Encounters between East and West: Intercultural Perspectives

Gregory McCarthy
Youzhong Sun
Xianlin Song *Editors*

Transcultural Connections: Australia and China

Encounters between East and West

Intercultural Perspectives

Series Editor

Fred Dervin, The University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

This book series publishes volumes problematizing the issue of East versus West. The topics covered in the series represent past, current and future trends in intercultural encounters and communication between the East and West, including: - The role of language in such encounters, for example plurilingualism and English as a global language. - The impact of digital technologies in East/West interactions. - The construction of the East/West in different kinds of discourses, such as in media, fiction, educational products and services, marketing and tourism. - Diachronic examinations of encounters between the East/West. - The impact of mobility/migration. - Comparison of different but similar populations in the East/West (e.g. migrants, teachers, etc.). - Redefinitions of the East/West, in terms of changing frontiers, political terms. The series also demonstrates innovative ways of conducting intercultural research. It has now become a cliché to say that intercultural encounters have increased over recent decades. Interculturality is not new – far from it! Encounters between people from different backgrounds speaking different languages have always taken place, but the difference today is the speed and ease with which they occur. Research on interculturality and intercultural communication dates back to the 1950s with different paradigms emerging over the years. However, we have now reached a mature stage of scientific development and discussions on this topic. While initially a simple understanding of 'national culture' was used to explain what happened when people from different countries met, today analyses of interculturality are more complex and also take into account elements such as gender, religion, social class and age. The last decade has seen major changes in the way interculturality is studied, with a shift from an overemphasis on culture to a focus on identity. Global politics has also changed since the 1950s and some countries that used to be colonies or 'closed' societies have (re-)emerged and in some cases taken on economic, political and symbolic positions. The dichotomy of the East vs. West has also reappeared after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This largely imaginary and political characterization of our world now deserves more attention, especially in relation to intercultural encounters and communication between these two spheres.

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Series Preface

I am delighted to welcome McCarthy, Sun and Song's important opus *Transcultural Connections: Australia and China* to my book series. Although its focus is mostly about the 'interconnectedness', 'mis-connectedness' and hopes for 're-connectedness' between Australia and China, it has relevance for the whole world since it problematizes issues (e.g. arts, ecology, education, mobility/migration) that concern us all. I believe that this interdisciplinary and well-thought-of book allows us to unthink and rethink everyone's current engagement with China by confronting imaginaries and realities about the connections between the Middle Kingdom and ourselves.

Published during the COVID-19 crisis the book will definitely have a lasting influence on readers who are interested in 'connections' that they themselves might determine as *global, intercultural, cosmopolitan, etc.* (the list of such qualifiers is endless in today's academia, see Dervin & Simpson, 2021). The choice of the word *connections* made by the authors could not be more fitting today as the world appears to be torn apart between togetherness/affinity in the fight against this irrational virus and uncoupling/disunion, especially in an ideological-economic-political-diplomatic sense. But even in the current disconnections between the 'West' and China, connections are still very much alive as many of the chapter authors of the book demonstrate insightfully about Australia/China.

There are many potential equivalent words for *connection* in the Chinese language. 连接 (lián jiē) is one of them. It refers to verbs such as *to join, to link, to attach* and to the nouns *connection* and *a link on a webpage* (mostly in reference to technology). Interestingly, the first character 连 (lián) has an ideographic that describes a cart 车 moving 辶 goods between cities, whilst the second 接 (jiē), which can mean *to meet or welcome somebody, to receive, to answer (the phone)*, is composed of the characters for hand (扌, shǒu) and concubine (妾, qiè). This ensemble of characters seems to add nicely to the idea of *connections*, which is then not just about performing a 'link' but also about facilitating the 'movement' of goods and people, as well as 'welcoming' them!

I admit that this is all easier said than done… *to connect, to meet, to open one's door to others* in times like ours… What the authors describe about connections and misconnections is disheartening at times—but realistic: 'cosmopolitanism vs. disconnected nationalism'; the anxiety experienced in front of the Other (here: China), which translates in positions that are clearly anti-Chinese, ethnocentric and politically driven (in research too!); political and diplomatic tensions; misunderstandings and misrepresentations; Othering but also the rehashing of the ideology of the 'clash of civilisations'.

However, the authors also offer hope for the future and I would like to venture a comparison to one of my musical experiences to underline the importance of their endeavours. I would like here to refer to the minimalist composer and pianist Philip Glass, whose work is known for building up from repetitive tunes and fluid layers. In 2014, his Études for piano were published. Glass had been composing them for about 20 years. These Études are very diverse in tempo, mood and dynamic, oscillating between different patterns. For Pianist Sally Whitwell being able to play the Études is 'rather like having a relationship… you really get to know them, their bad habits, their flaws, until you finally arrive at that deep level of intimacy you can only have with someone who is The One' (Wilkie, 2018). In December 2014, I purchased the first recording of the Complete Piano Études by pianist Maki Namekawa in Belgium. I was immediately seduced by the way the pianist seemed to balance both passion and precision in her rendition of each piece. I had heard Dennis Russell Davies's performance of some of the Études from a recording of the 2008 Ruhr Piano Festival but it sounded more restrained and detached. Following the release of Namekawa's CD, several recordings were made available (amongst others): Jenny Lin (2017), Jeroen van Veen (2017), Jacopo Salvatori (2018) and Sally Whitwell (2018). Every one of these recordings seems to be playing different versions of the Études, in a sense. At a concert in London in 2015, where four pianists were playing the Études alongside Glass himself, this diversity was described as follows (Fairman, 2015).

> There was a world of difference between Clare Hammond's precision and Maki Namekawa's rich colours, Vikingur Olafsson's dreamy introspection and Timo Andres's articulate intelligence. Highlights included Andres in the playful, lucid Etude 10 and Namekawa in the elegiac Etude 20, with its unusual (for Glass) harmonic uncertainties. Best of all was Olafsson in the supersensitive stillness of Etude 5—so mesmerizing that he could not find his way off the platform afterwards.

Some of these different versions I like—others I find difficult to listen to. Some of them appear to be too fast, too sensitive or too dreamy to my taste. I realized that Namekawa's version, which I have listened to so many times, has, in a sense, 'infected' my ears with static sounds (although she performs the Études fluidly!). As a consequence, I have struggled to reorganize, revisit and reconsider my engagement with the Études from different angles. But I have tried to be open towards different interpretations, listening carefully to them, to how similar and different they sound to me, taking into account my own (changing) sensibilities and moods, the types of piano used for the recordings, my use of headphones or loudspeakers, etc.

I feel that what I have just described about my engagement and perceptions of different versions of Glass's music corresponds to what the editors and chapter

authors of *Transcultural Connections: Australia and China* are sharing with us. By (re-)connecting us with China and other places, they suggest that we take the time to unthink and rethink transculturality, but also what appears to be different and similar between us, our (political, ideological, representational) preferences. They also empower them by shaping new tools for doing so. This is what Shi Wei does with the misunderstood notion of 'all-under-heaven'; Tony Hughes-d'Aeth and Xianlin Song in their important and convincing work about transcultural education; Guanglin Wang in counterposing Plumwood and Laozi about dualism between man and nature, or Ni Fan and Tony Hughes-d'Aeth in their comparison of Rong's *Wolf Totem* and Leigh's *The Hunter*.

I forgot to explain that the word Études refers to a composition that aims to train a pianist in technical difficulties. It comes from the French word for *to study*. The word derives itself from Latin *studium* which can mean devotion/pursuit/study as well as eagerness/enthusiasm/zeal/spirit. Like Glass's multifaceted Études, I believe that the book that you are about to read will certainly urge you to explore the intricacies of transcultural connections with enthusiasm!

Helsinki, Finland — Fred Dervin

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About This Book

Transcultural Connections: Australia and China

The book *Transcultural Connections: Australia and China* is a unique and original contribution to the knowledge of transcultural engagement between the East and the West, especially between China and Australia. The collection explores how the global system universally interrelates civilizations and how this interrelatedness offers the promise of progress but can evoke the counteracting trend of tribal nationalism. The tension between connected cosmopolitanism and disconnected nationalism is most evident in the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and this book offers hope rather than despair on the connectedness of civilizations. The book addresses the promise of progress by exploring how globalization creates new dynamic interfaces between regions and how rather than clashes of civilizations there are growing forms of reciprocity between civilizations. The book presents an intercultural connection between East and West, across a wide range of disciplines, revealing how encounters through knowledge production and people-to-people connections create new transcultural understanding.

This volume on East to West dialogue is primarily sparked from intellectual exchanges between Chinese, Australian and European scholars who explored global interconnectedness through a wide range of expertise on trade, economics, philosophy, urban studies, education, literature, ecology, Indigenous Art and cultural practice. Moreover, the volume addresses how Australia and China are intertwined in the larger frame of East and West encounters that build transcultural knowledge and understanding across disciplinary domains. The book reveals how the COVID-19 crises whilst devastating to humankind can bring transcultural advancement in

knowledge production and sharing, augmenting the collective comprehension of interconnectedness to create a global sense of community.

Greg McCarthy
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Theorising Transcultural Connectedness in an Era of Global Uncertainty

Theorising Transcultural Connectedness in an Era of Global Uncertainty

Greg McCarthy and Xianlin Song

Abstract In a global era of uncertainty, encounters between East and West are now more ambiguous than ever as the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened a sense of exceptionalism with constraints on the mobility of people and trade, and however, digital connections have exponentially enhanced global transcultural communications. The chapter begins by contesting the Eurocentric legacy of regarding other cultures in its own image and appropriating other cultures through its social science and methodologies, and then it addresses how orientalism is challenged by deprovincialising Europe and debunking the assertion that Europe provides the only and true path to modernity. The chapter then critiques the hypothesis of a 'clash of civilisations' by demonstrating how we all live in a transcultural moment where all aspects of the social and historic being between East and West are interconnected. The interconnectedness is established in a series of case studies of encounters between Australia and China via differing kinds of discourse: trade, media, urbanisation, philosophy, education, ecology and cultural practice. These case studies confirm the argument that the exceptional circumstances created by the pandemic have facilitated intense transcultural knowledge production and consumption and intellectual collaboration, albeit more by communication than physical encounters. The chapter argues that cultural encounters of the past weigh heavily on the present, as Australia regards itself as an outpost of European heritage and China has five thousand years of its own civilisation, and that transcultural engagements are paramount in enriching mutual respect between the two nations and peoples, and beyond.

Keywords Orientalism · Clash of civilisations · Deprovincialising · Eurocentrism · Transculturalism

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Introduction

The chapter addresses transcultural connections in an era of global uncertainty. We live in a world of ambiguity: global flows of trade and knowledge remain strong and yet new forms of national barriers arise on a persistent basis. The ambiguity has been most evident with global reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has fostered national and state border closures, suburban quarantining and stay-at-home orders whilst free flows of information are at a time of paramount importance. Some theories talk of the response to the pandemic as conforming to a post-global order (Enderwick and Buckley, 2020; Dannreuther, 2015), exemplified by a dramatic decline in the mobility of people, trade barriers and the rise of nationalism. Brown (2020) depicts the uncertainty over globalisation as longstanding, caused by a shift in the form of governing neoliberalism, which has evoked a more active nation state. For others, globalisation has produced populist nationalist reactions in a wide range of countries, including Western Europe, UK, US and parts of Asia that have fostered cultural exclusion and anti-migration policies (Chacko & Jayasurya, 2018). On the other hand, grave challenges facing the world such as the suppression of the virus, climate change and the deterrent of a nuclear war, require consolidated global approaches and offer the potential for a new global order (Rodrik & Walt, 2020). Moreover, whilst governments are reacting to globalisation through reaffirming national sovereignty, multinational corporations remain global with their sprawling networks of trade, investment and R&D hubs, which are predicted to remain global despite the pandemic (Antras, 2020).

Most importantly, transcultural knowledge production and exchange have grown exponentially despite global uncertainty and closed borders. The restrictions on mobility have facilitated a flourishing level of knowledge exchange, cultural dialogues, book publishing and readership across the globe as people exchange mobility for intellectual engagement online. Equally, academics have displaced conferences with online symposiums and debates at an unprecedented level, proving Plato's adage that 'necessity is the mother of invention'. The enhanced online global connectivity has proven to be an opportune platform to think transculturally in terms of Said's (1978) stress on 'worldliness' that is, to be culturally aware and globally engaged. Jose (2018, CH4, 2) depicts this new appreciation as a form of transcultural mindfulness, which 'is deep, revelatory, dialectical and transformative, a union of cultures through a process of transculturation' (10). Also, in a global era of what Harvey (1989) terms as space–time compression, the transcultural is the online verve for new meanings, for new understanding and new knowledge production. In this regard, global interconnectedness presents the possibilities of expanded transcultural awareness and appreciation across many fields.

This chapter explores these theoretical premises of transcultural possibilities: it starts by addressing the past, the Eurocentric legacy of regarding other cultures in its own image and appropriated other cultures through its social science and methodologies. The chapter then goes on to outline how the fall of the Soviet Union, the clash of civilisations and the civilising mission, place the West at the apex of modernity. The

chapter goes on to outline the character of transcultural knowledge production is practised across a range of disciplinary fields, economics, philosophy, media representation, urbanisation, education, ecology and cultural practices which transculturally link Australia and China.

Unfabling 'East and West'

In his influential book *Unfabling the East: The Enlightenments Encounter with Asia* Osterhammel (2019) presents an explanation of how the hierarchy of cultures and the power of Eurocentric methodologies was constructed in Europe via unfabling the East. By unfabling, Osterhammel (2019) means that early encounters between European travellers and the East saw the latter as inclusive of Eurocentric values but it was only after imperialism and colonialism that Eurocentrism become inclusively European and the East was unfabled as its inferior other.

In his sweep of history, Osterhammel (2019) examined travel diaries of diplomats, pilgrims and learned travellers, to build a picture that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, travelers depicted Asian civilization as equal to that of Europe. This equality, nevertheless, was drawn against the other, the 'savages' and the 'barbarians' who were deemed to lack the civilised attributes of rationality, language, scripts, rituals and moral righteousness evident in the European, Arabic or Chinese civilisations. Osterhammel (2019) traces how the notion of European and Eastern civilization having equal status began to be transformed as European imperialism and colonisation reinvented Europe as the superior civilization and found deficiencies in the previously perceived equal civilisations of the East to justify colonisation.

For Osterhammel (2019) in the eighteenth century, two forces came together to redefine the East as inferior to European civilisation. Firstly, the traveller diaries and tales gave way to academic disciplines, which privileged the scientific evaluation of Asia as the object of study, even if it was made by academics who may not have even gone to Asia. An obvious example is James Mill's whose philosophical history, draws a distinction between Scottish Enlightenment and the 'semi-barbarism' of India and China. As Osterhammel (2019, 186) notes Mills' history of India became the foremost source on precolonial India, which depicted the Hindu civilization as 'worthless and incapable of reform'. Mill never went to India and relied on second and third hand sources, however, he was ever ready to judge the travelers to India as being duped by their proximity to their subject, therein lacking objective judgement. For Osterhammel (2019), Mill is one example of how the East was professionalised as it entered into the European academy as the object of comparison with Europe, which marginalised Asia within global history, evident in Hegel's philosophy of history or Marx's idea of the Asiatic mode of production as an Asian static economy (Osterhammel, 2019, see 29 and 505). The western academic attempts at comprehending Asian otherness were overlaid by a deep-rooted self-referential mindset. As such, for Osterhammel, (2019) Europeans tended to assimilate, reduce and eventually subjugate Eastern cultures to the object of a higher order interpretation.

Secondly, the component of Osterhammel's (2019) theory of unfabling the East was that industrialisation gave economic power to European nations, which propelled colonial and imperialist expansion into Asia, accompanied by and at times led by rapacious entities such as the East India Company (Dalrymple, 2019). Osterhammel (2019) argues that the economic power created European empires and was culturally bolstered by the belief that only European societies were, rational, dynamic and Christian, so that colonial conquest could be proselytised as a civilising mission. Osterhammel (2005, 8) argues that the civilising mission was a justification for subjugation, which was founded on the 'self-proclaimed right and duty to propagate and actively introduce one's norms and institutions to other people based on the unwavering conviction of the inherent superiority and higher legitimacy of one's own way of life'. These two trends, academic differentiation as to whom was civilised and European political conquests, justified as good for the colonised, in Osterhammel (2019) view unfabled the East.

'Deprovincializing Europe'

It is the post-colonial theoretical framework that has offered a serious challenge to the claim that European modernity is the fundamental rupture with the premodern. Said's (1978) Orientalism is regarded as the forerunner of the questioning of Europe's exclusionary claims to modernity. In Seth's view (2014, 2016), post-colonial theory has both critiqued the exclusive claims to European modernity and at the same time opened up the theoretical space for criticising Western social science methodologies. In this regard, post-colonial works by Seth (2016) Chakrabarty (2000), Mignolo (2002) and Mitchell (2003), critique the concepts that are deeply embedded in European thought and theology aiming as they express it to deprovincialise Europe's claim to being the sole example of modernity and the methodologies developed in that tradition as devaluing other forms of analysis and ways of life (Chakrabarty, 2000; Mitchell, 2003; Seth, 2014).

The post-colonial critique has opened up new ways to rethink modernity, in this regard, Charles Taylor critiques theories of Western modernity by making a distinction between the economic and institutional processes and between cultural and technological that characterise the Western modernist tales. Similarly, Jameson (2012) emphasises that what gives European modernity its claim to superiority is the repetitive narrative of its rupture with the premodern world, which becomes a story that westerners repeatedly tell themselves of how we became modern as opposed to others. In Jameson's (2012) narrative of modernity, the story is a construct, an invention, deployed with European pretension of itself as telling the ultimate history of modernity. Seth (2016, 395) extends this argument to stress that to encompass East and West (North and South) the modernist narratives has to be plural, that is 'none are modern in the way that we have thought, where modernity is a narrative and a disposition and, often, a desire: a way in which people have told stories about themselves and others, a way of being-in-the-world.'

With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, the notion of pluralist modernity was ideologically challenged by claims that capitalism was the true and only form of modernity and this was most evident in Fukuyama's (1992) theory that the end of history is liberal democracy. However, it was Fukuyama's teacher and colleague Huntington who mounted a strong culturalist challenge to the end of history, arguing that there was now an ongoing clash of civilisations. Huntington (1996) depicts the world as divided along civilisational lines, where fixed cultures clash for prominence. The 9/11 attacks in the US, seem to confirm Huntington's thesis of Western civilization against Islam. Whilst many theorists have argued that Huntington's thesis is fundamentally flawed (Chiozza, 2002; Chomsky, 2001; Rizvi, 2011; Said, 2001) and highly objectionable and politically overlaid with racial overtones, it has remained a prominent cultural and geopolitical trope for over twenty-five years. Rizvi (2011) contends that the clash of civilisations hypothesis has become embedded in the social imagination of the West, notably in the US and for that matter Australia. Moreover, the clash of civilisations rhetoric has been revived under the Trump presidency depicting the clash between the US and China as between two immutably different civilisations (Brown, 2020; Ward, 2019).

Rizvi (2011) argues that the clash of civilisations fails to see that civilisations have multiple layers, economic, ideological and political and no civilisation is an absolute, instead there is continual cross fertilisation and sharing between cultures. Plus, culturalisation in any form is dangerous (Rizvi, 2011) as it becomes a self-fulling prophecy, therefore, Rizvi urges a new social imagination that embodies alternative narratives, multiple perspectives, essentially those which do not begin from the premise of a hierarchy of civilisations, which recognises how cultures interact to create transcultural meanings. It is upon this theoretical grounding that the transcultural turn highlights the connectedness in an era of global uncertainty and presents a real alternative to advance scholarship in the fields of humanities and social sciences which transcend the boundaries of human imaginary.

The Transcultural Turn

It is from the critiques of Eurocentrism that a transcultural appreciation emerged and flourished. Jose (2018) argues that once there was an awareness of the transcultural literature its origins could be traced back to the interaction between Cuba and the US in the nineteenth century. Transcultural literature, Jose (2018) writes is a 'union of cultures' seen in the subtle exchange of values in which an entirely new culture emerges. Jose (2018) argues that to appreciate world literature, it is essential to recognise its transcultural history and its diverse contemporary expressions. In this transcultural appreciation of transformation, the hierarchical distinction of civilised versus barbarian are exposed for their racial inflections, never more evident in the writings of Alex Wright. Jose (2018) highlights how Wright's novel *Carpentaria* is a transcultural transformative book, it is a transcultural dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and equally a dialogue with China, notably

with Inner Mongolia, where its stories have special transcultural resonances. As Jose (2018) notes the concept of transcultural inquiry is indispensable to an understanding of connections between diverse cultures and equally for a general approach to conceptualising differing relations within and between nations.

Jose (2018, 2) write that transcultural literature 'evokes a recognition that we all live in a transcultural moment, where we are part of the social and historical interconnectedness between cultures. This is a substantial case of transculturation in action'. By this evocation, the transcultural becomes a vibrant connection between cultures and this is abundantly evident in the longstanding literary exchanges between Australia and China (Song & Jose, 2020). Transcultural vibrancy is equally evident in the education field (2018) and forms the basis of Song and Cadman's (2012) writing on transcultural pedagogy. In recent years, the transcultural approach has presented a challenge to the dominance of Western modernity in education and there has been a demand for intercultural curriculum and pluralist learning environments (Dervin, 2011; Song & McCarthy, 2020). At the heart of the struggle for transcultural educational justice, is the destabilising of the civilising mission idea that bolsters Western education as the superior model that all must aspire to (Seth, 2014; Sakai, 2001; Connell, 2007, 2017; Chen, 2010; Lingard, 2006; Song, 2016). Confronted by a continuation of colonial educational philosophy, Mignolo (2002) and Chakrabarty (2000) argue that it is essential to provincialise European epistemology to show it is but one form of knowledge production. Mignolo and Tlostanova (2006) argue that colonialism drew borderlines between the civilised and the 'barbarians' and this has continued as a border between North and South knowledge appreciation, a border which has to be crossed to recognise the theoretical sophistication that exists on the Southern side. Similarly, Santos (2007) stresses that mobility of people, ideas and knowledge between South and North, East and West, as the basis to developing a new inclusive pedagogy. Song and McCarthy (2020) stress that, when it comes to Australia, the mobility of knowledge has grown in an unprecedented manner but an appreciation of this knowledge pluralism and the opportunities for transcultural understanding has met with economic and racialised resistance.

According to Rizvi (2011), the Western education model is facing a strong challenge from Asia, notably from China, where elite education is flourishing. Equally, Marginson (2015, 700) argues that the rise of Asia is destabilising the Western sense of educational superiority because 'the Post-Confucian systems' of higher education and research is rising significantly in global rankings. Similarly, Morris-Suzuki (2000, 20) argues educational mobility is challenging the view that Australia is a 'Western outpost of Western universalism'. With 17 per cent of the Australian population as Asian, 1.2 million people of Chinese ancestry (ABS 2018) and 455,389 of Indian heritage (1.9 per cent) and the growth of Indian language spoken at home (Acharya, 2017), Asia is in Australia and this continually challenges fixed cultural stereotypes, however, does foster intensified cultural anxieties (Ang, 2000, see Hu Dan in this volume). Asia in Australia has created opportunities for cultural reflexivity (Takayama, 2016) and appreciation of cultural diversity (Rizvi & Beech, 2017) to challenge cultural and racial stereotypes.

To meet the transcultural challenge to Orientalism, Dervin (2011) argues that educationists must commence with a social imagination that Asian students come from interconnected civilisations, as such, it is essential to embrace the notion of their fluid and not solid stereotyped identities (Dervin, 2011). A view shared by Rizvi and Choo (2020, 7) who argue that cosmopolitan world views are shared by many young people in Asia, 'proving it is not an exclusively Western construct that alone suggests the need to go beyond the limits of national thinking and tradition-bound parochialism, and which emphasises the interconnectedness and worldliness of individuals, communities, languages, and cultures'. They warn, however, that whilst the cosmopolitan imagination is held by many people across Asian cultures, there remains a barrier to its appreciation in Western pedagogy that still assets only Western and not a pluralist cosmopolitanism. Dutton (2002) also questions whether it is possible for the consciousness of the Asian Other to enter into Western educational thought without being framed as inferior. This is the very issue that Jayasuriya (2015) and Song and McCarthy (2020) address that in Australia, there is a culturalism in Australia that defines Asians as lacking critical objectivity, which is falsely assumed to come only from the European intellectual tradition.

Transcultural Connectivity in Practice

The above section on the post-colonial critique of Eurocentric thinking has paved the way for the exposition of case studies of transcultural connectivity in practice. The focus of this section is Australia and China's transcultural connections, where the interconnectedness has brought significant benefits to Australia and China. Economically the interconnectedness has been based on the complementarity of trade with China becoming Australia's major trading partner in 2009. Secondly, Chinese migration to Australia has led to those with Chinese ancestry constituting the largest ethnic minority in Australia and Chinese students comprise the major cohort of overseas students on Australian campuses (Song & McCarthy, 2020). The interconnectedness between China and Australia has sparked anxiety, Walker (2019) speaks of this as history repeating itself and like the past, this has seen increased security legislation to defend Australian national sovereignty (Williams, 2016; Rizvi, 2011; Jayasurya, 2002).

On the Australia and China complex relationship, Laurenceson argues that despite political and diplomatic tensions between Australia and China, the actual trade between the two countries is large and growing. He notes that the driving force in trade is complementarity, China needs Australia's mineral resources and Australia purchases complex electronic goods from China. Laurenceson, regards the trade complementary as a sound economic base to overcome the diplomatic tensions between the two countries.

However, Hu Dan is less sanguine over the potential for resolving the political tensions between Australia and China. She notes that the COVID-19 pandemic responses have intensified misunderstanding and media misrepresentation. Hu Dan

explores the disconnections in media representation between the narratives and the lived reality of people in Australia and China. Hu Dan takes two case studies, the bushfires in Australia and the outbreak of the Coronavirus in China, to show how stereotypes dominate the representation at the expense of knowledge sharing and an understanding of other people's situations. For instance, China's reporting of the Australian bushfires had an exotic representation to it, concentrating on fauna and flora, without fully capturing the human tragedy and resilience of the Australian people when they were confronted by the threat to their lives or to the loss of their property. Likewise, Australian reporting of the outbreak of the Coronavirus in Wuhan took an Orientalist perspective, which lacked empathy for the people in Wuhan, moreover, the media representation assuming this was an outbreak confined to China and not a global pandemic.

Richard Hu builds a case of Australia and China transcultural connections via the mobility of people and capital between two global cities, Shanghai and Sydney. By using air passenger data, Hu reveals that the flow of people between the two cities was on a continuing upward curve but due to the COVID-19 restrictions, mobility has come to an abrupt halt with border closures and air travel restrictions. He poignantly concludes his analysis by noting that COVID-19 has dried up the transcultural urban flow, exemplified by Shanghai and Sydney connectivity, but he warns that geopolitics may also become a devastating city-divide between the two cities.

Shi Wei argues that the resurgence of Huntington's clash of civilizations (1996) and its application to China has produced a counter theory in Chinese philosophy, with the ancient Confucian concept of 'all-under-heaven' (*tianxia zhuyi).* She argues that this theory has been incorporated into the Party-State's official discourse as a unifying universal philosophy. The dilemma for China is that in Australia, (*tianxia zhuyi)* is reads in geopolitical terms as subterfuge for Chinese expansionism. As a result, Australia is reluctant to address Chinese philosophy on its own terms rather China is read through the prism of competing US-China Empires. The point at issue for Shi Wei is that, to establish transcultural transformation, cultures and civilisations need to trust one another and this seems far from the case.

In their chapter, Fred Dervin, Ning Chen, Mei Yuan and Sude, turn the gaze from West to East to argue that Chinese Minzu education (often referred to as 'Chinese minority/nationality education') provides an inspiration for intercultural and transcultural connectivity. Their case study uses the Minzu university as an ideal type to explore the pros and cons of this educational model that may well have relevance to education diversity in Europe, China, and Australia. Using an educational survey of student responses during a course dedicated to interculturality, the study reveals that students recognised the need for open engagement with other cultures but that for them a multi-ideological notion like interculturality requires lifelong engagement.

Tony Hughes-d'Aeth and Xianlin Song extends the argument on transcultural education by reflecting on the pedagogic practice of sending a group of Australian students to study Chinese literature in English at Beijing Foreign Studies University. The objective was for transcultural awareness to develop by 'doing', in a 'contact zone' where students experience another culture through book-reading as well as physically living on campus at BFSU. The course 'Writing China in Country'

was an experimental educational programme, which provided a unique platform for Australian university students to learn through a multidimensional experience. The great benefit of this transcultural connectivity was its immersion in the Chinese education system at an elite university and with the enhanced engagement with China's history and heritage.

Qu Mingxin examines transcultural encounters going the other way by analysing the experience of Chinese students studying overseas in the US. She contests the dominant expectation and imperative that Chinese students must 'integrate' both with the US learning programme and with the home culture. In assessing this onus on overseas students to integrate, Qu Mingxin questions the validity and necessity of 'integration' and argues for a more equitable and fluid concept of 'inclusion'. She warns, however, that there remains in the US a strong belief in Huntington's (1996) clash of civilisations, which positions Chinese students as coming from an inferior culture, and therefore, they cannot be seen in an inclusive framing as it implies equal cultures. Qu Mingxin argues that the concept of 'inclusion' places overseas students at the centre of the process carrying cosmopolitan knowledge and experience (re: Rizvi and Choo, 2020) and not as a mere object of an integration trope.

Yang Liu examines student travelling from West to East, using a case study of US students studying in China and how they feel a persistent sense of exclusion and ethno-racial stereotyping. Yang Liu observers that with the rise of China's economy, it has increasingly become a new destination of educational migration from the West and this has posed challenges for China, which is as yet fully prepared to manage a large inflow of overseas students with diverse cultural backgrounds. Utilising an emic sociological perspective, Yang Liu notes that overseas student in China are subject to *Othering*, where American students experience their 'whiteness' in a racialised manner (see also Yang Liu and Dervin 2019) and these students adopted various strategies to negotiate their *Otherness* in China. She notes that with the ever-increasing number of overseas students in China there is the potential for a shift in cultural awareness and sensitivity in China, which may well offer transcultural cultural exchange devoid of othering.

Mark Beeson argues that the complementarity of the economic relationship between Australia and China remains a ballast to restore some semblance of transcultural interconnectedness. Beeson is particularly concerned with how both Australia and China are responding to climate change as both are over determined by capitalist economies that create global warming. Beeson observes that with the change in the Biden administration, it may be possible for the US and the PRC to address seriously climate change policies on a global scale. If that is the case, Australia may well be exposed as an environmental laggard, unless, that is, Australia revaluates its environmental status and seek to become a renewable energy superpower and therein reset the relations with China in a transcultural ecological manner.

Guanglin Wang takes up the argument that globalisation has made climate change an unprecedented international concern, forcing a philosophical rethink of mankind's place in the world. To explore this phenomenon, Guanglin Wang correlates human-induced climate change with the concept of the Anthropocene. Guanglin Wang, counterposes the Australian-born ecological feminist Val Plumwood, world view

with that of traditional Chinese philosophy of Laozi. In this comparison, Guanglin Wang shows that Plumwood and Laozi address the issue of dualism in a similar manner, for Plumwood, the Western human-centred approach creates an anthropocentric way of regarding man as separate from nature, and therefore, ever ready to exploit it. In Laozi's philosophy, there is harmony between man and nature and this like Plumwood's feminist ecology, runs counter to the Western idea of duality: human/animal; mind/body, reason/emotion, civilised/primitive that leads to the colonisation of people and nature. He argues that Australia and China must address the human desires to conquer nature and the desire to produce and consume no matter the environmental cost.

James Oswald argues that the environmental degradation in China began to be recognised by Chinese environmental epistemic communities before filtering upward to the CCP leadership. In his study, he found that transcultural ecological awareness developed from below and filtered through to the Party-State, which obliged a national policy response. It was this pressure from outside the Politburo that in 2007 produced a philosophical and policy change under the term 'ecological civilisation' (eco-civ) to confronting the environmental crises facing China. Whilst it might be thought that eco-civ is mere rhetoric; according to Oswald, this is not the case, as there have been continuous policy pronouncements and strategies to minimize environmental degradation and shift the Chinese production system away from coal to renewable energy. Oswald sees that the transcultural global thinking on ecological civilization has created a transformation in the way the Party-State addresses 'eco civ' and a transformation in environmental policies.

Ni Fan and Tony Hughes-d'Aeth have also addressed the issue of mankind and nature. They argue that in Chinese and Australian literature, there is a transcultural appreciation that 'nature' is imbued with a 'nation spirit', consequentially animal extinction stands as a symbol of ecological disasters that have a national ghostly presence. Ni Fan and Tony Hughes-d'Aeth address this notion of extinction by comparing two novels, Jiang Rong's *Wolf Totem* (《狼图腾》Láng Túténg, 2004) and Julia Leigh's *The Hunter* (1999). Jiang Rong's novel *Wolf Totem* draws on the Cultural Revolution and its ecologically disastrous attempts to turn the grasslands of Inner Mongolia into crop farms. The novel depicts the extinction of the Mongolian wolves as a metonym for a whole way of life on the Eurasia steppes, that tragically no longer exists. Ni Fan and Tony Hughes-d'Aeth then turn their attention to Julia Leigh's novel *The Hunter,* which is set in Tasmania and is concerned with the extinction of an ancient apex predator, known variously as the Tasmanian Tiger or the Tasmanian Wolf. Ni Fan and Tony Hughes-d'Aeth draw parallels between the Tasmanian Tiger and the Mongolian Wolf as a ghost-like species, haunting the memory of the past and the destruction of species and indigenous peoples' way of life. Further, they argue that the manner of the extinctions are metaphors for criticism of past national policies in China and Australia, more poignantly, their ghostly presence is always there in the nation unconsciousness.

David Carter explores the transcultural connections between Australian Indigenous Art and Asia through Indigenous traditional story-telling and creative expressions. He takes as a case study a major Indigenous cultural exhibition *One Road:*

Aboriginal Art from Australia's Deserts, which travelled through Australia and Asia. Carter follows the exhibition from Australian cities to Asia, arguing that the global recognition and connectedness of Indigenous art has become part of the Australian government's public diplomacy but goes much deeper to express transcultural exchange and admiration. Carter concludes with three observations, firstly, Indigenous art reveals the connections that the first Nation People have with their land physically and spiritually, secondly, the art exposes the ghosts of the colonial past and lastly, the stories that the Indigenous people tell about themselves have transcultural poignancy and global interconnectedness.

Weimin Zhang is interested in connectivity within China between young netizens and officialdom. To explore how connectivity between netizens and Party-State officials, the chapter uses a 2017 case study of *@ the Center of the Communist Youth League* in its representations of the "Two Sessions" [*liang hui*] of the government dialogues with netizens. In this quantitative study, Weimin Zhang explores the multiple forms and political positions that netizens exhibit in their online presence and in their dialogues with bureaucracy. Given that netizens push the boundaries of China's civil society, the Communist Youth League has established a communication network with netizens to find a form of unified connectivity and this is to be found in netizens nationalism and national pride.

Liu Lurong and Huang Zhong address the transcultural connection between Australia and China via the transnational writing of Brian Castro. Liu Lurong and Huang Zhong use the sociological theory of liminality 'smellscapes' to analyse two Castro's novels, *Birds of Passage* and *After China.* The authors place Castro's writing within the broader frame of Australian multicultural literature, which offers hybridity, plurality and transgressive moments in exploring the past, present and future. Liu Lurong and Huang Zhong highlight how Brian Castro is the best known contemporary Asian-Australian writer with a transnational background. They then apply the 'smellscape' theory to their two case study books, arguing that Castro's novels are infused with the smells of multicultural communities and these smells are markers of class differences and ethnicity. The authors conclude that liminal 'smellscape' in Castor's writing has a transcultural effect with the possibilities of new identities and transnational cosmopolitanism.

Conclusion

This opening section grapples with the transcultural encounters between East and West in an era of uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has restricted people's mobility but has enhanced knowledge sharing via communication. The chapter then, following Osterhammel's (2019) argument, sets out to address how history reveals encounters between West and East were once seen as between equal civilisations to then one of orientalist dissimilarity. It goes on to deprovincialise Eurocentrism both for its exclusionist claims to modernity and to its methodology

used to study the East and colonised peoples. The post-colonial critique of Eurocentric provided the epistemic space for transcultural theory to come to the fore and offer a new way of producing and appreciating the many cultural crossing between East and West. The transcultural theoretical foundation was then applied to connections between Australia and China, notably those of trade, media representations, philosophy, urban cities, education, ecology and culture practices to show how the transcultural approach opens up new vistas of knowledge production and appreciation.

