represented mainly by a voyeuristic gaze that fetishised the Chinese woman and fixed her within narrow racial stereotypes while suggesting an 'authentic' experience for the viewer. While exoticism, which refers to encounters with

that which is different or outside, should theoretically be reversible, this is not the case where historical and political imbalances are involved. It is not enough for diasporic writers, filmmakers or actors simply to reverse exoticism or to counter prevailing stereotypes. Within the global framework of the Chinese exotic where geographical distance has been ‘eliminated’, I argue that the only form of popular cultural exchange that becomes marketable today, for images or performances of Chinese femininity, is one of repetition (closeness), which at the same time ‘others’. This refers to a form of differential repetition or approximation as opposed to one of direct reversibility or an insistence on either uniqueness or difference, that is, a self-Orientalising or ‘autoexoticising’. The critical strategy of privileging the repeat, however, relates only to the reading of *popular* images — those which inform larger mechanisations of desire, consumption and production occurring within globalisation and regionalisation. The ‘use’ of the performative to the Chinese exotic as a reading strategy lies in the possibility of de-contextualisation, particularly pertinent to the situation of the diasporas. Through performance, the diasporic (deterritorialised, decontextualised) self can be “reworked in its enunciation”.⁶⁷

Images of Chinese femininity have always been popular, from at least as early as the Romantic period of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but their cultural density as ‘things’ that sell, and that are performed by the diasporas, has lately become unavoidably *visible*. Despite competing visions, strategic reformulations of previous discourses and historical, geographical and theoretical variations, the structural and semantic core of exoticism remains that of feminine difference and a dominating masculine desire; this is the story that sells and is therefore repeated. It is this mode of address that I set out to critique.

The following four chapters plot the formation of the Chinese exotic as an ex-centric mode of representation, attempting to read various performances of the Chinese exotic through particular tropes of movement that operate as different perspectives of the same phenomenon. The chapters are structured around the theoretical principles of the fold (Chapter 1), the cross over (Chapter 2), the ornament (Chapter 3), and the region (Chapter 4). Each trope has its own critical history, parameters and hence attend to specific media in different ways. The fold demonstrates a movement between the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’; that is, concerning cross-cultural exchanges and interactions that take place *within* diasporic contexts in the West. My textual examples in this chapter are the cultural products of everyday life, such as food and fashion, as they represent, and make sense of, diasporic Chinese femininity. The cross over follows on from this in Chapter 2, showing how such movements can

be translated and further understood through the movement of Chinese screen actresses from film industries in Asia *across to* the signifying terrains of cinematic industries and spectatorial practices in the West. In Chapter 3, the ornament, an object detailing excess, shows how a surplus of meaning produced through translation also inscribes whiteness into the formation of the Chinese exotic *between* different diasporic contexts. The production and reception of novels by diasporic Chinese women in Asian America and Asian Australia will be discussed, highlighting what is 'permitted' into these categories and what is anxiously excluded. Because of the messy nature of the forms of interaction diaspora China has with other categories, nations and regions, I will be using examples that are not always (strictly) diasporic Chinese where they signify the theoretical principles that constitute the Chinese exotic. It will be shown that the category of diaspora China also absorbs other forms of 'Asianness' as well as 'whiteness'. Therefore, the final chapter, Chapter 4, examines diaspora China's interactions with the region Asia. The region is another way of conceptualising space, and movements and collaborations in space, that can re-engage the concept of ex-centricity underpinning the Chinese exotic. Taken together, the chapters stage a movement of the Chinese exotic from a form of early colonial expression to its self-conscious formation as a modern ex-centric representation.

Notes

Introduction

- 1 Since *Chinese Box* Gong Li has starred in the following English-language films: *Memoirs of a Geisha*, *Miami Vice*, and *Hannibal Rising*.
- 2 On the relationship between Chinese modernity, men, and masculinity, see Louie, *Theorising Chinese Masculinity*, and Zhong, *Masculinity Besieged*. On Asian masculinities more generally, see Louie and Low, eds., *Asian Masculinities*; Eng, *Racial Castration*; and Stecopoulos and Uebel, eds., *Race and the Subject of Masculinities*.
- 3 Friedman, *Cultural Identity and Global Process*, p. 7.
- 4 Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture*, p. 171.
- 5 Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture*, p. 173.
- 6 Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture*, p. 173.
- 7 Stewart, *On Longing*, xii.
- 8 Chow, *Primitive Passions*, p. 23.
- 9 Chow, *Primitive Passions*, p. 171.
- 10 Bongie, *Exotic Memories*, p. 4.
- 11 Lowe, *Critical Terrains*, p. 2.
- 12 Huggan, *Post-Colonial Exotic*, p. 14.
- 13 Said, *Orientalism*, p. 166.
- 14 Ang and Stratton, "Straddling East and West: Singapore's Paradoxical Search for a National Identity", in Perera, ed., *Asia and Pacific Inscriptions*, p. 189; original emphasis.
- 15 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*; Amin, *Eurocentrism*; Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*; Young, *White Mythologies*; and Lowe, *Critical Terrains*.

- 16 Lowe, *Critical Terrains*, p. 20.
- 17 Waters, *Globalization*, p. 219.
- 18 Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, pp. 13–4.
- 19 Appadurai, “Disjuncture and Difference”, p. 7.
- 20 Hutcheon, *Poetics of Postmodernism*, p. 67.
- 21 Hong Kingston, *China Men*, p. 18.
- 22 Hutcheon, *Poetics of Postmodernism*, p. 41.
- 23 Ong and Nonini, *Ungrounded Empires*, p. 19.
- 24 Spivak, “Diasporas Old and New”, p. 246.
- 25 Gelder, *Reading the Vampire*, p. 123; 124.
- 26 Huggan, *Postcolonial Exotic*, p. 77.
- 27 See also Huggan, “Prizing Otherness” and “The Postcolonial Exotic” for further expositions of the concept of the “postcolonial exotic”. In each of these articles, Huggan makes no specific comments on gender or sexuality. His comments are also generally confined to diasporic Indian (South Asian) literary texts.
- 28 Huggan, *Postcolonial Exotic*, p. 20; original emphasis.
- 29 Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*, p. 35.
- 30 Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*, p. 36.
- 31 See for example Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*; Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*.
- 32 Gaonkar, *Alternative Modernities*, p. 17.
- 33 Ong, “Chinese Modernities”, in Ong and Nonini, *Ungrounded Empires*, p. 194.
- 34 Lee, “Across Trans-Chinese Landscapes”, in Gao, ed., *Inside Out*, p. 41.
- 35 For alternative discussions of mainland modernity see Yeh, ed., *Becoming Chinese*; Chow, *Woman and Chinese Modernity*; Barlow, *Formations of Colonial Modernity*; Liu, *Translingual Practice*; Zhang, *Chinese Modernism in the Era of Reforms*; and Yang, ed. *Spaces of their Own*. In my survey of the various ways of conceptualising Chinese modernity, I am concerned only with those scholars writing and publishing in English, either in diasporas in Asia or in the West. The intellectual work produced in the diaspora *on* the diaspora is essential to my project.
- 36 Yang, ed., *Spaces of their Own*, p. 2.
- 37 Yang, ed., *Spaces of their Own*, p. 3.
- 38 Yang, ed., *Spaces of their Own*, p. 8.
- 39 Yang, ed., *Spaces of their Own*, p. 9.
- 40 Chow, “Introduction: On Chineseness”; Ang, “On Not Speaking Chinese”.
- 41 Tu, *The Living Tree*.
- 42 Tu, *The Living Tree*, x; original emphasis.
- 43 Ong and Nonini, *Ungrounded Empires*, p. 12.
- 44 Anthias, “Evaluating ‘Diaspora’”, p. 558. See also Hall, “Minimal Selves”, in Rutherford, ed., *Identity*, p. 23.
- 45 Tölölyan, “The Nation-State and Its Others”, p. 3.
- 46 Anthias, “Evaluating ‘Diaspora’”, p. 558.
- 47 Mishra, “The Diasporic Imaginary”, p. 422. See also Safran, “Diasporas in

Modern Societies”; Spivak, “Diasporas Old and New”; and Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora”, in Rutherford, ed., *Identity*, on the distinction between ‘new’ and ‘old’ diasporas.