The transcultural connectivity perspective on global interaction is most pertinent in an era of considerable uncertainty with the rise of nationalism and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic that prompts border closures. Despite the barriers to global mobility, transcultural exchange across, multiple fields, especially literature, cultural practice and education remains strong, notably by new online platforms and global dialogues in which connectivity expands the realms of knowledge production and exchange. Whilst there is speculation of a post-global world due to the lack of mobility, this is not the case with transcultural knowledge production, distribution and consumption, which has flourished in a period of pandemic exceptionalism.

We hope this volume contributes to a greater appreciation of the transcultural theory and a deeper understanding of the transcultural connections between Australia and China, and beyond.

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Cultural Engagements and Exchanges: Australia and China

Australia–China Relations Through the Frame of Trade

James Laurenceson

Abstract Since 2017, the political and diplomatic relationship between Australia and China has seen better days; notably, in that, no Australian Prime Minister has been invited to China since 2016. Yet despite these tensions, the economic relationship remains strong. The traditional mainstay of the trading relationship (natural resources for manufactured goods) remains solid and has been joined by an increasing flow of services (tourism, education, and logistics). Even the lingering critique of the Australia–China economic relationship that it is largely transactional—that is, useful for the balance sheet now but not particularly important as a driver of long-run improvements in living standards—no longer appears to hold. This is demonstrated in China having now emerged as Australia's leading partner in scientific research collaboration, in no small part off the back of people-to-people flows between research institutions in both countries. The early data indicate that even the COVID-19 crisis has been unable to remove China as critical to Australia's international economic horizon (albeit affecting education and tourism). There are factors pushing in a different direction, such as the impact of US-China strategic competition on Australia–China science and technology research collaboration, and a widening gap between Australia and Chinese interests as calculated at a political level in both countries. But the resilient economic relationship serves to make the point that much of the Australia–China relationship takes place amongst different actors with different calculations, and the national interest benefits of these interactions have not escaped the attention of political decision makers.

Keywords Australia–China trade · Diplomacy of trade and business · ChAFTA

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Privileging Politics

By the end of 2019, former Australian ambassador to China (2007–2011), Geoff Raby was being widely quoted in his assessment that 'The [Australia-China] relationship is at the lowest ebb it's been in the 47 years since diplomatic relations were established' (Hall, 2019). It is a stark observation that an Australian Prime Minister has not visited China since September 2016 (Turnbull, 2016), while a Chinese leader has not stepped foot on Australian shores since March 2017 (Turnbull, 2017). Ministerial-level visits have also been few and far between. When former foreign minister Julie Bishop resigned from the role in August 2018, she had not been to China in two and a half years (Bishop, 2016). Her successor Marise Payne went in November 2018 but has not returned since (Payne, 2018a).

Interventions seen as potentially signalling a thaw, such as an upbeat speech on the China relationship delivered by then-Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull at the University of New South Wales on 7 August 2018, were quickly overtaken by other events (Turnbull, 2018). On 24 August 2018, Turnbull was deposed as leader. A day earlier, amidst the domestic political chaos, the man who would replace him, Scott Morrison, took the opportunity as acting Home Affairs minister to inform the Australian public that Chinese technology companies, notably Huawei and ZTE, would be excluded from involvement in Australia's 5G rollout (Fifield & Morrison, 2018). It later emerged that five days before the Australian public were told, Turnbull had called Donald Trump to inform the US president of Canberra's decision (Uhlmann & Grigg, 2018). In another report based on interviews with 'more than two dozen current and former Western officials' Australia was said to have led a global campaign pressing for action against Huawei (Bryan-Low & Packham, 2019). For Beijing, this was a betrayal of the terms of the bilateral relationship that Prime Minister John Howard had struck with the then-Chinese president, Jiang Zemin in 1996 (White, 2018). This involved a promise that, while Australia's security alliance with the United States (US) was not negotiable from Canberra's perspective, nothing Australia did as a US ally would be directed at China (Howard, 2011).

To be sure, Australia too has felt betrayed. To provide just one example, on 21 April 2017 at the Australia–China High-Level Security Dialogue, the two countries had agreed 'not to conduct or support cyber-enabled theft of intellectual property, trade secrets or confidential business information with the intent of obtaining competitive advantage' (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2017). Yet despite Canberra's long-standing reticence in assigning attribution to cyber-attacks, on 21 December 2018, Foreign Minister Payne felt compelled to issue a statement expressing 'serious concern about a global campaign of cyber-enabled commercial intellectual property theft by a group known as APT10, acting on behalf of the Chinese Ministry of State Security' (Payne, 2018b).

Ties between the two capitals managed to plumb even deeper depths in 2020 following Minister Payne's call on 19 April for an 'independent review mechanism to examine the development of this [COVID-19] epidemic' (Payne, 2020). When pressed on what she wanted to know from China, she cited 'transparency' about 'the

genesis of the virus' and 'the openness with which information was shared.' Just two days earlier and freshly returned from a visit to Washington, Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton was asked by an interlocutor, 'The US wants China to come clean over the virus outbreak, do you agree?'(Dutton, 2020). He replied, 'I do think there will be a reset in the way the world interacts with China. We do want more transparency…when you've got a Communist Party that doesn't have the transparency that other comparable economies have, then that is a problem. And when you see their involvement in foreign interference, when you see their involvement in cyber, all of these aspects need to be looked at again'. On April 22, Prime Minister Morrison appeared to endorse the World Health Organization having powers to enter a country and undertake investigations put by his interviewer as being akin to 'weapons inspectors' (Morrison, 2020a). The same day he touted a phone call with President Trump tweeting that they had 'talked about the World Health Organisation and working together to improve the transparency and effectiveness of international responses to pandemics. Australia and the US are the best of mates and we'll continue to align our efforts…' (Morrison, 2020b). This sequence was again enough for Beijing to surmise that Australia was working in partnership with the US to attack China. On 13 May, the most optimism that recently retired senior Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade official, Richard Maude could muster was that 'If it can be achieved, a workable relationship with China remains in Australia's interests…Such a relationship would be neither warm nor trouble-free. But it would better serve Australia's national interests than a permanent slide into outright hostility' (Maude, 2020).

Yet all of this gloomy analysis privileges a political frame and an examination of the Australia–China relationship through the eyes of the two countries' capitals. This is, however, far from the totality of bilateral ties. This chapter switches the frame to a trade one in which Australia–China engagement is not measured by the frequency of leader's meetings or ministerial visits but rather by the intensity with which thousands of Australian and Chinese businesses and millions of consumers interact in decentralised markets. This is not to say that political tensions cannot sometimes come crashing through to disrupt the activities of these actors, but for the most part, these take a back seat to other concerns, such as consumer preferences, production complementarities, and the geographical distribution of purchasing power. In light of the different priorities involved, it is perhaps not surprising that this chapter shows developments in the Australia–China trade relationship bearing little resemblance to those in the political relationship. In fact, far from being at the 'lowest ebb', by some metrics, the bilateral trade relationship is at, or close to, record highs.

Economics Triumphing over Politics

In 2011, the then-governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA), Glenn Stevens memorably told a business audience, 'The proverbial pet-shop galah can by now recite the facts on Australia's trade with China and our terms of trade, which are at a level not seen in over a century' (Stevens, 2011). China's switch in the mid-2000s to becoming

a large net importer of mining and energy products saw it eclipse Japan in 2007 as Australia's largest trading partner (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2020a). Yet when iron ore prices began falling sharply in 2014, the durability of the Australia–China trade relationship was called into question by a number of well-placed commentators. Economist and former Australia ambassador to China (1985–1988), Ross Garnaut wrote in 2013 that, 'Australia's resources boom was a China boom' but now China was shifting its growth model away from iron ore and coking coal-hungry investment towards consumption (Garnaut, 2013). Garnaut assessed this meant that 'dog days' were on the way for Australia. The following year, former HSBC chief economist and RBA board member John Edwards mooted that, 'Within a few years it is possible that Japan will once again be Australia's biggest export market, displacing China' (Edwards, 2014).

What unfolded was vastly different. The total value of Australia's exports to China eased modestly in 2014 and 2015 but remained, at a minimum, 83 percent higher than to Japan (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2020b). By 2016, the value of exports had eclipsed that in 2013 (Table 1). Then, rather than politics pulling down trade, data show record highs being set in each year from 2017 to 2019. In 2019, the value of Australia's exports to China had grown to be 179 percent higher than to Japan. This reflected a number of factors.

First, iron ore volumes and prices proved resilient. It is debatable whether this should be considered surprising: resources companies themselves have consistently been bullish about the long-run prospects of China's iron ore demand (Laurenceson, 2015). The view of resources companies was also supported by long-run modelling undertaken by the Commonwealth Treasury in 2014 that pointed to the world iron

Table 1 Australia's trade with China, selected years

	2013		2016		2019	
Exports	$	% Total	$	% Total	$	% Total
Total	94.1	29.1	95.7	28.4	168.6	34.2
Agriculture, forestry and fisheries	9.2	22.1	10.3	21.7	16.8	31.9
Minerals and fuels	69.3	43.6	62.3	43.9	118.1	46.6
Manufactures	4.6	11.2	4.9	11.1	6.1	11.0
Other goods	3.5	17.0	4.8	19.1	8.3	28.3
Services	7.5	12.5	13.4	17.2	19.3	18.9
Imports						
Total	49.6	14.8	62.3	17.8	82.8	19.5
Agriculture, forestry and fisheries	1.0	6.8	1.3	6.8	1.6	6.7
Minerals and fuels	0.2	0.4	1.4	5.5	3.8	9.5
Manufactures	45.3	26.1	55.8	28.0	73.2	31.4
Other goods	0.8	8.4	1.0	9.7	0.9	8.3
Services	2.3	3.0	2.8	3.4	3.4	3.2

Source Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

ore price falling from the historic highs of 2011, but remaining well above historical averages out to 2030 (Bullen et al., 2014).

Second, within the minerals and fuels sector, China added other Australian goods to its shopping basket, including liquefied natural gas (LNG), coal and gold. By 2019, LNG had grown to become Australia's second-largest export to China, worth $16.1 billion (Pantle, 2020).

Third, Chinese demand extended into Australia's agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector, as well as the services sector. In 2019, total exports from these two sectors amounted to $16.8 billion and $19.3 billion, respectively. Australia's export structure has traditionally been "deep but narrow", concentrated in minerals and fuels (Wilson, 2020). Nowadays, however, Australia's export bundle to China is more diversified than to other major customers such as Japan and India (Laurenceson & Zhou, 2020a).

The expansion of Chinese demand across sectors of the Australian economy can be seen not only in aggregate trade values, but also by the number of actors participating in the corridor. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in 2013–14, there were 5,893 Australian exporters involved in sending 144,818 consignments to China (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020). By 2018–19, this had grown to 8,184 exporters and 461,027 consignments.

While Australia's trade with China continued to grow even amidst political tensions, some commentators have downplayed its importance. In 2017, the Chief Executive Officer of the United States Studies Centre (USSC), Simon Jackman argued that because Australia's exports to China were 'tilted heavily towards resources, agricultural products, undergraduate commerce degrees and inbound tourism' they should not 'be equated with US sourced investments in technology-rich sectors that continue to grow Australia's stock of human capital and technological capacity' (Jackman, 2017). Yet this characterisation of Australia's economic relationship with China is challenged by research documenting rapidly expanding cooperation in scientific discovery too. According to a report published by the Australia–China Relations Institute in July 2020, more Australian scientific and research publications now include a co-author affiliated with a Chinese institution (16.2 percent of the total) than an American one (15.5 percent of the total) (Laurenceson and Zhou, 2020b). In some subject areas like Materials Science, Chemical Engineering, Energy, Chemistry, Engineering, Physics and Astronomy and Computer Science, more than one quarter of all Australian publications involved collaboration with China.

Mutual Trade Dependence

China's economy is now more than 10 times the size of Australia's in $US terms (World Bank, 2020a). When cost differences are factored into the equation and economic size is measured on the basis of purchasing power, the difference increases to more than 17 times (World Bank, 2020b). Such scale contrasts inevitably produce an asymmetry in the Australia–China trade relationship. China accounted for 38.2 percent of Australia's goods exports in 2019. Meanwhile, Australia's share of China's

goods imports stood at 5.8 percent (Laurenceson & Pantle, 2020). That said, it would be a misreading of the trade relationship to conclude that growing dependence was one-way. In 2012, Australia's share of China's goods imports stood at 4.7 percent. The increase in Australia's share of Chinese imports of 1.1 percentage points over a seven-year period may appear modest but given the size of China's economy and total imports, this amounted to an extra $US36.8 billion injection of Chinese demand into the Australian economy in 2019 compared with 2012. Australia's growing market share also saw it overtake Germany to become China's fifth-largest source of goods imports by value and only fractionally behind the US in fourth place.

At a more disaggregated product level, over the period 2012–2019, 25 of China's top 30 goods imports from Australia increased in value, while 19 increased their market share. In 2019, 61.1 percent of China's iron ore imports came from Australia, up from 22.9 percent in 2012. For wool, the most recent figure was 74.2 percent, while for beef it was 19.5 percent.

Strategic Nerves Versus Economic Realities

The worry that a large exposure to a single trading partner could be a source of risk for Australia's own economic growth prospects is not new. Owing to extensive financial links and not insignificant trade ones, in the 1970s to the 1990s, it was common to hear the phrase that 'when the US sneezes, Australia catches a cold' (Crosby & Bodman, 2005). In the case of China, however, fears around standard economic shock transmission are exacerbated by differences in the two countries' political systems and values. Almost as soon as China overtook Japan to become Australia's largest trading partner, nervousness within Australia's strategic community began to spike. In 2013, the Lowy Institute commissioned University of Sydney academic, James Reilly, to provide an assessment of the risk 'that the Chinese government will manipulate its trade and investment to undermine Australian autonomy or security'. Reilly concluded that these fears were 'overblown' (Reilly, 2013). For one, Reilly noted that iron ore featured prominently in Australia's exports to China, and in this trade, China was as dependent on Australia as a supplier as Australia was on China as a customer.

Strategic nerves did not abate, however. In part, this reflected that China was by then also emerging as a major customer for Australian agricultural products such as beef and wine, as well as services—notably education and tourism. Unlike iron ore, China has access to a number of alternative suppliers for these other goods and services, potentially undercutting Australian resilience in the face of coercive pressure. In 2016, the executive director of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), Peter Jennings warned, 'We've never had a greater dependency with any country…The risk that creates for us is if Beijing wants to adopt politically coercive policies, it's in a fairly strong position to do so with us because of that level of trade dependence' (Barrett & Wong, 2016). The following year, the director of the National Security College (NSC) at the Australian National University, Rory

Medcalf wrote that the reason Australia needed to be concerned about China was because its authoritarian political system, 'tends to link its commercial and political demands on other countries'. That said, Medcalf also conceded that in practice, 'Even where Canberra has seriously annoyed Beijing, such as by supporting legal rulings on the South China Sea [in July 2016], Beijing hasn't directed economic pressure specifically at Australia' (Medcalf, 2017).

Nonetheless, after bilateral political relations began to deteriorate in 2017, a prominent perspective emerged in Australian and international media reporting and commentary that marked a sharp departure from Medcalf's assessment that 'Beijing hasn't directed economic pressure specifically at Australia'. Instead, what began to be emphasised was a Chinese state unleashing 'punishment', 'bans' and 'boycotts' on Australian exports due to political disagreements (Palmer, 2020; Townshend, 2020; The Economist, 2020). An ASPI report published in September 2020 documented 152 alleged instances of coercive diplomacy by China globally over the past 10 years, with a sharp increase since 2018. It found that '[o]f the 27 countries found to have been affected, Australia was subjected to the highest number of recorded cases (17 cases)' (Hanson et al., 2020).

Assessing these claims is made challenging by evidence pointing to Chinese economic statecraft frequently operating in the 'greyzone' and with 'plausible deniability' (Harrell et al., 2018). For example, when on 19 November 2018 China's Ministry of Finance and Commerce (MOFCOM) launched an investigation into whether Australia barley was being dumped in the Chinese market and benefiting from subsidies, many Australian commentators interpreted the action as a coercive one triggered by political disagreements. However, while others agreed it was likely a move to put pressure on the Australian government, they argued that it was a misdiagnosis to cite political spats as having led to China's actions. The University of New South Wales (UNSW) law academic Weihuan Zhou wrote, 'China's main concern isn't barley, and it isn't the dumping of Australian products. It's Australia's use of anti-dumping against China'. Zhou explained that, of the thirty anti-dumping measures that Australia had in force at the time, eighteen were directed at China (Zhou, 2018).

There is also sometimes a disjoint between the prominence accorded to allegations of Chinese coercive actions and their impact on trade flows. ACRI research published in September 2020 examined four high-profile instances of Chinese actions directed at Australian exports covering beef, education, wine and coal over the period 2017–2019 (Laurenceson et al., 2020). In the case of education, the impact on trade was imperceptible, while for the others, it was modest and/or short-lived.

Nonetheless, as Australia's trade exposure to China has continued to grow, and particularly as the political relationship has deteriorated, calls from the strategic community to mitigate risk by reducing dependence on the Chinese market have grown louder. For its part, the Australian government has enthusiastically adopted the Indo-Pacific construct of the international environment for its foreign policy. In strategic terms, the Indo-Pacific encompasses significant powers such as the United States, Japan, India and Indonesia, with the intent to build a multipolar region that is resistant to the emergence of a new and potentially unfavourable hegemon, with eyes

firmly on China. There is an economic dimension too with a vision of more diversified trade throughout the region rather than being concentrated on China. Canberra has also put considerable diplomatic resources into expanding the number of countries with which Australia has concessional trade agreements. These include Japan, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and, most recently, Indonesia. Particularly high hopes have been placed on India with the Australian government releasing in 2018 an India Economic Strategy to 2035, albeit a bilateral trade agreement with India has proven elusive to date (Varghese, 2018).

Yet in another indication of trade mostly being driven by factors other than the preferences of politicians, bureaucrats and strategic analysts, economic reality has refused to bend to the Indo-Pacific vision. In 2012, when the Indo-Pacific started making a regular appearance in official government documents, China was the destination for 24.4 percent of Australia's exports. Other Indo-Pacific destinations accounted for 48.1 percent (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2020a). By 2019, China's share had increased to 34.2 percent, while the rest of the Indo-Pacific had fallen to 42.1 percent.

For a medium-sized open economy like Australia's, trade patterns are overwhelmingly determined by 'exogenous' factors, that is, those beyond Australia's control. That Chinese demand has expanded beyond iron ore to other Australian mining and energy products, as well as agriculture and services, points to a broadening of economic complementarities between the two countries. Put simply: Chinese households and companies want what Australian producers excel in supplying, and they have the purchasing power to pay for it. This matching of Australia's comparative advantages with China's wants and material wealth is not present to the same extent for other trading partners, at least not to date. A light-hearted illustration of this came in June 2014 when then-US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton warned Australia against putting 'all its eggs in the one [China] basket'(McGeough, 2014). Then-Communications Minister, Malcolm Turnbull responded, 'I'm sure that we'd love to export vast quantities of iron ore to the United States but they've never shown any enthusiasm in buying them' (Turnbull, 2014).

Over the past decade, the annual value of Australia's exports has increased by $180 billion. However, this has relied on China to provide 60 percent of the jump (Laurenceson and Zhou 2020a). Looking forward, the Australian government's *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper* contained a baseline forecast showing China's economy out to 2030 adding more new purchasing power than the US, Japan, India and Indonesia combined (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs, 2017). These are the economic realities of which Australian businesses are acutely aware.

The Age of COVID-19: Politics Strikes Back?

In late January 2020, shortly after the COVID-19 virus led to the metropolis of Wuhan and other major Chinese population centres being locked down to manage the public health crisis, some Australian commentators were again quick to elevate

an agenda of reducing trade reliance on China. On 28 February 2020, a program director at ASPI, Michael Shoebridge wrote that the implications of COVID-19 for the Australian economy were ‘profound’ (Shoebridge, 2020a). On 27 April 2020 he argued that ‘[w]ith COVID-19, the Chinese state has created unacceptable risks for the rest of us and it will continue to do so… until we reduce our dependence on activities within its jurisdiction’ (Shoebridge 2020b). On 3 March 2020, the NSC’s Rory Medcalf contended that, ‘Diversification is now a necessity, not just strategic aspiration’(Medcalf, 2020). On 2 May 2020, ASPI’s Peter Jennings claimed that ‘a view is hardening that economic dependence on China is dangerous and steps must be taken to reduce that dependence’ (Jennings, 2020).

In April, former American diplomat Paula Dobriansky suggested that the time was ripe for the US and partners like Australia to create ‘an international economic order that is less dependent on China’, one in which trading ties ‘better align … with political and security relationships’(Dobriansky, 2020). The following month, Charles Edel of the USSC similarly espoused the view that ‘our existing alliances now have the opportunity to move beyond the military realm and into the economic arena’ (Edel, 2020).

While the Australian government sees opportunities to work with the US and other partners like Japan in specific areas, such as around the supply chain for rare earth metals, there are few signs pointing to Canberra being willing or able to use public policy settings to force an alteration in the pattern of Australia’s trade away from China. On 26 May 2020, Prime Minister Morrison insisted that decisions about whether to engage with China ‘are not decisions that governments make for businesses’ (Morrison, 2020c). This suggests that whatever level of discomfort there might be in Canberra regarding Australia’s trade exposure to China, there remains a recognition that households and businesses are the actors best placed to weigh up the risks and opportunities. Even if the Australian government was inclined to be more interventionist, it is not clear how precisely it might do so, given that World Trade Organization rules generally require member countries to apply trade policy measures on a non-discriminatory basis. That said, the Australian government has also made clear that it does not intend on shying away from making decisions that it considers to be in the national interest with both economic and strategic considerations factoring into that assessment. Some of these decisions may draw ire from China and so Australian businesses have been put on notice that they could potentially become targets of coercive pressure and this needs to be incorporated into their risk management plans.

As COVID-19 became a global pandemic, what also soon became apparent was that China was the first major country to get the public health crisis under control, allowing the restart of its economy. By October 2020, the International Monetary Fund was forecasting a GDP growth of 1.9 percent in China for the year, followed by 8.2 percent in 2021 (International Monetary Fund, 2020). This contrasted with -4.3 percent and 3.1 percent for the US, and -8.3 percent and 5.2 percent in the Euro Area. Accordingly, Australia’s trade exposure to China has proven fortuitous with the relatively quick rebound in Chinese production and demand reflected in Australia’s trade statistics. In the first nine months of 2020, the value of Australia’s goods exports

to China had only fallen by 2.9 percent from the same period a year earlier, which was a record high (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2020b). Meanwhile, exports to all other destinations had fallen by 11.8 percent. This meant that Australia has only become more reliant on China as a customer. In 2019, China's share of Australia's goods exports stood at 38.2 percent. In the first nine months of 2020, this increased to 40.5 percent.

The same pattern is evident on the import side of the equation and around supply chains. In the first nine months, goods imports from China rose by 5.2 percent compared with a slump of 9.7 percent from elsewhere. This led to China's share of Australia's imports increasing from 25.8 percent in 2019 to 27.9 percent in 2020 through to September.

While this points to ongoing resilience in the Australia–China trade relationship at the aggregate level amidst political tensions, there is nonetheless growing evidence that the seeming firewall that existed in the past has finally begun to show signs of strain. After an 18-month investigation, on 19 May 2020, MOFCOM ruled that Australian barley producers had dumped their output in the Chinese market and been unfairly subsidised, imposing an 80.5 percent tariff in response (Cao and Greenville, 2020). Both the Australian government and analysts rejected this assessment, describing it using terms such as 'ridiculous' and 'spurious' (Coorey & Kehoe, 2020; Waldron, 2020). Unlike previous episodes of alleged Chinese economic coercion, the impact of these tariffs on the barley trade have the potential to be more sizeable and prolonged. In August, Chinese authorities announced a similar investigation into Australian wine (Birtles, 2020). In May, MOFCOM also suspended certification of four meat processors in Australia to supply the Chinese market, albeit this still left another seven plants continuing to sell chilled beef to China as normal (Tingle, 2017). A further 20 or so are also able to sell the frozen product, which accounts for around 85 percent of all Australian beef exports to China by volume (Sullivan & Gunders, 2020; Meat and Livestock Australia 2020). In October, reports emerged of Chinese actions targeting Australian coal and cotton (ABC News, 2020; Sullivan & Barbour, 2020). The extent to which these materialise and impact trade flows remains to be determined.

Still, what is also apparent is that China could be disrupting Australian exports to a greater extent than it currently is. Rather than benevolence, a more probable explanation is that Beijing has its own self-interested reasons to exercise some level of restraint.

First, there is a pure economic cost in disrupting trade. Trade is by definition a mutually beneficial exchange, meaning that less trade costs both sides. China's leaders might have lost some of their enthusiasm for dealing with Australia but for the most part, Chinese businesses and consumers have not. The latter groups would not appreciate their choices being circumscribed by the former.

Second, Beijing likely realises that economic coercion has little prospect of success in shifting Canberra's foreign policy positions into closer alignment with its own. As Australian exports have been targeted more frequently, the backlash in public opinion towards China has intensified and nowadays even the voices of groups with interests in urging moderation in government rhetoric and policies, such

as the business sector, have grown quieter (Kasssam, 2020; Power, 2020). Rather than undermining support for Australian government positions on China, making Australian businesses the target of coercion feeds into domestic politics to incentivise even stronger pushback.

Third, Beijing does not always have ready access to policy levers to cut-off trade. In the case of education and tourism, for example, indirect pressure can be exerted via disinformation campaigns in China's state-owned media to exaggerate the threat of racism and physical attacks. However, Chinese consumers get their news from a range of sources and Australian governments and industry can respond with marketing campaigns of their own.

Fourth, coercive actions against Australia are carried in news reports around the world, costing China its reputation internationally and casting doubt on whether it is a reliable trading partner that plays by the rules.

Fifth, while in Australian commentary a focus is placed on Chinese coercion, the bigger picture is that China is vulnerable to coercion too. US restrictions on exports of high tech goods to China are the most notable recent example, but Geoff Raby observes that it is also now "utterly dependent" on world markets for basic raw materials, including from Australia (Raby, 2015).

Finally, Australian businesses and the country as a whole are not passive bystanders and can pursue risk mitigation measures. On 23 August 2020, Trade Minister Birmingham alluded to as much: 'Some of the regulatory decisions that China has made this year will obviously increase the risk profile that businesses would see when it comes to trading with Chinese counterparts' (Putten & Durkin, 2020). This means, as Senior Writer for the *Australian Financial Review* John Kehoe explained on 24 June 2020, '…if an exporter can get $110 for their product in China or $100 in South Korea, the risk-adjusted price may be more profitable in the more predictable liberal democracy' (Kehoe, 2020). That said, the mitigation measures that businesses take will not always be in the form of customer diversification and nor would that necessarily be desirable. On 4 October 2018, Chancellor of The University of Queensland, Peter Varghese noted in the education services context, 'While demand remains high it makes little sense for Australian universities to turn their back on the revenue stream offered by students from China and elsewhere'. However, this observation was quickly followed by a suggestion: 'But it would be wise to invest the profit margin for the longer term not use it for current expenditure. Put it into a future fund or endowment which would give universities a measure of resilience in the event that the market abruptly shifts for reasons beyond the control of universities'. Even as risks in China engagement increase, businesses will also continue to be forced to weigh these against the available suite of opportunities. Consider again higher education services: in the first half of 2020, student visa lodgements from applicants in China fell by 29.5 percent on the same period a year earlier (Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, 2020). Meanwhile, those from India—Australia's second large education services customer—collapsed by 65.5 percent. At a country-level, as early as 2012, James Reilly noted that 'Australia has responded to deepening economic dependence upon China with classic balancing strategy: strengthening security ties with its Asian neighbours and the United States

while bolstering its military capacity' (Reilly, 2012). The *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper* and the *2020 Defence Strategic Update* have given further impetus to these endeavours (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs 2017; Australian Government Department of Defence 2020).

Conclusion

This chapter began by noting that a political frame is frequently privileged in media reporting and commentary on the Australia–China relationship. Within this frame worsening bilateral relations are plainly evident in recent years. Yet much of the Australia–China relationship occurs outside the political frame and trade ties are one such example.

This is not to suggest that a stable political relationship does not bring trade benefits or that political disputes do not incur trade costs. Were the China–Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA) not struck at the end of 2015, it is inconceivable that it could be struck in 2020 given the present strains between Canberra and Beijing, and Australian producers would not be enjoying the advantageous access to the Chinese market they are. Similarly, nowadays there are trade costs quite apart from the actions China is taking against specific Australian goods. The ChAFTA contained review clauses with an eye on promoting further trade and investment liberalisation. However, the last time a meeting took place to discuss the upgrade of ChAFTA was on 9 November 2017 (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade).

Still, when the Australia–China relationship is examined through a trade frame what is readily apparent is that Canberra and Beijing are typically not the dominant actors and their priorities in large part take a back seat to those of consumers and businesses. This is confirmed by trade data pointing to engagement between Australia and China growing both in scale and breadth even as political relations have deteriorated.

The events of 2020 raise the prospect that there may be more regular and significant spillovers between the political and trade frames of the Australia–China relationship. Yet the drivers of trade to date—consumer preferences, production complementarities across countries and the geographical distribution of purchasing power—remain intact. This provides cause for optimism and the potential for trade to remain a source of ongoing stability and ballast in bilateral ties.

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Connectedness and Disconnectedness: Compartmentalisation, Media Representation, and Information Gap

Dan Hu and Xin Wen

Abstract The spread of COVID-19 into a global pandemic is only a recent example of how connected we have become today. Despite this connectedness resulted from human mobility, what stood in sharp contrast is a disconnectedness between populations across national borders in the information they hold about the other: understanding of a common topic, even with facts, can be highly divergent. This chapter explores this disconnectedness by examining the gap of public perception of an issue in a foreign country from reality and how media representation has contributed to it, with ABC's coverage on the first three months of the COVID-19 in Australia and *The Paper*'s reports on Australia's bushfire season 2019–2020 in China as cases of study. Media analysis in both cases on both points to almost a universal gap created by media representation that in many cases can be selective and fragmentary. Social media and other sources of information, like government and academia, have failed to channel understanding too. It is further argued that such a gap will have serious implications for debate on, formulation and implementation of domestic and foreign policies in both China and Australia.

Keywords COVID-19 and Wuhan · Australian Bushfires · Media representation · Information gap

Introduction: Connectedness as Illustrated by the COVID-19

The COVID-19, as unfortunate as it is, is only a recent illustration of how connected people across the globe have become: human mobility on an unimaginable scale has again and again defeated governments' modelling when trying to control movement of the pandemic across borders. Australia being the first to shut down its border to

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China (and then others where a breakout was reported) yet later experienced the first wave of pandemic with contagious travellers coming back from the US almost proved this connectedness in a satirical way. Over-reliance on statistics from the US which "appeared to have many more infections…than had been announced", due to "a failure to conduct adequate numbers of coronavirus tests", led to an over-due closure of Australia's border to America. Speaking on 2 GB to explain the government's decision to close the nation's borders to all, Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison recognised that "the country which has actually been responsible for a large amount of these (coronavirus cases) has actually been the United States. At the end of the day, that's a function of the number of people who travel between the US and Australia" (Pearson Mar. 20, 2020). After years of globalisation, people's movement across national borders, for purposes of economic activities, education and tourism, has grown too complicated for any serious modelling to capture.

In a stark contrast, the pandemic also demonstrates how disconnected people are in relation to flow of information and public perception and debate based on it, in spite of this unprecedented human mobility. This chapter, therefore, intends to unravel this "disconnectedness", gap of information about the other, by examining information flow to and representation in China of Australia's latest bushfire season and the other way round to/in Australia during the earlier months of the COVID-19. Both cases demonstrate virtually two "parallel worlds" where information and perception about a common topic diverge drastically. The author then goes on to offer an analysis into the implications, arguing that media's under or skewered representation of the early phases of COVID in Wuhan and then larger China contributed to a relatively low awareness of the nature of the disease and importance of PPE, which, in turn, resulted in a prolonged process of persuading the Australians to put on a mask in public. In the same way, underrepresentation of Australia's ecological features and annual bushfire season in China merely re-enhanced a pre-established over-simplistic perception of an incompetent government. These selective and biased representations will prove to be costly for the bilateral relations in the long run.

Disconnectedness: Information Flow, Representation and "Parallel Worlds" During COVID-19

The above-mentioned disconnectedness or gap of information has never been a rare phenomenon, phrased as compartmentalisation or segmentation in communications studies. In fact, it has long been a practice of the media industry to differentiate various segments and target them accordingly. The advent of social media and algorithm-based news feed has only widened that gap (Bucher, 2012; Devito, 2017). Take Australia's public sphere during COVID as an example: the information represented and received among different segments of the society and the ensuing debate based on it is stunningly divergent. While major media in Australia and other parts of the world would cover in a matter-of-fact manner the "enormous evidence" in which

Secretary of State Pompeo suggested that "the virus came from Wuhan lab" in May 2020 (yet not necessarily on the counterargument), virologists in Australia had confidently dismissed it on public occasions days before that "all the scientists with access to data think it is not from lab" (Sedger May 1, 2020). Virologist and immunologist Dr. Lisa Sedger, Head of the Viruses and Cytokine Biology group at the UTS School of Life Sciences, complained at a webinar on 1 May that "there's a lot of misinformation in the mainstream about COVID-19" and urged that "Let's listen to the scientists a little bit more" (May 1, 2020). But as scientifically solid as it is, this piece of information wouldn't get too far beyond the dozen or so attendees to that webinar. What has been less studied but yet become increasingly more obvious amid the recent years of rising nationalism, inward-looking politics and heightened geopolitical rivalry is a segmentation or compartmentalisation between populations in different countries (Bieber, 2018; Pan, 2014). As a matter of fact, when it comes to information flow beyond the national borders, the gap seems to be considerably greater with multiple causation from access to diverse knowledge sources to user's education levels (Bonfadelli, 2002; Lind and Boomgaarden, 2019). Moreover, as Altman (2018) argues, Australian media is obsessed with and its economic model is centred around the Anglosphere, and therefore, creates knowledge gaps especially in regard to Asia.

Take the COVID-19 as an example of this gap, not only would people be less inclined to voluntarily seek a COVID update about foreign lands, perhaps with the exception of neighbouring countries, where spread of the virus always poses an imminent threat, the information they get to receive regarding other countries, including the so-called "hotspots" which would be understandably more frequently covered, can be highly fragmentary and selective. For example, when Australia's leading international relations think tank Lowy Institute surveyed 3,036 Australians on their attitudes to the Coronavirus pandemic in mid-April, the respondents presented a rather shocking assessment of countries' handling of the COVID-19, in some cases drastically apart from the scientific data of flattening the curve (Kassam, 2020) (Fig. 1).

While it is understandable that based on public opinion, the average Australian is satisfied with the Morrison government's early responsiveness (though not necessarily to the outbreaks on the Ruby Princess cruise ship or travellers from the US—which collectively accounted for the majority of early cases in Australia), China stood significantly low, if daily confirmed cases is to be relied on as an indicator, only slightly better than the UK (30% for "very well" or "fairly well") with only 31% of the Australian respondents making a positive assessment. When the survey was started on 14 April, China was recording new confirmed cases of 99 while the UK was reporting 3,489. At the end of the two-week survey period, China saw its confirmed case down to 3 and the UK still at 3,748. While a 93% approval rate in Australia is understandable with an average of 28 cases during the two weeks of the survey, Singapore whose daily average during the same period is as high as 792 still got the second-highest approval rate at 79%, again significantly higher than China whose daily average recorded less than one-tenth of it (Table 1).

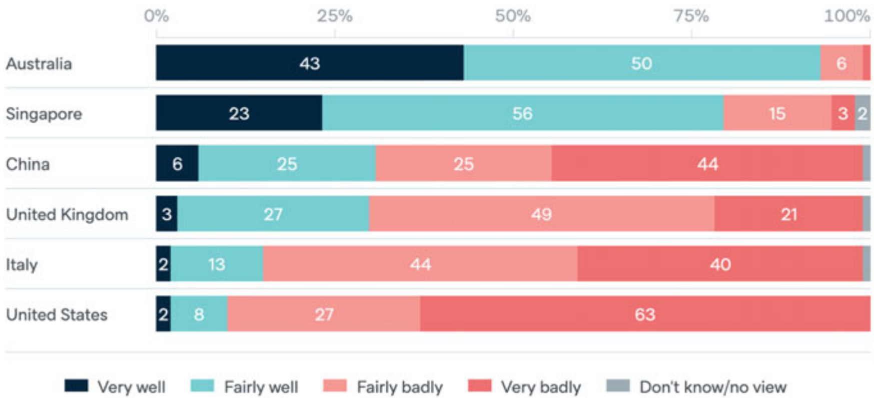

Fig. 1 Global Responses to Covid-19. *Source* Natasha Kassam, COVIDpoll: Lowy Institute Polling on Australian Attitudes to the Coronavirus Pandemic, Lowy Institute, May 14, 2020

This deviation of people's perception, as reflected in the poll, from real-life numbers almost points to a common irrationality. To better capture it, the following chart shows the average of confirmed cases in the six countries during the Lowy survey period (14 to 27 April 2020) as bars and the Lowy disapproval rate (a sum of "fairly badly" and "very badly") in a blue line, which can be reasonably assumed to be based on the respondents' knowledge and perception of situations in those six states during and prior the survey period (Figs. 2 and 3).