- 48 In terms of the actual movement of Chinese overseas, there are several books dedicated to the specifics of population flows. The greatest movement of Chinese overseas occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century, with some two million mainlanders moving to the Malay Peninsula, Indochina, the Philippines, California and Australia between 1848 and 1888 due to the European presence in the East (Pan, *Sons of the Yellow Emperor*, p. 42). Many who left China, often as traders, were still politically aligned to China and considered themselves *huaqiao* or ‘sojourners’. As *huaqiao*, or overseas Chinese, a person is still regarded as a Chinese national (Wang, *Chinese Overseas*, p. 79). The Chinese in Southeast Asia, however, now generally refer to themselves as *huaren* (ethnic Chinese) rather than as *huaqiao* so as to suggest a shift in identity to local orientation after the independence of Southeast Asian nations. The gendered (masculinised) nature of existing discourses on the Chinese diaspora will be addressed in the following section of the Introduction entitled ‘Visualising Modern Diasporic Femininity’.
- 49 Ang and Nonini, *Ungrounded Empires*. It should be noted that much of the current scholarship on the Chinese diaspora is “contingent upon the idea of a preexisting homogeneous ‘mainland’ China”, Huang, “Writing Against the Chinese Diaspora”, p. 145. Huang suggests “de-imagining” the homogeneity of China rather than imagine a diasporic self against it. While not advocating a homogenising mythology of the mainland, I seek to examine how the diaspora can exist as a condition *independent of* the mainland.
- 50 Two foundational reference books on the Chinese diaspora, Lynn Pan’s *Sons of the Yellow Emperor* and the *Encyclopedia of Chinese Overseas*, devote individual chapters to explaining the problematic case of Hong Kong as it relates to the diasporas. Pan, for instance, views Hong Kong as ‘between’ diaspora and China: “Hong Kong is the threshold and outlet of the motherland, the junction of diaspora and the homeland”, p. 373.
- 51 Donald Nonini refers to Hong Kong and Taiwan as the “envisioned metropolises” of the alternative modernity of the transnational Chinese, “Diaspora Chinese in the Asia-Pacific: Transnational Practices and Structured Inequalities”, in Armstrong et al, *Chinese Populations*, p. 241. Unlike Nonini, I do not wish to conceive of Hong Kong or Taiwan as ‘centres’ of diaspora China but to consider, through my examples, how they help build diaspora China through ex-centricity and regionality.
- 52 See for example Lu, *Transnational Chinese Cinemas*, and Yau, *At Full Speed*.
- 53 Felski, *Gender of Modernity*, p. 38.
- 54 Huyssen, “Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism’s Other”, in Modleski, ed., *Studies in Entertainment*, p. 191.
- 55 See for example *Seduction*, where Baudrillard figures femininity in relation to

- seduction and simulation. The link between the feminine and mass culture, however, remains unbroken.
- 56 Most of the recent books on Asian modernities, such as the ‘New Rich in Asia’ series, published by the Asia Research Centre at Murdoch University, Western Australia, focus on the masculinisation of the region. Only one of these books explores the gender dynamics of Asian modernities: Sen and Stivens, *Gender and Power in Affluent Asia*.
- 57 Yang, ed., *Spaces of Their Own*, p. 7. Virtues such as pragmatism, self-discipline, familial orientation and collectivism are said to infuse global capitalism with local values.
- 58 Ong and Nonini, *Ungrounded Empires*. Gender is only mentioned in relation to factory regimes, family regimes and labour markets, and on each occasion does not occupy more than one page of the book.
- 59 Sen and Stivens, *Gender and Power*, p. 1.
- 60 The economic downturn in Asian financial markets was referred to most often in the media as the ‘Asian crisis’, and furthermore as a ‘virus’ or ‘contagion’ in terms its effect on other markets.
- 61 Stewart, *On Longing*, p. 171.
- 62 Felski notes that nostalgia is often seen as “a sign of an inauthentic relationship to history and the past”, “Gender of Modernity”, p. 58.
- 63 See for example, Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor*.
- 64 Deleuze, *Foucault*, p. 59.
- 65 Deleuze, *Foucault*, p. 52; 57.
- 66 Butler, “Burning Acts, Injurious Speech”, in Parker and Sedgwick, eds., *Performativity and Performance*, p. 205.
- 67 Probyn, *Sexing the Self*, p. 2.

Chapter 1 Folding Chinese Boxes

- 1 Morse, “Home: Smell, Taste, Posture, Gleam”, in Naficy, ed., *Home, Exile, Homeland*, p. 72.
- 2 Deleuze, *The Fold*, p. 3.
- 3 Deleuze, *The Fold*, p. 7. See Leibniz, *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese*, and Mungello, *Leibniz and Confucianism* on the influence of Chinese thought (in particular the *I Ching* and neo-Confucianism) on the work of Leibniz.
- 4 Deleuze, *The Fold*, p. 37.
- 5 For examples of books that utilise paper as the paradigmatic material of Asia (particularly China and Japan), see De Bure, *Asian Style*, pp. 20–25 and De Gex, *Asian Style Source Book*. The forms of paper commonly associated with ‘the Orient’ are thin; for example rice paper, washi or origami paper, as opposed to firmer substances such as cardboard.
- 6 Stewart, *Nonsense*, p. 129.

- 7 In Greek mythology, Pandora was sent by the gods to seduce and destroy Prometheus for stealing fire from the gods. She carried a jar of evils and was forbidden to open it, but her curiosity got the better of her. In *Visual and Other Pleasures*, Mulvey links this myth (of boxes, secrets, and the iconography of the inside and outside) to femininity and feminine seduction in the cinema. Freud's case study of Dora also associates 'boxes' (purses, reticules) with female sexuality, *Case Histories 1: 'Dora' and 'Little Hans'*.
- 8 Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. 85; original emphasis.
- 9 Foucault, *Order of Things*, xv. Note that Borges was a disciple of Leibniz.
- 10 Elizabeth Grosz provides an insightful commentary on Deleuze's conception of the inside and the outside, which can also be used to describe the Deleuzian concept of the fold:
- binarised categories ... are played off against each other, they are rendered molecular, global, and analyzed in their molar particularities, so that the possibilities of their reconnections, their realignment in different 'systems' is established. So it is not as if the outside or the exterior must remain eternally counterposed to an interiority that it contains: rather, the outside is the transmutability of the inside. ... The outside is a *virtual* condition of the inside. ... The virtual is immanent in the real. (*Space, Time, Perversion*, pp. 131–2)
- The specificity of the fold as a theoretical figure for the Chinese exotic resides in the fact that it moves between the real and the virtual, producing a new kind of experience that is constituted through the senses.
- 11 The five nonsense operations are: reversals and inversions; play with boundaries; play with infinity; the uses of simultaneity; and arrangements and rearrangements within a closed field. An example of the last operation is the idea of 'anagrammaticity', which will be discussed in the next chapter.
- 12 As Stewart notes, "in those objects called Chinese boxes ... the possibility, if not the actuality, of infinity is thus presented", *Nonsense*, p. 123.
- 13 Stewart, *Nonsense*, p. 120.
- 14 Stewart, *Nonsense*, p. 121.
- 15 Ebert, Review of Chinese Box.
- 16 Poon, "Chinese Box", p. 31.
- 17 See, for example Guthmann, "Too Many Pieces".
- 18 Stewart, *Nonsense*, p. 129.
- 19 Keller, Review of *Chinese Box*.
- 20 Harvey, "Wang's 'Box' Wraps San Francisco Festival".
- 21 Johnson, "Chinese Box Holds a Puzzle".
- 22 Meadows, "Review of *Chinese Box*".
- 23 Johnson, "Chinese Box Holds a Puzzle".
- 24 Quoted in Pride "Chinese Box".
- 25 Meek, "Review of *Chinese Box*".
- 26 Poon, "Chinese Box", p. 31.

- 27 Poon, “Chinese Box”, p. 31.
- 28 Adams, “La Colonial”.
- 29 Bear, “Thinking Outside the Chinese Box”.
- 30 Urban also describes Gong Li as “extraordinarily luminous”. “Review of *Chinese Box*”.
- 31 Urban, “Interview with Wayne Wang”.
- 32 See, for example, Basile, “Review of *Chinese Box*” and Rob MacDonald, “Review of *Chinese Box*”.
- 33 Mauss, *The Gift*.
- 34 Wang describes Irons as a co-creator of the film, saying that Irons was “in the trenches with me every day, trying to make sense of it”, quoted in Johnson, “Jeremy Irons’ Night in San Francisco”.
- 35 Character narration or subjectivity is rendered through the point of view shot (here, through John/Wang’s camera). The ‘subject’ is the perceiver within the narrative, who sees, tells, hears or displays, whereas the ‘object’ is s/he who is seen, told, heard or displayed. These terms are not fixed, but are indicative of a relationship between the two elements, thus allowing the possibility for their reversal. Edward Branigan explains, “The boundary lines between subject and object, narration and narrative, are never absolute ... It is a set of Chinese boxes, one inside the other, with each successive box or level introducing a new relation of subject and object.” *Point of View in the Cinema*, p. 2.
- 36 Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 214; original emphasis.
- 37 Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 250.
- 38 Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 132.
- 39 Forster, *A Passage to India*, p. 135.
- 40 Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 124.
- 41 Garber, *Vested Interests*, p. 235.
- 42 See for example, Chow, “Dream of the Butterfly”, in *Ethics after Idealism*, pp. 74–97; Garber, *Vested Interests*, pp. 238–51; De Lauretis, “Popular Culture, Public and Private Fantasies; and Eng, “In the Shadows of a Diva”.
- 43 Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, pp. 102–3; emphasis in original. For Lacan, the scopic field is constituted by a split between the Real and the scopic drive, and the division between the eye and the gaze. This manifests as the lack that constitutes castration anxiety.
- 44 Chow, *Ethics after Idealism*, p. 97.
- 45 Chow, *Ethics after Idealism*, p. 82.
- 46 Roland Barthes characterises Japanese boxes and parcels in a manner similar to Susan Stewart’s example of Chinese boxes. He suggests that the “diminutiveness” of Japanese objects is not a function of size but “it is because every object, every gesture, even the most free, the most mobile, seems framed”, *Empire of Signs*, p. 43; original emphasis. Furthermore, Barthes notes, “the famous set of Japanese boxes, one inside the other down to

- emptiness [is] always signed somewhere with an asymmetrical fold or knot ...”, p. 45.
- 47 Poon, “Chinese Box”, p. 31. Keller describes *Chinese Box* as being “as intricate and ornate as the culture where it is set”. I will discuss the concept of ornamentation in Chapter 3.
- 48 Kaplan, *Looking for the Other*, xvi.
- 49 Bal, “Looking at Love”, p. 65; original emphasis.
- 50 Kaplan, *Looking for the Other*, xvii.
- 51 Silverman, *Threshold of the Visible World*, p. 2.
- 52 Silverman, *Threshold of the Visible World*, p. 77.
- 53 Silverman, *Threshold of the Visible World*, p. 77.
- 54 Wang, “Review of *Chinese Box*”.
- 55 Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*.
- 56 I am referring here to a dominant Griersonian model of documentary filmmaking rather than to direct cinema or any its variants aiming to question this traditional model.
- 57 Susman, “Chinese Box”. Poon herself notes that *Chinese Box* “attains its own luminescence”. “Chinese Box”, p. 31.
- 58 Guthmann, “Review of *Chinese Box*”.
- 59 Wang recounts in an interview that some scenes with Gong Li were dropped because she wouldn’t do them. Carriere, one of the scriptwriters, said that he “had written some complicated and interesting scenes which Gong Li wouldn’t do. She said they weren’t Chinese. That’s disappointing”. Urban, “Interview with Wayne Wang”.
- 60 Quoted in Pride.
- 61 Rey Chow has commented on the significance of scarring in relation to the film *The Joy Luck Club*, also directed by Wayne Wang. The second of four interrelated stories in *The Joy Luck Club* is entitled “The Scar”. In a fight between her mother and her mother’s in-laws, hot soup was accidentally poured on one of the four mothers, An-Mei, as a child. The resulting scar is all her daughter can remember her by. Chow characterises the entire film as a kind of scar—a mark of damage to a people through a hurtful history of representation, where “the recuperation of this scar [is] an entertaining embellishment ... a new, exotic way to tell stories in postmodern America”. Chow, “Women in the Holocene: Ethnicity, Fantasy, and the Film *The Joy Luck Club*”. *Ethics after Idealism*, p. 112.
- 62 Silverman, *Threshold of the Visible World*, p. 79.
- 63 This is done for instance through the use of ample facial close-ups creating affect through their suggestion of interiority, intimacy and proximity. Gilles Deleuze and Mary Ann Doane further describe the face as a primary tool of intersubjectivity, of relation or communication with the other. Deleuze, *Cinema 1*; Doane, “The Close-Up”.
- 64 See Robbins and Cheah, eds., *Cosmopolitics*.

- 65 Anderson, “Cosmopolitanism, Universalism, and the Divided Legacies of Modernity”, in Robbins and Cheah, eds., *Cosmopolitics*, p. 272; original emphasis.
- 66 Clifford, “Traveling Cultures”, in Grossberg et al., eds., *Cultural Studies*, p. 108.
- 67 Clifford, “Traveling Cultures”, p. 103. See also Clifford, *Routes*.
- 68 Radhakrishnan, “Toward an Eccentric Cosmopolitanism”, p. 821.
- 69 Hannerz, *Transnational Connections*, pp. 103–4; my emphasis.
- 70 Cheah, “Rethinking Cosmopolitical Freedom in Transnationalism”, in Robbins and Cheah, eds., *Cosmopolitics*, p. 302.
- 71 This argument is based on a ‘monocultural’ version of multiculturalism. See Goldberg, *Critical Multiculturalism*.
- 72 Margaret Morse defines virtualities as “fictions of presence” within the spheres of everyday life, *Virtualities*, p. 20.
- 73 Cheah and Robbins, eds., *Cosmopolitics*.
- 74 Hall, “Notes on Deconstructing the Popular”, in Storey, ed., *Cultural Theory*, p. 456.
- 75 Morse employs Barthes’s term ‘cenesthesia’ (from *Empire of the Signs*) to discuss the “total sensation of the inner body or bowels”. *Virtualities*, p. 145.
- 76 Morse, *Virtualities*, p. 127.
- 77 On historical topographies of this, see for example Bowlby, *Just Looking*.
- 78 Morse, *Virtualities*, p. 136.
- 79 For more on the concept of ‘foreignness’ and the consumption of national cinemas within the international film festival circuit, see Stringer, “Global Cities and the International Film Festival Economy”, in Shiel and Fitzmaurice, *Cinema and the City*, and Khoo, “Slang Images”.
- 80 Frank Chin, “Introduction”, in Chin et al., eds., *Aiiieeeee!*
- 81 Wong, *Reading Asian American Literature*, p. 55.
- 82 Wong, *Reading Asian American Literature*, p. 55.
- 83 Morse, *Virtualities*, p. 125.
- 84 Morse, *Virtualities*, p. 127.
- 85 Morse, *Virtualities*, p. 132.
- 86 Probyn, *Carnal Appetites*, p. 14.
- 87 Probyn, *Carnal Appetites*, p. 18.
- 88 Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, pp. 209–10.
- 89 Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, pp. 197–8.
- 90 Goldberg uses the term ‘incorporation’ to refer to multiculturalism that is anti-assimilationist and anti-integrationist, *Critical Multiculturalism*, p. 9.
- 91 Kitchen, “East Goes West”, p. 33.
- 92 Durack, “Meals on Wheels”, p. 40.
- 93 Gallini, “Mass Exoticisms”, in Chambers and Curti, eds., *The Postcolonial Question*, p. 212.
- 94 Gallini, “Mass Exoticisms”, p. 216.

- 95 Castleton, “The Oriental Table”, p. 79.
- 96 Castleton, “The Oriental Table”, p. 79.
- 97 Barthes, *Fashion System*, p. 297.
- 98 McLeod, “Undressing Architecture: Fashion, Gender and Modernity”, in Fausch, ed., *Architecture in Fashion*, p. 40.
- 99 Barthes, *Fashion System*, pp. 251–2.
- 100 Kondo, *About Face*, p. 145.
- 101 Craik, “Exotic Impulses in Fashion”, p. 397.
- 102 Narumi, “Fashion Orientalism”, p. 313.
- 103 Craik, “Exotic Impulses”, p. 398.
- 104 Craik, *The Face of Fashion: Cultural Studies in Fashion* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 44. In the context of Western fashion, for instance, there is a neglect of men’s fashion as part of Western notions of gender that equate femininity with display and masculinity with action.
- 105 Kondo, *About Face*, p. 16.
- 106 Loucas, p. 11.
- 107 Seppelt Contemporary Art Awards, Museum of Contemporary Art; Sydney, Australia, http://www.mca.com.au/seppelt_1998/finalists/akira.html (accessed 23 October 1999).
- 108 New York Magazine, “Derek Lam”.
- 109 Skov, paper presented at the Intra-Asian Cultural Traffic Workshop; Sydney, Australia, February 2000.
- 110 Iwabuchi, “Marketing ‘Japan’”, p. 166.
- 111 Gallini, “Mass Exoticisms”, p. 213.
- 112 Dyer, *Stars*.
- 113 Probyn, *Camal Appetites*, p. 145.
- 114 Probyn, *Camal Appetites*, p. 69.
- 115 Barthes, *Fashion System*, pp. 251–2.
- 116 Jagose, *Lesbian Utopics*, p. 5.
- 117 Quoted in McLane, “Like a Geisha”, p. 26.
- 118 Quoted in McLane, “Like a Geisha”, p. 26; my emphasis.
- 119 Quoted in McLane, “Like a Geisha”, p. 26.
- 120 Ellis, “The Twentysomethings”, p. 37.
- 121 The term ‘ethereal girl’ is a play on Madonna’s song (and role) as the “Material Girl”. Similarly, pop star Kylie Minogue has undergone marked transformations during her time in the public eye and has also cast herself as a geisha in a film clip for the song “German Bold Italic” which features on the album *Sound Museum* (1998) by Japanese-born artist Towa Tei.
- 122 Deleuze, *The Fold*, p. 121.
- 123 Chua, “Postcolonial Sites”, p. 282.
- 124 Chan, “Fashioning Change”, p. 293.
- 125 Ong, “Flexible Citizenship Among Chinese Cosmopolitans”, in Robbins and Cheah, eds., *Cosmopolitics*, p. 135.