If fully based on the number of confirmed cases recorded in a surveyed country, the disapproval rate (and approval rate) on the government's handling would be largely proportional to it. However, two significant deviations can be observed in the chart: China and Italy. While recording an average of 2,879 cases during those fourteen days (less than two thirds of UK's 4,633), 84% of the Lowy respondents rated Italy unfavourably, compared with only 70% for the UK.

The "verdict" was undoubtedly based on accumulated perception from late February when the outbreak hit Europe towards the days of the Lowy survey in mid and late April. As the following chart of daily confirmed cases in Italy and the UK shows, that perception which had developed over the previous two months may be the main factor: though the outbreak seemed to be getting worse in the UK than in Italy since early April, that improvement was not properly reflected in the public knowledge or opinion.

There is certainly "inertia" in shifts of public perception but for the case of Italy, that tendency of fossilisation seemed to have been assisted by Australian media coverage on those two countries. To approach it quantitatively, search and analysis below was conducted on the website of ABC, which as revealed by respondents to the Lowy poll was their No. 1 source of news (Kassam, 2020).

Table 1 World health organization coronavirus disease dashboard

Days/Country	Australia	Singapore	China	UK	Italy	USA
14 April	44	386	99	3489	3153	29,308
15 April	50	334	51	4178	2972	24,446
16 April	42	447	50	4326	2667	25,802
17 April	10	728	352	5065	3786	28,711
18 April	65	623	31	5292	3493	32,549
19 April	73	942	43	4956	3491	30,023
20 April	6	596	16	4721	3047	28,252
21 April	13	1426	14	3853	2256	27,668
22 April	22	1111	35	4854	2729	25,634
23 April	14	1016	15	4760	2370	24,019
24 April	6	1037	9	5487	2646	29,127
25 April	20	897	12	5158	3021	30,719
26 April	16	618	14	4970	2357	38,509
27 April	10	931	3	3748	2324	32,417
Average	27.9285714285714	792.285714285714	53.1428571428571	4632.64285714286	2879.42857142857	29,084.5714285714
Average (roundup)	28	792	53	4633	2879	29,085

Source compiled from World Health Organization Coronavirus Disease Dashboard

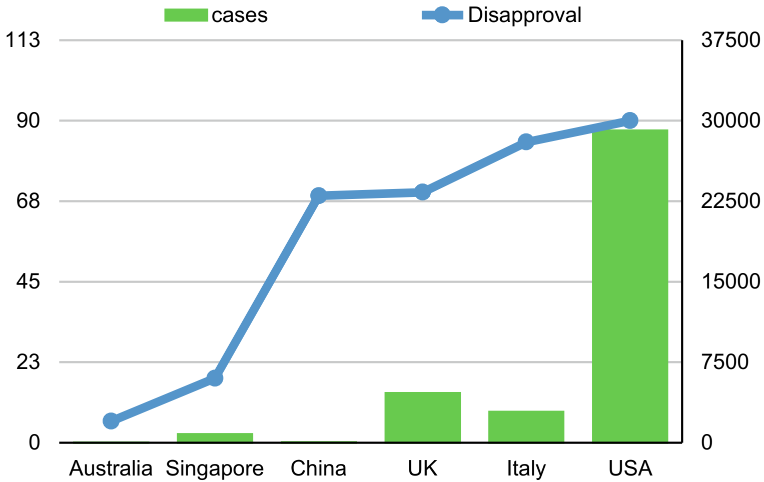

Fig. 2 Confirmed Cases and Disapproval Rate in the Six Countries. *Source* compiled from World Health Organization Coronavirus Disease Dashboard and Natasha Kassam, COVIDpoll: Lowy Institute Polling on Australian Attitudes to the Coronavirus Pandemic, Lowy Institute, May 14, 2020.

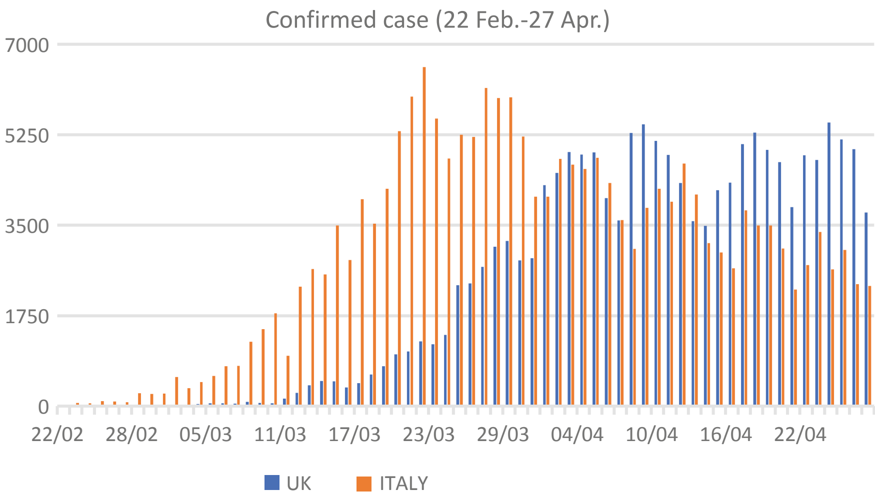

Fig. 3 Confirmed Cases (22 Feb.-27 Apr.). *Source* compiled from World Health Organization Coronavirus Disease Dashboard

While Italy recorded the first case on 22 February 2019, only one day earlier than the UK, it quickly became a "hot spot" and had since been mainly represented in Australian media as an "epicentre" and "source of transmissions", with "apocalyptic scenes" and empty cities. "The sudden increases of cases in Italy…are deeply

concerning", the ABC alerted on 27 Feb., and throughout March shocked the readers with titles like "Italy's coronavirus disaster: At first, officials urged people to go out for an aperitif. Now, doctors must choose who dies" (Besser Mar. 18, 2020). "There are lessons to be learned from the country's missteps" Australian media thus judged (Besser Mar. 18, 2020).

The UK, however, had been constantly reported in a more positive note. Throughout the two months leading to the Lowy poll, even during the last month when Britain's confirmed cases started to catch up with Italy, both the government and top leader Boris Johnson were consistently portrayed with a neutral, even slightly positive note, except perhaps for two reports, one of which admitted in mid-April that "The UK's coronavirus problem is getting worse" (Hawley April 13, 2020). While UK's reported cases had already surpassed Italy for two weeks then, the title sounded far less worrisome than those on Italy. The body of this rare example of negative report on the UK during the examined period did capture the severity of the situation in Britain though, citing Sir Jeremy Farrar, a government advisor and specialist in infectious disease, "what…should have been obvious to us all…[that] It's certainly one of the worse if not the worst-affected country in Europe" (Hawley April 13, 2020). The title of it, however, is, to say the least, an understatement of the situation there.

With the exception of these two (the other being "Coronavirus has infected 2,000 UK care homes but their deaths aren't included in the daily tally", 16 April 2020), coverage on the UK's handling of the pandemic towards the poll days remained largely neutral, constantly in a sympathetic note and never doubtful about the government. In fact, ABC reports would habitually start their UK stories with a headshot of a determined and serious-looking Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who "orders pubs to close…Government to pay 80 per cent of wages" or "steps up response" amid "up to 10,000 infected with coronavirus in UK" or "announced tough new measures to try to curb the spread of coronavirus" (ABC Mar. 21, 2020; Hawke Mar. 13, 2020; Hawke Mar. 24, 2020).

This neutral or even positive tone of the reportage continued well until 11 June, when the UK was still reporting 1,158 cases and about one month past the April and May peak (WHO, 2020), reflecting that "UK coronavirus deaths could have been cut by half if lockdown came earlier, top epidemiologist says" and in the same report Johnson was given a chance to defend that "it is too early to make judgments about the Government's response to the pandemic", a privilege many national leaders weren't granted (ABC June 11, 2020).

It is certainly understandable that Australian media tend to portray a country with which it has so many historical, political and cultural connections in a compassionate or uncritical way (Altman, 2018). The author, however, is not rushing to the conclusion that a media bias against Italy can be established; rather a hidden element in this inertia, though would be difficult to validate, seems to be Italy allegedly being the "source of transmissions" in Europe. ABC reported in late February that "an expanding cluster of 400 cases in northern Italy is being eyed as a source for transmissions" (ABC Feb. 27, 2020). News consumers thus slowly bought that idea, later

to be enhanced by stories that "There are lessons to be learned from the country's missteps" (Besser Mar. 18, 2020).

The same element seems to be factoring, maybe more so, for the stunningly disproportionate disapproval rate on China. That the pandemic was first reported in China worked against it all along. ABC reported it as "China virus" till 23 Jan, and hammered the idea down gradually by constantly covering uncritically on suggestions that the virus came from a Wuhan lab and Australia's call for an "independent inquiry" into the origin or nicknaming Italy's Lombardy region as "Italian Wuhan" (Chao& Chalmers Jan. 22, 2020; Leslie et al. Mar. 26, 2020).

In addition to this element of blame-taking, like Italy, China consistently received a more negative coverage: from the alleged "coverup" in early phases, "draconian measures" adopted countrywide, to the long-running doubt on numbers provided by the Chinese government. The validity and success in China's handling of the pandemic was never a topic to be covered, at least with ABC till the end of April when the Lowy poll was conducted. The only report that came close to that is a story by Christina Zhou and Bang Xiao, clearly Chinese Australians, entitled "What Australia could learn from China's response to coronavirus COVID-19" on 18 March, in which a Grattan Institute's blog was cited that "They've come at a real economic cost to many households and businesses—but they appear to have been successful", again in an understating and compromising way (Zhou and Xiao Mar. 18, 2020). The "apparent success" which was hailed once only at the beginning of the story developed into a discussion on alleged risks of the pandemic handling in China and the "completely different systems of governments and different views on privacy" (Zhou & Xiao Mar. 18, 2020). "Even if Australian politicians want to take a leaf out of China's book, it would be highly unlikely", the article concluded (Zhou and Xiao Mar. 18, 2020).

When Bill Birtles, ABC's China correspondent in Beijing from 2015, attended a Lowy Institute webinar after flying back to Australia in September 2020, he noted a "parallel world" between what was being heard about COVID-19 in China compared to elsewhere (Raphael Sept. 25, 2020). The truth is, this may be true everywhere. There is also a "parallel world" between what was being heard about COVID-19 in Australia compared to elsewhere, maybe in a slightly more subtle way.

Disconnectedness: Information Flow, Representation and "Parallel Worlds" During Australia's Bushfire Season 2019–2020

The above example of how people across national borders may come to see the same thing very differently is by no means alone. A good example in China during the past twelve months perhaps is how Australia's worst bushfire season in 2019–2020 was covered and represented in Chinese media. Media analysis in this section samples China's *The Paper*, which started in 2014 as an online news website targeting

government and business elites, as well as middle-and-higher educated and income groups (*Zhong Guo Xin Wen Chu Ban Bao (China's Media Publication)* April 28, 2015). With original in-depth analysis on current affairs in China and beyond, *The Paper* has become one of the most highly regarded news apps in China. In 2017, for example, it was ranked No.1 six times and No.2 four times in the country's monthly influence tracking ("Qiu," Feb. 28, 2018). It has also been widely seen as adopting a more balanced approach in its reportage.

An interesting indicator of how *The Paper's* coverage on Australia's bushfire 2019–2020 shaped its readers' perception of the subject is the questions posed in a special Q&A column opened on 9 January 2020 entitled "Ask me anything: why is the bushfire in Australia getting ever bigger?". Except for a few concerned future travellers, the great majority of the readers who were interested enough to post a question in the column were asking "why can't Australia just put it off?" (*The Paper* Jan. 9, 2020). This is consistent with the casual observation that an average Chinese at that time was curious, critically, about why the Australian government could not just put off the disastrous fire. As one of the posted questions phrased it, after citing a paragraph describing a fire from *The Thorn Birds*, "I remember fire is quite common in Australia. Don't they have relevant experience on fire control?" (*The Paper* Jan. 9, 2020).

Australia of course does have ample experience and expertise. In fact, the bushfire season is an annual occurrence spanning at least half of the year and the 2019–2020 season was particularly bad due to a combination of various factors. The Chinese voices above, which would sound far more concerned than an average Australian at that time, first indicate how important collective memory and referencing is when perception about an issue is being formed. Without sufficient knowledge or information about Australia's geography and ecology, which is very different from that of China's, the Chinese readers would quickly develop their opinion based on their most recent and relevant memory: the country's worst forest fire in Daxinganling in the Northeast of China in 1987. A fire that had been accidentally started in the country's largest virgin forest and one of the main sources of timber was not put off until 27 days later, wreaking havoc on not only the forest itself, but also timber ready to be transported, cars, trucks, bridges, telecommunication lines, transmission lines, houses and people (National People's Congress, 1987). Tens of thousands of soldiers were sent to fight the fire (National People's Congress, 1987).

Without doubt Australia's bushfire season is not to be compared. Yet the strong collective memory of a seemingly similar incident readily provided the framework, to be buttressed by media representation of the event.

Behind the widespread questioning "why can't Australia just put it off" lies the common misconception among the Chinese public at that time: all of Australia, including major cities like Sydney and Melbourne, was under the threat of fire and animals were burned dead with the government doing nothing about it. An average Australian, of course, would be likely to tell them, in its usually laid-back manner, that things were not that bad. Some would even bother to explain that Australia

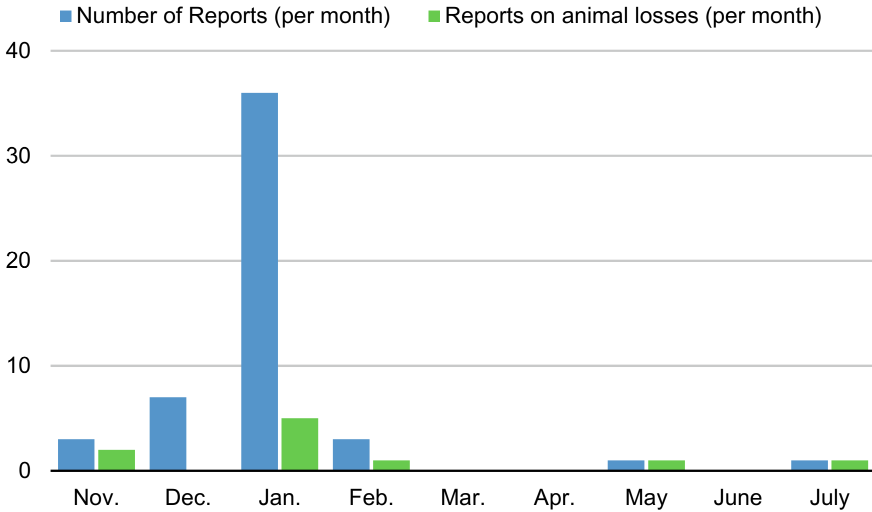

Fig. 4 Number of *The Paper*'s Reports on Australia's bushfire 2019–2020 (per month) v. Those on the Subject of Animal Losses. *Source* collected and compiled by the author from *The Paper*

has an annual bushfire season between October and March (though admittedly it is getting longer) and, like the Amazon, hazard reduction burns are routinely practiced. Unfortunately, little on those important yet nuanced aspects of the subject managed to get through to the Chinese public, even for a balanced medium like *The Paper* (Fig. 4).

Media analysis of *The Paper*'s coverage on Australia's bushfire 2019–2020 shows that of the total of 51 reports through November 2019 to July 2020 (see monthly breakup above), a significant number of them focussed on the animal and plant losses, with koalas constantly being a subject matter. As the above monthly makeup illustrates, the death of animals and plants in the fire dominated many of the months, in particular, the start and end of the reporting cycle. *The Paper*'s bushfire reports started off with a heavy emphasis on the loss of koalas, with two thirds of reports in the first month of November centred on it, the continued attention on the subject matter all through and the cycle ended again with it being the only emphasis reinforced the idea among the readers.

Significant loss of animals and plants points to the ill-handling and incompetence of the government and sad stories on koalas, one of the Chineses' best-liked exotic animals, made it worse. As the graph below indicates, that "incompetent" judgement on the Morrison government was based on and constantly supported with the majority of *The Paper*'s reports focussed on describing the severity of the situation ("description", 16 out of 51 reports), huge losses of animals and plants ("losses", 10 out of 51 reports), and consequences except plant and animal losses ("consq", 10 out of 51). Nearly all the rest merely work to further prove how bad it has been handled: 5 out of the 51 reports are direct criticism of the prime minister ("PM"),

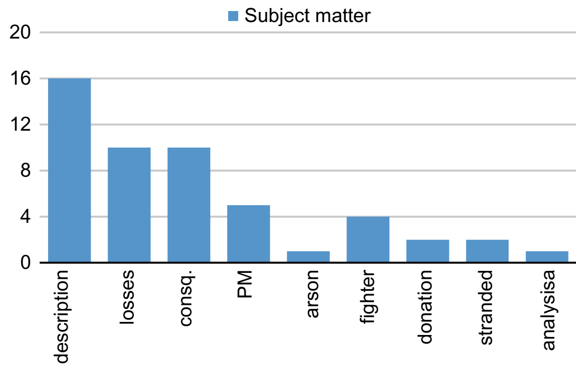

Fig. 5 Subject Matters of *The Paper*'s Bushfire Reports. A total of 51 through November 2019 to March 2020). *Source* collected, coded and compiled by the author from *The Paper*

1 on arrest based on arson ("arson"), while the 4 reports on brave firefighters and the pain their families went through ("fighter"), 2 on donations ("donation"), and 2 on the consular service offered to "stranded" Chinese all made the government look even worse. There was only one attempt at exploring the deeper reasons, a translated commentary to the Project Syndicate by Ramesh Thakur entitled "Why Australia is Burning" (analysis) (Jan. 9, 2020). As a result, the 51 reports as a whole shaped *The Paper*'s readers' perception of a weak and incompetent government which had failed to respond and control fire (Fig. 5).

Implications: Mask-Wearing, Incompetent Government and the Future of Bilateral Relations

It is not intended in this chapter to target the Australian or Chinese media and put all the blame on them. After all, there are plenty of other sources of information in today's world. What has proved in such serious disasters as a pandemic and the worse wildfire in history, however, is that how limited a role those other sources of information may be able to play to present a fuller and deeper picture about what is going on beyond the border. As Yates and Partridge (2015) observe, natural disaster enhances social media importance in a narrow localised communication spectrum, which is positive in local communities, however, it can diminish in terms of global understanding.

Social media has for a long time remained problematic: would an open platform of speech guarantee the widest possible portrayal and interpretation of an issue? Would social media companies be in the best position to monitor speech on their platform and decide what is "true" or what is not? Worse still, the language barrier has always been there. In fact, one of the most shocking discoveries during the pandemic is how compartmentalised speakers of different languages are: English speakers would constantly browse Facebook and Twitter, while many Chinese Australians would

prefer to read Wechat posts. Reports, comments and analysis on them are constantly different.

Academia, a lesser known and under-discussed channel of information sharing between countries, has been found to be confined to its own compartment too. A rough count of COVID-related webinars hosted by Australian organisers since the pandemic hit would indicate a shocking absence of mainland Chinese speakers, with the University of Sydney's China Studies Centre being the only exception. They hosted a dialogue between Prof. Stephen Simpson AC, Academic Director of the university's Charles Perkins Centre and Prof. Zhong Nanshan, a widely respected health specialist who played central roles during both 2003 SARS and this year's COVID response in China (Eventbrite June 18, 2020). Even this one exception was supported by a China-related company, China United Assets Appraisal Group (CUA) Australia, which represented itself as the "largest appraisal and advisory service group in Asia and China, aiming at promoting and assisting cooperation, trade and investment worldwide". Speakers from HKSAR and Chinese Taiwan have been much more visible.

Conclusion

What lies behind this absence of mainland Chinese voice? Is it driven by ideology or does it reflect distrust, partly attributable, in the same way as a public opinion as illustrated in the Lowy poll, to media's representation? Whatever the reasons are, with academic exchange appearing to be no more smooth or efficient than other sources of information sharing, there are not many chances left for a balanced flow of information across national borders or languages.

This stunning gap of information between different countries does have implications. A notable one during the pandemic, for example, is how much time and effort the Australian federal and state governments spent to persuade the public to acknowledge the nature of the pandemic and start putting on masks, along with other restrictive measures. The media's underrepresentation of the COVID-19 as a public health emergency and overrepresentation on the possible "cover up" in the initial phases, then "draconian measures" adopted by the Chinese government and doubts over statistics provided all seem to be depicting COVID response in China through an ideological lens, creating an illusion of plot and othering. When Julie Bishop was asked to comment on the UK's Prime Minister Boris Johnson catching COVID during a May webinar hosted by Lowy Institute, she remarked that "[I am] shocked that COVID will inflict leader of a major power…" (May 12, 2020), as if virus understood geopolitics or ideology. This misconception about the pandemic, created by the gap of information received from the reality, tended to backlash later when the second wave hit Victoria and restrictions desperately needed to be put in place. The prolonged process of persuading the public to put on a mask and respect lockdown rules is the best evidence.

This gap of information has implications for public debate, as well as policy-making and implementation. As illustrated in the previous section, even one of the most balanced news media in China tends to fail in presenting a fuller picture. Under-representation of Australia's annual bushfire season, geographical and ecological features and overrepresentation of animal losses and severity in the stricken areas exaggerated the situation and created a hallucination among even the well-educated and travelled Chinese elites that it was apocalyptic all across Australia. It quickly fell into the pre-established dissatisfaction of a weak and incapable Australian government, whose dealing with China-Australia-US relations had long disappointed and agitated the Chinese.

In this era of connectedness, a widening gap between "what it is" and "what we know" about the other deserves serious attention, deliberation and action. China and Australia, in particular, need to find a way to tackle this disconnectedness? If not, it is bound to be costly for future relations and has the potential to disconnect the two countries despite the strong trade links, the two-way flows of students, knowledge and migrants. While it is often the case that transcultural understanding takes root and grows in such people-to-people exchanges, for the case of China–Australia relations, an apt question to pose now is why the two peoples are disconnecting in spite of them.

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Connecting Shanghai and Sydney: Mobility of People

Richard Hu

Abstract In this chapter, I address the book's concern on China-Australia connectedness from an urban perspective, through unravelling the connections between Shanghai and Sydney, the gateway global cities of the two countries. I approach the Shanghai-Sydney connections in multiple economic and social dimensions. First, I trace the rise of the two cities in the global city system in the twenty-first century, reflecting not only the growing economic influences of the two cities but also the increasing economic interaction between their home countries. Second, I utilise air passenger data to reveal the people movement between the two cities, which interacts with and complements their economic connections. Third, I compare the global competitiveness of the two cities, comprehensively, to reveal how the two cities converge and diverge in terms of competitive strength and weakness. Fourth, I examine the recent Chinese and Shanghainese migrants to Sydney to further delve into the people connection between the two cities. These intercity connections, overall, have shown a trend of increasing volume and intensity. The broad contexts—an accelerated globalisation and an increasingly engaged China-Australia relationship—that have enabled this trend, however, are at a crossroads, posing uncertainty and challenge for the future, especially in a COVID-19 world of disconnections.

Keywords Mobility · COVID-19 · Air travel · Chinese migration

Introduction

In a globalised, urban world, cities are new spatial units for global connections (Hu, 2017). Countries are interconnected, primarily, through their gateway global cities. Shanghai and Sydney play such roles for China and Australia, respectively. Not only do these two cities connect their home countries, but also forge an important global city corridor in the Asia Pacific area, the new world economic centre in recent decades. Both cities are strategic urban nodes, with growing dominance in their national urban

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systems, as well as in the global city system (Taylor & Derudder, 2016). At the same time, the intercity connections between them have also been intensifying, along with growing economic and social interactions between the two countries, and along with the growing roles of the two cities in the regional and global economic systems.

However, the settings—both global setting and relational setting between China and Australia—that have enabled the increasing Shanghai-Sydney connections are experiencing radical changes in recent years. The accelerated globalisation process that has created the rise of global cities like Shanghai and Sydney during the several decades across the century is now at a crossroads. The new geopolitics is putting global interaction, collaboration, and mobility—all the hallmarks of contemporary globalisation—under grave uncertainty, if not a reversal towards de-globalisation (Garcia-Arenas, 2018). Under this broader geopolitical context, the diplomatic relationship between China and Australia has been plunging, in unusual manners that are politicising many of the connections in trade, people, culture, and education areas. These connections that have incrementally grown since the formal diplomatic relationship between the two countries was established in 1972 are now being compromised by political distrust and ideological differences. These contextual factors are surely influencing the intercity connections between Shanghai and Sydney, even though the extent and the specifics of these influences are to be observed and gauged yet. But one surety is that the historical relational trajectories between the two cities—and between the two countries—are not likely to restore smoothly and quickly. They need to be reimagined and rebuilt, with wisdom and pragmatism, in an increasingly disruptive and uncertain world system.

Geographically, Shanghai and Sydney in this chapter refer to the metropolitan areas of Greater Shanghai and Greater Sydney. However, Greater Shanghai and Greater Sydney are not exact equivalents due to different urban governance structures in China and Australia. Greater Shanghai is the Shanghai Municipality, which is a province-level municipality directly under the central government in the Chinese administrative system. Under Shanghai Municipality, there are 16 subordinate districts as local government areas. There is not a metropolitan-level government for Sydney or any capital city in the Australian administrative system. Greater Sydney is more a geographical and economic concept than an administrative concept, and is governed by the New South Wales state government. Its geography is delimited by the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Greater Capital City Statistical Area, containing 35 local government areas within the state. The City of Sydney, which is often misunderstood as Greater Sydney, is one of those 35 local government areas and covers the central city area only (26.15 km^2). Covering a land area of 12,368.2 km^2, Greater Sydney had an estimated resident population of 5,312,163 in 2019 (City of Sydney Council, 2020). Greater Shanghai's land area is 6,340.5 km^2, and had a resident population of 24,237,800 as of 2018 (Shanghai Statistics Bureau, 2020). Despite being strategic urban centres in global and national contexts, these two cities have different local geographical, demographic, economic, and political parameters.

In this chapter, I address the book's concern on China-Australia connectedness from an urban perspective, through unravelling the connections between Shanghai and Sydney. I approach the Shanghai-Sydney connections in multiple economic and

social dimensions. First, I trace the rise of the two cities in the global city system in the twenty-first century, reflecting not only the growing economic influences of the two cities but also the increasing economic interaction between their home countries. Second, I utilise air passenger data to reveal the people movement between the two cities, which interacts with and complements their economic connections. Third, I compare the global competitiveness of the two cities, comprehensively, to reveal how the two cities converge and diverge in terms of competitive strength and weakness. Fourth, I examine the recent Chinese and Shanghainese migrants to Sydney to further delve into the people connection between the two cities. I conclude the chapter with some reflections on the emergence of new geopolitics and escalated political and diplomatic tensions between China and Australia, and the impacts on the intercity connections between Shanghai and Sydney.

Global City Connectivity

The global city is a buzzword in recent decades. Constructed and debated since the 1980s, especially under the influence of works by leading urban theorists such as Peter Hall, John Friedmann, Saskia Sassen, and Peter Taylor, the term has become a dominant urban discourse shaping theoretical and empirical studies and urban policymaking. Nowadays, almost every major city in the world claims or aspires to be a global city. To take the two cities of interest in this chapter as examples. In 2018, both Shanghai and Sydney released a new urban strategy. The Shanghai municipal master plan *Shanghai 2035* set 'striving for the excellent global city' as the central vision for the city's future development (Shanghai Urban Planning & Land Resource Administration Bureau, 2018). The Greater Sydney region plan *A Metropolis of Three Cities* had its vision statement starting with 'Greater Sydney is Australia's global city' (Greater Sydney Commission, 2018). The global city, as both a concept and a policy goal, is on the verge of being overused at an expense of its conceptual root.

Here, I use this term's conceptual root and empirical manifestations to illuminate the notion of intercity connections between Shanghai and Sydney in the global context. For Saskia Sassen, the author of the term, 'the global city' is constructed to capture a particular urban phenomenon that is unique to contemporary globalisation, with one defining attribute as its capacity of providing the advanced producer services—finance, insurance, accounting, banking, law, and management (Sassen, 2001). Essentially an intermediary economy and the supply capacity of a knowledge economy, these advanced producer services support production firms and other types of organisations—both private and public—rather than final consumers (Sassen, 2001). The global firms of advanced producer services choose to locate and establish branch offices in those cities where they can provide the best services for their producer clients. The presence of those advanced producer services firms is thus taken as a reflection, as well as used as an indicator, of the global city status and

its connection with other cities and participation in the global economy (Taylor & Derudder, 2016).

Built upon this conceptualisation of the global city and its defining capacity of providing the advanced producer services, the Globalisation and World Cities (GaWC) Research Network has developed a world city network model to empirically measure the connectivity of global cities through their advanced producer services. GaWC has undertaken time-series studies for global cities in the twenty-first century (Fig. 1). These studies aim to present 'a city-centred world of flows in contrast to the more familiar state-centred world of boundaries', and measure the importance of individual cities 'as nodes in the world city network' (GaWC, 2020). Leading cities are classified into several categories: Alpha + + cities—London and New York; Alpha + cities—highly integrated cities that largely provide services for the Asia Pacific area; Alpha and Alpha- cities—very important cities that link major economic regions and states into the world economy (GaWC, 2020). These studies and classifications provide a lens to understand the connectivity of Shanghai and Sydney in the global city system.

Shanghai and Sydney have demonstrated converging and diverging trends in the global city connectivity in the twenty-first century (Fig. 1). Both cities have been on generally upward trends among the leading groups of global cities, but Shanghai's ascendance has been more impressive than Sydney's. In much of the first decade of the twenty-first century, Sydney was ahead of Shanghai: Sydney was classified as an Alpha city and Shanghai an Alpha- city until 2008 when both cities entered the category of Alpha + cities, with the gap between them significantly shrunk. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, Sydney seemed to have flattened its position between Alpha + and Alpha categories, while Shanghai has established its position as an Alpha + city, consistently ahead of Sydney. GaWC also computed city links using the 2018 data to measure the connectivity between pairs of cities: Shanghai and Sydney were classified into Alpha- category, as an important intercity connectivity in the Asia Pacific area.

The positions and trajectories of Shanghai and Sydney in the global city connectivity reflect many aspects of the economic relationships between the two cities as well as between their home countries. Both Shanghai and Sydney are important urban nodes in the Asia Pacific area, with their positions in the global city system further strengthened. Shanghai's rapid rise has been directly related to the growth of the Chinese economy, while Sydney has been under the direct influence of the increasing integration of Australia's economy with Asia. At the same time, the intercity connections between the two cities have also been strengthened, along with strengthened economic connections between the two countries. For example, as a reflection of the strong economic connections between China and Australia, the financial markets in Shanghai and Sydney have demonstrated explicit interdependence since the global financial crisis of 2008 (Burdekina & Tao, 2020).

It should be noted that these measures, while providing a useful lens of the global city connectivity, do not fully capture the intercity connectivity between the two cities. The GaWC studies have used data of the advanced producer services firms to empirically capture a city-based, corporate globalisation. The intercity connections,

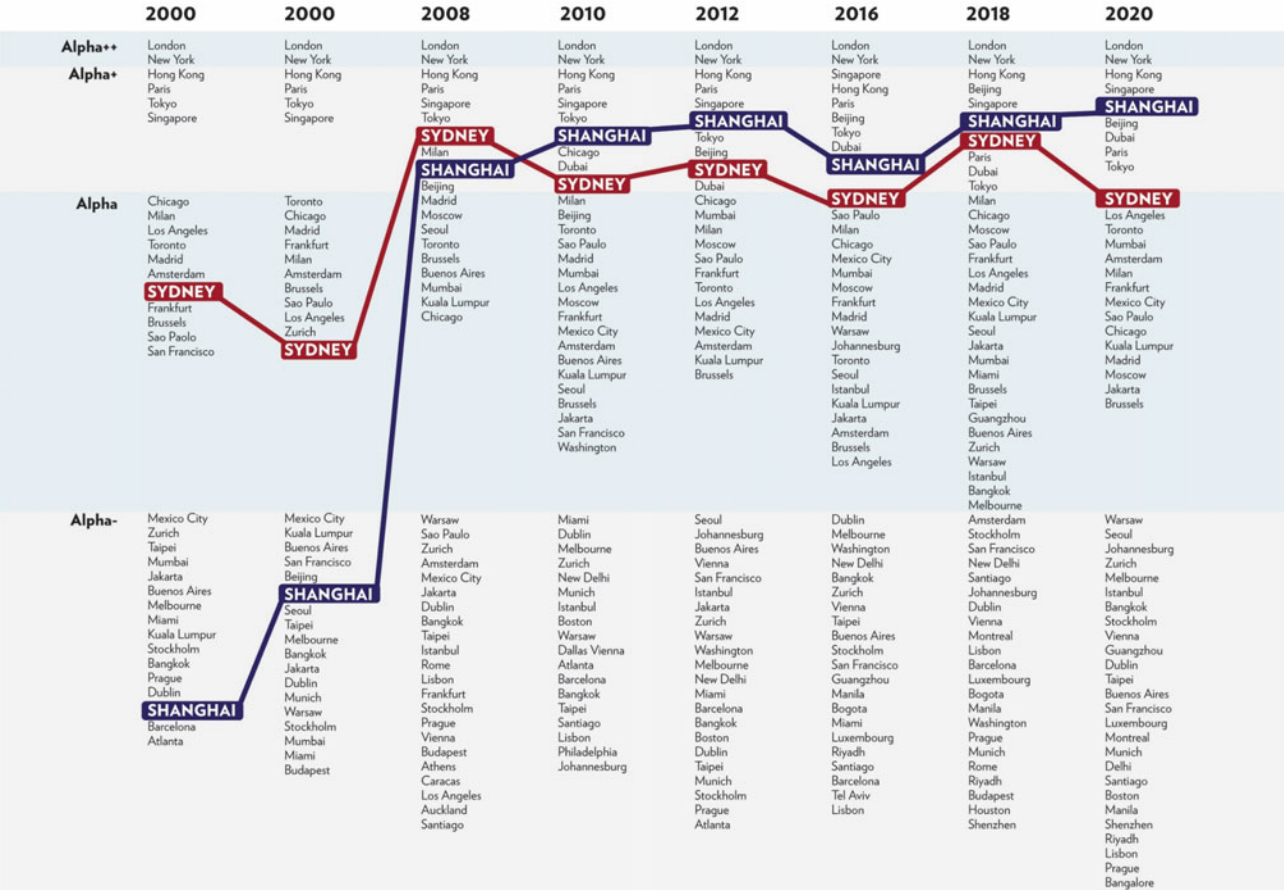

Fig. 1 Shanghai and Sydney in the global city connectivity, 2000–2020. *Data source* (GaWC, 2020)

including those between Shanghai and Sydney, are more than what can be measured through advanced producer services. Much of the intercity connections acted by those advanced producer services firms are in digital forms (Taylor & Derudder, 2016). Apart from them, there are also important connections in forms of movements of goods and people, which have also been growing exponentially in an accelerated globalisation. Next, I examine the Shanghai-Sydney connections through people movement between them.

People Movement

Global cities are connected in multiple forms, and there are different ways of constructing a global city network. The above global city connectivity is essentially economy-centric, focusing on a city's economic connections with other cities via advanced producer services. This economy-centrism is also a criticism of the global city thesis (Benton-Short et al., 2005; Hu, 2015). The operationalisation of this type of intercity connection is largely enabled, technically, by the advancement of digital technology and digital infrastructure, to underpin an increasingly integrated global economy. This virtual connectivity between cities has not replaced physical connectivity, such as goods and people, however. Both virtual connectivity and physical connectivity have been growing, concurrently and reciprocally, in recent decades; they are interacting to restructure the global city system (Johnson et al., 2008). Those gateway global cities, and their urban node roles in the global economy, are reflected not only by their economic capabilities such as advanced producer services, but also by their cargo volumes and air passengers. Air passengers are a frequent indicator of a city's node role in the global economy. The increasing people movement between cities forms a physical global city network, constituting an alternative intercity connection and functioning in association with other forms of physical and virtual connections, such as digital flow and international trade. Empirically, data of air passengers and advanced producer services converge on mapping intercity connectivity under globalisation (Taylor et al., 2007). Those leading global cities are also major destinations or transit hubs of air passengers. Airport is a hallmark infrastructure of global cities; many of them have more than one international airport to enable the growing demand of people movement.