Chapter 2 Spies, Vamps and Women Warriors

- 1 Dyer, *Stars*, p. 3.
- 2 See Mayne, *Cinema and Spectatorship* on ‘white spectatorship’. See also Hooks, *Black Looks*, Gaines, “White Privilege and Looking Relations: Race and Gender in Feminist Film Theory”, in Erens, ed., *Issues in Feminist Film Criticism*, and Chow, *Woman and Chinese Modernity* for more on cross-cultural spectatorship. Although significant for different reasons, these works do not directly address the issue of star consumption.
- 3 Singer, *World’s Greatest Women Spies*.
- 4 Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, p. 2.
- 5 Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, p. 11.
- 6 Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity*, p. 2.
- 7 Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity*, p.15.
- 8 Morris; foreword to Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity*, xiii.
- 9 Morris; foreword to Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity*, xiv.
- 10 Morris, foreword to Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity*, xiv.
- 11 Lo, “Double Negations”, p. 472. Specifically, these negations refer to the displacement of the Hong Kong subject after its return to China. In the translation of Chinese identity into Hollywood, Hong Kong cultural identity is *re-made*; this offers a way out of a notion of Chineseness that necessarily involves a reunification with China. Rather, Hong Kong Chineseness can also be implicated in the changing transnational meanings of *diasporic* Chineseness.
- 12 Laura Mulvey, quoted in Martin, *Phantasms*, viii.
- 13 Kolko, “Erasing@race: Going White in the (Inter)Face”, in Kolko, Nakamura, and Rodman, eds., *Race in Cyberspace*, p. 217.
- 14 Morley and Robbins, “Techno-Orientalism”, p. 154; my emphasis.
- 15 Morley and Robbins, “Techno-Orientalism”, p. 134.
- 16 Garber, *Vested Interests*, p. 234.
- 17 Garber, *Vested Interests*, p. 234; original emphases.
- 18 Garber, *Vested Interests*, p. 239.
- 19 Sek Kei, “The War between the Cantonese and Mandarin Cinemas in the Sixties”, p. 3.
- 20 Bond does say to Moneypenny in *You Only Live Twice*: “You’ve forgotten, I took a first in Oriental Languages at Cambridge.” By the time of *Tomorrow Never Dies*, it seems that Bond himself has forgotten!
- 21 On Hollywood’s fascination with ‘exotic Asia’ and the transcendent love story, see Marchetti, *Romance and the ‘Yellow Peril’*, p. 2.
- 22 Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*.
- 23 The figure of the spy in diasporic Asian literary texts suggests something similar. See Lazaroo, *World Waiting to Be Made* and Lee, *Native Speaker*. In both of these novels, spying is equated with assimilation in order for the protagonist to avoid drawing attention to her/himself as an ethnic other.

- 24 Garber, *Vested Interests*, p. 256.
- 25 Morris, “Learning from Bruce Lee”, p. 10.
- 26 Morris, “Learning from Bruce Lee”, p. 13; original emphases.
- 27 Morris, “Learning from Bruce Lee”, p. 15; note 27.
- 28 See Liu, “Translingual Practice: The Discourse of Individualism between China and the West”, in Dissanayake, ed., *Narratives of Agency*, p. 2, on the ‘condition of translation’. The condition of translation allows the intelligibility of certain modes of production and transaction to emerge, here, in the specific figures of Chinese femininity.
- 29 This earlier representation has, among its main incarnations, Nancy Kwan’s role in *The World of Suzy Wong*, and the numerous roles of Anna May Wong that inevitably end in death or discreditation by some other means (for example, by playing the villainess in Joseph von Sternberg’s *Shanghai Express*).
- 30 Haraway, “A Manifesto for Cyborgs”, pp. 66–7; original emphases.
- 31 De Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender*, p. 2.
- 32 Balsamo, *Technologies of the Gendered Body*, pp. 2–3.
- 33 Lo, “Muscles and Subjectivity”, p. 106.
- 34 Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies*, p. 35. Other critics who see Hong Kong kung fu films as pure visual and aural spectacle (with no historical or ideological connection), include Hammond and Wilkins, eds., *Sex and Zen and A Bullet in the Head*. For a critique of this, see Stringer’s “‘Your Tender Smiles Give Me Strength’”.
- 35 Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies*, p. 1.
- 36 Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies*, p. 3.
- 37 Tasker, “Fists of Fury”, p. 324; original emphasis.
- 38 Tasker, “Fists of Fury”, p. 324.
- 39 For more on Bruce Lee’s narcissism see Berry, “Stellar Transit: Bruce Lee’s Body or Chinese Masculinity in a Transnational Frame”, in Martin and Heinrich, eds., *Embodied Modernities*, pp. 218–34.
- 40 Tasker, “Fists of Fury”, p. 319.
- 41 Tasker, “Fists of Fury”, p. 316.
- 42 Tasker, “Fists of Fury”, p. 334.
- 43 Quoted in Tasker, “Fists of Fury”, p. 334.
- 44 Tasker, “Fists of Fury”, p. 332. Jackie Chan’s parody of James Bond in the film *Tuxedo* also subverts the myth of the muscular kung fu body through a discourse of modern technology. Chan plays a character named James Tong who only acquires fighting skills when he dons a special tuxedo. Although this is an example of the body operating *with* technology, it is not equivalent to the body *as* technology.
- 45 Lo, “Muscles and Subjectivity”, p. 117.
- 46 The title of Lo’s article, “Muscles and Subjectivity”, suggests as much. Lo states that he is concerned with “the complex cultural formation of Hong Kong identity through the muscular body”, p. 106.

- 47 Ciecko, “Transnational Action”, p. 227.
- 48 Ciecko, “Transnational Action”, p. 227; original emphasis.
- 49 See for example Stringer, “‘Your Tender Smiles Give Me Strength’”.
- 50 Jodie Foster’s role as a radio astronomer in *Contact* (1997) and as a jet propulsion engineer in *Flight Plan* (2005) are two examples of this new kind of Hollywood ‘action’ star.
- 51 “Looker Online: Reactions to Michelle Yeoh”, <http://perso.club-internet.fr/fakirpro/movies/yeohr.htm/> (accessed 30 November 2000).
- 52 “Looker Online”.
- 53 “Michelle Yeoh Message Board”, 1 February 1999, <http://www.geocities.com/hollywood/studio/4297/geobook.html/> (accessed 30 November 2000).
- 54 Pearce, *Making of 007: Tomorrow Never Dies*, p. 80.
- 55 “Michelle Yeoh Riding High”, *A Style Magazine*, <http://www.astyle.com/articles/articles13.htm/> (accessed 20 February 2000).
- 56 Maggie Q (a.k.a. Maggie Quigley) has a similar, albeit lesser, role as Cantonese-speaking seductress and IMF team member Zhen Lei in *Mission: Impossible III*.
- 57 Ferdinand de Saussure’s (unpublished) theory of anagrams plays an important role in the creation of a theory of intertextuality. Anagrams are organised not so much along a linear (historical) frame, but along “a kind of vertical axis, an exit that leads to other texts, in other words — intertextuality”. Iampolski, *Memory of Tiresias*, p. 17.
- 58 *Ana*, as a prefix, means different things in different contexts; when attached to *gramma* (the ‘written’), it means ‘against the grain’ of the written — that is, another way of reading; a translation: Brunette and Wills, *Screen/Play*, p. 88.
- 59 Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, p. 320.
- 60 Brunette and Wills, *Screen/Play*, p. 88.
- 61 Latex, as a material, has specific cultural connotations related to sexuality. However, in terms of the way the product is gathered and manufactured (as rubber), the main bulk of the product comes from Southeast Asian rubber plantations, overseen by colonial administration.
- 62 For scholars who link female vampires to lesbianism, see for example Weiss, *Violets and Vampires*, Case, “Tracking the Vampire”, and Creed, *Monstrous-Feminine*.
- 63 Chow, *Primitive Passions*, pp. 192–3.
- 64 The song that is playing during the dinner party at Mireille’s house and also during the credits of *Ima Vep* is Luna’s cover of Serge Gainsborough and Brigitte Bardot’s “Bonnie and Clyde”, which narrativises the lives of the famous armed bandits. Thus even the soundtrack is ‘doubled’ or recycled. Moreover, “Bonnie and Clyde” is featured as a hidden track on Luna’s 1995 album *Penthouse*, suggesting that an anagrammatical translation must be done *against the grain of the written* — that is, by ‘thieving’ that which is below the surface of what is apparent.