People movement takes a physical form of intercity connections. However, people movement has significant associations with other forms of intercity connections. People movement is generally correlated with economic activities; it is also a ready proxy of cultural and social exchanges. Digital technology has conquered distance, but digital connection does not supersede travel or render face-to-face meetings obsolete. Not only the volumes, but also the compositions of people's movement—social-demographic characteristics, purposes of travel, and durations of stay—provide alternative but essential indicators of intercity connections. Here, I use people movement as an alternative lens to view the increasing and transforming connections between Shanghai and Sydney at the beginning of the twenty-first century. For this purpose,

I analysed anonymised air passenger data of direct flights between the two cities in 2002 and 2011, which were provided by the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection (now Department of Home Affairs). Below, I present the people movement between Shanghai and Sydney, drawn from the air passenger data, in terms of aggregated volumes, purposes of travel, and disaggregated purposes of travel by Chinese and Australian citizens. These measures present overall as well as detailed pictures of people movement between Shanghai and Sydney, enriching an understanding of the connections between the two cities as well as between the two countries.

The air passengers flying between Shanghai and Sydney increased by more than two times from 2002 to 2011 (Table 1). This massive increase of people movement is indicative of growing connections between the two cities, and more importantly, between China and Australia in many aspects in this period. In both years, the majority of the air passengers were Chinese citizens and Australian citizens: they together accounted for 93 per cent of total air passengers in 2002, and 88 per cent in 2011. Further, in each year and each direction of the flights, Chinese citizens were significantly more than Australian citizens. This imbalance of citizenships among the air passengers may be explained by the different population sizes of the two countries; it may also reflect the growing attraction of Australia as a destination for Chinese travellers, for tourism or business purposes.

Dissecting the purposes of travel helps reveal the nature of the people movement between Shanghai and Sydney in 2002 and 2011. However, the incompleteness of this data used needs to be considered when the patterns are interpreted. Not every passenger indicated the purpose of travel when the data were collected in the air passenger cards. For example, 48 per cent of the total air passengers did not indicate their purposes of travel in 2011. As a result, for data in both 2002 and 2011, the analysis was based upon only those air passengers who indicated purposes of travel. Analysing this incomplete data has no intention of extrapolating the results to represent all the passengers. They are analysed to provide some insights, albeit partial, into the people movement.

Table 1 Air passengers between Shanghai and Sydney in 2002 and 2011

Directions		2002	2011
From Shanghai to Sydney	Chinese citizens	35,937	95,013
	Australian citizens	15,061	59,378
	Other citizens	3,575	22,257
	Subtotal	54,573	176,648
From Sydney to Shanghai	Chinese citizens	29,371	90,869
	Australian citizens	14,276	58,881
	Other citizens	3,183	20,798
	Subtotal	46,830	170,548
Total		101,403	347,196

Data source Department of Immigration and Border Protection

Figure 2 presents the purposes of travel for all the air passengers, regardless of their citizenships, who recorded their data in 2002 and 2011. In both years, the top purposes remained the same: employment, business, convention/conference, and visiting friends/relatives. However, their shares changed to various degrees: while employment and business increased their shares, the other two purposes decreased theirs. Put together, these trends suggest that economy-related activities accounted for the majority of the purposes of travel in 2002–2011, and this dominance was strengthened in the one decade.

Table 2 further presents the purposes of travel by Chinese and Australian citizenships and by directions of flight in 2002 and 2011. The patterns by citizenships and directions of flights do not deviate much from that observed for all the recorded air passengers in Fig. 2, in that the majority of purposes were related to economic activities. This is because, as indicated above, the Chinese and Australian citizens dominated the compositions of the air passengers. However, one nuanced feature stood out for Chinese citizens travelling from Shanghai to Sydney: among them, visiting friends/relatives was the largest share of purposes of travel at 25 per cent in 2002; and was the second largest share at 18.1 per cent in 2011. This feature captures another significant dimension of Shanghai-Sydney connections—the Chinese migrants in Sydney and Australia connecting the two cities and the two countries, in addition to the growing economic relationship. How the new Chinese migrants are remaking the connections is further discussed later. Naturally, COVID-19 travel restrictions are profoundly altering this trend and its likely resumption may take until 2022–2023, at least.

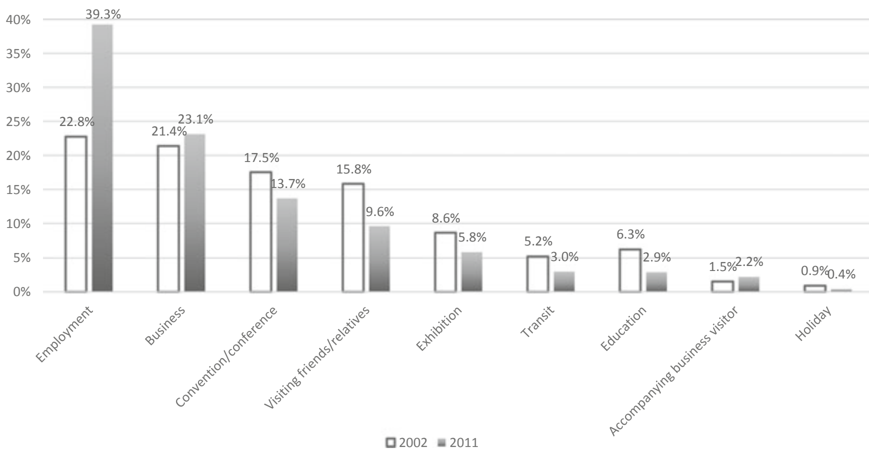

Fig. 2 Purposes of travel between Shanghai and Sydney in 2002 and 2011. *Data source* Department of Immigration and Border Protection

Table 2 Purposes of travel by Chinese and Australian citizens between Shanghai and Sydney in 2002 and 2011

Directions		2002		2011	
		Chinese citizens	Australian citizens	Chinese citizens	Australian citizens
From Shanghai to Sydney	Transit	7.3%	0.1%	3.2%	1.8%
	Convention/conference	17.7%	4.2%	8.3%	10.5%
	Business	16.4%	20.1%	17.5%	47.5%
	Accompanying business visitor	0.7%	3.8%	1.7%	1.8%
	Visiting friends/relatives	25.0%	17.1%	18.1%	1.1%
	Holiday	0.8%	2.2%	0.6%	0.1%
	Employment	14.9%	25.8%	42.0%	24.0%
	Education	8.2%	7.5%	3.5%	2.0%
	Exhibition	9.0%	19.2%	5.1%	11.2%
	Subtotal	100%	100%	100%	100%
From Sydney to Shanghai	Transit	1.3%	2.4%	0.8%	3.4%
	Convention/conference	16.4%	18.3%	11.3%	22.0%
	Business	35.2%	29.6%	50.1%	26.9%
	Accompanying business visitor	3.5%	2.4%	2.3%	2.2%
	Visiting friends/relatives	3.3%	1.9%	0.8%	1.2%
	Holiday	2.3%	0.6%	0.1%	0.3%
	Employment	24.4%	35.3%	25.0%	37.2%
	Education	4.7%	2.6%	2.9%	1.6%
	Exhibition	8.9%	6.8%	6.7%	5.2%
	Subtotal	100%	100%	100%	100%

Data source Department of Immigration and Border Protection

Global Competitiveness

Do cities compete? And how? It is not hard to understand that businesses compete, and nations compete; these are accepted notions in theories and policies. The proposition of competing cities is derived from these notions of competing businesses and nations. However, when the idea of urban competitiveness was debated in the 1990s, urban theorists did not always agree. One argument is that cities do not compete, but businesses within cities compete; the counterargument is that cities do compete, but they compete in more complex ways than businesses, which compete for profit, to attract business, investment, talent, visitors, and events (Hu et al., 2013). Today, urban competitiveness is an established concept in urban policy debates and practices. Hardly can we find a city's strategic plan that does not set competitiveness as a

key development goal. Many cities in the world, including Shanghai and Sydney, seem to converge on prioritising competitiveness in urban strategies. This urban policy convergence has been enabled by two macro forces: one is the dominance of neoliberalism in urban governance and policymaking to promote competition; the other is the globalisation of this urban policy thinking to cities across the world (Hu, 2018). Cities are globalised, not only in terms of their interconnections as argued above, but also in terms of the goals and thinking of their policymaking.

Along with the establishment of urban competitiveness in research and policy, its conceptualisation has also been evolving, incorporating advancements in theories and practices. I identify three broad strands of its conceptual evolution. First, the conceptual scope of urban competitiveness has expanded from an economy-centrism to an inclusion of non-economic dimensions, such as environmental sustainability, social equality, and urban governance (Hu et al., 2013). This conceptual deviation from an economy-centrism has enabled conceptual cross-fertilisation with urban sustainability, whose classic triple bottom lines definition falls into economic, social, and environmental domains. There seems to be a conceptual tendency for urban competitiveness to fuse into urban sustainability, signifying a significant departure from the original conceptualisation of urban competitiveness which had an explicit economic focus (Hu, 2018). Second, the geographical scope of applying urban competitiveness has moved from regional and national contexts to the global context. Cities, large and small, have been interlinked within a global system that is connected and competitive. Competing in a global system poses new imperatives for cities to pursue global competitiveness in urban strategy. This is especially a policy priority for those gateway global cities like Shanghai and Sydney. Third, cities within a global system do not compete only; they also collaborate. Within the global city system, there is also a division of 'labour' between cities which involves both competition and collaboration of urban functions. Urban competitiveness, while capturing the competition aspect, does not explicitly denote the collaboration aspect, which is often an outcome of intercity competition although. For these reasons, it is a partial understanding to classify the relationship between Shanghai and Sydney as competitive. Shanghai and Sydney, like many other cities, are relational—competitive and collaborative—in a global age (Hu, 2017).

Numerous studies are undertaken every year to empirically measure and rank global cities. These studies employ different conceptualisations, methodologies, and data collections, and the results vary. Here, I use the data from a study on 30 global cities—a mix of cities at different development stages across the world—by consultancy firm PwC, which is published in the report *Cities of Opportunity* (PwC, 2016). I present the performances of Shanghai and Sydney, and the top performer city in each indicator, which is a composite index built upon a set of sub-indicators (Fig. 3). The top performer city refers to the one city that performs the best among these 30 cities in that indicator. So, the top performer city is different by indicators. Figure 3 illustrates an overview of where Shanghai and Sydney stand in comparison with the top performer city, and with each other, against the indicators.

This comparison echoes several notions discussed above concerning global competitiveness of cities. For example, this suite of indicators used to measure and

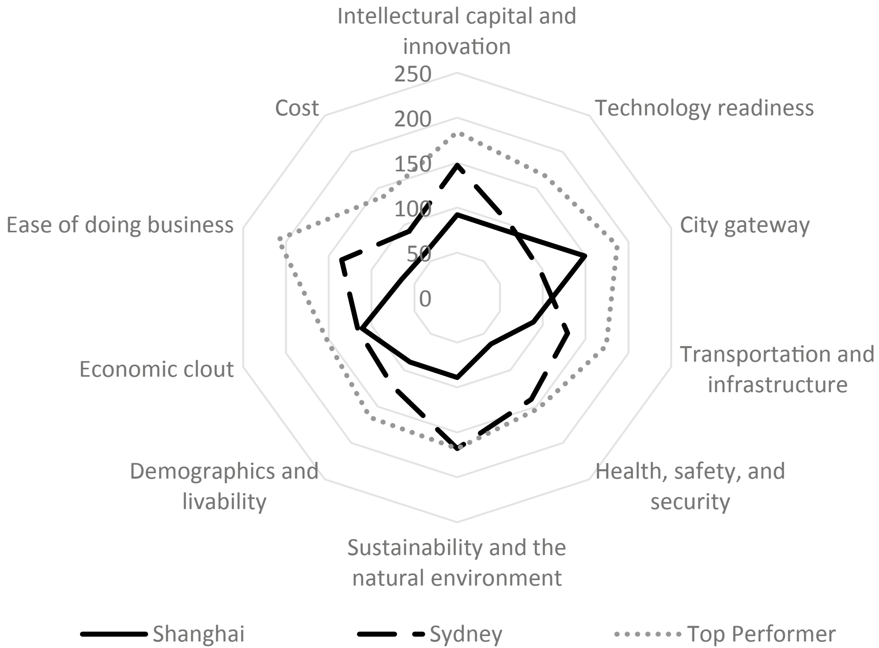

Fig. 3 The global competitiveness of Shanghai and Sydney. Data source: (PwC, 2016)

rank global cities, despite a strong economic focus, also includes social and environmental dimensions. They seem to indicate a particular focus on innovation and technology to reflect their growing importance in defining a city's global competitiveness. Shanghai and Sydney perform differently in different indicators. The performances generally reflect the strengths and weaknesses of the two cities, as measured by the indicators and their sub-indicators, before and when the study was published in 2016. Here, my intention is not to show which city performs better in which indicator, so as to inform how cities should improve and catch up. Instead, I use the indicators and comparison to show the two cities have different areas of advantages and disadvantages, which help inform an understanding of the connections between them that involve not only competition but also collaboration. For example, Sydney's better performances in liveability and natural environment reflect the city's attractiveness to visitors and migrants, and Shanghai's better performance in gateway status reflects its lead urban node role in China and the Asia Pacific area. No city could perform well in every indicator, and no city should perform well in every indicator. A city's competitive strength and weakness, in a way, justify how it connects with other cities.

People Connection

Probably the most important connection between Shanghai and Sydney, and between China and Australia, is the Chinese diaspora in Sydney and in Australia. The Chinese diaspora in Sydney, along with its own growth, has attracted some academic interests in exploring their settlements, communal places, identity, and gender and community organisation (Burnley, 2002; Davidson, 2008; Lalich, 2006; Low, 2006). The China-born population (excluding Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan) in Sydney increased in both numbers and shares in the local population in recent decades (Fig. 4). From 2006 to 2016, the China-born residents in Sydney more than doubled from 109,140 to 224,682; in the same period, Sydney's total population increased from 4,119,190 to 4,823,993 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020). As a result, the shares of the China-born residents in the total population also increased from 2.65 per cent to 4.66 per cent during this period. This growing Chinese diaspora in Sydney is bringing more than demographic change: it is influencing the local receiving community in all-round manners, including cultural and social compositions, economic development, political preference, and environmental impact. Further, it is linking the local receiving community with the sending community back in China. This diaspora connects the two communities in more complex and less tangible ways than generally comprehended.

A Shanghainese group is discernible in the Chinese diaspora in Sydney, although the accurate numbers of these Shanghainese are hard to be recorded and ascertained. According to the Australian Census 2016, more than 1.1 million residents in Australia recorded Chinese ancestry (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020). A general acknowledgement in Chinese reportage—unsourced and unverified—is that nearly a quarter of these Chinese-Australian are of Shanghainese origin. The presence of a considerable Shanghainese subgroup among the Chinese diaspora is not

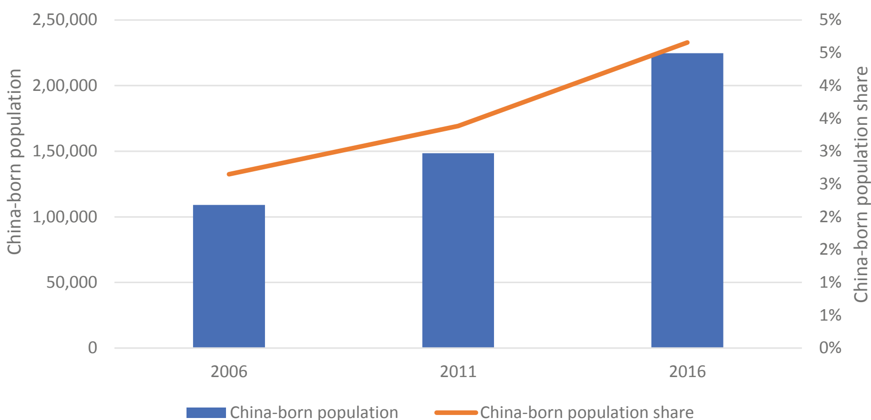

Fig. 4 China-born population in Sydney, 2006–2016. *Data source* (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020)

surprising. In the 1980s, soon after China opened its door to the world, the Shanghainese were among the first groups to go overseas to pursue opportunities. Many of these Shanghainese came to Australia and settled down in Sydney. From the turn of the century, the source provinces and cities of Chinese migrants to Australia have become diversified.

When I moved from China to Australia in 2005, Sydney was my first stop of settlement. I lived there until 2009 and was able to have anecdotal experiences of the Shanghainese subgroup there. I lived in Chatswood—a suburb in north Sydney with a strong Asian flavour, where several restaurants boasted of Shanghai cuisines. Not long after I arrived in Sydney, I heard of the nickname 'Little Shanghai' for Ashfield—a suburb in the inner west of Sydney, where Shanghainese dominates the Chinese population. The local artery Liverpool Road is lined mostly by Chinese restaurants and shops, where it is not unusual to eavesdrop on conversations in Shanghainese rather than Mandarin. The local Shanghainese cluster originated mainly from the students who were granted resident status after the Tiananmen Square Incident in 1989, and then their families arrived (Singerman, 2006). My early encounters included two Shanghainese who impressed me. One was a driving instructor, who trained me before I sat in a driving test; the other was a removalist, who removed my furniture when I changed apartments. Both seemed to have tertiary education in China and belonged to the Chinese students who stayed after the Tiananmen Square Incident—the generation of 'old Shanghainese Australian'. I also got to know a Shanghainese who studied in Sydney and then stayed as an IT engineer in the twenty-first century—the generation of 'new Shanghainese Australian'. These distinctions of occupations and implied social statuses between the old and new generations of migrants do not just apply to the Shanghainese-Sydneysiders; they apply to the Chinese-Australian in general.

Shanghai is an exception to the thesis that global cities are often migrant cities (Benton-Short et al., 2005; Hu, 2015). Compared to other leading global cities like London, New York, Singapore, and Sydney, which all have a share of the foreign-born population of more than 30 per cent (Migration Data Portal, 2020), Shanghai's foreign-born population base is small, despite being the most cosmopolitan city in mainland China. The Chinese Census 2010 recorded an overseas population of 208,300, including residents of Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan, living in Shanghai (Shanghai Statistics Bureau, 2019). However, there is also an Australian diaspora in Shanghai, although its presence is less prominent than the Chinese diaspora in Sydney. Many of them are Australian expatriates posted by Australian organisations operating business in China (Hutchings, 2002). When I lived in Sydney, I could not find a Sydney-based international consultancy firm of architecture and urban design—my professional area—which did not have business in China, and Shanghai was a prime destination for their business operation in China.

In the twenty-first century, a new phenomenon in the people connection is that many Shanghainese/Chinese studied in Sydney/Australia and became Australian permanent residents or citizens, and then they returned to Shanghai/China to pursue business and career opportunities. So, the Australian diaspora—if it is defined by citizenship status—in Shanghai may include many Chinese faces. This 'circular

migration' phenomenon is not new or unique to Sydney and Shanghai. It is part of the migration-mobility shift in people movement between global cities (Hu, 2015). In Shanghai and other major Chinese cities, these circular migrants are so-called *haigui*—phonetically sounding 'turtle' and literally meaning 'return from sea'—who have re-established themselves locally through adopting a flexible identity and citizenship, and expanding socio-economic and territorial spaces (Huang & Kuah-Pearce, 2015). The traditional conceptualisation of migration by country of birth and permanent settlement is insufficient to reflect the new people connection between global cities, which is better reflected by the increasing mobility of people irrespective of their country of birth or citizenship (Hu, 2015). The people connection between Shanghai and Sydney is materialised by both the migrant population and the mobile population.

Concluding Remarks

I have discussed several major dimensions of the intercity connections between Shanghai and Sydney with a focus on the period of the early twenty-first century. These intercity connections, overall, have shown a trend of increasing volume and intensity. This trend needs to be understood under two broad contexts: an accelerated globalisation and an increasingly engaged China-Australia relationship in the same period. However, both of these broad contexts are at a critical moment now as COVID-19 travel restriction has fundamentally cut migration, student, and tourist flows between China and Australia. Further, the contemporary globalisation, which has been evolving at faster speeds since the early 1980s, is being challenged, if not disrupted, by the rising nationalism, populism, protectionism, and attempts of economic decoupling in major powers. A new geopolitical landscape is being forged by the re-emerging political and ideological differences, which used to be prevailed over by economic connections, mainly between the United States and China—the two largest economies in the world. The new global geopolitics is reshaping the China-Australia relationship, as well as the intercity connections between Shanghai and Sydney. Political distrust and ideological bias—mixed with facts and fictions, information and disinformation—which used to hibernate, are now emerging to the front.

The geopolitical fragility is generating costs of connections in economic and other spheres. The China-Australia relationship is at a historically low point. Its future trajectory does not seem to be wholly dependent on the wishes and actions of the two countries; it is also dependent on geopolitical factors external to them, adding to the uncertainty and complexity of its future. Thus, what I have discussed in this chapter is more a summary of the past than a basis for foreseeing the future of the Shanghai-Sydney connections. The reason is clear: the contexts—national and international—that have nurtured the intercity connections in the past two decades are rapidly changing. COVID-19 happened to arise at such a tricky time, pausing the world and disrupting many of the intercity connections. It is an unlikely scenario that

the intercity connections would return to normal very soon in the post-COVID-19 era. COVID-19 divides history. COVID-19 may also divide the Shanghai-Sydney connections, for reasons not necessarily of pandemic, but of geopolitics.

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Will the Confucian Idea *Tianxia* Contribute to Australia-China Economic Relationship

Wei Shi

Abstract As China continues to grow as an influential regional power, a problem facing China is how it will address the relationship with its neighbours in terms of economics, politics and culture. In recent years, a great number of Chinese thinkers have been working hard to demonstrate China's peaceful rise by turning to China's own cultural resources and historical experience for inspiration. This chapter shall focus on the case study of *tianxia* (all-under-heaven)—a typical Confucian worldview that is highlighted in current Chinese academic and governing official discourses. By exploring the origin and evolving connotation of *tianxia*, followed by a critical examination of the practice of a modern verision of *tianxia* today as well as the response from Australia, this chapter intends to show the potential of this Confucian idea to serve as a key element in a search for peaceful regional cooperation and economic development.

Keywords *Tianxia* (all-under-heaven) · Clash of civilisations · Australia-China economic relations

In an unprecedented global era when China looms as a regional economic and political power of international influence, a problem facing China is how it will get along with its neighbours in terms of economics, politics and culture. Instead of adopting Western terminologies that comprise the dominant vocabulary of international relations theory, Chinese thinkers have been turning to China's own historical experience for inspiration, bringing indigenous Chinese concepts, theories and methodologies–especially selected Confucian ideas–to address the problem. A typical example is Chinese thinkers' invoking of the Confucian idea *tianxia* (all-under-heaven) as an alternative model of world order - an expression that is explicitly formulated in response to Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' thesis. Why do Chinese thinkers turn to Confucianism for inspiration given the latter has been vilified for much of the twentieth century? What do these scholars mean by *tianxia* in the contemporary global context? Will *tianxia* become a useful cultural resource that can be shared by China's neighbour Australia and contribute to the bi-lateral relationship between

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Australia and China? Bearing these questions in mind, this chapter intends to clarify the context and drivers lying behind *tianxia* discourse, to critically examine the description and practice of *tianxia* today, and to show the response from Australia, followed by a further exploration of whether and how this Confucian idea may have an impact on Australia-China economic relationship as a key element in a search for peaceful regional cooperation and development.

Introduction: Clash of Civilisations Versus Confucian *Tianxia*

In the opening chapter of his 1996 book, *The Clash of Civilizations*, Samuel Huntington (1927–2008) pointed out that after the Cold War, for the first time in history global politics is 'both multipolar and multicivilizational' (Huntington, 1996, 20); and that the most important distinctions between people have become cultural instead of ideological, and that a new world order based on culture/civilization[1] is emerging. According to Huntington, modernization encourages politicians in non-Western societies to denounce Western cultural imperialism by promoting their own unique cultures. Given that 'cultural commonality facilitate[s] cooperation and cohesion among people and cultural differences promote cleavages and conflicts' (Huntington, 1996, 128), clashes are likely to occur among different civilizations, especially among Western, Islamic and Sinic civilization.[2]

As it happens, a series of terrorist atrocities such as 9/11 have occurred and continue to occur in Europe, North America, the Middle East, East Africa and many other parts of the world, committed by Islamic fundamentalists.[3] Other non-Western societies (or what Huntington classified as 'weaker civilizations' compared to 'challenger civilizations' like Islam and China), including Latin America and Africa, have advocated and promoted their indigenous cultures and languages in response to so-called Western colonial influence. As such, Huntington's prediction seems to have come true in certain areas.

Concomitantly, on the other side of the globe, mainland China has witnessed an unprecedented and sustained resurgence of interest in Confucianism over the past few

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[1] Huntington tended to mix the usage of civilization and culture in his statement. According to him, a civilization is the broadest cultural entity (Samuel, 1996, 43). As Li Shenzhi 李慎之 (1923–2003) has pointed out in a 1997 article (Li, 1997), certain Chinese scholars such as Zhang Shenfu 张申府 (1893–1986) also used this term the same way.

[2] Here, by Sinic Chinese, Huntington means Chinese civilization, in which Confucianism constitutes the major component of its cultural tradition. (Huntington, 1996, 183).

[3] These extremists are discontented with the existing political and social order and thus call for Muslims all over the world to use force to break through the boundaries of the nation states and to establish a superior Muslim community.

decades.[4] Active public participation, expanding academic research, and an unprecedented level of government support have all contributed to turning the contemporary Confucian revival from what was originally limited to an academic activity (1980–2000) (Makeham, 2008) to a complex intellectual and political movement that aims to define China's cultural and political identity.

As can be seen, the Chinese party-state has made a concerted effort to free itself from Western cultural penetration, by reviving and promoting China's own indigenous culture and values–especially selected Confucian ideas–in both theory and practice, domestically and increasingly internationally. This move has received wide attention and criticism, and also generating strong interest in the media, and among public intellectuals and academics. Some interpret Confucianism today as being part of those Chinese traditions that are used 'as political tools to consolidate the power of the party-state' by 'fill[ing] the void in the ideological system left by a decline in the official political doctrine' and 'combat[ing] the influence of Western liberalism' (Ai, 2015). Some use the word 'cultural chauvinism' to comment on advocates of contemporary mainland New Confucians (*dalu xinrujia*),[5] accusing them of taking an extreme path by resisting western values (Ji, 2017). Others, by referring to Chinese history, refute the notion of 'Chinese exceptionalism,' which has been recruited into official 'peaceful rise' discourse, arguing that Confucian China behaved aggressively and expansively in certain historical periods, despite the common belief that Confucianism always 'cherishes harmony and abhors war' (Walt, 2012). Still, others connect the contemporary revival of Confucianism with the rise of cultural nationalism, with anti-Western sentiments being a dominant theme (Pang, 2011). Quite a few comments and views outside of China, various as they seem, have something in common: to set China against the West, and to perceive China to be assertive and aggressive in order to trigger conflict between civilizations and to challenge the existing world order. In this light, Huntington's spectre of the clash of civilizations seems to have returned. Yet is the clash between different civilisations unavoidable? Are Chinese civilization and Western civilization so diametrically opposed that there is no common ground? Is there no likelihood that various civilizations can co-exist peacefully?

The answer to these questions may not be a simple yes. As we may see in what follows, nowadays in China, scholars and public intellectuals in mainland China are discussing *tianxia*, a broadly Confucian expression[6] that is explicitly formulated in

[4] Reading Confucian classics has become popular in mainstream society; hundreds of conferences, seminars and workshops on Confucianism have been organized; and a number of Confucian ideas such as 'peace among all nations' (*xiehe wanbang* 协和万邦) and 'all people belong to one family' (*sihai yijia* 四海一家) have been frequently employed by party officials in their public speeches.

[5] The author does not give a clear definition of mainland New Confucians, but according to his statement and his reference to Ge Zhaoguang's 葛兆光 article, what he means by mainland New Confucians refer to a group of mainland Confucians who are keen to be actively involved in China's politics, such as Jiang Qing 蒋庆, Kang Xiaoguang 康晓光, etc.

[6] Some scholars (Abe, 1956) hold that *tianxia* is a Mohist concept, rather than a Confucian concept.

response to Huntington's 'clash' thesis. According to these Chinese thinkers, an adaptation of the so-called *tianxia* order that emerged in the Spring and Autumn period (770–476 BC) is not only capable of dealing with problems in ancient China, but also has the potential to provide universal norms for addressing international relations in the modern world. With this cultural resource, they claim, different civilizations are likely to co-exist peacefully, and hence avoid potential conflict.

It is of course our hope that as China looms as an influential world civilization, it will assume the responsibility to nourish world cultures by offering its own resources and by engaging more deeply with challenges that concern us all. Yet many questions remain to be answered. For example, what specific arguments do these Chinese thinkers make? Are they plausible? And, by extension, what factors in *tianxia* theory, if there are any, will become a force for reason that will bring regional stability and global peace? This leads us to the discussion in the next section, which examines the deployment and description of *tianxia* in recent years by contemporary Chinese scholars. Special attention will be given to Zhao Tingyang 赵汀阳 (affiliated with Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) and his writings on *tianxia*, not only because Zhao's writings provide a reconstructed peaceful *tianxia* system that marks the rise of *tianxia* revival discourse in mainland China, but also because Zhao's case typically shows how academic discussions can have an impact on China's foreign policy narratives in the twenty-first century.

A Philosophical Reconstruction of *Tianxia* for a Peaceful World Order

With the literal meaning 'beneath the sky' and conventionally English translated as 'all-under-heaven', *tianxia* is a traditional Chinese concept that was employed for hundreds of years (1046–256 BC) during the Zhou 周 dynasty. Generally, it has three meanings: (1) a manageable political unit or geographic territory similar to 'the Central States', the 'middle Kingdom', or *Zhongguo*, as held by Japanese scholar Abe Takeo 安部健夫 (1903–1959) and Yamada Sumeru 山田统 (1906–1976) (Watanabe 2008 10); (2) a notion of 'civilized society' or 'enlightened realm', which is larger than the political unit nation-state, as suggested by Joseph R. Levenson (1920–1969) (Levenson, 1968, 101) and Wang Gungwu 王赓武 (Wang, 2013, 133); (3) 'all beneath the sky', as is used in the *tianxia* discourse of contemporary Chinese scholars, which is similar to the meaning of 'world' today.

After fading from sight for hundreds of years, the ancient concept of *tianxia* is given new vitality by Chinese contemporary philosopher Zhao Tingyang with his creative reconstruction of *tianxia* system. For much of his academic career, Zhao has established himself as a scholar of political theories, ethics and epistemology. Since 2005, however, Zhao has gained considerable currency in the realm of international relations theory through his publication of the book *The Tianxia System: An Introduction to the Philosophy of a World Institution* (Zhao, 2005). With his

explicit admiration and adaptation of the idea of *tianxia*, Zhao has taken up the role of an active advocator and promoter of the *tianxia* revival discourse in contemporary China.

According to Zhao, the present world order is full of 'conflict, hostility and continuing clashes among civilizations' (Zhao, 2018) as a result of the prevalence of Hobbesian political philosophy. In order to save the world from growing chaos, Zhao suggests that we turn to ancient Chinese philosophy for antidotes. This is because 'China's attitude to the outside world is fundamentally different from that of the West, and China has a completely different worldview from the West' (Zhao, 2005, 15)— whereas Western thought thinks about conflict, Chinese thought thinks about harmony.

What Does *Tianxia* Look Like?

Inspired by the historical account of the political governance in the Zhou dynasty, Zhao Tingyang proposes his new *tianxia* conception as an alternative model of world order, which defines 'an all-inclusive world with harmony for all' (Zhao, 2018). What, then, does this *tianxia* look like? According to Zhao, three dimensions together constitute the picture of *tianxia.*

First, in a geographical sense, *tianxia* means all lands under the sky. Zhao maintains that *tianxia* in ancient times referred to the entire world, but due to the limited knowledge, ancient people used to take the territory of *Jiuzhou* 九州 (Nine Regions, which is less than half the size of modern China) as the whole world. Second, in a socio-psychological sense, *tianxia* refers to a world defined by all people's hearts (*minxin* 民心). Based on Chinese aphorisms such as 'he who wins overs the support of all people wins the world' (*de minxinzhe de tianxia* 得民心者得天下), Zhao insists that people's hearts are the basis for legitimizing the governance, and the legitimacy will be established only when people are satisfied with the reign. Third, in the sense of political institutions, *tianxia* means a world institution that guarantees the-world-as-one-family (*shijie yi jia* 世界一家). Although there is the United Nations, Zhao regards it as an 'international organization' rather than a 'world institution', with the difference being that the former addresses world problems from an international perspective whereas the latter does so from the world-as-a-whole perspective (Zhao, 2005, 93).

As such, Zhao provides an ideal picture of *tianxia* in which the three senses–geographical, psychological and institutional–are interdependent and essential. From this viewpoint, our world is now still a 'non-world', because the world 'has not yet been completed in its full sense' (Zhao, 2005, 126). Beautiful and harmonious as the *tianxia* ideal might seem, Zhao fails to provide any detail or description of how this *tianxia* vision might be realised. How, for example, are people's hearts observed? In what ways can a political institution work in the sense of world-as-one-family? Who will become the administrator of this world institution? Precisely because of this, some critics describe Zhao's *tianxia* conception as an 'imaginary

utopia' (Ge, 2017, 131–198). Yet that criticism does not seem to be a problem for Zhao, because what interests him most is 'the best theoretical possibility for world order' (Zhao, 2008, 516), whether it can be realized or not is another matter. In Zhao's words, *tianxia* is just a vision of a world politically remade to optimize the chance of enduring stability and security for all. Philosophically speaking, it suggests an ontological solution to the political problem of the clash of civilizations, as the American political scientist Samuel Huntington put it (Debray and Zhao, 2020). (Paradoxically, when addressing Western political theory, Zhao faults them for their practical failure (Zhou, 2008).) This prompts the question: What elements in *tianxia* theory does Zhao believe are most conducive to eliminating clashes of civilizations and at the same time maintaining global harmony and peace?

A Critical Discussion of Key Elements in Zhao Tingyang's *Tianxia* Theory

There are at least three elements that are crucial to ensure the harmonious operation of the *tianxia* system Zhao depicts.[7]

(1) All-inclusive (or non-exclusive, *wuwai* 无外).
'All-inclusive' is the main principle that runs through the whole *tianxia* theory. Believing that the ultimate goal of politics is peace rather than conflict, Zhao criticizes a prevalent view in Western political theory that politics is based on the distinction between friend and enemy. Zhao describes this view as a 'stubborn illness' in Western thought and asserts that the idea of 'all-inclusive' in *tianxia* system can help remedy this deficiency, of which the key lies in that 'all-inclusiveness' can 'transform enemies into friends (*hua di wei you* 化敌为友)' (Zhao, 2005, 33). (Ironically, questions including 'Who are our enemies? Who are our friends?' are found in Mao Zedong's *Selected Works* and remained a key pillar of the thought of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) throughout the years of Maoism. Discussions on distinguishing enemy from friend in China appeared even some time before the discovery of the centrality of friend/enemy dichotomy in Western theory through Carl Schmitt's (1888–1985) work (Dutton, 2019, 81; 2005).
By highlighting the transformability of enemies, Zhao implies his pursuit of harmony and peace in the ideal *tianxia*. How to transform then? Zhao explains, to 'transform' means to attract people through culture instead of using force. Zhao draws inspiration from the Zhou dynasty. Zhou was a small state at the time but was able to bring larger states willingly into the *tianxia* system. Zhao claims that Zhou's success was apparently not through using violence or coercion, but through its culture. In the Zhou dynasty, according to Zhao, it was the System of Rites and Music that played a key role in maintaining

[7] It might be difficult to summarize key elements in Zhao's *tianxia* theory, not only because his arguments scattered about in his various books, article, conference papers (in both English and in Chinese), but also because he 'does not always clearly or logically lay out its elements' (Zhang, 2010) and 'utilize[s] many of the same arguments and examples in sometimes contradictory ways' (Callahan, 2008) which easily cause misinterpretations, as noted by some scholars. Despite this, one can nevertheless find some clues in Zhao's discussions.

tianxia order. In an era when the System of Rites and Music no longer existed, Zhao does not provide any alternative suggestions on how an 'all-inclusive' *tianxia* can be achieved nowadays. Stephen C. Angle, a specialist on Chinese philosophy, shows sympathy to Zhao's concept of 'all-inclusive', maintaining that 'an inclusive process resulting in an agreement about the rights of all people' is 'already well underway'. Yet in contrast with Zhao, Angle sees the UN as having an important role to play in this process. While accepting some of Zhao's criticism of the UN as important, Angle believes that 'they are significantly overstated' (Angle, 2012, 89).

Put aside the actual effectiveness of the idea 'all-inclusive', we may still find some problems here. For example, on the one hand, Zhao claims that all are included in a harmonious *tianxia* system; on the other, he seems unconsciously to set Chinese thought against Western ideas. Besides, in Zhao's vision of *tianxia*, everything and everyone should be included if they are outside. But what if someone does not want to be transformed or internalized? Can they stay outside of *tianxia* system? How, then, will this 'all-inclusive' be possible? By extension, if all are transformed and internalized in *tianxia*, will they become homogenous? How are differences addressed in the *tianxia* system? For example, William A. Callahan, a professor of international relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science, raises the following concern:

> While Zhao understandably criticizes the West for universalizing its particular worldview at the considerable expense of other worldviews, is he doing anything different? Is not he trying to universalize the very particular Chinese concept of *tianxia* in order to apply it to the world? (Callahan, 2008, 756)

Callahan then makes the following comment: Rather than guide us towards a post-hegemonic world order that will solve global problems, *tianxia* 'presents a new hegemony where imperial China's hierarchical governance is updated for the twenty-first century' (Callahan 749). As might be expected, Zhao Tingyang regards Callahan's criticism as a total misunderstanding. In a series of articles and writings, Zhao develops his theory and responds to Callahan's criticism through his discussions on universalism, claiming that *tianxia* is by no means imperial or hegemonic; rather, it emphasizes coexistence and peace. This is where we come to the second key element of the *tianxia* system.

(2) Compatible universalism (*jianrong pubianzhuyi* 兼容普遍主义).

Generally, when mention is made of universalism or universality, people usually think of something that is valid throughout the universe, which is monistic and can be applied to every individual and everywhere, such as 'universal mathematical axiom' and 'universal truth'. Zhao Tingyang concedes that it is possible in a global world to apply this universality to understand techniques. Yet he is critical of employing this monistic and unilateral universality to understand values because 'if a certain culture can believe its values to be applicable to everybody, then every culture can believe the same, thus resulting

in conflicts among civilizations' (Zhao, 2019, 60). Zhao thus proposes an alternative Chinese-style universalism, or what he calls compatible universalism. According to Zhao, compatible universalism.

> considers universal values as those applied to every interrelation; namely it anchors universal values on symmetrical relations rather than on unilateral individuals, thus avoiding the paradox in values. (ibid.)

What, then, does Zhao mean by symmetrical relation? Zhao does not provide any specific definition, but the term 'symmetrical relation' has much to do with the ontological foundation of Zhao's *tianxia* theory. According to Zhao, the ontology of *tianxia* is relation-based, rather than individual-based. That is, in his words, 'existence presupposes coexistence. Everyone can live if—and only if—they let live; otherwise, everyone will suffer from unbearable retaliation. This truth is captured in the Confucian concept of *ren*, which literally means that being is only defined in relation to others, not by individual existence' (Zhao, 2018). Here Zhao shares the ontology of relationship with Western thinkers like Martin Buber (1878–1965) and Emmanuel Levinas (1905–1995), both of whom emphasized dissolving the dichotomy between subject and object, self and other. It is thus arguable (although contested) to say that relation-based 'compatible universalism' emphasizes coexistence and interdependence, which does not reject but embraces diversity.

Based on the distinction between 'compatible universalism' and 'unilateral universalism', Zhao faults the West for its practice of unilateral universalism. By referring to Huntington's argument, Zhao notes that the West has unilaterally imposed its values on cultures of other regions and that it won the world not by its values, but rather by 'its superiority in applying organized violence' (Zhao, 2019, 52). Zhao regards this unilateral universalization as a manifestation of imperialism. He says it is wrong

> to think [from the imperialist point of view] that universality comes from universalization. This is a fatal misunderstanding. Whether in logic or in practice, universality is a precondition for universalization, not the other way round. That is to say, only inherently universal things can be universalized, whereas universal expansion will never lead to universality. That is exactly where the fundamental difference lies between unilateral universality and compatible universality, as well as between imperialism and Tianxia. (Zhao, 2019, 52–53)

In criticizing the West as advancing a confrontational strategy and hostile attitude towards other regions, Zhao (2019) relies heavily on Huntington's clash thesis.

As for the criticism itself, it might be a tad too strong as it simplifies the complexity in the West. Despite this, his proposal that coexistence and cooperation between civilizations should become a universal value is something that is worth noting. In fact, bilateral cooperation and multilateral cooperation between different areas nowadays have proved to have been effective in some regional issues. Yet this cooperation is also not without its problem because

cooperation can also lead to conflict. For example, once an economic cooperation is established between two parties, if one party wants to maximize its own interests, will it not lead to the other party being worse-off? Zhao Tingyang acknowledges that such conflict does exist in cooperation, and he regards 'relational rationality' as the solution to this problem.

(3) Relational rationality (*guanxi lixing* 关系理性).
According to Zhao (2019), universal reason (*pubianlixing* 普遍理性) has two aspects: individual rationality and relational rationality. The former assumes that people are likely to make choices that can maximize their own personal interests with no regard to other people's interests, whereas the latter prioritizes the minimization of mutual hostility to the maximization of mutual interests. In modern society, people are usually driven by individual rationality. Zhao (2019) regards this rationality as deficient because although it seems to be able to logically calculate the gains and losses of an individual in the short term, it is very likely to miss the long-term interest. In other words, in the *tianxia* system where all individuals are included and interdependent, only those choices that are in everyone's interest are truly rational. Zhao thus introduces relational rationality as a complement, which gives priority to co-existence over the competition. Zhao says,

> It is necessary to introduce relational rationality, which highlights the priority of coexistence awareness as follows. First, it is able to foresee the issue of retaliation against imitation and act pre-emptively for the sake of retaliation aversion. This is an enhanced risk aversion that takes future interaction into consideration, and as such will always give priority to minimization of mutual hostility over maximization of self-interests. Secondly, it is able to seek further an optimal condition for coexistence in which cooperation is maximized and conflicts are minimized once the minimization of mutual hostility is ensured, so as to develop shared interests to a maximum degree. (Zhao, 2019, 63)

In this way, relational rationality is supposed to ensure the minimization of conflict in cooperation in the first place and to maximize shared interests thereafter. It should be noted that by advocating relational rationality, Zhao does not mean that individual rationality can be replaced by relational rationality. Rather, these two rationalities are two sides of a coin. Zhao (2019) refers to Confucius' word that 'one is established if and only if he lets others be established, and one is improved if and only if he lets others improve' to show that the improvement of oneself and others can be achieved simultaneously. He regards this win–win cooperation as the realistic goal of relational rationality, and names it 'Confucian Improvement' (Debray and Zhao 2020). No one would deny that win–win cooperation is the best result. Yet the question is, how is it possible that a rational choice for the individual is compatible with a rational choice for all? How should equilibrium be established? This might be a gap that Zhao needs to fill.[8]

[8] Since the publication of his first monograph on the *tianxia* system in 2005, Zhao Tingyang has been constantly revising his *tianxia* theory. Not only does he try to clarify his views by responding

Zhao (2019) touches on various elements of *tianxia* in general, yet there is still much room for interpretation. For example, in his discussion, Zhao (2019) takes a universal stance to reconstruct the *tianxia* system, but he also seems to consciously avoid elaborations on certain controversial elements of traditional *tianxia*, especially those that might have been regarded as contradictory to the principle of 'all-inclusiveness'. For example, when it comes the issue of the 'distinction between Chinese (*hua* 华) and barbarians' (*yi* 夷), Zhao (2008) claims, 'the concept of *tianxia* and the concept of Chinese/barbarians (*huayi* 华夷) are two different ideas, and they refer to different issues. When discussing *tianxia*, it is not necessary to discuss Chinese/barbarians' (Zhao 2008, 58). He further notes that Chinese/barbarians is a misconception that is inherently opposed to *tianxia* and should be corrected.[9] Here Zhao (2008) simply breaks apart *tianxia and* Chinese/barbarians by treating them as unrelated concepts, but this is less than convincing considering that the latter is generally seen as a central element of *tianxia* (Ge, 2011, 44).
Zhao's non-historical narrative of *tianxia* has been criticized by a few scholars. Ge Zhaoguang 葛兆光, a prominent historian at Fudan University, for example, comments from the viewpoint of historiography:

> Any interpretation of ancient terms need to be situated in their concrete historical context. Ancient Chinese concepts are not always "hard facts" that can be universally applied, and [their meanings] should be understood within the context of contiguous clusters of ideas….Simply taking out the two characters *tian* 天 *xia* 下 and maintaining that it was a type of world view full of "equality" and "harmony," is, I am afraid, merely an a historical imaginary that can represent nothing more than romantic feelings and lofty ideals. (Ge, 2017, 141)

In contrast with those who have portrayed traditional *tianxia* as a peaceful world, Ge Zhaoguang refers to China's history and gives examples such as Han Wudi's 汉武帝 (Emperor Wu of Han, 156–87 BC) punitive expeditions against the Xiongnu 匈奴 (Huns) and Tang Taizong's 唐太宗 (Emperor Taizong of Tang, 598 - 649 AD) attack on the Tujue 突厥 (Turks), showing that China was not always that peaceful (Ge, 2017, 144–145). As Ge notes, 'it need not be the case that, because we are Chinese people, we have to heap praise on Chinese culture and feel that every aspect of the culture is good, or even the basis for building the human culture for the future' (Ge, 2014, 162). He further maintains that 'to insist that China always 'cherished men from afar' is to deceive oneself and others, and it is hardly always the truth to say that 'China is a country that has loved peace since ancient times' (Ge, 2014, 163–164). In this case, does Ge mean that ancient China was aggressive and invasive?

to various criticisms, but he has also published a few English-language writings in which he refined his arguments to makes them sound much clearer to Anglophone readers. See ….

[9] Xu Jilin 许纪霖 (another active protagonist of *tianxia* discourse in contemporary China) has elaborated on the distinction between Chinese and barbarians; see Xu Jilin, 'Xin tianxia zhuyi: Chongjian Zhongguo de neiwai zhixu' 新天下主义: 重建中国队的内外秩序 (New Tianxia-ism: Reconstructing China's Internal and External Orders). Available online http://www.aisixiang.com/data/91702.html.

> Perhaps not, or not entirely. While acknowledging that there was much blood and fire in China's history of opening new territories, Ge also highlights that China did not necessarily, due to its complacency and imagination, have much interest in the territories of others (Ge, 2014, 164–166). John Makeham (an Australian specialist on Chinese intellectual history), however, has recently drawn attention to Ge Zhaoguang's warning (Ge, 2014) should the concept of *tianxia* is brought to life in the modern world. Ge writes: When imagined versions of the tribute system are taken to be real, and memories of the Celestial Empire are unearthed, then perhaps Chinese culture and national sentiment will turn into a nationalism (or statism) that opposes both global civilization and regional cooperation. Such a development would truly lead to a 'clash of civilizations' (Ge, 2014—passage translated in Makeham, 2020, 330).

Tianxia and Its Practice in Chinese Foreign Policy

Originally a pure philosophical exploration, Zhao Tingyang's *tianxia* theory has been incorporated into China's international relations theory in the most recent years and Zhao is even recognized as one of most representative and influential IR scholars, together with Qin Yaqing 秦亚青[10] and Yan Xuetong 阎学通[11] (Cho & Hwang, 2020; Shih & Chen, 2014). The relation between academic scholarship and government policy in China used to be opaque (Callahan, 2008), but recent research findings have shown that Chinese IR scholars and policymakers are mutually influenced by each other (Feng et al., 2019).

As it happens, over the past few years, the concept *tianxia* that used to be discussed in academic circles in the first decade of the millennium has entered Chinese governing discourse. Ideas such as 'all people belong to one family' (*tianxia yijia* 天下一家), 'the world is for all' (*tianxia weigong* 天下为公), and 'great unity under heaven' (*tianxia datong* 天下大同) are becoming frequently mentioned by President Xi Jinping 习近平 on many occasions at home and abroad. Probably because of the concerns about possible skepticism and negation that the concept *tianxia* may bring due to its ancient connotation, 'community with a shared future for mankind' (*renlei mingyun gongtongti* 人类命运共同体)—a modern version of *tianxia*, or a 'modern spiritual offspring' of *tianxia*, as suggested by some scholars (Kallio, 2018, 7) - that is less likely to be misinterpreted, has been advocated and repeatedly appears in Beijing's foreign policy narrative. Wang Jie 王杰, a professor in the Party School of the Central Committee of CCP (*Zhongong Zhongyang dangxiao* 中共中央党校), directly relates the concept of 'community with a shared future for mankind' to

[10] Qin Yaqing (b. 1953) is the former Chancellor of China Diplomatic Academy (2014–2019). He is also a member of the Foreign Policy Advisory Committee of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, and the Vice President of the China Institute of International Relations.

[11] Yan Xuetong (b. 1952) is the Dean of the Institute for International Relations at Tsinghua University. Yan is also one of China's leading experts on China's foreign policy and national security.

tianxia, seeing the former as an inheritance and innovation of traditional Chinese '*tianxia* outlook' (*tianxia guan*) (Wang, 2020). Wang's article was published in the *Guangming Daily* 光明日报 (an official newspaper of the Central Committee of the CCP) and was reposted on the website of *Qiushi* 求是 *Journal* (CCP's main theoretical journal), which suggests that opinions expressed in this article accord with the party's voice. Similarly, Zhang Liwen 张立文, a professor in Renmin University, connects '*tianxia*' with 'community with a shared future for mankind', arguing that 'since ancient times, the concept of the community with a shared future for mankind has guided the Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu* 中华民族) in its longing for the ideal world of values (*tianxia*) and the pursuit of eternal values. [Although] the forms are different, the rationale is the same' (Zhang, 2017). What, then, is this modern version of *tianxia* about?

In the Report to the 18th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (2012), 'community with a shared future for mankind' was firstly proposed and expressed in terms of 'mutually beneficial cooperation' (or win–win cooperation),

> Promoting mutually beneficial cooperation means to advocate the awareness of community with a shared future for mankind; take into account other countries when pursuing one's own interests; to promote common development of all countries when advancing one's own development; establish a new type of global partnership for development that is more equal and balanced; stick together in times of difficulty; share rights and responsibilities; and boost the common interests of mankind.

As can be seen, in this modern version of *tianxia*, key elements such as 'imperial' 'hegemony', 'tributary system' that used to constitute the ancient *tianxia* have been replaced by terms including 'mutually beneficial cooperation', 'common development' and 'equal'. (It might be noted that the distinction between Chinese and barbarians that was central to traditional *tianxia* discourse is no longer referred to in official discourse (for obvious reasons).) In this way, 'community with a shared future for mankind' alluding to *tianxia*, sounds much like the ideal and harmonious *tianxia* system that Zhao Tingyang depicts. Since 2013, this modern version of *tianxia* has been advocated on many international occasions, including the General Debate of the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2015), a high-level conference at the Palace of Nations in Geneva (Wang, 2017), and the 55th Munich Security Conference (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2019). The concept of building a 'community with a shared future for mankind' was even incorporated into a UN solution for the first time for China (CGTN, 2017).

In line with the main principle of 'peace and development' in China's foreign affairs, China has been making an effort to downplay the perceptions of 'China threat' or 'Chinese aggression' to reassure the international community, especially its neighbours, of China's peaceful rise. This effort is manifested not only in its putting forward theoretical concepts such as a 'community with a shared future for mankind', but also in its active promotion of global cooperation through practical projects. In 2013, one year after the idea of a 'community with a shared future for mankind' was officially proposed, China started its global partnerships through The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, also known as One Belt and One Road (*yidai yilu* 一

带一路)). This Initiative is regarded by Chinese political leaders as the solution to put into practice the ideal *tianxia*, or ‘community with a shared future for mankind’. Unveiled in 2013, BRI aims to ‘promote the connectivity of Asian, European and African continents and their adjacent seas, establish and strengthen partnerships among the countries along the Belt and Road, set up all-dimensional, multi-tiered and composite connectivity networks, and realize diversified, independent, balanced and sustainable development in these countries’, according to the official outline (Belt and Road Initiative). It consists of two main parts: (1) The Silk Road Economic Belt that spans six corridors, featuring a host of infrastructural development, connectivity and economic cooperation of Eurasia; (2) The Twenty-first Century Maritime Silk Road, featuring marine-based cooperation including trade facilitation, logistics development, and infrastructure projects across the Asia Pacific region. Formally, the Belt and Road Initiative emphasizes five cooperative priorities, most of which are for economic considerations. They are:

- Policy coordination.
- Infrastructure and facilities connectivity.
- Unimpeded investment and trade.
- Financial coordination.
- Cultural and academic exchanges bonds.

Over the past few years, BRI garnered great interest across the world and has become one of the most exciting global trade developments. As of October 2019, 137 countries and 197 international organizations have signed BRI-related Cooperation Agreements with China (Awan, 2019).

In a keynote speech delivered at the opening ceremony of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF, 2019), Xi Jinping publicly expounded on the Initiative, emphasizing that BRI is ‘not an exclusive club’, which would be operated ‘in the spirit of multilateralism’. Xi also notes that the project would be based on mutually beneficial cooperation and benefit all participants involved, rather than serving China’s interests alone. Although Zhao Tingyang and his reconstruction of *tianxia* system never appeared in official discourses, it is not hard to see that key elements in Zhao’s *tianxia* theory do engage in China’s foreign policymaking. As we may see here, many expressions that appeared in Xi’s vision for BRI such as not being exclusive, mutually beneficial cooperation, shared interests, are actually in line with Zhao’s conception of *tianxia.*

In this way, the ancient Confucian idea of *tianxia* that used to be associated with hegemony and empire has been reconstructed by Chinese academics and the party-state as a peaceful and harmonious concept to be incorporated into China’s foreign policy discourse, with its modern expressions including ‘community with a shared future for mankind’ and The Belt and Road Initiative.

Response from Australia

As neighbouring countries, China and Australia have established a bilateral partnership based on strong economic complementary. China needs iron ore and coal from Australia for requisite infrastructure and manufacturing, whereas Australia needs manufactured goods from China. According to statistics, Australia's two-way trade with China in terms of goods and services reached a record $ 252 billion in 2019, accounting for 27.4 per cent of Australian trade with the world (Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade of Australian Government, 2020). Nowadays when China actively promotes the Belt and Road Initiative under the framework of *tianxia* (or 'community with a shared future for mankind') that aims to foster connectivity and understanding between China and other countries through economic activities, how does Australia respond? Basically, the attitude of Australia determines whether and to what extent China's vision of ideal new *tianxia* and its practice can contribute to the Australia-China economic relationship. In other words, if Australia endorses and promotes China's initiative, or actively joins the BRI programme, there will certainly be more opportunities for economic cooperation, unimpeded trade, and people-to-people bonds between the two countries, thereby laying a good foundation for the further deepening of Australia-China bi-lateral relations. What, then, is Australia's response?

Based on a news report by the *Financial Times*, we know that during Prime Minister Li Keqiang's 李克强 visit to Canberra in March 2017, the Australia's federal government explicitly rejected signing any formal memorandum on the BRI project (Smyth, 2017). But one year later, the Victorian government bypassed Canberra and signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with China to work together on BRI, becoming the only Australian state formally to support the controversial initiative (Smith, 2018). Apparently, the Australian government was not unified internally. The divergence of government on this issue is not unique; in fact, responses to China's BRI project have varied across Australia, in political circles, industry and commercial circles, academic circles, and think-tank. The main reason for this divergence is different perceptions of motives and agendas behind China's BRI project.

Generally, there are two different views. One believes that the nature of BRI is basically economic as China claims, whereas the other holds that BRI is the first step in China's geopolitical strategy. The former attitude can be found in an analysis provided by The Lowy Institute, an independent policy think-tank in Australia, in which it argues that geopolitical consideration is just a small part of China's agenda behind BRI, some of the key drivers are 'largely motivated by China's pressing economic concerns' (Cai, 2017, 201). If people put too much focus on the geopolitical dimension of the BRI project, says the author, it will certainly obscure the principally economic drivers that lie behind it. According to this analysis, China's BRI is closely related to China's domestic industrial policy, which aims to promote economic development in the western and northeast regions of China. A similar opinion has been expressed by Cheung (2016), who claims that the Chinese economy is not as successful as it might appear to be, but rather needs programmes such as

BRI to 'exhaust China's excess industrial capacity'. The latter perception that China's BRI is primarily a geopolitical strategy is clearly demonstrated in a report by Geoff Wade, an Australian researcher with interests in Sino-Southeast Asian interactions, who is concerned that the longer term agenda of China's BRI is aimed at 'creating a Eurasia-wide, China-led bloc to counter the US' (Wade, 2016). Similarly, a scholar at ANU describes China's BRI as an 'incredibly ambitious undertaking', and goes so far as to say that China aims 'to remake the world around it. If built, the initiative could change the strategic and economic character of Eurasia and the Indian Ocean region. China would no longer be dependent upon its connections with East Asia and the Pacific; it would sit astride two oceans and potentially be able to dominate the entire Eurasian continent' (Brewster, 2015). In addition, there are still some people who are not quite sure what China's BRI would bring to Australia. This is understandable as China's BRI project is still at an early age and Chinese politicians have always talked in generalities without giving specifics and details. This neutral attitude is held by politicians such as the previous prime minister, Malcolm Turnbull, who explained his delay in signing a formal agreement during Li Keqiang's visit to Canberra in 2017 as: 'An agenda is probably the best way to describe [the BRI]…We obviously welcome Chinese investment that meets our foreign investment guidelines but we'd prefer to focus on specific projects and investments rather than engaging in generalities' (Taylor, 2020).

Different perceptions lead to different reactions. It is thus not hard to see active supporters of China's BRI across Australia, especially in the business realm. For example, Malcolm Broomhead, Senior Australian businessman, also a board member of BHP Billiton, said that it was 'naive' to ignore the potential opportunities brought by the BRI project and urged other Australian states to follow Victoria (Smith, 2018). Former Australian ambassador to China, Geoff Raby, also an economist, counselled the Australian government to actively embrace China's BRI, as it would not only boost the Australian economy but also to help reset the tense bilateral relationship (Golley & Laurenceson, 2019). In the meantime, it is also not hard to see that many politicians have explicitly expressed their opposition to joining China's BRI project. For example, Immigration Department secretary, Mike Pezzullo, and then Defence Department secretary, Dennis Richardson, were opposed to the idea of joining BRI in consideration of 'strategic' concerns. Quite a few senior figures in Australia's national security community also held a suspicious and prudent attitude towards China's real agenda behind BRI (Greene & Probyn, 2017).

Obstacle and Prospect

As China continues to grow as an influential regional power, its effort to down-play the perception of 'China threat' among its neighbours becomes increasingly challenging. Although China has been working hard to demonstrate that its rise can be peaceful and that it intends to promote mutually beneficial cooperation in a harmonious *tianxia* system, its neighbour Australia has apparently yet to be convinced.

In terms of the promotion of the BRI project, the Australian government has two main concerns. First, whether it is worthwhile joining this BRI in terms of economic benefit. Australia is concerned about this because although China has provided an attractive outline of BRI, this initiative is still an abstract framework. Besides, although BRI is said to be a cooperative 'win–win' policy for all, Australia has yet to see how this agenda can become a reality. Thus, more concrete and specific cooperative projects under the overall framework of BRI are supposed to be proposed and implemented by the Chinese government. Second, whether it is safe to join BRI, or will cooperate with China impact Australia's relation with the US? On the one hand, Australia has enjoyed a robust security alliance with the US for decades, and it does not want to compromise the relation with US due to any BRI cooperation with China. On the other, Australia seems not to have much trust in China due to a number of disputes including human rights, nuclear weapons, the Tibet issue, the South China Sea issue, and China's growing presence in the Pacific, etc. On this point, China's attitude is clear, which is non-interference in each other's internal affairs. Instead of adopting an idealist approach to relations focused on values, China is more interested in taking a pragmatic approach to boost its economy. (Australia's attitude may seem somewhat hypocritical in that while Australia criticizes China for its assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific, some small Pacific nations also see Australia as an imperial and hegemonic power in the Pacific Region (Mückler, 2016; Teaiwa, 2015)).

Considering that Australia and China are countries with different histories, cultures and social systems, it is very likely that they have different opinions on political issues and values. Yet no one would deny that peace, harmony and development are priorities for both countries. With this common sense, it might be expected that Australia and China would establish a cooperative relationship that aims to promote mutual understanding and respect, rather than faulting each other with prejudice. After all, despite his presupposition of potential clashes, even Huntington, who proposed the clash of civilizations thesis, has himself argued that 'what I expect is that, I arouse people's attention to re-evaluate the danger of the civilization, which would thus to help promote the civilizational dialogue in the world' (Huntington, 2010).

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Connected Through Global Education

'I don't Think This Can Be Done Overnight, Nor Can It Be Done in a Hurry': Multi-ideological Perspectives on Interculturality in Chinese Minzu Education

Sude, Mei Yuan, Ning Chen, Wan Zhang, and Fred Dervin

Abstract This chapter examines how Chinese students at an institution of higher education focusing on Chinese minzu ('ethnic minorities'), express, construct and discuss diversity and encounters during a course dedicated to the multi-ideological notion of interculturality. Texts written by 37 students as answers to the question *'can we be good at interculturality?'* were analysed against a model of interculturality that relies on the identification of multiple ideologies, alternative perspectives and multilingual aspects of discourses on the notion. The results show that the students were able to identify some factors contributing to 'being good' at interculturality, including: increasing one's scientific knowledge of intercultural encounters; observing the central role of the Structure at local and global levels; adopting benevolent attitudes towards intercultural encounters (tolerance, respect, acceptance) and revising the multifaceted use of the concept of *culture*. The study shows some success in helping the students unthink and rethink the notion of interculturality. However, there was a lack of deep engagement with minzu and Chinese ideologies about diversity and interculturality. Critical considerations of 'Western' ideologies in the students' texts would also need to be further systematized. The chapter ends with recommendations as to how to improve these aspects of interculturality work in education.

Keywords Minzu education · Interculturality · Higher education · Ideologies · Critical discourses of culture

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Introduction

In his ceiling painting entitled *Divine Wisdom Giving the Laws to the Kings and Legislators* (1827), which was made especially for the French State Council rooms at the Louvre, French artist Jean-Baptiste Mauzaisse (1784–1844) depicted the Prophet Moses, Louis XVIII and other kings, as well as 'diverse' legislators receiving the law from Divine Wisdom, Prudence, Equity and Clemency. Among the legislators, one can identify: the first king of Rome Romulus, the first president of the United States George Washington, and the lawgiver of Sparta Lycurgus. In the lower right corner of this 'multicultural patchwork' sits the only Asian figure of the painting: the Chinese philosopher Confucius. Although China was (still) popular in Europe at the time, figures like Confucius were rarely represented in European art, especially in such an important piece looking over the activities of the State Council. The lack of consideration for anything related to Chinese thought has been somewhat of a constant in Europe, even today.

The authors of this paper all specialize in what could be labelled generically as 'diversity education'. While some of us position their work within *multicultural/intercultural education*, others categorise theirs as *minzu (*民族) *education.* But our interests are the same: our societies are diverse in terms of 'culture', 'ethnicity', 'race', 'worldview'[1] (amongst others), and through our research and teaching we wish to develop a form of education that can help people deal with diversities. It is important to say here that there are both overlaps and differences between the labels of *intercultural, multicultural* and *minzu education.* What is more these are all slippery and polyvalent notions that deserve to be reinterpreted and discussed again and again (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2004; Dervin, 2016).

Minzu is probably the least well-known notion out of the three and, through, our collaborative work we wish to propose it as an addition and a potential counter-narrative to current discussions of 'diversity education', which tend to be Western-centric (R'boul, 2020). Loaned from the Japanese neologism 'minzoku' in the late nineteenth century, the Chinese word is composed of *min* (民) for 'folk or common people' and *zu* (族) for 'consanguinity or lineage' (Zhang, 1997). What the notion refers to is complex. For Zhao (2014), when we try to express the idea of minzu in English, 'irrespective of which concept of minzu we employ or which standpoint we take, we are only exchanging one Western model for another, without ever finding a way of identifying and expressing our own Chinese uniqueness'. Epistemologically, methodologically, societally, individually and politically, the word can mean different things. In English, it is translated as 'ethnic groups', 'minority groups', 'cultural groups', or 'nationalities' (amongst others). In our work, we prefer to keep the Chinese term minzu since the English words tend to connote extra layers of (politico-economic) meanings that do not seem to fit the Chinese context. In general,

[1] We use inverted commas at this stage for these English words and will discuss some of them later in the paper. The inverted commas indicate that we do not take these words for granted, nor do we consider them as synonyms to the words we use in Chinese, Finnish and/or Swedish, French, German (the languages of our contexts).

minzu refers to the plurality of the Chinese or the 56 officially recognized nationalities, which were officialized from the 1950s to the 1990s. The largest minzu group is the Han which represents about 94% of the Chinese population, while the rest comprises the other 55 minzu groups such as Hui, Mongols, Tibetans, Uyghur. Specific policies relate to minzu issues (for example, the 2009 *Chinese Ethnic Policies on Developing All Ethnic Groups*) and aim to strengthen the idea of 多元一体 (*duoyuan yiti,* diversity in unity). In education, specific policies and practices also aim to contribute to diversity in unity. The context of our study, Minzu University of China (MUC, Beijing), is meant to support minzu diversity by offering higher education access as well as research and training on issues of minzu culture, language and history (amongst others). In this institution, about 60% of the students come from different minzus beyond the Han. Preferential policies (优惠政策, youhui zhengce) represent important steps in ensuring educational access for all Chinese minzus.

In Yuan et al. (2020) we suggested exploring various aspects of minzu education to enrich the way we see diversity and interculturality in other parts of the world. The influence of European and American research and education policies on diversity education is immense and somewhat damaging to the world. Although the core of diversity education is diversity itself, the way it is discussed and ‘done’ in different parts of the world is rarely diverse and/or intercultural in itself. Often, publications in English about minzu education tend to present negative evaluations (and judgments) about the situation of diversity in China. We argue that this is a bias that deserves to be revised. As such, Western diversity ideologies such as intercultural and multicultural education have not always been very successful. For instance, Coulby (2019) argues that intercultural education has failed in many parts of the Western world.

In the past, minzu education, through the figure of the former Institute of National Minorities (MUC today), was often discussed by visitors to China. The Institute was often included in foreign officials’ tour of China. For instance, in his diary about his China trip with a small delegation of French intellectuals in 1974, French semiotician Roland Barthes, had the opportunity to visit MUC. He wrote (2012, 161):

> Tuesday 30th April 1974 Institute of National Minorities (…)
>
> Uighur. The women, rather gypsy-like, have big combs on their Chinese-style plaits. (…)
>
> The library
>
> Newspapers in loads of different languages and characters (…)
>
> Grouped questions: (…) 2) Since Confucius was Han, what are the implications for minorities? 3) Non-written literatures? 4) Current tentative progress: details?

Former Canadian premier Pierre Trudeau (1919–2000) is even said to have been impressed by his visit to the institution, which seems to have influenced him in proposing multiculturalism as an official government policy in Canada in 1971 (Qian, 2013, 54).

In this chapter, using interculturality as a central and multi-ideological notion for dealing with diversity in education, we examine a group of students’ discourses on the notion within the context of minzu higher education. In a course on minzu and interculturality in education, the students were asked to reflect critically and reflexively on the meaning of ‘being good at interculturality’. Based on essays that

they have written about this issue our chapter provides some answers to the following questions:

- How do the students construct their answers to the issue of ‘being good at interculturality’?
- What words do they use in English to formulate their answers? What ideologies seem to be contained in their arguments?
- Because our study is taking place within the specific context of minzu higher education, how much of this specific context of diversity education seems to influence the students in the way they see the issue of ‘being good at interculturality’?

Interculturality as a Complex Figure in a Carpet

> “I wanted my own words. But the ones I use have been dragged through I don’t know how many consciences”.
>
> Sartre (1948: 49)

In Henry James’s, 1896 novella called *The Figure in the Carpet*, the narrator prides himself in having discovered the true meaning of an author’s book in a review that he had just published. However, he overhears the author commenting negatively on his review at a party, arguing that nobody has been able to identify the idea present in all his novels, which he compares to the complex woven figure in a Persian carpet. In the rest of the novella, in vain, the narrator tries to find this secret. To us, interculturality is like the writer’s key idea that the novella’s narrator wishes to identify. When we think we have put our finger on it, its meaning and connotation disappear in front of our eyes. Interculturality is like a complex figure in a carpet, a multidimensional space of encounters between different policies, practices, philosophies and ideologies. However, it is rarely dealt with in such complex ways.

Since we use the notion in our work with minzu students as a central term to discuss issues of diversity within the Chinese context and beyond, what follows serves as a way of problematizing it. It is important to reiterate first that the notion is kaleidoscopic and polyvalent. It means either too much or too little. However, we are somewhat seduced by the complexity of the notion, which is indicated by both its prefix *inter-* and suffix *-ality*, hinting at (never-ending) processes, relations, co-constructions. Used in different socio-political contexts, a smörgåsbord of perspectives on interculturality is available around the world. Sometimes it is even confused and mixed with other terms such as *multicultural, transcultural* and even *global* (as in *global competence*), meaning the same or something different, and having the same or different politico-economic connotations. We note, however, that some specific Western-centric ideologies seem to dominate the way the world thinks about interculturality, especially in education. In this chapter we understand *ideology* as follows:

> “Ideology” means strictly a system of ideas elaborated in the light of certain conceptions of what “ought to be.” It designates a theory of social life which approaches the facts from the point of view of an ideal, and interprets them, consciously or unconsciously, to prove the correctness of its analysis and to justify that ideal. The starting-point is essentially extra-scientific-the ideal. Thus every ideological construction involves the projection of a certain ideal into the future, into the evaluation of the present, and into the past. (Roucek, 1944: 479)

As a societal project that is coloured by the political, philosophico-social arguments, power relations (e.g. host–guest) and corporate supremacy, interculturality cannot but be discussed, constructed, taught and researched within the realm of ideologies, of the ‘ought to be’ (versus the ‘ought not’). Research and teaching about interculturality are systematically influenced by assumptions in, e.g. the words used to deal with the notion (‘tolerance’, ‘democracy’), its premises are taken for granted (‘contact with different others opens our mind’) and become the ‘truth’ with the ‘right values’. These often hide behind illusions of scientificity. In global education, it is important to bear in mind that dominating ideologies are promoted by Western scholars who have some symbolic power such as prestigious institutional affiliations (US/UK universities), publications in top international journals, editorships of book series with top publishers. What is more these ideologies are passed onto people through different Euro-/Americano-centric ideological apparatuses such as the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which ‘dictate’ the way interculturality should be defined, practiced and evaluated. Locally ideologies of interculturality may also have a specific ‘flavour’ influenced by decision-making and governance. France, for example, is famous for its politically driven ideology of *laïcité* (translated poorly in English as ‘secularism’) which is omnipresent in intercultural education (see, e.g. Abdallah-Pretceille, 2004). When *laïcité* is combined with ideologies for e.g. an ideological apparatus like the OECD or with those of a British scholar of language and intercultural education, the end result might be very contradictory, confusing and even ‘unfair’ for some scholars, teachers and students alike.

In the context of MUC, bearing in mind the multiplicity of discourses about diversity in the ways minzu students think about interculturality (see Yuan et al., 2020), we have negotiated and taken three steps to make sure that the students have the possibility to use interculturality as a critical and reflexive tool to deal with issues of diversity. During the lectures the students are trained to unthink and rethink what they claim about diversity and interculturality—and what scholars, educators and decision-makers make of these notions too. Borrowing the words of Musil (1978/2017 269), our main interest is for them to learn to see how ‘the unsettled holds more of the future than the settled’ when it comes to diversity and interculturality. Figure 1 presents the three steps:

These three steps go hand in hand and entail consistent discussions of the use of terms in Chinese and English to refer to intercultural ‘realities’; noticing how the way one thinks about interculturality and diversity is influenced by many (and often contradictory) ideologies; opening up to alternative ideologies. The steps are described in more detail below:

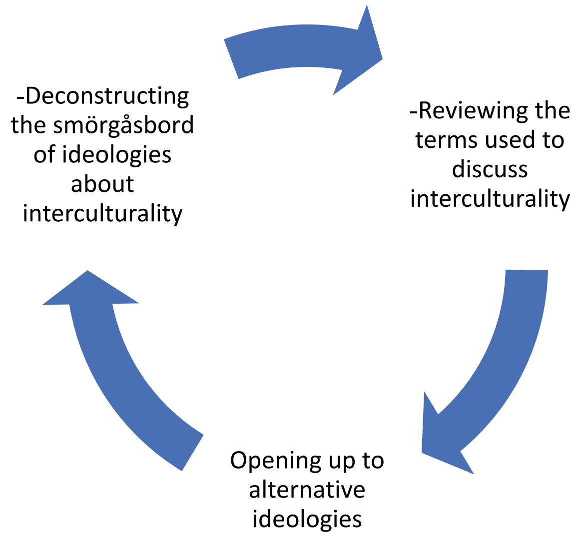

Fig. 1 The three steps in using interculturality as a critical and reflexive tool

Deconstructing the smörgåsbord of ideologies about interculturality.