- 65 Farmer, “Tracking the Vamp”, p. 49.
- 66 Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 226.
- 67 Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 227.
- 68 Sutton, “Remaking the Remake”, p. 70.
- 69 Sutton, “Remaking the Remake”, p. 69.
- 70 Spivak, “The Politics of Translation”, p. 179.
- 71 Arsinée Khanjian starred in *Exotica*, a movie about scopophilia directed by her husband Atom Egoyan. In *Exotica*, Khanjian plays a character named “Zoe”. A further intertextual reference is *Family Viewing*, another film by Egoyan also based on the theme of scopophilia. In *Family Viewing*, Khanjian plays a phone sex operator and there is also a hallucinatory sequence in a hotel as in *Irma Vep*. The repetitions and reversals in *Irma Vep* are seemingly boundless although they are only available to spectators within this art house context.
- 72 In a review of *Irma Vep* for *Artforum*, Howard Hampton notes that the scene in which Maggie throws the jewels away is lit like the climax of *The Heroic Trio*, the film on which René bases his decision to cast Maggie. The fact that she is throwing away the jewels (which she has stolen), can be read as a relinquishment of the codes that others have put in place for her. In an interview for Melbourne’s *Metro* magazine, Assayas says of this scene that Maggie is “acting for herself”. Caputo et al., “Irma Vep: *La Femme d’Est*”, p. 67.
- 73 Theories of masquerade proliferated as a response to an essay written by Joan Riviere in 1929 entitled “Womanliness as Masquerade”. Riviere argues that women with professional ambitions mask their powers of assertion by hiding behind exaggerated performances of feminine behaviour. Psychoanalytic film theorists such as Mary Ann Doane have utilised the notion of masquerade in order to theorise female spectatorship. See “Film and the Masquerade”.
- 74 Kraicer, “Irma Vep”.
- 75 Reynaud, “I Can’t Sell My Acting Like That”, p. 26.
- 76 Reynaud, “I Can’t Sell My Acting Like That”, p. 26.
- 77 Assayas, “Apropos of Maggie”, p. 63.
- 78 Virilio, quoting Michel Simon; *Aesthetics of Disappearance*, p. 54; original emphasis.
- 79 Marshall, *Celebrity and Power*, p. 115.
- 80 Abbas, *Hong Kong*, p. 7.
- 81 Martin, “Review of *Irma Vep*”, p. 5.
- 82 Fekete, “Vampire Value, Infinite Art and Literary Theory: A Topographical Meditation”, in Fekete, ed., *Life After Postmodernism*, p. 72.
- 83 The Chinese exotic both enables and explains how a star like Maggie Cheung is able to cross over into French art house cinema and to ‘fit’. Richard Dyer has in similar terms analysed the representations surrounding the black actor Paul Robeson. Dyer characterises Robeson as a cross over star, equally popular with black and white audiences, and he suggests that the pre-War period 1924–45 was more permissive of black stardom; that is, a black man was seen to

- embody particular qualities held to be ‘favourable’ by certain audiences at that time. In particular, the aesthetics of Robeson’s body (strong, muscular) were defining of a ‘hard-working’ black American citizen. *Heavenly Bodies*, p. 139.
- 84 Gelder, *Reading the Vampire*, p. 123. Others who also conceive of vampires as ‘boundary crossers’ include Donna Haraway, *Modest Witness@Second_Millennium*, Case, “Tracking the Vampire”, and Auerbach, *Our Vampires, Ourselves*.
- 85 Case, “Tracking the Vampire”, 15.
- 86 Auerbach, *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, 6.
- 87 Maggie is due to work with Ridley Scott within the film *Irma Vep*. In ‘real life’, Maggie starred in *Chinese Box* after *Irma Vep* but returned to France to make *Augustin, Roi du Kung fu* in 1999 and again in 2004 in Assayas’s *Clean*, for which she won the Best Actress Award at the Cannes Film Festival.
- 88 Haraway, *Modest Witness@Second_Millennium*, p. 213.
- 89 Haraway, *Modest Witness@Second_Millennium*, pp. 214–5.
- 90 Case, “Tracking the Vampire”, p. 10.
- 91 Allen, “Dressing and Undressing the Chinese Woman Warrior”, p. 347.
- 92 *Walt Disney Classics Collection*, <http://disney.go.com/DisneyArtClassics/classicscollection/index.html/> (accessed 12 November 2006).
- 93 See for example Dorfman and Mattelart, *How to Read Donald Duck*, and Byrne and McQuillan, *Deconstructing Disney*.
- 94 Byrne and McQuillan, *Deconstructing Disney*, p. 143.
- 95 Byrne and McQuillan, *Deconstructing Disney*, p. 143.
- 96 Hong Kong was chosen as the third international location for a Disney theme park, and opened in September 2005.
- 97 Berry, “Disney’s *Mulan*”, p. 6.
- 98 Berry, “Disney’s *Mulan*”, p. 6.
- 99 Berry, “Disney’s *Mulan*”, p. 6.
- 100 Berry, “Disney’s *Mulan*”, p. 7.
- 101 Zipes, *Happily Ever After*, p. 94.
- 102 Berlant, *Queen of America Goes to Washington*, p. 27.
- 103 Giroux, *Disturbing Pleasures*, p. 29.
- 104 Venuti, *Scandals of Translation*, p. 170.
- 105 Sek Kei, “The War between the Cantonese and Mandarin Cinemas”, p. 31.
- 106 Sek Kei, “The War between the Cantonese and Mandarin Cinemas”, p. 31.
- 107 Donald and Lee, “*Mulan* Illustration? Ambiguous Women in Contemporary Chinese Cinema”, in Munshi, ed., *Images of the ‘Modern Woman’ in Asia*, p. 134.
- 108 The timing of the release of *Mulan* within Australia’s geopolitical climate was fitting. In the national newspaper, *The Australian*, the advertisement for *Mulan* reads, “Just when Australia was looking for strength, leadership, passion and a great sense of fun . . . along comes *Mulan*” — signalling Asia’s new place within Australia’s political, economic and cultural horizon; this will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 3.

- 109 Borges, *Collected Fictions*, p. 19.
 110 Borges, *Collected Fictions*, p. 23.
 111 See Petro, ed., *Fugitive Images* and also Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses*.
 112 Aravamudan, *Tropicopolitans*, p. 86.
 113 On pedagogical and performative time, see Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 147.
 114 Venuti, *Scandals of Translation*, p. 81.
 115 Derrida, *Ear of the Other*, p. 123.