- Identifying the sources of global dominating ideologies, supported by global systems of politico-economic institutions;
- Identifying their orders, imposed (inter-)subjectivities and ideological intimidation: what they tell us to believe in; 'ought tos'.

Reviewing the terms used to discuss interculturality.

- Multilingual and 'archaeological' analyses of concepts and notions used in Chinese and English (etymology);
- Critical translation of words (e.g. *tolerance* in Chinese and English, which can have different meanings and connotations).

Opening up to alternative ideologies.

- Identifying alternative ideologies which are localized/silenced in global research/educational worlds;
- Looking at intercultural issues from multiple perspectives, and, possibly, have more opportunities for (re-)negotiation and choices;
- Reiminaging interculturality while being aware of re-ideologization.

In what follows we provide some examples of how we educate the students to systematize their application of the steps. For the step of deconstructing the smörgåsbord of ideologies about interculturality, we review with the students what they know about learning/teaching objectives of interculturality—what they think one should do to become 'intercultural'. Two points continually emerge: interculturality is about 'cultures meeting and/or clashing' and 'stereotypes should be eradicated'. We review these assertions with the students to make them aware of the ideological

beliefs hiding behind them. For ‘cultures meeting and/or clashing’, we explore the history and archaeology of the concept of *culture* and how it has been an overused and abused episteme since the eighteenth century to create, e.g. hierarchies between different cultures, even and especially in research (‘more civilized’, ‘politer’, ‘more punctual’, ‘more hardworking’, ‘quieter’, see e.g. Chemla & Fox Keller, 2017). The step of reviewing the terms in discussions of interculturality is used here too. Fang’s (2019) book *Modern Notions of Culture and Civilisation in China* is introduced to examine how the word *culture* and *civilisation* have come to mean what they mean in China today. Fang explains that the two concepts of 文化 wenhua (culture) and 文明 wenming (Civilisation) are not stable in China today (Fang, 2019,113), although their current meanings are borrowed from the West. Fang also shows that when we start surveying the historical use of the two words, we realise that the words 文化 wenhua (culture) and 文明 wenming (Civilisation) have foreign origins in their meanings, although they have been identified in classic Chinese but with different meanings from today. The semantic changes occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century, influenced by the ‘West’, but imported via Japan (Fang, 2019 62). While 文 (wen) in classic Chinese used to refer to component elements being mixed together (Fang, 2019 10), 化 (hua) originally indicated *change, formation* or *making*. 文 + 化 used to refer to a situation wherein a change takes place for one side or both sides concerned, as a result of their contact with each other (Fang, 2019 9). Before it took on its ‘western’ meaning, 文明 (wenming) used to refer to a progressive state of being, thriving development of culture and education (Fang, 2019 2). Since the two words are somewhat ambiguous in Chinese today, the students learn that they should never assume, when they speak to foreigners in English that they refer to the same realities when we say *culture* and *civilisation.*

The ideas of ‘cultural difference’, ‘knowledge about other cultures’, ‘culture shock’, ‘the clash of cultures’ are also problematized. The students explore how these could potentially serve as caricatures and simplifications. In order for them to become aware of the instability of the use of these concepts around the world, we show them how the concept of culture can be used as a mere substitute for other concepts in some contexts (Eriksen, 2001). For instance, in some European countries, the concept of *race* cannot be ‘voiced’, instead decision-makers, scholars and educators refer to *ethnicity* and/or *culture*, while promoting, e.g. anti-racism. As far as stereotyping is concerned the idea that the awareness and knowledge of other cultures can help either reduce or remove stereotypes is strong amongst the students. We spend time deepening their critical and reflexive engagement with the concept by, e.g. making them aware of the fact that stereotypes are unstable elements that can re-emerge at any moment even when they have been ‘suppressed’ or that they can easily be substituted by another stereotype.

As a way of summarizing the unthinking and rethinking of both culture and stereotypes—as components of dominating ideologies—the students are made to reflect with us on the types of questions that are asked in intercultural encounters. For instance, the questions ‘where are you from?’ (and for some people, the systematic follow-up question, ‘where are you *really* from?’), ‘what is your culture?’, ‘what

is your mother tongue?', are all based on the modern ideologies of the nation-state, national identity and national language, and can easily lead to hierarchies rather than encounters. Since the students are from minzu contexts, they know that answering these questions (for example when meeting a foreigner) often requires to make choices in terms of what to answer. Depending on the interlocutor, and the context of interaction, this might lead them to have to make choices between various identities or even to refrain from telling the 'truth' about their origins for fear of discrimination and/or stereotyping. In order to reinforce this awareness, in Autumn 2020, we used excerpts from *What would you say I am?* by British-Chinese playwright Eric Mok which was broadcasted online as part of the Digital Reading Festival (2020) ('From the Rooftops—A showcase of East Asian Talent'). In the piece, as a British-Chinese, Mok puts it nicely when he reflects on people playing what he calls the 'where are you from game': "Oh, that's where you are from?' Like they have won some quiz or something'. The awareness of this 'game of validation' is important for the students to reflect on the kinds of problematic and ideological questions asked about diversity and interculturality. The step of *Opening up to alternative ideologies* is then explored with the students, whereby new ways of thinking about, e.g. what to ask when meeting someone for the first time are envisaged.

Bearing in mind the specific context of our study, we have written earlier about the extra complexities in the different layers of discourses, ideologies and multilingual aspects of discussing interculturality, as experienced by minzu students (Yuan et al., 2020). Through these three steps the students are supported in building up awareness of their own intercultural ecosystem, where complex discourses are enmeshed: so-called 'Western' ideologies (*tolerance, respect, open-mindedness*) with references to American and British scholars such as Byram and Deardorff, but also, and most importantly, MUC's ideological position towards intercultural dialogue ('Knowledge corresponds with actions'; 'Diversity in Unity'), Chinese political discourses about Minzus ('Harmony without uniformity'), as well as more localized Minzu discourses ('we Hui[2] learn the language of others to facilitate understanding') (see Yuan et al., 2020).

Reviewing this smögårsbord with the students, they can realise how they have been influenced by different voices, but also how incompatible some of these ideologies are. What the students do with these critiques, is, in a sense, their problem, however we believe that they need to be aware of this range of ideologies, their origins, how they relate to systems of domination, their polysemy and potential compatibility. In our teaching, we do not support or put forward any of these ideologies as being the 'right ones' when we teach—although, of course, we have preferred ideologies of interculturality—but support them in unthinking and rethinking the notion.

In his work on intercultural philosophy Nelson (2020, 6) summarizes well what we attempt to achieve with our students: his wish is to reveal 'the multiperspectivality and multi-directionality of thinking' of interculturality. By learning to systematically ask questions such as *What concepts and notions do we use to 'do' and talk about interculturality? What is the archeology of these terms around the world? Who*

[2] The Hui people mainly come from Northwestern China and the Zhongyuan region.

proposed them/introduced them to discuss interculturality? What political motivations are behind them? we argue that the students can start revising and adding to unproblematized ideologies of interculturality and thus enrich their worldviews.

'Can We Be Good at Interculturality?'

The data used in this chapter consist of analysing 37 short essays (maximum number of words: 300) written by third-year bachelor's students in education at MUC. The essays were written in English, one of the languages used in the course. Our main motivation for asking them to use this international language was to see if the students attempted criticality and reflexivity in the way they discussed interculturality in a another (global) language. Collected as part of a 16-week course on intercultural and minzu education, the essays were written 6 weeks after the beginning of the course, so as to examine how the students took on board the ideas that were shared and discussed around the three steps that form the backbone of the course. The essay title was: 'Can we be good at interculturality?'. This broad and somewhat provocative question was meant to evaluate how the students invested the three steps to provide answers to the question. Since the essays were meant to be short, we do not claim that their contents reveal their full perceptions and ideological construction of the notion of interculturality. Further studies are already in the pipeline with the same students to explore long-term engagement with critical perspectives on interculturality. However, we argue that there is a lot we can learn from the essays since they can allow us to observe change as it happens.

The course was taught by the authors in both Chinese and English (3 h per week). The group of students was composed of male and female students (approximately half-half) and 60% of the students were from minzus other than the Han. During the first 6 weeks of the course, the following topics were dealt with: 1. *What is interculturality?* 2. *Is culture still a relevant concept?* 3. *Identity and interculturality*, 4. *Imaginaries of interculturality*, 5. *Othering,* 6. *Pre-modernity, Modernity and Postmodernity.*

The data was analysed by means of a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which allows us to identify and report patterns (themes) within the data. The following analytical elements were used for each essay: *What is the main argument of the essay? Are there contradictions between some of the arguments and assumptions? What concepts are introduced by the students? Are they explained and problematized? Do they use examples and illustrations to support their arguments? Are there any elements of Chineseness and/or Chinese minzus used?*

Analysis

Based on the thematic analysis of the 37 texts written by the students the analysis is composed of two main sections: 1. *Factors contributing to 'being good (or not) at interculturality'* and 2. *How to develop interculturality?* Each section contains the following subsections: 1. a. *On the need to develop knowledge about interculturality*, b. *Role of the Structure*; 2. a. *Discourses of benevolence*, b. *Multifaceted use of the concept culture.*

Let us share some general comments about the texts we have analysed: *First*, amongst all the texts that we analysed, the vast majority answered 'yes' to the set question of 'Can we be good at interculturality?'. Although some of the students started by stating that it is a difficult question, they often were able to provide a (more or less convincing) answer. Student 31's answer was the most 'open' answer. He used a Chinese phrase to explain why he thinks that 'we can be good at interculturality':

Excerpt 1 (student 31)

I think that everyone can be good at it if he/she holds the belief of love, the idea of understanding and the expectation of a better world. So do we. There is a Chinese proverb that goes: Attitude decides everything. With this attitude, I am sure we have accomplished the half, as for the rest, just leave it to diligence and creativity. I don't think this can be done overnight, nor can it be done in a hurry.

For this student, interculturality relates to some sort of philosophy of life based on the values of 'love' and 'hope'. Introducing the Chinese phrase 态度决定一切 (*Attitude decides everything*), he insists first and foremost on the centrality of one's stance and mindset, and then on the role of chance, 'accident'. What the student argues throughout his essay is that one cannot program being 'good' at interculturality, and that interculturality takes time (see: 'I don't think this can be done overnight, nor can it be done in a hurry').

Only one student answered a clear 'no' to the question:

Excerpt 2 (student 32)

My answer is 'no'. Because everyone has a different identity, and it is a dynamic process of change at different times. With identity comes identity politics.

The student's argument relies on a discussion of the concept of identity which he uses as a way of questioning what he claims to be general assumptions about interculturality as a 'solid' process. We'll come back to this aspect in the next sections.

Second, very few students used examples or illustrations to justify their views about 'being good at interculturality'. Among the four students who did, three linked their answers to their own life experiences (e.g. someone they met) and one student to the scientific literature about expressing emotions.

Third, while analysing the data we had to negotiate the meaning of what the students were trying to say at times. Words such as *objective, development* and *cross-cultural* often appeared in English in the texts but seemed to have unstable signifiers. They had to be discussed so that we would not misinterpret the data. Let us provide an example from student 35:

Excerpt 3 (student 35)

Eliminating the inherent prejudice and actively conducting cultural self-examination through others are more conducive to promoting development.

The word *development* is used with different meanings in the students' texts to describe, e.g. the process in which something becomes more advanced (economically), an event representing a new stage in a situation, but also—as is the case in this excerpt—an experienced process of change in someone. The use of the first meaning by the students is the most common to discuss interculturality, probably due to the fact that many discussions around minzu issues relate to, e.g. economic development (see Sude et al., 2020). In Chinese, the word for development, 发展, translates as 'becoming different', and contains the characters for 'hair' and 'to spread out'(发) as well as 'show'/exhibition (展). It is also noteworthy that many students seem to use the English words 'cross-cultural' and 'intercultural' interchangeably in their texts. After checking the Chinese for both words, we realized that there is only one word in this language to refer to these two notions: 跨文化. Although in English there might be differences between *cross-cultural* and *intercultural*, they can also refer to the same realities in some contexts and for some decision-makers, educators and scholars (see Zilliacus & Holm, 2009 about *multicultural* and *intercultural*).

Finally, some students used what we refer to as *interculturalspeak* (Dervin, 2016) in their answers, i.e. a somewhat automatic 'robot-like' way of talking about interculturality by using phrases, mottos/slogans and words that are not critically or reflexively evaluated. In some of the texts, we also noted gentle clashes of ideologies which will be discussed in the following sections.

Factors Contributing to 'being Good' (Or Not) at Interculturality

On the Need to Develop Knowledge About Interculturality

One of the first common themes that appears in the essays is that of the need felt by the students to be knowledgeable about interculturality to be able to be 'good' at it. This aspect might relate to the fact that the data was collected as part of a theoretical course on the notion. Student 1 shares the view in this first excerpt:

Excerpt 4 (student 1)

In the face of more and more diverse areas of cultural contact, we need to improve our theoretical level of interculturality, that is, in terms of guiding principles, we should know how to communicate and connect with people from different cultural backgrounds. (student 1)

Using an argument revolving around the concept of *culture* ('diverse areas of cultural contact', 'people from different cultural backgrounds'), the student insists

on the need to acquire 'guiding principles' (a synonym for theories?) about interculturality. Student 8 in excerpt 5 goes deeper into what needs to be learnt by listing concepts that also derive from the concept of culture:

Excerpt 5 (student 8).

we inevitably need to be familiar with various related concepts, such as cultural identity, cultural discrimination, cultural infiltration and so on. These are the major obstacles for us to learn cross-cultural well. Only when we can fully understand and understand the connotation of cross-cultural and related concepts and form our own theoretical system, can we be conducive to cross-cultural learning. (student 8)

Amongst the three listed concepts only cultural identity was discussed during the lectures, the other two concepts of cultural discrimination and cultural infiltration, which are often used in relation to minzu, are introduced by the student herself. While cultural discrimination might be self-explanatory, cultural infiltration (or penetration, 文化渗透), is a concept used in Chinese to refer to a 'strong culture' influencing a 'less powerful one', which could be translated as 'cultural invasion' although the word invasion is too strong compared to what the Chinese version connotes (see, e.g. Liang, 2016). What is interesting about what the student affirms here is that she considers that these concepts can be counter-productive if one does not learn to 'fully understand' them and what they connote—or even act upon the phenomena they describe. As mentioned in the first part of this chapter, we had spent time with the students discussing this important aspect of interculturality. About theoretical learning, student 19 argues that having access to knowledge produced in other parts of the world ('overseas' in the excerpt) can help to decentre in relation to interculturality:

Excerpt 6 (student 19).

I need to take a more distant view of learning, to learn overseas empirical theories, or even to visit other countries to learn. (student 19)

While increasing one's theoretical knowledge about interculturality is argued for by many students, others consider the development of technology and fast movement of humans and goods from one place to another to be beneficial to developing interculturality. In what follows, students 5 and 11 discuss the importance of information technology (the Internet):

Excerpt 7 (student 5)

In today's highly developed information technology, the Internet has broken through the limitation of time and space and greatly narrowed the distance between people, especially between different cultural groups. This kind of condition gives us more opportunities to understand other cultures and greatly reduces the possibility of stereotyping.

Excerpt 8 (student 11)

with the development of Internet technology and the improvement of people's general education level, we have more opportunities for more and more people to open up their horizons and to have a more objective and comprehensive understanding of cultural differences and similarities, thus avoiding for example, the negative impact of a single story.

In these excerpts both students seem to define what interculturality entails and thus the ways technology can support 'being good at it': (student 5) 'understand

other cultures and greatly reduces the possibility of stereotyping'; (student 11) 'open up their horizons and to have a more objective and comprehensive understanding of cultural differences and similarities, thus avoiding, for example, the negative impact of a single story'. For them, interculturality should lead to having a more objective and comprehensive understanding of 'cultures' and reducing stereotyping ('single story'). Technology seems to be leading us to achieve these aspects according to the students. A note on the use of the adjective 'objective' is needed at this stage. Many students use it in their texts when they describe what 'good at interculturality' means to them. In the Chinese word for *objective*, 客观, the first character refers to a customer (*subjective* contains the character for the Lord (主). What the students seem to mean here is that by providing access to and showing different realities, technologies can transform people's perceptions from the 主 Lord view (self) to the 客 customer perspective (the Other). Therefore, for the students in this section, knowledge about interculturality consists in decentring oneself from what one (thinks one) knows by experiencing theoretical knowledge and examining other realities.

In a similar vein, for student 29 direct contact established by transport (travel?) improves 'being good at interculturality':

Excerpt 9 (student 29)

The development of transportation technology promotes cross regional cultural exchange, and the emergence of information technology even turns the earth into a village in the network. These technologies give us the opportunity and ability to learn more about other cultures.

Although these excerpts emphasize the importance of reflecting on knowledge and different realities, somewhat blinded by our misperceptions, we note that the students are sometimes too idealistic (e.g. use of the cliché of 'information technology even turns the earth into a village') or lack criticality for example in relation to the use of the concept of culture or to the kind of knowledge that one could acquire from other countries. What is more the argument about information technology and the somewhat illusionary argument of the 'contact hypothesis' (Allport, 1954)—i.e. contact between people, face-to-face or online is enough to trigger interculturality—would need to be unthought and rethought with the students.

Role of the Structure

This section is based on the students' inclusion of what we refer to as the Structure in how they determine the possibility of 'being good at interculturality'. The Structure here corresponds to what Althusser calls Ideological State Apparatuses (2001), which determine a system of production relations in which people live. For the philosopher, these include two kinds of apparatuses: 1. the ones which function by violence (e.g. courts, the police, prisons, the army), 2. Ideological state apparatuses such as religion, education, politics, trade unions, the media, the arts. These function by ideology and tell us to think and act in the interests of the economic dominance of the ruling class. In addition to these apparatuses, Global Ideological Apparatuses also have an influence on, e.g. the way we think about 'us' and 'them'. People have no choice but to submit freely to all these apparatuses in the interests of the economy. In the students' texts,

the following components of the Structure are included: the economy, supranational political institutions, and the generic Apparatus of 'countries'. It is important to note that the students never mention concrete 'actors'.

The first excerpt from student 4 is the most comprehensive in terms of the role of the Structure in promoting interculturality. In fact, the whole text oscillates between discourses around the following apparatuses: 'countries', the economy, and supranational political institutions. The excerpt starts with a comment on countries, then moves to the economy, diplomacy and 'people-to-people exchanges', to conclude with the economy (and a direct reference to 'economic theory'):

Excerpt 10 (student 4)

one country that is good at cross-cultural communication is dynamic and active, rather than complacent and backward.

The interaction and innovation brought by communication can improve the development space and comprehensive competitiveness of a country.

Cross-cultural communication will also have a greater impact on economic and trade, and play a more significant positive role in diplomatic development, international status, international tourism and people-to-people exchanges.

Cross-regional, cross-national, cross-polity and cross-national communication is associated with certain risks. However, it is pointed out in economic theory that risks and benefits coexist.

For the student, countries must be 'dynamic', 'active', 'competitive', 'international' and 'risk-taking' in order to create interculturality. The position of people is limited in this excerpt as the contexts introduced by the student remain at a macro-level.

Student 36 focuses mostly on the personal level in her essay but comments on the responsibility of one Apparatus:

Excerpt 11 (student 36)

First of all, this is a personal issue as well as an international issue, as it involves all regions and everyone. The relevant political institutions should also establish an exchange strategy for the peaceful coexistence of various ethnic cultures.

The Apparatus, 'the relevant political institutions', is deemed in charge of making sure that interculturality takes place 'peacefully'. For the student interculturality, from this macro-perspective, translates as 'the peaceful coexistence of various ethnic cultures'. All the words in this 'definition' hint at the influence of a certain understanding of minzu communication. The use of the concept of 'ethnic cultures' (which would not be used in many contexts around the world) is a strong indicator of this influence. We note that this student does not refer to any economic aspects in his text.

The last excerpt of this section contains a critique of certain 'countries and nations'. The critique relates to their roles in 1. Creating a sense of ethnocentrism amongst their people while 2. Looking down upon others by creating what the student labels 'stereotypical images of other cultures' as well as 'mutual incomprehension and non-acceptance':

Excerpt 12 (student 10)

In my opinion, there are two factors that make us not very good at interculturality: firstly, there are objective political factors, where countries or nations may try to strengthen their internal unity and cohesiveness by making their own nation or nationality more visible and slightly less visible to other nations or nations, or by giving more negative information about other cultures to their own people. This, coupled with the fact that exchanges between cultural groups are not as close as those within one's own nation, is likely to lead to stereotypical images of other cultures, thus deepening mutual incomprehension and non-acceptance.

For the student, such Apparatuses need to contribute to making interculturality inclusive, critical of limited images of Self and Other, and provide objective information about the Other.

This section focused on how some students construct discourses about the role of the Structure on the possibility of 'being good at interculturality'—shifting the focus from the individual to the forces of political, economic and ideological Apparatuses. Together with the first analytical subsection about the need to develop knowledge about interculturality, this section demonstrates that some students are able to identify what factors could contribute (or not) to being 'good' at interculturality. We have noted some definitions of the notion in the excerpts, and a somewhat overreliance on the concept of culture. In what follows, we examine how the students suggest developing 'being good at interculturality'.

How to Develop Interculturality?

Discourses of Benevolence

In the vast majority of the students' texts, many keys to 'being good at interculturality' fall within a category that we label *benevolence*, the quality of being well-intentioned, kindness. The phrases used by the students are often found in the international literature on interculturality: *avoid conflict, end discrimination, break down stereotypes, put an end to ethnocentrism.* We also identified references to the verbs *to respect* and *to tolerate* in many sentences that appeared to read like mottos or slogans—without being problematized: 'First, we must learn to respect and tolerate' (student 18). 'Second, respect and tolerate others' (student 23). The use of the verb *to accept* seems to serve the same purpose and to also be used in a fluid way: 'we must accept cultural differences' (student 33); 'we should sincerely and tolerantly recognize and accept each other's similarities and differences' (student 25). In these two excerpts, we note a slight 'clash' of ideologies since student 33 suggests 'accepting cultural differences' while student 25 'each other's similarities and differences', without the word *culture* and within the continuum of differences and similarities—instead of what Dervin (2016) has referred to as the 'differentialist bias'.

In excerpt 13, student 2 focuses on stereotypes and explains what 'breaking them down' means:

Excerpt 13 (student 2)

we should break down stereotypes, look at people without colored glasses, tear off the labels and define a person by his own characteristics rather than his own cultural characteristics.

Metaphors ('colored glasses', 'labels') are used to introduce the idea that one should move away from 'culture' to focus on the individual. Although this excerpt contains a modal verb ('should') other assertions made by the students about benevolence are formulated in peremptory sentences, like orders. Excerpt 14 introduces critical discourses about the concept of *culture* (see next section) to lead to the conclusion of avoiding 'evils' of intercultural encounters such as discrimination and racism:

Excerpt 14 (student 12)

I agree with this view: culture is neither bounded nor closed; it is not homogeneous; it is the result of human being's generation, acquired postnatally (through education, etc.), meeting and integrating with other cultures in the long history.

Therefore, we need to avoid similar situations and avoid discrimination, racism and stereotype in intercultural communication.

Student 34, who shares very similar views, even provides a personal narrative to describe how she has herself experienced being prejudiced against certain representatives of other nations, showing a good level of reflexivity and self-criticality:

Excerpt 15 (student 34)

When I was a child, my mom has dinner with a Japanese gentleman and I expressed my hate after knowing his nationality. Every time I record this with a strong sense of shame. He is really a gentleman, but I tag him 'bad guy' because of his nationality.

In the final excerpt, student 17 illustrates his reflections on similarities and differences between himself and another Chinese of Tibetan background and one of us who was teaching on the course—a Caucasian:

Excerpt 16 (student 17)

whether it is to associate with Professor Fred, who is far away in Finland, or with the Mongolian student sitting next to me, it belongs to cross-cultural communication for me. Perhaps someone will immediately refute me, arguing that Fred and I come from totally different cultural backgrounds, but my Mongolian classmates are at least Chinese.

I would like to ask a question: when I associate with Fred, am I dealing with people from all over Finland? Of course not. I'm just associate with him. It has nothing to do with other Finns. In this case, why should I use the cultural label 'Finland' to define Fred in advance and think that our communication will be more difficult?

If we need to divide them according to some standards, it is obvious that Fred and I are humorous people (although sometimes we may accidentally tell some frost jokes), but the Tibetan student around me is serious. If we want to identify ourselves according to some kind of identity, can Fred and I enter a "humor circle" and exclude this Tibetan student?

What the student shows here is his awareness that interculturality does not necessarily refer to cross-border encounters but that it also applies to locality. He gives examples of Mongolian classmates and a Tibetan student, whom he compares to the foreign professor. In the second paragraph of the excerpt, the student shows a good

level of reflexivity by asking questions to himself about how to treat these different individuals, especially the Caucasian professor—hinting at the fact that he wishes to avoid generalizing and stereotyping representatives of the professor's country. The third paragraph contains the identification of a similarity with the foreign professor ('humour') which is opposed to the seriousness of the Tibetan student. So, intercultural comparison thus moves beyond the 'international-based' understanding of interculturality to be applied to locality.

In this section, we have demonstrated that there are signs of the students wishing to show benevolence to the Other through respecting, tolerating, and avoiding stereotyping. Some of the students were also able to go in a more active direction by reflecting within the continuum of difference-similarity with the Other. Maybe the aspect that seems to be missing here is the expectation of reciprocity in terms of how one treats the Other. If one tolerates them, avoids using stereotypes against them (if that's possible), should we not expect the Other to do the same? Can these acts of benevolence just be a one-way phenomenon?

Multifaceted Use of the Concept Culture

In this last analytical version, we focus on the concept of culture, which is commented upon systematically in all the 37 texts that we collected. Some of the students were very critical of the concept, emphasizing its fluid characteristic and commenting upon issues of identity, while a minority of students used culturalist discourses—culture as the only explanatory force to encounters, see Chemla & Fox Keller, 2017—to determine how to 'be good at interculturality'. Two students' texts were clearly culturalist:

Excerpt 17 (student 25)

But I'm aware of the importance of the interculturality research, cultural differences and the cultural collision is fundamentally caused by cultural differences, so respect is different from the native culture of foreign culture is the basis of interculturality communication, respect and open mind is a start, because do not understand each other national cultural taboos and breaking lamella and misunderstanding.

Excerpt 18 (student 34)

I think everyone can be good at interculturality. In intercultuality, we often have conflict because we are not familiar with other's culture background.

In excerpt 18, student 25 uses the word culture and its companion terms throughout: 'cultural differences' (twice), 'cultural collision', 'foreign culture', and 'national cultural taboos'. Culture is clearly seen as a problem and as something that leads to misunderstandings (amongst others). Student 34 also emphasizes the negative side of culture by referring to it leading to 'conflict'.

Other students are very critical of the concept. The three following students use metaphors to describe what they see as problems in the use of the concept: (Excerpt 20) 'imprisoned in the "straitjackets" of culture'; (student 27) 'confine ourselves in

a certain cultural shackles' (sic); (student 32) blindfolded 'cultural label'. For them, removing these problematic aspects of culture in the way interculturality is done represents potential paths towards being 'good at' it.

Excerpt 19 (student 26)

As culture has always been at the center of discussions in intercultural education and people remain imprisoned in the 'straitjackets' of culture.

Excerpt 20 (student 27)

We live in a global village, rather than confine ourselves in a certain cultural shackles, overestimate or underestimate ourselves or others from a cultural perspective, but take an equal attitude towards each person's cultural background.

Excerpt 21 (student 32)

If we can tear off the blindfolded "cultural label" and treat every communication as a complete "risk equality" attempt, we can conduct cross-cultural communication more objectively and sincerely.

In a similar vein, student 9—in a somewhat imperious manner however—asserts that the concept cannot be used because it 'isolates' and creates 'many prejudices and ideologies':

Excerpt 22 (student 9)

Trying to flout a culture or its boundaries often leads to isolation from a world with which it interacts and influences it. when we use the concept of culture, we are often influenced by many prejudices and ideologies, so we can't use the concept of culture correctly.

The use of the first-person pronoun of the plural (we) adds to the student's strong conviction about the concept. Student 30 also takes a position against culture, suggesting to 'ignore' it although she still seems to give it some importance as 'one of the possible factors':

Excerpt 23 (student 30)

But this is obviously not an easy thing, because the best way of interculturality communication is to ignore culture. Culture is not the result or the main factor, but one of the possible factors.

The fluid characteristic of culture is noted many a time by the students. In excerpt 22, the student is categorical about the fact that culture is a construction, taking place through encounters with 'other cultures'—thus personifying culture, giving it an agency:

Excerpt 24 (student 21)

Interculturality expresses a simple truth: culture constructs itself through its relationships. It also constitutes itself through the relationship with other cultures.

The constructivist perspective on culture is also commented upon by a student who comments on what can be learnt from the Chinese word wenhua (文化, culture):

Excerpt 25 (student 28)

Because the original meaning of "Hua" is to change, generate and create.

The idea that culture is ‘open’ was also identified in student 7’s text, where he comments on the performative characteristic of the concept:

Excerpt 26 (student 7)

Culture is not the attribution of certain behavior, but the performance of behavior. Trying to define culture or its boundaries often leads to its closure and isolation from the world.

It makes you think that you belong to a single nation, but the reality is that your body has more resonance with the world. Not only can a person’s mind be diverse, but a person’s body is also diverse. An open world begins with an open mind.

The excerpt starts with a critique of the tendency to delimit culture and thus to close it down and isolate it. The student continues with a metaphor about body/mind in relation to culture to discuss the openness and resonance of people with the world, rather than with a single (national) culture.

For many students, discourses of culture and especially cultural difference are substituted with discussions of identity as change:

Excerpt 27 (student 13)

Culture is the laziest excuse to explain differences. In order to achieve smooth cross-cultural communication, each individual in cross-cultural communication should look at each other from the perspective of development, instead of defining each other rudely with simple stereotypes. The identity of an individual is diversified and constantly formed, rather than fixed and limited by culture.

This excerpt starts with a provocative statement about culture (it is ‘the laziest excuse to explain differences’), and moves towards discussing interculturality as a process (the student uses the word ‘development’) and opposes identity as ‘diversified and constantly formed’ to culture which is said to be ‘fixed and limited’.

For some of the students, the idea that the Self is constructed by the presence and in interaction with the Other (and vice versa) is amply discussed. For example, student 9 asserts that.

Excerpt 28 (student 9)

Because it is through the eyes of the other that the self is constructed that our identity becomes alive.

Finally, student 14—like many other students—insists on the need to consider both similarities and differences between people from different countries. Using research from the field of communication, the student explains that many similarities had been identified in terms of facial expressions for basic emotions:

Excerpt 29 (student 14)

For example, studies of cross-cultural categories of facial expressions show that in American, European, South American and Asian cultures, people perceive in the same way eight different basic emotions -- excitement, joy, surprise, sadness and pain, disgust, contempt, anger, shame and fear (Dickey & Knower, 1941; Ekman & Friesen, 1972; Izard, 1968). Later, Eckman et al. (Ekman, 1971; In 1969, cited in Izard, 1980, the experimental subjects were extended to non-written cultural groups).

This section examined the presence of discourses of culture in the students' essays. Since a lot of discussions around the concept took place during the first six weeks of the course, it is not perhaps surprising that most students commented upon it. Although a couple of students seemed to share very strong culturalist positions what the other students seem to reveal is a good critical and reflexive stance towards the concept when discussing interculturality. Their discussions of identity as a fluid phenomenon complemented their critiques of culture and showed some awareness of, e.g. the continuum of similarity-difference and the importance of change in interculturality.

Discussion and Conclusions

In this chapter we used the notion of interculturality as an entry point into how Chinese students at an institution of higher education focusing on minzu issues express, construct and discuss diversity when they answered the question 'can we be good at interculturality?'. Several research questions were asked, and our analytical sections provided the following answers: 1. The students were able to identify some factors contributing to 'being good at interculturality', including increasing one's knowledge of intercultural encounters and learning through today's intercultural facilitators such as digital technologies. Some students also emphasized the central role of the Structure ('ideological apparatuses') at the local and global levels. 2. Suggestions—which often sounded like 'orders'—were also provided by the students. These included: somewhat typical 'global' discourses of benevolence relating to tolerance, respect, acceptance and putting an end to stereotyping. Although these are of importance the fact that they were rarely problematized by the students (what does *tolerating* mean?) and not considered from the perspective of reciprocity made them rather empty proposals. Finally, the last analytical section reviewed the multifaceted use of the concept of *culture* by the students to answer the question of 'being good at interculturality'. While there were hints of culturalism (culture as a solid and static 'thing' used to explain Self and Other, see Abdallah-Pretceille, 2004), the vast majority were critical of the concept and pushed for a more fluid and constructivist understanding.

In the course that the students were taking, we had introduced a three-step model of interculturality: 1. *Deconstructing the smörgåsbord of ideologies about interculturality, 2. Reviewing the terms used to discuss interculturality* and *3. Opening up to alternative ideologies.* While the students were only in their sixth week of the course (reminder: this was a 16-week course) there were signs that the students were already able to demonstrate that they possessed some of these subcompetencies. As far as *Deconstructing the smörgåsbord of ideologies about interculturality* is concerned, some students were able to identify the influence of global/local systems of politico-economic institutions and of global dominating ideologies. A few students also discussed some of the 'ought tos' and 'orders' from these institutions (e.g. the imposition of discourses of culture leading to prejudice and stereotypes). The objectives of *Reviewing the terms used to discuss interculturality* and *Opening*

up to alternative ideologies were marginally found in the data. As such very few students proposed multilingual and 'archaeological' analyses of concepts and notions (one student mentioned the word *culture* in Chinese and its original connotation of change, see Fang, 2019). Finally, although many of the proposed ideas represented alternative ideologies about interculturality, they were still somewhat grounded in Western-centric worldviews (e.g. discourses around identity).

What seems to be missing in the students' texts—which would require further work with them in the future—comprises:

- A lack of deep engagement with minzu and Chinese ideologies about diversity and interculturality. This could be explained by the fact that the texts were produced in English, requiring the students to think (maybe) in a specific mind-world. Although we identified some traces and signs (some 'slogans' and the use of some particular terms), there would be a need for them to be further considered and problematized against other ideologies.
- Many of the proposed answers to the question 'can we be good at interculturality?' resemble slogans and mottos in the sense that they are not discussed but just 'thrown in' the students' texts. They would need to be more explicitly discussed and critiqued.
- The essay instructions did not ask the students to illustrate their arguments by use of examples. Yet it would be important for them to be able to systematically use some to make their arguments more convincing and concrete at times.
- During the course the students are urged to look at the words they use in Chinese and English to talk about interculturality reflexively and critically. Very few scholars have suggested that such multilingual perspectives be systematically included in intercultural education but we do believe, based on our own co-operation as a multilingual team, that such work is necessary and rewarding to unthink and rethink interculturality.

All in all, while reading and analysing the students' data, we felt that the students were experiencing some changes—more or less consciously—in the way they perceive, construct and discuss interculturality. More explicit and metacognitive work about the form and content of discourses about interculturality is needed. However, we note, with one of the students from this research, that a multi-ideological notion like interculturality, which looks like Henry James's complex figure in a Persian carpet, requires lifelong engagement: 'I don't think this can be done overnight, nor can it be done in a hurry'…

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Transcultural Education in Practice: 'Writing China in Country'

Tony Hughes-d'Aeth and Xianlin Song

Abstract In the spirit of John Dewey (1859–1952) whose educational philosophy is primarily concerned with interaction, reflection and experience, an in-country learning program was developed to send a group of Australian students to study Chinese literature in English in Beijing. Originally initiated by Nicholas Jose at the University of Adelaide, the educational model was then transferred and remodelled at the University of Western Australia. This change saw a diverse group of students embarked on a special educational journey in the Chinese summer semesters of 2017 and 2018 at Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU). Incorporating the learning practices of social interaction, self-reflection and cultural experience, the unit, titled 'Writing China in Country', provided a unique platform for Australian university students to learn by 'doing', and a 'contact zone' where students experience another culture through book-reading as well as physically living on campus at BFSU. The learning environment was both transcultural and transnational where students 'cross' the cultural boundaries, and live in an 'inter'-cultural environment, and through reflective learning assignments 'transcended' their original limits. This chapter theorises the transcultural educational approach through an examination of students' learning experience from the 'Writing China In-Country' program. It argues for a more conscious recognition that such boundary-crossing is part of an evolving transcultural pedagogical 'imaginary' which accounts for our transcultural and transnational world we live in, and such imaginary is only possible when educational practitioners are open to look beyond what constitutes knowledge and knowledge-making within the geographical borders.

Keywords Border-crossing · Study Abroad Program · Transcultural pedagogy · 'Contact zone'

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In 2017 and 2018, we ran a course called 'Writing China in Country' at the University of Western Australia (UWA). The unit involved a partnership with Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU) who hosted our students for 3 weeks during our Australian winter break at their campus. For them, it was the beginning of their summer break, which meant accommodation and teaching venues were available for us to use. Before moving to UWA, the course had actually been run from the University of Adelaide (2014–2016), where it had been conceived by Nicholas Jose, who has a long association with BFSU. 'Writing China in Country' on appearance is a literary studies and creative writing course. The idea was that students would read modern and contemporary Chinese literary works, but do this—and write about their experiences—'in country'. As a foreign studies university, BFSU is set up to teach in English, which was important as the majority of the students were not Mandarin speakers. Students had been provided a course reader in advance which allowed them to do the majority of their reading before they arrived in Beijing. Once at BFSU, each morning the students attended a 3-h lecture and a discussion session in the afternoon. These became more interactive as the course progressed and the students and the lecturers, Profs. Wang Yuanlu and Wang Yan, became used to each other. The unit was assessed through participation, short writing exercises and a longer written piece.

In general terms, 'Writing China in Country' resembles the programs known in North America as short-term Study Abroad Programs (SAP), and which formed a popular and, before the 2020 pandemic, growing part of the American tertiary education landscape. Short-term SAP include both study tours and service-learning (e.g. international volunteering), but our course is best understood as a shortened form of the third main variety of short-term SAP common in the United States, the 'summer semester abroad'. Like 'Writing in Country' these take place on the campus of an overseas partner university:

> The basic format of the summer semester includes class sessions 4 days per week and free time for independent travel 3 days per week. The primary goals for this type of trip include helping student gain in-depth information about the course topic and increasing student interest in the local country, sites, and people. Furthermore, the trip should last long enough that it should increase students' confidence in their ability to travel abroad and it may increase their confidence to live abroad (Sachau et al., 650–51).

This summary captures the basic concept for our course as well, with perhaps the main qualification being that, as scholars in literary studies, we do not regard literature as 'information', at least not in the traditional discipline sense. Hopefully, in the remainder of this chapter, we can illustrate why we would choose to stress this point of difference. It should also be noted that while the students were enrolled at an Australian university (UWA), the 'Australian student' is something that is increasingly diverse. For example, in the 2017 cohort, the 21 students included students originally from Iraq, Egypt, Singapore, Scotland, England and Mauritius, as well as China and Australia. The students also came from a wide range of academic backgrounds, pursuing degrees in science, business, the social sciences and the humanities.

Australian Higher Education in Global Learning

'Writing China in Country' was developed at a time when Australian universities were fast becoming globalised. Australia has become a very popular destination of the 5.3 million internationally mobile tertiary students (DESE, 2020) over the past two decades, however, the reverse is not true with Australian students, especially to Australian neighbours in Asia. As Tables 1, 2 and 3 illustrate, Australian tertiary students studying overseas amounts only a fraction of the international students who enrolled in Australian higher institutions. While China contributes to 164,730, one-third of the international cohort to Australian universities in 2019, there were only 7376 Australian students who gained an overseas experience in Chinese tertiary institutions in 2018.

Of those Australian students who succeeded in pursuing some international experience in Asian countries, most would be in short-term language-based studies as the linguistic barrier is a major hurdle for English-speaking Australian students. In this context, there is a need for more innovative exploration of designing courses for Australian students to cope with this basic problem (i.e. the language barrier). It is

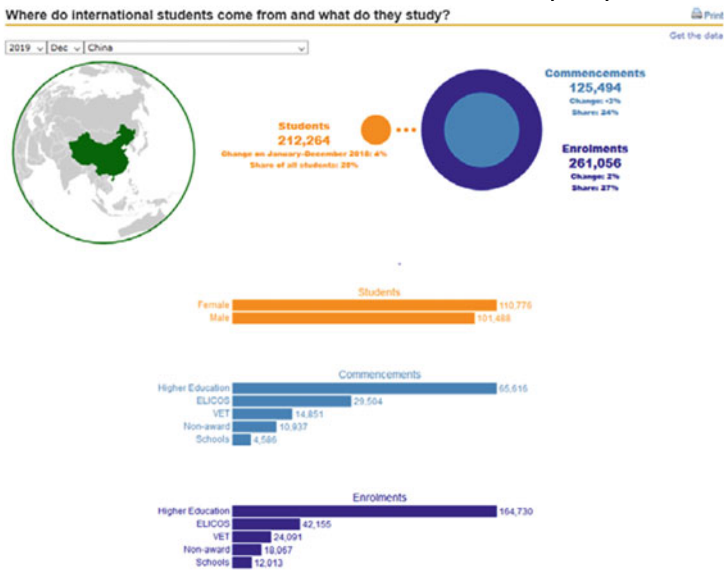
Table 1 International student enrolments in Australia 2015–2018 (DESE, 2020).

	Data	Year						
	Sum of DATA YTD Enrolments				Sum of DATA YTD Commencements			
Sector	2015	2016	2017	2018	2015	2016	2017	2018
Higher Education	271,664	305,344	349,152	399,078	116,779	130,996	148,747	166,549
VET	168,301	186,505	216,123	244,287	108,674	118,326	135,845	148,023
Schools	20,524	23,251	25,664	26,801	11,011	12,356	13,403	13,121
ELICOS	144,153	150,187	155,212	156,369	110,547	114,363	117,564	117,769
Non-award	37,589	44,043	49,979	49,864	29,033	34,774	37,032	37,059
Grand Total	642,231	709,330	796,130	876,399	376,044	410,815	452,591	482,521

Table 2 International mobility of Australian university students (DESE, 2020).

Table 2. Australian university students abroad by country (all levels)				
Top 5 destination countries (2018)	2017		2018	
	Number of experiences	*% of all experiences*	*Number of experiences*	*% of all experiences*
China	5,526	11.2%	7,376	14.1%
USA	5,472	11.1%	5,268	10.1%
UK	4,065	8.3%	3,959	7.6%
Italy	2,142	4.3%	2,261	4.3%
Japan	2,066	4.2%	2,190	4.2%
Other	29,992	60.9%	31,117	59.6%
Grand Total	**49,263**	**100.0%**	**52,171**	**100.0%**

Table 3 Where do international students come from and what do they study? (DESE, 2020).



a significant constraint, but the value of intercultural experience is also significant. Thus, the main value of 'Writing China in Country' was that it offered a genuine opportunity for Australian students who do not speak Mandarin to engage in an intercultural 'contact zone' where they conduct learning through the prism of Chinese literature, which in itself is a representation of Chinese history, society and culture. In this sense, the course offered a pathway for student mobility from Australia to China. More particularly, the philosophy underpinning the design of this class is grounded in the belief that boundary-crossing between cultures is a virtue in itself, provided there are appropriate supports in place. In responding to the higher education learning environment which has become translingual, transcultural and transnational, it is essential for university courses to explore innovative ways through the evolution of a new pedagogical 'imaginary' (Dervin, 2016). This involves a willingness to look beyond what constitutes knowledge and knowledge-making in ways that correspond to the complication of geographical borders caused by contemporary mediated globalisation (Cadman & Song, 2012).

Literature, Translation and the Transcultural

'Writing China in Country' was thus designed to meet a particular cross-cultural challenge and to operate within the constraints of the relevant institutions (University of Adelaide, UWA, BFSU). The basic pedagogical mode of this course was experiential in the sense that the encounter with Chinese literature 'in country' was

treated as an immersive *experience*, rather than simply a subject of study. In the spirit of John Dewey (1859–1952) whose educational philosophy is primarily concerned with interaction, reflection and experience, this in-country learning program was grounded in the learning through intercultural proficiency, and openness to cultural diversity. Through the medium of Chinese literature, the course drew on the pedagogy of creative writing, inasmuch as students were encouraged to engage their imaginative faculty, in addition to the critical methods of traditional scholarship. Aiming at developing the capacity to interpret the experience of China through discussion, critical reading and creative writing, students were encouraged to explore the various contexts of their interactions on the ground and to respond in appropriate ways. Incorporating the learning practices of social interaction, self-reflection and cultural experience, the pedagogical focus of this course is on the development of 'cultural awareness' and cultural sensitivity which has been considered part of the quest for 'Global citizenship' (Lewin, 2009). In this sense, this course is 'a substantial case of transculturation in action' (Jose, 2018, 79).

For their major assessment, students were asked to produce 'a sustained work of 2500–3000 words (or equivalent) that considers any aspect' of the course. This was a deliberately open-ended task and it is fair to say that many of the students experienced an anxiety that was akin to agoraphobia when confronted with the multitude of possibilities that the assessment allowed. The caveat was that the topic was to be formed *in consultation with the course coordinators* and students gradually came to understand that the formulation of their topic was a crucial part of the process. The topic formation was done in stages while at BFSU, with students presenting topic ideas to each other in class sessions. In the end, and pleasingly from our point of view, there were a diverse range of assignments submitted in fulfilment of the assessment requirements. From the 21 students in the 2017 cohort, there were five conventional essays, eight 'personal' essays, four short stories, a speech, a play, a documentary film and an art series with commentaries. As well as their major final assessment, the students were also assessed by a reflective journal and we will be quoting from these journals using pseudo initials to identify particular students to preserve complete privacy.

The success of 'Writing China in Country' depended, in crucial ways, on the power of translation. Firstly, students read literary works that have been translated into English by a range of skilled literary translators. A second kind of translation, unique to in-country learning of this kind, is the multitude of glosses and contextual information provided by the bilingual literature lecturers at BFSU. Here, the key quality is the kind of cultural peripheral vision and lived experience that any Chinese intellectual has at their disposal, but which is not directly available to someone from outside the culture. A non-Chinese reader can read a translated Chinese text, but it will remain beset by a range of enigmatic moments, assumptions and allusions. Like any cultural text, those from China are embedded in a complex of history and culture that can only be made accessible by someone with an intimate experience of China. The lecturers at BFSU provided this kind of immediate real-time footnoting to the texts studied, dropping effortlessly into descriptions of the Confucian public service exam, the development of modern Chinese written language, the dynamics

of the traditional extended family, and so on. The effect was not only informational, however. What it brought home to students in the classroom was that these experiences live on in the memories and lives of the Chinese people, embodied by the teachers in whose classes we were guests. Hearing about them in this way, rather than say via Wikipedia, allowed concepts and cultural touchstones to exist in their ambivalence and complexity. Sensitive topics, such as the experience and legacy of the Cultural Revolution, could be understood through the direct cultural memories of the Chinese teachers, their friends and families. This allowed history and culture to be living and complex, rather than cut and dried.

A third layer of translation comes from the fact that the course was based on a study of literary works. What literature presents us with is the translation of life into imaginative narratives. To read Lu Xun, Mao Dun, Ba Jin, Lao She, Cao Yu, Sheng Congwen, Eileen Chang and Mo Yan, even in translation, is to confront particular Chinese renditions of Chinese experience. These writers wrote in the midst of the radical upheaval of Chinese society in the twentieth century. As well as being witnesses, and sometimes participants, in these events, these writers also played a crucial role in the development of the modern Chinese language itself. A point brought vividly home to the students by Profs. Wang Yan and Wang Yuanlu. As one student put it in her diary: *I was surprised and fascinated to discover that the evolution of language and literature in Chinese culture was so deeply tied with social and cultural revolution, to the point where literature was a successful mode of action. It was an aspect of history I had never associated with China, and it changed my view of Chinese history immensely.* (NR) In other words, a writer like Lu Xun 'translated' classical Chinese literature into a modern literary vernacular he helped invent. In these various senses, then, 'Writing in China' is a unit based on the process of translation.

In these ways, this unit turned what had been a largely insurmountable obstacle into a transnational space for genuine pedagogy. Because literature depends on dramatic situations for its effects as well as the particular resonances of words, students are thrown into a distinctly Chinese interiority by reading these works, particularly when given a chance to workshop their reactions in a Chinese pedagogical setting. Whilst it is acknowledged that many crucial elements of a literary work are inevitably lost in translation, many other elements do proceed through and it is on this basis that students are able to apprehend a way of thinking and feeling that is unique to the (in this case, Chinese) source culture. As one student puts it: *I still believe that to know a country, you should know its literature* (HS).

Nevertheless, the students were under no illusions that they are able to access Chinese culture in any direct or unmediated way. They realise that they were working in a cultural space that is foreign to them. The fact of this foreignness confronted students not just in the literature but in their day-to-day experience in Beijing. As one student put it: *Being situated in a foreign country where I neither understood the language nor most of the customs made doing this unit a far richer experience because I was learning every day and not just within the walls of the classroom.* (ZA) Another student commented: *A major change in my thinking occurred upon visiting China and seeing how accommodating people could be with their English ability*

and my own lack of Mandarin. Honestly, I felt ashamed that I could walk around and be able to communicate sufficiently, while if the situation was flipped, it would be hard for someone to speak Mandarin and be understood by the average Australian. (JF) By the end of the unit, students had also begun to gain a sense of perspective about the scale of the problem. In a view that was echoed by others, another student noted that *while I feel that I have obviously learnt a lot in my time in Beijing, I also learnt that gaining any kind of cohesive understanding will take far longer than I anticipated* (LS).

Even if the students were reading Chinese literature in English translation, the fact that the students were reading these works in China, whilst resident at a Chinese university and under the tutelage of Chinese lecturers made a difference as they were literary living a 'contact zone' where transcultural learning happens. Many of the students commented in their diaries that the literature had a much greater significance or 'weight' than it would have had if studied in Australia. As one student put it: *The literature we delved into during our classes proved to be a vital tool on our journey, as it set the foundation of our understanding of the culture that permeated every street corner, drawing a timeline on the events that shaped the China we now treaded on, a far cry from the generic literature classes I was used to.* (ZA) These thoughts were echoed by another student, who wrote: *Reflecting back, I am surprised how much more I learned whilst over in Beijing than simply the literature* (CL). This same student *found the literature to be far more confronting* than [she] *expected* and noted how *the stories transformed and became more emotional and harrowing when living in Beijing*. She concludes: *I would not have fully understood the weight of these texts had I not been in Beijing at the time* (CL).

The students realised that, on the one hand, the 2 weeks they spent in Beijing would only allow them to scratch the surface of Chinese culture, but at the same time, because it was a sustained and immersive cultural experience, it did provide a genuine challenge to their previous assumptions. As one student puts it: *Before arriving at BFSU, China was a completely unknown place to me. I had little knowledge about the culture, the language and its modern history. After spending two weeks at BFSU, however, I feel that my thinking about China has changed* (NR). The same student continues: *Those two weeks were truly insightful into the evolution of Chinese literature and culture, and being immersed into an unfamiliar environment affected how I understood them.* (NR) Another student phrased the matter slightly differently, but expressed a similar sentiment: *Before actually visiting China and studying at BFSU, most of my ideas about China were shaped by vague ideas I'd picked up by the media.* (CR) The student then concludes: *I think going to China and reading literature there made things more solid and real, and dispelled the more silly thoughts I had. … studying at BFSU did indeed make China more three-dimensional and real to me … China became more whole in my mind* (CR).

An example of how literature can change perceptions is in presumptions Australian students may have about the lives of women in China. One student related the experience of reading Eileen Chang's novella *Love in a Fallen City* (1943*): I am not sure why, but before going to BFSU the images I had of women in China were things such as bound feet and daughters being drowned as they were seen as less*

important. But reading Eileen Chang and her characters, as well as other female authors, changed my views. (CR) The student continued: *Women in China have many of the same ideas and worries and dreams as women in Australia: a simple concept, but one I'm ashamed to say wasn't quite hammered home until this unit. But perhaps that's something that I really had to experience.* (CR) Significantly, the student described her reading of Chang's work as an 'experience' and speaks of the fact of reading as something she underwent as a lived moment.

The Value of the Experience

The extensive literature considering short-term study abroad focuses on two main questions. The first is the general value of study abroad; in short, why should students do it, and why should universities go to the effort of providing it? The second question is whether these benefits can be achieved through a short-term visit ('less than a quarter or semester of study'; Donnelly-Smith, 2009), or whether longer exposures are necessary. The benefits of study abroad are often put in instrumental terms, which is understandable given that they are often subsidised by the initiating university. One rationale given is that intercultural experiences facilitate life in advanced global capitalism. Douglas and Jones-Rikkers (2001), for instance, point to the problems that attended the Daimler-Chrysler merger in the 1990s: 'Cultures did indeed clash and created very real problems, problems that will continue to occur as global mergers and acquisitions become even more common' (56). They suggest, and indeed sought to test the idea, that study-abroad works as a form of 'cross-cultural training' that might obviate the kind of difficulties that were faced by Chrysler managers in their dealings with their German counterparts. They give the name *world mindedness* to this new virtue. A later study by Clarke et al. (2009) broadened this rationale somewhat but retained the basic stance that study abroad delivered cross-cultural training, or as they term it, *intercultural proficiency*. (Another term used is *cultural adaptability*: Mapp, 2013) Like Douglas and Jones-Rikkers, Clarke et al. asserted that study abroad contributed to an attitudinal change in world view, which they called *global mindedness*. A study by Kehl and Morris (2008) indicated that global mindedness was more achievable over semester-length rather than short-term programs. It is not specifically remarked upon in this literature, but the parochialism of Americans is naturally that of the hegemon, and adjustments to global mindedness might well differ with students from other echelons in the global system.

A more sceptical approach to the phenomenon of study abroad is visible in Härkönen and Dervin. They demur at some of the more open boosterism visible in the critical literature on study abroad and in a corresponding faith in 'post-modern metanarratives of mobility'. The advocacy for study abroad draws on familiar terms ('flexibility, openness, intercultural skills, tolerance' 42) that have come to stand for a 'global common sense'. It is certainly true that many of the vaunted benefits of study abroad mirror the needs of global capitalism. To underscore the doctrinal dimension

of study abroad, Härkönen and Dervin, describe its program of intercultural adaptability as a form of 'imagineering', or as they gloss this term, the 'engineering of imaginaries'. This critique is clearly a valuable corrective and its underlying argument extends more generally to the increasingly instrumentalised view of tertiary education. In Australia, for instance, the Federal Government has recently passed legislation pointedly titled the 'Job-ready Graduates Package', which redistributes funding away from subjects (such as those in the humanities) it deemed were not making graduates 'job-ready'.

Notwithstanding such pressures, it is imperative that tertiary education is not reduced to job-training, and this applies equally in the domain of study abroad. Indeed, not all advocates of study abroad seek to cast their case in instrumental terms. Perry et al. (2012) ground their case for the benefits of short-term study abroad within a context of personal growth and change. Drawing on Dewey's concept of education as experience, and Jack Mezirow's (1923–2014) elucidation of transformative learning theory (TLT), Perry et al. locate study abroad firmly within the pedagogical value of critical reflection: 'Short-term study abroad [can] serve as a vehicle for fostering transformative learning environments where new experiences and perspectives may be developed.' (682) Rather than simply characterising short-term study abroad as 'cross-cultural training', they suggest it can be 'a catalyst for developing a global citizenry' provided the conditions for transformative learning are in place. They cite the criteria that Mezirow gave for transformative learning and they are worth citing for their salience in light of the comments given above by the students of 'Writing China in Country':

1. A disorienting dilemma.
2. Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame.
3. A critical assessment of epistemic, socio-cultural or psychic assumptions.
4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change.
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions.
6. Planning of a course of action.
7. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's own plans.
8. Provisional trying of new roles.
9. Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships.
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective.
   (Mezirow, 1991: 168–69; quoted in Perry et al. 2021: 681).

What becomes clear when we review 'Writing China in Country' in the light of the scholarship on short-term study abroad is the particular investment that we made in the possibilities that creative writing provides in an intercultural context. Another unusual feature of our program was the fact that it featured English-language instruction in a non-English-speaking country. The prevalence of English-speaking Chinese people, particularly in the younger generations, is rapidly increasing but on the street and in day-to-day life, those without Mandarin in China will depend on the usual miming, pointing and, increasingly, the AI translations offered by social media

platforms. For an English-speaking student group, 3 weeks in the suburbs of Beijing is a far cry from Dublin, London, Paris, Prague or Amsterdam—popular destinations for the 'Summer Semester Abroad' taken up by American students. The extent to which living on the campus of a Chinese university for three weeks constitutes 'a disorienting dilemma' in Mezirow's terms was a widely expressed view in our student group.

Our method, and it must be said that this was largely intuitive, was to set up literature as a proxy for the disorienting dilemma confronted by the simple reality of existing in China without the ability to speak Mandarin or even read the basic signage in Chinese characters. In dealing with works, often quite profound works, of Chinese literature (in English translation), the students (not to mention their teachers) were offered a parallel realm in which the complexities of Chinese society and culture were acted out. These literary works, although fictional, were deeply embedded in the key moments, forces and crises of Chinese history and, indeed, the Chinese present. At the same time, outside of the class, they needed to buy subway tickets, rent bicycles and purchase SIM cards. They also availed themselves of the cultural landmarks of Beijing as a centre of Chinese civilisation and realised that these sites were not necessarily, at least not primarily, addressing *them.* By using literature to instigate its own disorienting dilemmas (i.e. How do I read this text? What does it mean?), but placing this process in the hands of Chinese instructors, we were able to model a participatory hermeneutics that goes beyond what is called 'information'.

At the other end, we also offered creative writing as a mode of student response. Using creative writing as a form of assessment, afforded students the licence to respond creatively to the totality of their experience. One student chose to update the famous play, *Teahouse* (1957) by Lao She. Lao She (Shu Qingchun 舒慶春), though a revered national hero, was persecuted during the Cultural Revolution and famously took his own life by drowning himself in Beijing's Taiping Lake in 1966. His play *Teahouse* takes place in three acts between 1899 and 1949, and each act is a slice in time that is pivotal in that momentous period. The student's 'fourth act' was set in the contemporary moment (in this case, 2017) and consisted of dialogue written entirely via text messages. The student's work was studded with insights that came from the texts we had read and the interactive lectures that took place, and revealed a deep capacity to think one's way into the dilemmas of contemporary Chinese society and the drama.

In Conclusion

Globalisation of the past 20 years has not only resulted in large numbers the mobility of peoples in universities across the world, it has also presented educators with challenges to transform curricula in response to the diversity of student population and to provide them an educational experience for their transcultural, translingual and transnational futures. 'Writing China in Country' is one of the many experimental educational programs which endeavoured to provide a unique platform for Australian

university students to learn by 'doing', in a 'contact zone'. Incorporating the learning practices of social interaction, self-reflection and a cultural context, students experienced Chinese culture through book-reading as well as physically living on campus at BFSU in Beijing. As we have shown above, within the higher education learning environment as we know it is possible to explore teaching programs to respond to the changed world we live in through the evolution of a new pedagogical 'imaginary'. Since 2018, the world has changed significantly, and writing now in 2020 it is hard to envisage conditions that will allow us to run 'Writing China in Country' again, at least in the near term. Not only has a global pandemic dramatically curtailed student mobility between China and Australia, but geopolitical tensions have dampened the enthusiasm of universities (in both countries) to make investments into these kinds of genuinely cross-cultural modes of pedagogy. Nevertheless, the cross-cultural creativity that this course exemplified is also suggestive of a way forward in happier times.

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Chinese International Students' Experience: Integration or Inclusion?

Mingxin Qu

Abstract Fuelled by globalization, the internationalization of higher education in the Western-countries has occurred at a rapid pace. A typical demonstration of this trend is the increasing number of international students, among which, Chinese international students are the largest source in the global higher education market. However, the integration experience of Chinese international students has been varied. This article reviews the current research on Chinese international students' integration to examine how the concept of integration on global higher education has been applied to Chinese international students. Considering the current result from Chinese international students' academic adjustment, intercultural communication and interaction, the complexity of international community and co-national groups, the author questions the validity and necessity of 'integration', and argues for an 'inclusion' as the alternative to integration, and calls for more research into factors such as students' motivations, purposes and individual needs to further verify 'internationalization'.

Introduction

Globalization over the past three decades has enabled cross border flows of investments, information, knowledge and talents in an unprecedented manner, which strengthens the international and global connectivity of higher education. In the process of higher education internationalization, international student mobility studying in higher education outside of their place of birth becomes one of the key dominators (Song & McCarthy, 2020). On the broad scale, the map of international mobility is a movement from East to West, as the West is assumed at an extraordinary peak of power to other civilizations (Huntington, 2000). According to UNESCO data of 2019, there were over 5.3 million international students studying away from their country of birth, among which, Chinese students are the largest country of origin for international students worldwide (UNESCO, 2019).

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Douglass et al. (2009) proposed that universities and higher education systems have become globalization's muse: "in essence, a widely recognized and worshipped route for full participation in the knowledge society, an unparalleled source of knowledge and artful innovation, a foundation for modern science, an unequalled generator of talent, and a nearly required path for socio-economic mobility in the postmodern world" (p. 3). This results in the fact that students all over the world are investing a large amount of money in the hope that overseas education meets family expectation and enhance global social connections, in addition to improvement of personal social status that goes beyond income measures (Song & McCarthy, 2020).

Many countries stated the presence of international students as crucial to the internationalization of higher education. As a British Council report (2014, p.4) explained: "simply having a diverse student body does not mean the education or even the campus is global in nature. What comes as an essential part of a global education is the inclusion of international students in communities and classes. Integration of all students is an elemental factor in the expanding concept of internationalization". Australia also has a similar rationale towards international education: "international education offers opportunities to build enhanced bilateral and multilateral relationship, which increase cultural awareness and social engagement. In addition, diplomacy is advanced through Australian educated alumni who develop lasting connection as personal, organizational and governmental level. All of this is fostering better relationships with regions neighbours and the rest of the world" (Australian Government 2016, p. 26).

The importance of integration has also been emphasized by research and scholars (Merola et al., 2019; Tinto, 1997); this chapter reviews the evidence on Chinese international students' integration in the global context, and focuses on the concept of integration and the role it plays in the current higher education environment. More explicit unpacking of the meanings of the concept is needed to enrich our understanding of internationalization processes in the higher education sector. Therefore, the central aim of this article is to interrogate the concept of integration as it is applied to Chinese international students. If integration is the main leading objective in the government policies and education institutions, what has happened to Chinese international students themselves in the global context?

Section "Conceptualization of Integration Model" explores theories of integration and the ways that the degree of integration can be determined. The point of departure is the Tinto's (1997) and Berry's (1992) conceptualization of integration which describes academic and social integration as the central to the college experiences. Section "Unique Integration Experience of Asian International Students on Campus" considers the academic and social integration of Chinese international students by reviewing the evidence about their experience on campus. Section °Academic Integration" concludes that despite the fact that the current theories and conceptualization of integration is the basis for institutional policies, and the overall importance and benefits of maximizing integration in the higher education sector are well documented, this conceptualization of integration in higher education is indeed problematic and should be reconsidered for future implementation.

Conceptualization of Integration Model

Theoretical and empirical research into integration over several decades has taken place in a number of fields, such as social policy, education, intercultural communication, health psychology (Spencer-Oatey & Dauber, 2019). In this article, we review the conceptualization of integration in the education, which are highly related to the internationalization of higher education.

Within the education field as a whole, research on integration is often associated with Vincent Tinto (1997). He stated that "if academic and social involvement or integration is to occur, it must occur in the classroom" (Tinto, 1997, p. 599). A majority of the previous works have made use of Tinto's model, which describes academic and social integration as the central to the college experiences. The greater students' integration in their college life, the more likely they will persist. Like individuals who commit suicide due to a lack of integration into society, Tinto claims that college students who fail to integrate into the social and academic systems of the institution may leave the institution (Tinto, 1997). There was little discussion of how the concept was being interpreted. However, a small number of researchers have explored the meaning of integration more deeply. For example, based on Tinto's focus on integration, Severiens and Wolff (2008) extended the distinction between academic and social integration to involve formal and informal integration, giving a fourfold framework as shown in Table 1.

According to Dervin (2011), in the literature on academic mobility related to international students, theories and models of integration are often used explicitly or not by researchers to deal with these students. As "different Others", they are often the basis for reflecting on how one should or if one should integrate to the "Western World". The basic concept of culture in these theories is often used in "uncritical, solid and reified ways". The reified vision of culture is seen as a way of either allowing the migrants to be fully integrated into the host culture (Dervin, 2011) or helping them to maintain the national culture and being actively involved with the host culture (Bhatia & Ram, 2009). For example, various student activities and services are implemented to promote international students' integration on-and

Table 1 Distinction between formal and informal aspects of academic and social integration

Explanation	
Academic integration	
Formal	Contact related to the institute itself: for example, engaging actively with the learning content, and being supported to do so by the teachers
Informal	Contact between teachers and students outside the formal learning environment
Social integration	
Formal	Contact between peers matters of learning, particularly in relation to group work and project work
Informal	Frequent social contact and participation in activities out of class

off-campuses (Owens & Loomes, 2010). Challenges that international students face in the process of integration are frequently explored (Harvey, 2018; Li, 2017).

In line with Tinto's integration model, Beil and Shope (1990) detected academic and social integration to be influential on study performance. They distinguished four concepts in academic integration. Firstly, academic adjustment refers to the degree of a student's success in coping with various educational requirements, for instance, whether or not the students successfully respond to the educational demand and are satisfied with their learning environments. Second, social integration describes how well students deal with the interpersonal-societal demands of a study, such as making friends, participating in social activities and small group projects. The personal and emotional adjustment scale indicates the level of psychological and physical distress while adapting to the local academic way-of-life. Lastly, attachment reflects the degree of commitment to the educational-institutional goals (Baker & Siryk, 1999).

Based on the literature on the concept of student retention (Baker & Siryk, 1999) and acculturation (Berry, 1992), Rienties et al. (2012) also extended social integration to three main areas: satisfaction and recognition of their school through social networking, degree of friend and family support, satisfaction with social life. Results show that international students with a non-Western background are less integrated compared with other international students. Yet, they have a similar study performance (Rienties et al., 2012). Research also points to integration as a potential predictor of international student satisfaction. Furthermore, academic and social integration help explain the connection between nationality and satisfaction (Merola et al., 2019). However, a study by Arkoudis et al. (2019) identified a lack of social integration and sense of belonging perceived by international students, in spite of relatively high levels of satisfaction.

Another model widely cited is Berry's bi-dimensional acculturation model. Berry (1992) identified four modes of adaptation based on two questions: how much they want to maintain their heritage culture and identity and how much they want to have contact with other cultural groups and participant in the mainstream culture. The four modes include "integration" (the combination of the culture of origin and the host culture), "assimilation" (relinquishment of original cultural identity and strong identification with the host culture), "separation" (maintenance of ethnic identity and detachment from the host culture) and "marginalization" (losing contact with both cultural groups). Since Berry conceptualized acculturation as bi-dimensional process, he proposes that minorities are not able to integrate successfully unless dominant groups hold an open attitude towards newcomers and cultural diversity.

According to the above-mentioned literature, integration is given a high preference in the literature and is considered by many as the ideal model for transnational students (Arkoudis et al., 2019; Beil & Shope, 1990; Berry, 1992; Merola et al., 2019; Rienties et al., 2012); successful international students' integration into Western campus would mean that those internationals, regardless of cultural or linguistic background, have the ability to participate in and achieve equitable outcomes in both the academic and social domains. Social isolation of minorities, such as not belonging to, or being excluded from the mainstream host society, would mean a failure of integration.

Unique Integration Experience of Asian International Students on Campus

Chinese international students in Anglophone countries reported uneven integration experiences, which can be categorized into the following themes: educational values, membership in the classroom, the role of faculty, networking, and adequacy of information, resources and opportunities. Below is a brief description of each.

Academic Integration

Educational values. Tinto (1997) and Beil and Shope (1990) depict whether students can respond successfully to the educational demands as an indicator of academic integration. Gu (2009) found that Chinese international students have serious difficulties getting used to the host teaching and learning environment. Conclusions from the study of Li (2017) indicated that Chinese international students' understanding of disciplinary conventions and literacy practices could affect academic integration and academic performance. In this study, participants noted that differences between their home country's education system and that of host countries could become one of the stressors that international students must overcome (Li, 2017). For example, the author analysed factors impacting international students' integration into Germany, finding that Chinese students from a collectivist society may wait for the lead to follow instead of asking questions, may need to fit into the surrounding culture rather than feeling comfortable standing out, or may be more passive than a student from an individualistic society. Understanding the content of teaching was also another source of stress when sufficient instructions were not given (Li, 2017; Li & Pitkanen 2018). Li and Pitkanen (2018) argued that for those exchange students coming to a new country, the course content was not synchronised between the two universities, and the students found them unprepared for their studies in Finland; this created a significant barrier to the students' academic integration. Lyken-Segosebe (2017) also reported links between acculturative stress and educational systems as well as teaching content was strengthened by the emphasis professors gave to the classroom participation.

Membership in the Classroom. Findings indicate that low language skills affected participants' integration experience in a significant way. In the classroom, many Chinese students found themselves struggling to follow the lectures, take notes, or participate in discussions; they cannot keep up with the pace of dialogue, which has often been moved on by the time they have formulated what they wanted to say (Su & Harrison, 2016). Li (2017) also mentioned the language barrier is a major barrier to the integration of international students. Heng (2019) examined the academic experience of Chinese international students and found that first-year students experience anxiety in finding their place in the classroom as native speakers' responses are faster. According to the research by Wang and Moskal (2019), participants complained

there was no opportunity for them in some classes if teachers do not direct and offer guidance because of the native English students being dominant and insisting on their opinions. In the meantime, Chinese international students are criticised by their silence and seeming withdrawal in the classroom (Ross & Chen, 2015), as this is inconsistent with educators' pronounced desires to encourage all students to challenge existing concepts and discuss any controversial topics and advance a personal view (Stevens, 2012).

The role of faculty. International students also explained how faculty could make a difference in the institutional environment as well as international students' integration on campus. Lyken-Segosebe (2017) pointed out how professors' respect for the opinions of international students contributing to a more inclusive classroom. Chiu et al. (2016) found that teachers' characteristics were the strongest predictor of students' sense of belonging. Students who developed a closer relationship with their teachers received more teacher support and students who came from more well-organised classrooms perceived a greater sense of belonging at school. Heng (2017) found that one-third of participants wished their teachers were aware of their backgrounds during teaching and assessment process. Participants stated that teachers' impatience scared them and discouraged them from contributing to classroom discussions. Different from the above studies, Arkoudis et al. (2019) argued though students are eager to be engaged in the learning, they are discouraged from integrating by inadequate teaching skills.

Networking

Interaction with host nationals. According to Tinto (1997), Severiens and Wolff (2013), Rienties et al. (2012) and Baker and Siryk (1999), satisfaction with one's social life is an indicator of one's social integration. Leong (2015) found that the degree of social interaction that an international student establishes with domestic students is an important factor in the sense of membership and belonging. However, according to an investigation of Chinese international students in New Zealand, 70% reported that they were dissatisfied with their opportunities for leisure activities, and 52% were unhappy with opportunities to participate in local community activities (Zhang & Brunton, 2007). Liu and Dong (2019) examined obstacles that Chinese international students encountered in communication with domestic students and pointed out apart from cultural differences, language barriers, Americans' lack of empathy also leads to low interaction rate. Yang (2017) investigated Chinese international students in Singapore; participants mentioned that there is a sociocultural emphasis with an underlying assimilationist thrust in integration. Integration with host nationals is impossible for Chinese students to achieve as, since individuals who differ by gender, ethnic group, and social class are expected to renounce their cultures and values to be exactly the same as Singaporeans. With various obstacles standing in the way of intercultural interaction, the quality between international students and host students may not be ideal. Furthermore, a study by Li and Pitkanen (2018)

showed that participants who are not integrated with host students and host social activities have much higher GPAs than other interviewees. It seems the validity of social integration still needs examination.

International student community. Gomes (2015) proposed a new form of integration, not with host nationals, but other international students. In this study, all participants (Asian international students) revealed that they form connections with other international students. Findings from this study showed that international students identify and bond together as a community because of the same foreign status. Therefore, they can understand issues ranging from emotional factors of being away from home to practical issues connecting with living in Australia.