Chapter 3 Ethnic Supplementarity and the Ornamental Text

- 1 Gebauer and Wulf, *Mimesis*, p. 1.
- 2 In this chapter I will not be discussing the Asian Canadian diaspora, or the Asian diaspora in Britain. The Asian Canadian situation can be held to be comparable to the Asian Australian position since Canada's codified policy of multiculturalism (in the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*) results in a similar (official) response to multiculturalism. For more on the Canadian situation, see Khoo, *Banana Bending*. In Britain, 'Asian' usually means South Asian, whereas I am focussing on East and Southeast Asians, of which Britain has only a very small population. In addition, multiculturalism in Britain refers mainly to debates about schooling and education (that is, broadening the curriculum): see Bhattacharyya, "Riding Multiculturalism", in Bennett, ed. *Multicultural States*.
- 3 René Girard uses the term mimetic desire to refer to a triangular circuit of desire whereby "*the subject desires the object because the rival desires it*". *Violence and the Sacred*, p. 145; original emphasis. I am not so much interested in this definition as I am in how a popular desire (or a desire for popularity) creates forms of mimesis, although the desire between Nobu and the Chairman can also be viewed in Girard's terms.
- 4 All numbers appearing in parentheses after quotations from literary texts refer to page numbers from the edition appearing in the 'Bibliography' section.
- 5 Although outside the scope of this chapter, it would also be worthwhile considering the relationship between the biographical film (the 'biopic') and the autobiographical form in literature. In particular, a comparison could be made with the use of three Chinese actresses, Gong Li, Zhang Ziyi and Michelle Yeoh, to star as Japanese geisha in the film version of *Memoirs of a Geisha*, which met with equal scepticism and/or fury from Japanese, Chinese and American audiences. The levels of mimesis involved in this 'eccentric' casting are, however, unique to the filmic medium. The rarefied notion of 'authorship', particular to the literary medium, means that while the characters in a novel may do the work of 'performing', authors themselves generally may not.
- 6 Margaret Foster, *Memoirs of a Geisha* (inside cover).

- 7 According to Patricia Chu, several Asian American novels can be characterised as *bildungsroman* — novels about an individual’s development or formation, particularly in terms of reconciling an individual with the social order. She notes, however, that in the Asian American *bildungsroman* there is a notable absence of marriage plots (usually considered central to gender construction in the traditional *bildungsroman*), since this would imply reconciliation with the social order and full assimilation, Chu, *Assimilating Asians*, p. 18. I would argue that the absence of marriage plots noted by Chu does not in fact deny the absence of the narrative of (heterosexual) romance.
- 8 In *Memoirs of a Geisha*, Japanese imagery (particularly of food) is used for authenticity and the mimetic production of ethnicity. Some notable examples are: “Her skin made me think of a piece of sashimi left on the plate overnight”; “I stood there . . . with my eyes the size of rice crackers” (p. 358). As I argued in Chapter 1, food is one of the primary signifiers of ethnicity.
- 9 Quoted in “A Cross-Cultural King of the Kimonos”, *Macleans*, 1 March 1999, p. 53.
- 10 Sentimentality as an excess of emotion is commonly, and pejoratively, associated with the feminine. See Lieberman, *Mother and Narrative Politics in Modern China*, p. 10.
- 11 Chua-Eoan, “The Art of Memory”; my emphasis.
- 12 Liza Dalby, the only Western woman to have worked as an actual geisha in Japan, wrote the autobiography *Geisha* on her experiences there.
- 13 Brian Niiya suggests that these texts, as personal narratives, life stories or *bildungsroman*, “stress the ability of Asian Americans to assimilate and to accommodate to the basic rules of American society. . . [As a result,] this ‘success’ story, in all senses of the word, tends to reproduce itself”. Quoted in Cheung, *An Interethnic Companion*, p. 18.
- 14 In Asian American literature specifically, this collapse can be traced to the late 1970s with the publishing of Maxine Hong Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts*. The debate over the labelling of this book as an ‘autobiography’, however, only came much later, with Frank Chin’s 1991 criticism, “Come All Ye Asian American Writers of the Real and the Fake”, his introduction to Chan et al., eds., *The Big Aiiieeeee!*. This was just prior to the release of *Wild Swans* in 1993; the immense popularity of *Wild Swans* around the world, however, remains unmatched.
- 15 These comments can be found in the 1993 Flamingo edition of Chang’s *Wild Swans*.
- 16 Chua-Eoan, “Art of Memory”, p. 93.
- 17 Bongie, *Exotic Memories*, p. 6.
- 18 Chambers, *Story and Situation*, p. 4.
- 19 Chambers, *Story and Situation*, pp. 7–8.
- 20 Lejeune, *On Autobiography*.
- 21 ‘Oto’ relates to the ear. Derrida, *The Ear of the Other*, p. 51.

- 22 Frank Chin and the editors of *The Big Aiiieeeee!* were the most vociferous in this account.
- 23 On the public construction of the ‘self’ in autobiography, Ien Ang’s defence of the use of autobiography in critical (‘non-fictional’) writing is instructive. Ang defines autobiography as “a more or less deliberate, rhetorical construction of a ‘self’ for *public*, not private purposes: the displayed self is a strategically fabricated performance, one which stages a *useful* identity, an identity which can be put to work. It is the quality of that usefulness which determines the politics of autobiographical discourse. In other words, what is the identity being put forward *for*?” “On Not Speaking Chinese”, p. 4; original emphases.
- 24 Cheung, *Articulate Silences*, p. 23.
- 25 Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, pp. 144–5.
- 26 Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 145.
- 27 Several other writers have noted that for ethnic authors, the autobiographical form has often been utilised as an initial point of access into a ‘national’ field of literature. See Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, pp. 7–9, and Olney, “Autobiography and the Cultural Moment: A Thematic, Historical, and Bibliographical Introduction”, in Olney, ed., *Autobiography*, p. 13.
- 28 The supplement also intervenes along the lines of Homi Bhabha’s disruption of the singular writing of the nation, or ‘dissemiNation’. This is because ethnicity becomes acutely visible in diasporic conditions since the dominant (white) culture is assumed not to possess an ‘ethnicity’. Thus, Homi Bhabha suggests that adding ‘to’ may not necessarily ‘add up’ but may in fact disturb a calculation, in his example the singular narrative of the nation. *Location of Culture*, p. 155.
- 29 Schor, *Reading in Detail*, p. 86.
- 30 Chow, “On Chineseness”, p. 5.
- 31 Hattori, “China Man Autoeroticism”, p. 216. On the relationships between onanism, supplementarity and writing, see Derrida on Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Confessions*, Book 8. Masturbation is a supplement because the “giving oneself-a-presence” or pleasure, substitutes another’s presence. As an activity, it is *added to* ‘normal sexual experience’ just as writing is added to self-present speech. *Of Grammatology*, p. 155.
- 32 Hattori notes: “the borders of Asian American literary production have been maintained thus far through a permanently extended strategy of essentialism: Asian American literature is still understood, for the most part, as literature written by Asian Americans. Consequently, the dominant genre of Asian American and other ethnic American literatures has been autobiography and autobiographical fiction”. “China Man Autoeroticism”, p. 217.
- 33 Hattori, “China Man Autoeroticism”, p. 215. Hattori relies on Eve Sedgwick’s connection between onanism and homosexuality: “because it [masturbation] escapes both the narrative of reproduction and (when practiced solo) even the creation of any interpersonal trace, it seems to have an affinity with amnesia,

- repetition or the repetition compulsion, and ahistorical or history-rupturing rhetorics of sublimity”. Sedgwick, *Tendencies*, p. 111.
- 34 Hattori, “China Man Autoeroticism”, p. 232.
- 35 Hattori, “China Man Autoeroticism”, p. 231; original emphasis.
- 36 Hattori, “China Man Autoeroticism”, pp. 232–3.
- 37 Hattori views Stevens, the butler, as the ‘model minority’ figure in *The Remains of the Day*. “China Man Autoeroticism”, p. 225.
- 38 Hattori, “China Man Autoeroticism”, p. 225.
- 39 Stewart, *On Longing*, p. 172.
- 40 Radway, *Reading the Romance*.
- 41 Chu, *Assimilating Asians*, p. 143.
- 42 Jameson, “Third World Literature”, p. 69; original emphasis.
- 43 For critiques of Jameson see Ahmad, *In Theory*; Palakeel, “Third World Short Story as National Allegory?” and Aravamudan, “In the Wake of the Novel”.
- 44 Chow refers to this as a “coercive mimeticism”. “Introduction: On Chineseness”, p. 22. See also Chapter 3 of Chow’s *Protestant Ethnic*.
- 45 In *The Ear of the Other*, Derrida characterises the mother as an ‘extra’, a supplement, p. 38. On various forms that the mother takes in modern Chinese literature, see Lieberman.
- 46 Grossberg, “Is There a Fan in the House?: The Affective Sensibility of Fandom”, in Lewis, ed., *Adoring Audience*, pp. 56–7.
- 47 Lutz, and Abu-Lughod, eds., *Language and the Politics of Emotion*.
- 48 Wong, “Sugar Sisterhood: Situating the Amy Tan Phenomenon”, in Palumbo Liu, ed., *The Ethnic Canon*, p. 187.
- 49 Grossberg, “Is There A Fan in the House?” p. 59.
- 50 Wong, “Sugar Sisterhood”, p. 181.
- 51 Amy Tan writes, “[this is] a remarkable first novel ... filled with family secrets and the intersection of personal and world histories”. Chai, *Last Time I Saw Mother*; back cover.
- 52 Lee, *Americas of Asian America*; Koshy, “The Fiction of Asian American Literature”, p. 335. There has been a critical shift in emphasis from identity politics and cultural nationalism to heterogeneity and diaspora; from issues of race to those of ethnicity, gender, class and sexuality, although the old debates haven’t just disappeared. For discussions on citizenship, immigration, exclusion, and the ‘claiming’ of America, see Chu, *Assimilating Asians*; Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*; Ma, *Immigrant Subjectivities*; and Li, *Imagining the Nation*. For how gender and sexuality impact on the ‘America’ that Asian American writers construct, see Lee, *Americas of Asian America*; Lim and Ling, eds., *Reading the Literatures of Asian America*; and Wong, *Reading Asian-American Literature*.
- 53 Derrida, *Truth in Painting*, p. 57. Following Derrida, Wigley suggests that the ornament is “an example of the operations of the supplement”; it identifies “the structural role of a supplement”. “Untitled: The Housing of Gender”, in Colomina, ed., *Sexuality and Space*, p. 84.

- 54 Wigley, “Untitled: The Housing of Gender”, p. 354.
- 55 Khoo, “Who Are We Talking About?” p. 13.
- 56 Pauline Hanson, self-touted as the politician representing the viewpoints of ‘ordinary Australians’, characterises the ‘ordinary Australian’ as the white male ‘Aussie battler’, arguing that it is the white male who has been most dispossessed by Asian migration and indigenous land claims. Hanson was elected independent Member of Parliament for the seat of Oxley in Queensland at the March 1996 Federal Elections. Her negative views on indigenous Australians and Asian immigration were the source of fierce race debates in Australia around (and since) that time.
- 57 Dyer, *White*, p. 142.
- 58 Despite these broad-based statements, there are many problems associated with the kind of multiculturalism in practice in Australia, where ‘inclusion’ is sometimes only tokenistic. See, for example, Ang, “The Curse of the Smile”, p. 37.
- 59 Hage, *White Nation*, p. 41.
- 60 Paul Keating on “Good Morning America”, 3 May 1993. In cultural and political terms, this proved to be a failure; Keating lost the March 1996 elections to the Liberal-National Coalition headed by John Howard, by an overwhelming 45-seat majority in the House of Representatives, Labor’s worst defeat since 1977. This failure was widely regarded as a result of these ‘Asianising’ of Australia reforms and Keating’s embrace of reconciliation (in relation to white-indigenous Australia relations). More recently, at the Alfred Deakin lectures celebrating Australia’s Federation in Melbourne in May 2001, Gareth Evans, a former Foreign Minister, has said explicitly that Australia is *not* an Asian country, and *not* a part of the Asian region; this would be the commonly held view.
- 61 Alexander Downer, in a speech made in Beijing in April 2000. Quoted in Knight, *Thinking About Asia*, p. 262.
- 62 Hage, *White Nation*, p. 142.
- 63 The post-Hanson increased interest in Australia’s relationship to Asia, and of Asians in Australia, can be seen in the marked increase in books being published on the topic in recent years. Books such as Walker’s *Anxious Nation*, Berry’s *A Bit on the Side*, Perera’s *Asia-Pacific Inscriptions*, Khoo, Lo and Gilbert’s *Diaspora: Negotiating Asian Australia*, Ang, Chalmers and Thomas’s *Alter/Asians*, Ommundsen’s *Bastard Moon*, Shen’s *Dragon Seeds in the Antipodes* and Hage’s *White Nation*, all mark a shift from Alison Broinowski’s influential *The Yellow Lady: Australian Impressions of Asia*. These texts concern not only white constructions of Asia in Australia, but also of Asia in Australia.
- 64 Gunew, *Framing Marginality*, p. 12.
- 65 Gunew, *Framing Marginality*, p. 27.
- 66 Asians make up 6% of Australia’s entire population compared with only 4.9% of the US population. These statistics are from the 2000 Census of both countries.

- 67 For more on the specificities of (racial) hybridity see Parker and Song, eds., *Rethinking 'Mixed Race'*; Young, *Colonial Desire*; and Williams-Léon and Nakashima, eds., *Sum of Our Parts*.
- 68 Perera, "Representation Wars: Malaysia, *Embassy*, and Australia's corps diplomatique", in Frow and Morris, eds., *Australian Cultural Studies*, pp. 16–7.
- 69 Increasingly, work is being done to identify emergent indigenous and Asian coalitions and linkages. See for example, the conference proceedings from the 'Lost in the Whitewash: Aboriginal-Chinese Encounters from Federation to Reconciliation' conference, Australian National University (ANU), 1 December 2001, published by the Humanities Research Centre at ANU.
- 70 Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*, p. 65.
- 71 These terms, re-articulated in the context of vertigo, can be contrasted to more optimistic names for Australia by Chinese immigrants such as 'New Gold Mountain', embodying the hoped for prosperity in the new country with the arrival of the gold rush.
- 72 Gibson, *South of the West*, x. Compare this to the US national mythology whereby 'going West' is the ideology that represents the pushing of America's frontiers into the West of the country.
- 73 Yue, "Asian-Australian Cinema, Asian-Australian Modernity", in Gilbert, Khoo and Lo, *Diaspora: Negotiating Asian Australia*, p. 192. See also Yue and Hawkins, "Going South".
- 74 For Michel Foucault, ships are examples of heterotopia *par excellence* because they are "a floating piece of space, a place without a place". "Of Other Spaces", p. 27. As the world's largest island, Australia's heterotopic identity is attenuated by anxieties over its isolation.
- 75 Ross Gibson uses the term "Elsewhere" to refer to Australia, *South of the West*, p. x.
- 76 Connery, "The Oceanic Feeling and the Regional Imaginary", in Wilson and Dissanayake, eds., *Global/Local*, p. 289.
- 77 Hage, "'Asia', Hansonism, and the Discourse of White Decline", pp. 85–6.
- 78 Walker, *Anxious Nation*.
- 79 Morris, "White Panic", p. 246; original emphasis.
- 80 Morris, "White Panic", p. 255.
- 81 Asylum seekers from the Middle East were rescued from a sinking ferry near Indonesia by a Norwegian freighter, MS Tampa, in August 2001 and taken to the outlying Australian territory of Christmas Island. The Australian government refused to let the asylum seekers disembark, sending troops onto the ship in order to prevent this. They were eventually transferred to Nauru, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea to have their refugee claims assessed. Prime Minister John Howard's 'tough stance' on the asylum-seekers was criticised by many as 'unhumanitarian'. However, his re-election (for a third term) at the November 2001 elections, in the midst of these debates, suggests

that many Australians backed him and his conservative Liberal government, on this issue.

- 82 For Kracauer, the ‘mass ornament’ initially referred to the precision kick dancing of chorus girl troupes such as the Tiller Girls. Kracauer used this a metaphor for the emergence of a German modernity, whereby an individual could lose him- or herself into a coherent, unitary mass. In his early formulations, Kracauer saw this as a way of undermining the rational, unitary subject of the Enlightenment — that is, as a utopian metaphor for social harmony. By 1931, with the rise of fascism in Germany, Kracauer began to alter his perceptions. In a second essay on the mass ornament, published in 1949, Kracauer reconceptualised the mass ornament as a symptom of German society’s fall into fascism and totalitarianism. See Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament*.
- 83 Eng, *Racial Castration*, p. 2.
- 84 Berlant, *Queen of America Goes to Washington City*.
- 85 Eng, *Racial Castration*, pp. 141–2.
- 86 Wiegman, “Whiteness Studies and the Paradox of Particularity”, p. 139.
- 87 Barthes, *Mythologies*, p. 86.
- 88 On the ornament as “artifice, ruse, charm, veil and secret”, see Gordon, *Ornament, Fantasy, and Desire*, p. 12.
- 89 Dyer, *White*, p. 208.
- 90 Morris, “White Panic”, p. 355.
- 91 Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 18.
- 92 Dyer, *White*, p. 57.
- 93 Ackbar Abbas defines a postculture as “culture in a situation where the available models of culture no longer work and where culture is experienced as a field of instabilities”. “Cultural Studies in a Postculture”, p. 295. Conceiving of Australia as a postcolony or post-culture is a way of accounting for the various dis-locations of culture that can also rupture Australia’s white centre.

Chapter 4 From the Chinese Exotic to the Asian Exotic

- 1 Most often, the term has been deployed by Japan to articulate its shifting allegiances to the region. During World War II, for example, Japan sought to associate itself with nations in the region under the rubric of the ‘Greater East-Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere’, promoting the phrase ‘Asia belongs to the Asians’ in an effort to raise support for its war campaigns.
- 2 Ching, “Globalizing the Regional”, p. 246.
- 3 Naisbitt, *Megatrends Asia*, ix.
- 4 For example, Michael Storper and Richard Walker promote the term ‘territory’ as a concept with less theoretical baggage than regionalism, and suggest that the word territory denotes “functional interaction rather than bounded spaces”, *Capitalism Imperative*, p. 183. The term territory seems to me to imply a bounded

- and marked space, which appeals more to the concerns of boundary maintenance and control *constraining* movements, rather than freeing them up.
- 5 Ching, “Globalizing the Regional”, p. 244.
 - 6 Wilson and Dissanayake, *Global/Local*, p. 1; original emphases.
 - 7 Rofel, “Qualities of Desire”, p. 457.
 - 8 Bali, Indonesia, was bombed in 2002 killing a total of 202 people, and again in 2005. The outbreak of SARS in late 2003–2004 was also a factor in the decline of tourism to Asia over that period.
 - 9 2005 figures, Singapore Tourism Board, <http://app.stb.com.sg/asp/tou/tou03.asp> (accessed 19 November 2006).
 - 10 Ooi, “Tales from Two Countries”.
 - 11 See for example Chang, “Place, Memory and Identity”, Yue, “The Regional Culture of New Asia”, and Chia and Pacini, eds. *ASEAN in the New Asia*. After a successful seven year run as ‘New Asia’, during which the country established itself as a major destination in the burgeoning economic region, Singapore’s new place brand, ‘Uniquely Singapore’, was unveiled in March 2004.
 - 12 This success is measured in terms of brand recognition, awards gained for the advertising campaign, and actual tourist numbers, which exceeded 15 million in 2005. Malaysia’s top tourism markets are Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam, although China is recognised as an increasingly important market. *Tourism Malaysia*, <http://www.tourism.gov.my/corp/trade/default.asp/> (accessed 19 November 2006).
 - 13 Another example of a regional deployment in branding concerns Hong Kong’s flagship airline, Cathay Pacific Airways, and its 1990s campaign for regional growth centred on the new slogan, “Cathay Pacific. The Heart of Asia”.
 - 14 There is a Cultural Studies department at Lingnan University in Hong Kong and a PhD program in Cultural Studies in Asia will begin at the National University of Singapore (NUS) in 2008. The Asia Research Institute at NUS provides another forum for Cultural Studies work in Asia. In addition to these dedicated departments, cultural studies practitioners are also dispersed across a number of literature, film and sociology departments in the region.
 - 15 See Sun, “How Does Asia Mean?” (Parts 1 and 2)
 - 16 Connery, “Pacific Rim Discourse”, pp. 31–2.
 - 17 Connery, “Pacific Rim Discourse”, p. 32.
 - 18 Connery, “Pacific Rim Discourse”, p. 41.
 - 19 See www.apec.org/ for more information. APEC was established in order to manage the transition from the Cold War to the post-Cold war era by liberalising and integrating markets in the region.
 - 20 Vietnam, Cambodia, Lao, Myanmar and Brunei Darussalam have since joined the ASEAN. See www.aseansec.org/.
 - 21 Dirlik, “The Asia-Pacific Idea”, p. 64.
 - 22 Wilson and Dirlik, *Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production*, p. 6.

- 23 Korhonen, “Asia’s Chinese Name”, p. 253.
- 24 Baik, “Conceptualizing ‘Asia’ in Modern Chinese Mind”.
- 25 Korhonen, “Asia’s Chinese Name”, p. 254.
- 26 For example, the current craze for South Korean popular culture (also known as the Korean Wave or *hallyu*) has not yet translated into economic or political power.
- 27 Chua defines Pop Culture China as “the dense flow of cultural–economic exchanges between geographically dispersed Chinese populations”. “Pop Culture China”, p. 115.
- 28 Chua, “Pop Culture China”, p. 116.
- 29 Chua, “Pop Culture China”, p. 118.
- 30 Chua, “Conceptualizing an East Asian Popular Culture”, p. 216.
- 31 See Iwabuchi, ed., *Feeling Asian Modernities*.
- 32 In particular, it is action-driven or, conversely, slow moving, dialogue-scant films which appear at international film festivals. I have elsewhere explored the politics of these generic decisions in relation to Singapore’s burgeoning film industry. See Khoo, “Slang Images”. The art biennale provides another forum for the international circulation of such visual media.
- 33 The Columbia TriStar’s ‘Silk Screen’ Initiative was a season dedicated to Asian (mainly arthouse) films. Other films in the 2000 collection included Zhang Yimou’s *The Road Home*, Zhang Yang’s *Shower*, Chen Kaige’s *The Emperor and the Assassin* and Takeshi Kitano’s *Kikujiro*.
- 34 Qantas: The Australian Airline inflight magazine, November–December, 2001, p. 71; Corliss, “Martial Masterpiece”.
- 35 Klein, “*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*”, p. 21.
- 36 Klein, “*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*”, p. 25.
- 37 *Jiang hu* refers to the mythical underworld, a fantasised space where the heroes of *wuxia* films travel; literally, ‘rivers and lakes’.
- 38 Lee, “Far Away, So Close”, p. 281.
- 39 “*Wu* refers to a person’s physical prowess and mastery of martial arts. *Xia* stands for a chivalrous hero who defies legal and social conventions in his quest for justice, honor, and personal ambitions.” Cai, “Gender Imaginations”, p. 445. On the *wuxia* film as a quintessentially ‘Chinese’ film genre, see for example Klein, “*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*”, p. 22; on the masculinism of this genre, see Cai, p. 443. For an alternative point of view, see Reynaud, “The Book, the Goddess and the Hero”. Reynaud describes the *wuxia* film as “a playful and spectacular way of enacting a grand-scale redefinition of gender roles”.
- 40 Interview with Joan Dupont in Lee and Schamus, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, p. 40. Echoing Lee’s sentiments about his film as a nostalgic and idealistic rendering of a China that doesn’t exist, Bérénice Reynaud argues: “Born in a time of social/political crisis, the *wuxia pian* reflects a nationalist nostalgia/fantasy for a China that never was.” Reynaud, “The Book, the Goddess and the Hero”.

- 41 Ang Lee in Lee and Schamus, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, p. 76.
- 42 Schamus, “Aesthetic Identities”, p. 47.
- 43 Tsui Hark, Ching Siu-tung and Raymond Lee, the producers and directors of later films in the series also worked as assistant directors on King Hu’s original *Swordsman*, released in 1990.
- 44 ‘The East Is Red’ (*Dongfang hong*) is an old revolutionary song which became the anthem of the Cultural Revolution. The song was based on a traditional northern Shaanxi folk tune and given new lyrics to celebrate Chairman Mao and the Communist regime.
- 45 Levie, “Ang Lee: Third-Stage Feminist?”
- 46 Levie, “Ang Lee: Third-Stage Feminist?”
- 47 Chen Kaige’s *The Promise* stars Japanese actor Hiroyuki Sanada and Korean superstar Jang Dong-gun in lead roles alongside Chinese and Hong Kong actors such as Liu Ye, Nicholas Tse and Cecilia Cheung. Stanley Tong’s *The Myth* stars Korean actress Kim Hee Seon and Bollywood idol Mallika Sherawat as Jackie Chan’s female counterparts. These films have been aggressively promoted across the region.
- 48 See for example Chua, “Conceptualizing and East Asian Popular Culture” and Iwabuchi, ed., *Feeling Asian Modernities*.

Conclusion

- 1 Note that the ideogram for ‘East’ (*dong*) in Chinese is a superimposition of the ‘tree’ radical (*mu*) on the ‘sun’ radical (*re*). Thus, the turn to and from the East is represented by the entanglement of the sun within the branches of a tree at sunrise.
- 2 The heliotrope is any of a genus (*heliotropium*) that have fragrant, purple flowers. The plant requires rich soil and full sun in order to thrive. Its roots are not deep, and furthermore, they are useful roots, used to yield the drug valerian (from the garden heliotrope). The heliotrope is also, as Derrida notes, a kind of stone — a bloodstone — or what Derrida refers to as an ‘oriental jasper’ — greenish, sprinkled with red spots, acknowledging the essentialist aspects to the ways in which Chineseness has been considered, and which also fold into the Chinese exotic.
- 3 Derrida, “White Mythology”.
- 4 Derrida, “White Mythology”, p. 250. Heliotropic metaphors give us too little knowledge because the sun cannot be known and its presence cannot be mastered. The sun both turns and hides itself.

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