Co-national Enclave. Contrary to the above studies, Sawir et al. (2008) examined the loneliness of international students in Australia. After analysing 200 interviews, they found that more of those who report loneliness has casual friendships with other international students and casual friendships with local students and also reported involvement in social organizations. That suggests that connections with both international and local students are not the universal panacea to isolation and it does not necessarily eliminate loneliness and facilitate international students' wellbeing. Spencer-Oatey et al. (2017) found that co-national groups could provide international students with more emotional and moral support, since cultural similarity builds up attributional confidence and it helps sojourners to get involved in deeper engagement. In the same vein, Chen and Ross (2015) conducted a three-year ethnographic research on Chinese international students in a US university and found that this co-national group offers both mentoring and peer-support as well as instrumental help regarding every aspect of life. They proposed that integration to the host culture is not the only way of engagement on campus. Furthermore, representation co-national groups as 'passive' is unhelpful to understanding the student experience. Indeed, they show that it is the feelings of comfort within the co-ethnic group and inadequacy outside of the group that prevented participants from seeking non-group interactions.

Adequacy of Information, Resources and Opportunities

Inadequate resources also had an impact on international students' integration and a sense of belonging (Caidi & Allard, 2005). Current literature showed that Chinese international students are provided with insufficient information about their study and life in the host country. Heng (2017) found that students desired greater clarity about administrative information such as immigration information so as to reduce the stress associated with their status as international students. Other studies such as Leong (2015) reported that some students face financial challenges when studying abroad. Job opportunities in the US for international students is shrinking; in the meantime, student tuitions are rising sharply. He further reported that feeling inadequate and dejected may lead to feelings of confusion, and further marginalised.

Integration or Inclusion?

Problematizing the Concept of 'Integration'

The literature shows that international students had uneven perceptions of how they expect to be engaged in the universities relating to educational values, memberships in the classroom, the role of faculty, networking as well as the adequacy of resources. This chapter demonstrates that (a) Chinese international students in the universities in Anglophone countries experience difficulties integrating into new educational systems; (b) institutional environment such as membership in the classroom, the role of faculty and adequacy of institutional resources are factors impacting international students' engagement; (c) cultural, language and social walls between international students and domestic students, combined with a range of complexities associated with co-national contact as well as international ties call into question the necessity and importance of 'integrating' into the mainstream culture.

The above-discussed result indicated that the integration model is indeed problematic. Bhatia and Ram (2009) pointed out that it is unclear what the term "integration" really means. They further asserts that the integration models developed are "universal, linear models of acculturation". This simplistic vision of acculturating merely implies moving from one culture to another and ignores its complexity. Furthermore, the integration model promoted by educational institutions has an implicit assimilation thrust. Tierney (1992) argues that integration models can be interpreted as assimilation in the sense of a rejection of one's home culture, since individuals who differ by gender, ethnic group, and social class are expected to renounce their cultures and values in order to assimilate into the dominant culture of the institution. The integrative programs initiated by educational institutions also expect international students to assimilate (Chen & Ross, 2015). Those who fail to integrate are considered deficient and remedial others; this makes overseas students more marginalised. Chinese international students are deemed as 'subaltern subjects' in Western universities to learn superior Western knowledge. These universities, in the face of the diversity of students, remain dominated by Western knowledge production and dissemination, closed to alternative forms of knowledge (Song & McCarthy, 2020).

The integration model requires international students to take the responsibility of intercultural communication, renouncing their cultures and values to be 'Westernised'. However, a wide range of reasons as to why there is a wall between international students and host students are pointed out, such as language barriers, limited cultural knowledge as well as limited intercultural opportunities. However, and perhaps of more interest, there were reports of indifferent even discriminatory attitudes of host people to international students. Berry (2006) conceptualized acculturation as bi-dimensional process and pointed out that it is not only sojourners who have to be willing to engage with host people; the receptivity of the host society and of individuals, in particular, are also crucially important. If dominant groups do not have an open attitudes towards newcomers and their cultural diversities, international students will not be able to have great transnational experiences.

The integration model also indicated the 'ghettoization' of co-nationals as unsuccessful integration (Deardorff, 2009). But findings from a study by Schartner (2014) suggested that international students formed a "close-kit international community", enabling them to enjoy a positive social experience independent of the host society. Through international student networks, they could feel 'at home' in the host country, without identifying with host people (Gomes, 2015). Therefore, these findings call into question whether 'fitting in' with host nationals is the only and exclusive way to achieve a sense of belonging in the host environment. From several studies focusing on co-national groups, it is obvious that the specific form of co-national groups and their involvement are often hidden or barely visible when viewed from the perspective that assumes a dominant, mainstream campus culture (Bittencourt et al., 2019; Brown, 2009; Yang, 2017). It should be noted that there is not only one culture and one society, but many cultures and parallel societies within a culture (Chen & Ross, 2015). The complexities of international student communities and co-national groups also refute Tinto's belief (1997) that students who are more integrated into the campus life and the mainstream culture are more likely to have high grades and more satisfying overseas experience. However, findings from the research by Chen and Ross (2015) and Schartner (2014) show that those sticking with co-national groups and other international students also achieve strong academic performances due to the mentoring and academic peer support provided by their co-nationals and internationals.

Therefore, one might conclude international students' academic and social needs can be met by other international students. Some UK research even considers separation as desirable, which actually call for less integration of international students, who will only remain for a relatively short time, and an encouragement to maintain links with home, and form links with co-nationals in the host country (McKinlay et al., 1996, also cited in Sovic 2009). This view seems to be guided by the neoliberal rationale under which international students are seen as little more than cash cows in the higher education market that could result in fragmented student cohorts rather than global citizens (Song & McCarthy, 2020; Stein & Andreotti, 2017).

Institutions sometimes expect that personal and family networks take full responsibility for student surveillance and pastoral care, including matters that might be in the domain of responsibility of the institution itself (Sawir et al., 2008). However, this would be an overly hasty conclusion. There are controversial findings regarding international students' perception to intercultural interaction with host students. Several studies have shown that not all international students are satisfied with the current situation (Schartner, 2015). Therefore, simply transferring the pastoral burden to co-national networks seems to be a lazy strategy that allows the institutions to go on without improving itself (Sawir et al., 2008).

Inclusion as an Alternative Framing

The above critical literature indicates the integration model is indeed problematic in the current context of mobility. Chinese international students experience various difficulties relating to social and academic life when engaging themselves in foreign institutions and societies. Findings show that intercultural interaction does not naturally happen, and acculturative stresses does not disappear, with time spent in the host country (Lyken-Segosebe, 2017). Therefore, international students require institutional support throughout their stay in a foreign country. To realize a truly globalized diverse campus, universities need to appreciate the complicated realities and understand the profile of their students, rather than assume any fixed patterns or "think along the lines of low flying-stereotypes that will prevent any meaningful achievement to that end" (Chen & Ross, 2015, p. 178). Therefore, instead of integration, the concept of "inclusion" was proposed by Ross and Chen (2015) and Bittencourt et al. (2019); in higher education, this concept is often used to describe the systems and practices supporting students with disabilities. Within the inclusive philosophy, diversity is appreciated and conceived in a broad sense comprising the various capabilities, gender differences and differences in the social and cultural background. These diversities and differences are seen as benefits rather than problems. The belief is that all students are treated like valuable university members (Merina, 2017).

The concept of 'involving universities' is helpful in imaging more inclusive and responsive campus environments that support the engagement of international students. In an inclusive system, institutions are expected to respond to the needs of the students: "an inclusive approach begins with a critical examination troubling dominant constructions of campus life. By troubling these dominant constructions, institutions may become better suited to acknowledge the multiple ways students engage with campus life and recognise the diverse needs that may emerge as a result of these engagements" (Bittencourt et al., 2019, p. 13). The concept of 'inclusion' requires universities to embrace a pluralistic 'diverse-diversity' paradigm, rather than superior-inferior framing (Dervin, 2011). As George Kuh (1991) notes, "involving colleges are committed to pluralism in all its forms, and they support the establishment and coexistence of sub-communities that permit students to identify with, and receive support from, people like themselves, so that they can feel comfortable in becoming involved in the larger campus community" (p.369). Therefore, sub-communities like Chinese international students are recognized rather than discouraged in an inclusive system. In this system, universities are expected to respond to the needs of the students, whereas in an integration-focused system, international students are required to respond and assimilate into the institution (Bittencourt et al., 2019). "Inclusion", as an alternative framing in the international higher education, offers new insights on how international students expect to be engaged on campus, within or outside of the classroom.

The central role of the classroom in the educational activity structure of higher education institutions has been emphasised (Tinto, 1997). He argued that "engagement in the community of classroom can become a gateway for subsequent students'

involvement in the academic and social communities of the college generally" (p.616). Hollander (2002) also noted the importance of classroom activities and participations and defined the classroom participation as a collective responsibility of the class rather than just an individual responsibility. It is neither international students' responsibility to adapt to the new learning environment or their peers' obligation to compromise. It is important to promote an appreciation of diversity in the classroom community to legitimise different participation modes. For example, Wang and Moskal (2019) proposed the need to optimize silence as a pedagogy rather than a deficient learning mode. These stereotypes negatively affected international students' experience, in some extreme cases, conflicts and tensions may arouse as international students blamed each other for the inactive atmosphere. Academics also tend to hold stereotypes to Chinese learners and adopt a position that some characteristics such as lacking critical thinking is the case for all Chinese students. Chinese students are assumed as deficient, never matching the pre-determined expectations (Ryan, 2010; Song, 2016; Song & McCarthy, 2018). This calls for a need to clarify that international students have the same intellectual capacity; but they are disadvantaged by lack of local knowledge (Holliday, 2017).

Conclusion

Universities in Anglophone countries have long enjoyed the economic, academic and diversity benefits of international students on their campus. However, findings from this review indicated that the internationalization of higher education fails to "place emphasis on students as central players in intercultural exchange and diplomacy between nations" (Lee & Rice, 2007, p. 385). As the larger enrolment of international students, both domestic and international students perceive their institutions to be a less supportive environment (Zhao et al., 2005). This also conveys a message that strengthening internationalization only by the enrolment of international students is never enough, and it is not the sole responsibility of international students to create a global learning environment.

International students, for various reasons, experience difficulties and disappointment from intercultural communications. Therefore, they will still approach co-nationals for help rather than the institution or domestic students. If the academic and social needs of student sojourners are expected to be met by other international students and compatriots, questions should be raised surrounding the need to achieve integration. The increasing deficit account of co-national groups also reveals tensions and issues in higher education. The long-term dominance of English-speaking countries produces ethnocentrism so that they feel a sense of honour, superiority and pride, considering other civilizations as othering of people from the South (Stein & Andreotti, 2017). This strong sense of superiority reflects the cultural bias that makes co-national groups intolerable, since this is a sign of institutional failure to well-serve students. Instead of being considered as a hindrance to integration, co-national groups should receive encouragement and general acceptance.

At this time when globalization is moving on a difficult path, what the universities should do is maybe recognise the multiple sources of knowledge (Stein et al., 2017), and acknowledge the different epistemological approaches that come with Asian mobility of students and attempt to pluralise the pedagogy rather than closing it off to one Eurocentric norm (Song & McCarthy, 2020). It is essential to develop what international students, as cosmopolitan subjects, can offer to Western universities (Dervin, 2011). As an alternative framing, 'inclusion' offers a rethinking of how international students expect to be engaged on campus. Voices of co-national groups could also provide valuable insights on things like campus services and campus climate.

An analysis of the current literature highlights several gaps the future research should seek to address. One issue is it will be useful to examine how local hosts understand or approach the presence of international students. As Berry (1992) has pointed out, adaptation is a two-way process. More attention should be given to investigating how local university students or host societies understand internationalization and their expectation in this regard. In addition, the research regarding 'integration' is still parochial at some point. A majority of research focuses on the challenges international students face in the process of integration, based on the assumption that 'integration' is the main goal of educational sojourn. Broader research is needed to delve into the purpose of international students' studying abroad to further verify the legitimacy of internationalization. Future research can also pay more attention to undergraduate student cohort since a lack of distinction between undergraduate and postgraduate hinders efforts to provide inclusive student services.

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Ethno-Racial Labels, Perceived Exclusion and Resistance: A Grounded Theory of American Migrants' Experiences of Being the *Other* in China

Yang Liu

Abstract International migration is driven by migrating individuals' desires to be recognized, accepted, and included by their destination societies. Unfortunately, migrating individuals often end up feeling excluded by specific ethno-racial labels, which are habitually used to highlight their distinctness from locals in the destination society and then differentiate them as out-group members or the *Other* in an over-simplistic way. In response to the perceived exclusion, migrating individuals would adopt a variety of strategies to resist ethnic labelling as a discourse of *Othering*. The resistance initiated by the *Other* has been long ignored, disregarded and even restricted in traditional intercultural communication studies which advocate migrating individuals' alignments with the destination culture. Against this backdrop, this study attempts to examine American young expatriates' experiences of being the *Other* in China as a representative case. Ethno-racial labels that exclusively attend to Americans' non-Chinese phenotypic traits were perceived by these young Americans to generate an exclusionary discourse of *Othering* via homogenization, alienation and stigmatization. Out of antagonism towards the perceived exclusion, these Americans strategically initiated counter-discourse to resist ethnic labelling under the condition of being the *Other* in the Chinese context.

Keywords Discourse of *Othering* · Migration · Ethno-racial labelling · Young American expatriates · Resistance

Introduction

With the rise of China's economy, this country has increasingly become a new destination of the reversed migration from the West to the East (Lehmann, 2014; Lehmann & Leonard, 2019). The ever-expanding international migration has posed challenges for China that is still unprepared to manage migrants of diverse cultural backgrounds. In this context, various ethno-racial labels, habitually employed to refer to Westerners

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in China, are commonly perceived and resisted by Western migrants as exclusionary expressions which categorize them as outsiders in this country (Conceison, 2004; Mao, 2015; Ilnyckyj, 2010; Birks,2012). However, the exclusionary nature of the popularly used ethno-racial labels has neither been sufficiently noticed by Chinese users nor openly discussed in China (Y. Liu & Self 2020). To fill this gap, this study will adopt an emic perspective to explore Western migrants' perception of the commonly used ethno-racial labels in China, focussing on American migrants' experiences as an illuminating case. Guided by grounded theory, this study will examine how American migrants in China perceive social exclusion from Chinese locals' habitual uses of specific ethno-racial labels and how they strategically respond to labelling as an exclusionary discourse of *Othering*. By doing so, this study hopes to shed lights on the future research of insufficiently explored Western migrants' intercultural adaptation in China and enrich the scholar understanding of migrating individuals' identity re-constructed in and through their resistance to perceived social exclusion as *Others* in receiving countries.

Literature Review: *Othering*, Ethno-racial Labelling, Perceived Exclusion and Resistance

Othering is defined as a discourse that employs a power "to construct particular subject positions for 'us' by designating a certain category of people as 'them' (the *Other*)" (Inokuchi & Nozaki, 2005). As a three-step process, *Othering* first barely recognizes the *Other* as not-*Self*, then attributes *Otherness* to the *Other*, and finally links the attribution to specific motivations and/or payoff (Brons, 2015). Embedded in intercultural encounters, ethno-racial labels, drawn from migrating individuals' phenotypic and cultural distinctness, generate a discourse of *Othering* through first and foremost bringing these out-group members' differences from natives into prominence (Hecht et al., 2005; Y. Liu & Kramer, 2019). Out of in-group favouritism and/or out-group prejudice, these homogenous labels are further employed to attribute *Otherness* to migrating individuals through reducing them to the generalized *Others* under the homogenous categories, regardless of their diversities and peculiarities within these categories (Hecht et al., 2005; Collins, 1995; Phinney, 1996; Trimble, 1995; Y. Liu & Kramer, 2019).

Given the asymmetric power structure embedded in international migration, host-nationals' labelling of sojourners and immigrants can reinforce *Othering* of the latter in receiving societies via stereotyping which misses the rich nuances and complex variations within, between, and among these migrating individuals and their ethno-racial groups (Cicognani et al., 2018; Collins, 1995; Dervin, 2016; Phinney, 1996; Trimble, 1995). In light of labelling as a discourse of *Othering*, migrating individuals would be stereotyped as the alien, deviant, abnormal, incapable, inferior, threatening, unwelcome, and even unwanted *Others* who are less good, normal and/or capable than locals during intercultural encounters (Bhabha, 1984, 1985; Spivak, 1987; Shin

& Jackson, 2003; Dervin, 2016; S. Liu, 2007; Hecht et al., 2005). Against this backdrop, migrating individuals more easily fall prey to host-nationals' stereotype-rooted exclusionary behaviours, such as pointing out and focussing on these out-group members' differences in comments and by conveying the idea using you-do-not-belong-here subtle looks and stares (Bhabha, 1984, 1985; Spivak, 1987; Shin & Jackson, 2003; Dervin, 2016; Y. Liu, 2017; Y. Liu & Kramer, 2019; Y. Liu & Self, 2020; S. Liu, 2007; Hecht et al., 2005; Ahnallen et al., 2006). Ultimately, ethno-racial labelling functions as a stereotype-laden discourse of *Othering* which can elicit migrating individuals' sense of exclusion in destination countries.

According to Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) proposed by Hecht et al. (2005), individuals acquire their identity in at least two ways. One is to create a social phenomenon's symbolic meanings and establish, exchange, and entrench these meanings through social interaction. The other refers to the individuals' confirmation or validation of social categories made relevant to them through social interaction. So far, the symbolic meaning of being the *Other* during intercultural encounters has been fostered, grounded in the sense of exclusion generated by stereotype-laden ethno-racial labelling. In and through intercultural communication, migrating individuals further accomplish their *Other*-identity through resisting ethno-racial labelling as an exclusionary discourse of *Othering*. Being socially constructed as different from white Dutch women, Muslim female immigrants expressed strong identification with their ethnic origins in response to the label *allochthonous*, which specifically referred to "minority women with Moroccan or Turkish background" even if they had Dutch citizenship in the Netherlands (Ozyurt, 2013). Identities under hyphenating labels such as Iranian-Americans and Cypriot Turkish-Australians were constructed and adopted by ethnic minorities to challenge the homogeneous and monocultural identity imposed by their adopted societies (Ali & Sonn, 2010; Zaal et al., 2007). The above-presented practices reveal that migrating individuals' resistance to perceived social exclusion, ranging from their acceptable of out-group membership to their creation of counter-discourse to contest the hegemonic ethno-racial labelling, are important to their claims for belonging and recognition in the face of the dominant group's homogenization of out-group members (Cicognani et al., 2018; Y. Liu & Kramer, 2019; Cheng & Momesso, 2019).

Foreignness-focussed Labels, Foreign *Other* and Unnoticed Exclusion in China

The label *waiguoren* (外国人 in Mandarin, *foreigner* in translation) has been popularly used in China as a referring expression for non-Chinese individuals without noticeable Han-Chinese phenotypic traits, typically marked by yellow skin, black hair and black eyes which dominate the prevailing construction of Chineseness in China (Conceison, 2004; Ilnyckyj, 2010; Mao, 2015; Stanley, 2013). Hence, East Asians

are seldom to be recognized as *waiguoren* in China, since they look physically indistinguishable from the Chinese, especially the Han-Chinese (Birks, 2012; Ilnyckyj, 2010; Mao, 2015). Among all non-Chinese nationals, white people are most likely to be labelled as *waiguoren*, followed by black people, as a result of the long-standing tradition of constructing the foreign *Other* in China (Birks, 2012; Conceison, 2004; Ilnyckyj, 2010; Mair, 2014; Stanley, 2013). Heavily influenced by the Sinocentric view situated in the East–West dichotomous structure, Chinese culture tends to use patrilineal descent and blood kinship, both reflected in physical dissimilarity, to separate the Chinese as the in-group at the centre from *waiguoren* (the foreign *Other*) on the periphery for their non-Chinese physical appearance (Conceison, 2004; Dikötter, 1992, 1997; Mao, 2015). With the deepening of Western power's colonization of China in the mid-nineteenth century, Chinese people have gradually constructed their mental image of *waiguoren* in accordance with Westerners, especially white Westerners (Ford, 2010; Y. Liu & Self, 2020).

Resulting from the cultural influence and historical trauma illustrated above, *waiguoren* and its derivatives, such as *laowai* (老外 in Mandarin, a moniker of *waiguoren*) and *waijiao* (外教 in Mandarin, *foreign teacher* in translation), are generally employed in mainland China based on ethno-racial traits rather than nationality (Mao, 2015). Consequently, these labels specifically refer to Westerners without salient Han-Chinese physical appearance, especially those with fair skin colour (Birks, 2012; Conceison, 2004; Ilnyckyj, 2010; Mao, 2015; Stanley, 2013). Although these labels are considered by their Chinese users as official, neutral, respectful and intimate terms (Is Laowai a negative term, 2007; Laowai is what you make it, 2001), Western recipients commonly experience and hence resist these terms as exclusionary discourses of *Othering*, which are perceived to single them out exclusively for their foreignness, and eventually exclude them as alien, incapable and even discredited foreign *Others* in China (Birks, 2012; Conceison, 2004; Ilnyckyj, 2010; Mair, 2014; Mao, 2015; Stanley, 2013).

Compared to other Western expatriates who fall under these labels, Americans without noticeable Han-Chinese look are more susceptible to *Othering* enacted by ethno-racial labelling in China (Birks, 2012; Conceison, 2004; Gries, 2004; Hessler, 2006; Ilnyckyj, 2010; Mao, 2015; Stanley, 2013). Coming from a country that is perceived by many Chinese people to symbolize the West, Americans, who don't look like the Han-Chinese, have long been regarded as prototypical Westerners in China (Conceison, 2004; Stanley, 2013). According to China's most recent national census carried out in 2010, American migrants possess more visibility than their Western counterparts, given their prominence as the largest Western expatriate group in this country (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2011). Last but not least, the Sino-US relations which have been covering some twists and turns in the past 40 years have further exposed American migrants to Chinese *Othering* in China (Stanley, 2013; Gries, 2004; Y. Liu, 2017). Given the reasons listed above, this study attends to 34 Americans' experiences of the previously presented foreignness-focussed labels in China and is specifically interested in their strategic resistance to labelling as an exclusionary discourse of *Othering* in this country.

Research Method

Participants

Participants recruited for this study met the following criteria by the time of interviews: (1) they are citizens of the United States (the U.S. for short); (2) they came to China with the initial motivation of learning Mandarin and Chinese culture; (3) they had been living in China for at least six months and (4) they are not Chinese descendants. A total of 34 Americans were recruited from Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing and Guangzhou, four of Western expatriates' most-favoured cities in mainland China (Zheng, 2016). These participants ranged in age from 19 to 36 years (average age of 26 years), were engaged in different occupations (18 international students, five college English teachers, eight employees of institutions and enterprises, and three business owners), included diverse ethnicities (31 white Americans, two African American and one Latino American) and varied in sojourn length from six months to ten years. All participants reported that they spoke Mandarin with varying levels of proficiency, which ensured their communication with Chinese people on a deeper level.

Data Collection

Guided by grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), the researcher collected data in three stages. Each stage of data collection and analysis guided subsequent stages of recruiting participants and conducting interviews. Data collection began in Beijing with four participants in October of 2015. Data gathering continued with 16 interviews in Beijing, two in Shanghai, and eight in Jiangsu province during November and December of 2015. The final stage of data collection was completed with four interviews in Beijing in April of 2016. At each stage of data collection, snowball sampling was adopted since it is well-suited to studying people who have certain attributes in common (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011).

The semi-structured interview was conducted by the researcher with each participant about their intercultural experiences in China. Before the interview started, the first author explained to each participant the purpose and nature of this study and provided each of them with a consent form. All participants were interviewed in their desired locations and their mother language, English, to ensure they could fully and precisely express themselves. With the approval of each participant, the interviews were digitally audio-recorded. In total, 34 interviews were completed and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Ultimately, 77 h of recorded audio were collected, generating a 1,232-page transcript with 717,110 words.

Data Analysis

The researcher employed the constant comparative analysis illustrated by grounded theory to locate common themes and patterns across the interviews by asking generative questions and writing analytic memos in three steps (Charmaz, 2006). As the data were analysed, *the sense of being an outsider* in mainland China, ascribed by such labels as *waiguoren*, *laowai* and *waijiao*, emerged from the open coding as a common theme running through all interviews. During the focussed coding, *Othering enacted by these labels* was placed on a higher level of conceptualization as a core concept for further analysis. Finally, axial coding was conducted to address two questions: 1) how were these labels perceived by participants as discourses of *Othering* in mainland China, and 2) how did they respond to the *Othering* enacted by these labels in this region. In order to increase the accuracy of the data analysis, the researcher checked back with participants and revised the analysis based on their feedback. Data saturation occurred when the 31st interview was accomplished. After this interview, the researcher engaged member checking five months later (Patton, 2015). This process entailed sharing the results with and receiving feedback from three more American expatriates who were qualified for this study. All of them agreed with the findings from previous analyses.

Findings

Data analysis revealed that American expatriates' stories conveyed examples of perceived social exclusion on phenotypic, cultural and ideological levels based on their foreignness-rooted non-Chinese group membership that is marked by labelling as a discourse of *Othering*. As resistance to social exclusion in China, American expatriates employed a variety of strategies to position themselves in Chinese society. In and through intercultural communication, American expatriates developed their *Otherness*-grounded identity of resistance to carve out a comfortable space for their dwelling in China.

Perceived Social Exclusion Based on *Other*-identity

Phenotypic Level Exclusion

Irrespective of how long participants had lived in China, they disclosed that they were distinguished constantly as non-Chinese individuals coming from a homogenous assembly labelled *waiguoren*, *laowai* or *waijiao*, regardless of their diversities and peculiarities. As a result of their sole emphasis on their recipients' non-Chineseness, these labels were experienced by participants as foreignness-anchored

referring expressions which excluded them as out-group members on the phenotypic level in a generalizing way. Having been living in Beijing for ten years, Will still rejected *laowai* for this label's exclusionary use that homogenously marked his out-group membership in China solely based on his Caucasian look.

> You will always be called *laowai* in China because you will never look like Chinese. I don't like this label because it is not specific. It just means you are not from around here.

When asked about what he meant by "being specific", Will associated the term with the accentuation of a person's individuality, including personality type, education background, ethnicity, nationality and sojourning purposes. Counter to Will's expectation, the habitual use of *laowai* in China exclusively attended to his noticeable foreignness and over-generalized him into a homogenous assembly coming from outside, as opposed to the Chinese who were from here, no matter how fluently his Mandarin was, how deeply he understood Chinese culture and how intimate relationship he developed with his Chinese wife and her family. Similar to Will, Jroux was repeatedly distinguished as an outsider labelled *laowai* in China for his salient African physical appearance.

> I would go anywhere and little kids would point at me and say: "*laowai*, *laowai*, *laowai*." I mean, I feel you are literally pointing a finger at me and calling me an outsider because I look different from everyone else around.

By the same token, *waijiao* was also experienced as an exclusionary discourse of *Othering* by four participants who were working as college English teachers in China. Unlike Chinese locals who regarded this term as a neutral and even respectful referring expression, *waijiao* was viewed by these participants as a way to accentuate their foreignness first and then exposed them to a permanent divide between them and the Chinese in China. Rising from the division exclusively resting upon her foreignness, Kathy, who had been teaching English in China for nearly two years disclosed that her integration into her department was obstructed by *waijiao*, an exclusive discourse that always reminded her of being a foreign outsider in this country.

> I had the arguments with my students all the times, because they call me 外教 [*waijiao*]. I told them that in America they would never call into the fact that their teacher was called foreigners. I am a teacher just like anyone else who is teaching in this university. I don't know why I'm not considered like a normal teacher. I feel I've been put in this category [*waijiao*] because of my skin color. So hearing that title reminds me that I'm a foreigner first above anything else. There is no way for me to be integrated into the department, especially with communication like that.

Similarly, *waiguoren* was also commonly perceived by such Western expatriates as participants as a public discourse to bring their foreignness-grounded *Otherness* into prominence in China, despite this label's more formal and diplomatic uses by the Chinese government (Conceison, 2004; Hessler, 2006; Stanley, 2013). Susan, who had been living in China for two years, revealed that label *waiguoren* frequently aroused her sense of being an outsider in this country.

> Even little [Chinese] kids on the street are like "oh *waiguoren*!" and then I go like "中国人 (*Chinese* in translation)." And they all laugh. But it is still like that is putting me into *waiguoren*; it is the outsider. It is like an invisible boundary that never fades off. Even if I have as many Chinese friends as you do, I am still *waiguoren* and I am always *waiguoren.* I feel I am never going to fit at the society at large.

The labelling illustrated above can be compared to a White child's curiosity-driven *Othering* of Franz Fanon (1967), as Conceison (2004) depicted. The Chinese *Othering* is grounded in participants' foreignness, manifested by their non-Chinese physical appearance which first and foremost functioned as a categorizing criterion in intercultural encounters to exclude these Americans as out-group members, or the *Other* in China (Modood, 1997, 2011, 2005; Ahnallen et al., 2006; Conceison, 2004; Dikötter, 1992, 1997; Mao, 2015). Though the dominant Chinese gaze didn't seem to be hostile, it was still experienced by participants labelled *laowai*, *waijiao* or *waiguoren* as a traumatic moment, in which they were permanently defined as outsiders, as not belonging in China forever (Conceison, 2004; Lehmann, 2014). Consequently, the enduring sense of *Otherness* left negative effects on participants, discouraging them from fitting into Chinese society, as Kathy and Susan described previously.

Cultural Level Exclusion

Based on foreignization, ethno-racial labels discussed above further exposed participants in this study to a sense of alienation due to their association with the term *foreigner*. Echoing Kathy, Maroon, who had lived in mainland China for nearly ten years, explained that it was extremely rude to point at people on the street and call them "foreigners" in the US and Europe. This linguistic taboo, according to Kevin, was attributed to the bad connotation of the term "foreigner", which implied being more foreign than others. The emphasis of being foreign-made Jroux describe how he was alienated by the label *laowai.*

> There are different ways to translate it [*laowai*], but they [Chinese users] translate it into…like alien, and that's kind of in my mind how it is translated in China and that's… that's a very rude word to use in America. I never heard it actually. So in my mind that word is "just… you're calling me alien."

Participants' sense of alienation, built on their non-Chinese physical appearance, was amplified when their foreignness was repeatedly used by many Chinese locals to justify their assumptions about these foreign *Others*. In mainland China, individuals' Mandarin proficiency is firstly and foremost measured by their Chinese physical appearance, which is prior to and confused with the cultural disposition in Chinese racial consciousness (Conceison, 2004; Dikötter, 1992; Hessler, 2006). Unless looking Chinese, individuals are not expected or even perceived as able to have Mandarin proficiency and to understand the intricate nuances of Chinese culture. Against this backdrop, participants in this study, who were perceived as foreigners,

were constantly underestimated in terms of their Chinese cultural competence. Running her own business in Beijing after finishing study in mainland China, Sarah often encountered new Chinese interns' assumption that she couldn't understand complicated Mandarin when they joined her company.

> When we were about to discuss something, they [new interns in Sarah's company] would be like "这个怎么说呢? [How do I say this to you?]" They were like "这个没法儿解释 [There's no way to explain this], because you are a *waiguoren*, you are not a Chinese person" I felt they didn't even try to learn about my Mandarin proficiency. I get upset when this happens.

Labelled as *waiguoren*, Sarah was assumed by her new Chinese interns as linguistically incompetent. Holding steadfast to this assumption, these Chinese interns didn't explain certain issues in Mandarin to Sarah and struggled to make themselves understood when speaking English to her. In Sarah's opinion, these new Chinese interns seldom considered Mandarin proficiency to be a skill that could be mastered by foreigners like her. In a similar vein, Jroux was continuously doubted by many Chinese people about his capability of understanding the Chinese culture as *laowai*.

> Whenever the people say that [you don't understand it because you are *laowai*], I'm like "okay, you're taking all of my knowledge and all of my accumulation of Chinese culture and experiences in China, and throwing it out the door, because I am an outsider, because of my skin color." I feel like no matter how great I speak Chinese, I'm always going to be *laowai*.

Fascinated by Chinese culture, Jroux made great efforts to practice Mandarin and learn Kongfu during his spare time in mainland China. However, he felt these efforts were entirely erased by Chinese people's use of *laowai*, which disqualified him from accumulating Chinese cultural literacy. Similar to Sarah, Jroux attributed the alienation to biological racialization existing in mainland China, which exclusively ascribed cultural defects to his non-Chinese phenotypic traits.

(Conceison, 2004).

The sense of alienation brought by phenotype-focussed racialization was further accentuated when ethno-racial labels were employed to rationalize certain unique Chinese customs and habits. For example, Sarah heard about the Chinese custom of *zuo yuezi* (坐月子 in Mandarin, "confinement in childbirth" in translation) when she first came to mainland China for study abroad in 2010. To her surprise, Sarah was told by her Chinese teacher that *zuo yuezi* was necessary for Chinese women because they were not as physically strong as *laowai* like her.

> I asked my Chinese teacher about this custom [zuo yuezi] by saying "She is not allowed to have a shower. She is staying in bed for a month after giving birth. That's so bad for her health." My Chinese teacher was like "you laowai, how many push-ups can you do?" I was like "ten." "But I cannot do any. We Chinese are weak. So you have to accept we are weaker than you. We need to do things like 坐月子 [zuo yuezi]." I was like "em, That's not the reason why."

Not only Chinese customs, but also trivial things such as drinking habits exemplified Chinese people's stereotyping of foreigners as well. Jack was directly informed by his Chinese lab-mate that Chinese people were physically incapable of drinking cold water because their DNA was different from *waiguoren*.

> He [Jack's Chinese lab-mate] said, "You can drink cold water because you are *waiguoren*. But we Chinese people have to drink hot water because we are different from you, our DNA is different." He said our DNA is different in Chinese. This guy is [a] Biology major; he knows that's not true. But this mental image, the identity of we Chinese is just not questioned. This is something that you do because you are Chinese and therefore the end.

Jack did not accept his Chinese labmate's explanation and considered it to be an unscientific statement used to rationalize Chinese habits. As a result of this statement, Jack was depicted as a genetically different *Other* under the name of *waiguoren*, opposing the unquestioned identity of we Chinese. Will revealed that such attribution to genetic disparity was prevalent in mainland China, and aroused his sense of being alienated.

> I hate such expressions as "我们中国人体质跟你们老外不一样 [We Chinese have a different physique from you *laowai*]". I'm like "People have 99% of DNA in common. I don't want to hear that our bodies are different. It is like calling me alien." But I hear it from my wife, I hear it from highly educated friends. I really don't think that's true, but they really firmly believe it.

Due to non-Chinese looks, participants in this study were separated from the crowd by Chinese people by virtue of the aforementioned ethno-racial labels. Being placed in the position of minority, these American expatriates' foreignness was considered by Chinese people, who are the majority in Chinese society, as unusual. As Tiffany disclosed, when local Chinese people uttered such labels as *waiguoren* and *laowai*, they were actually talking about migrants' foreignness-rooted unusualness, which was employed by these Chinese people to justify their assumptions and unique customs, as illustrated above. Under this circumstance, these labels initiated a certain speech act that unequally distributed power between American expatriates and local Chinese people, with the former perceived as the alien minority and the latter as the normal majority. American expatriates, deprived of their individuality by previously illustrated labelling, face the only given option: being singled out and excluded as aliens in Chinese society.

Ideological Level Exclusion

In addition to alienation, *waiguoren* and *laowai* were perceived by participants to enact ideological exclusion via stigmatization, defined as a process of devaluing individuals who possess a socially discredited attribute, behaviour, or reputation (Goffman, 1963). As a result of the devaluation, the stigmatized person or group is denigrated by stigmatizers as psychologically inferior (Kurzban & Leary, 2001). Since the popularity of China-made feature movies and television series that recruited Western expatriate actors in the 1990s, *waiguoren* have been misrepresented as sexually promiscuous *Others* in mainland China (Conceison, 2004; Hessler, 2006; Stanley, 2013). Therefore, Tiffany, who was pursuing her bachelor degree in a Beijing university by the time of her interview, was assumed to be open to strangers' approaching her in bars.

> I was out in a bar, and a Chinese guy kept talking to me. But I didn't want to talk to him. Then he was like "Why aren't you being friendlier? You are a Westerner. Are you like trying to be like a Chinese girl?" He assumed that I should be like wild because I am a Westerner.

Similar to Tiffany, Maroon, who was working in Guangzhou by the time of his interview, was described as being *kaifang* (开放 in Mandarin, "being sexually promiscuous" in translation) by some Chinese locals just because he was seen as a *waiguoren*. From Maroon's perspective, such stigmatization epitomized by *kaifang* reflected Chinese speakers' stigma-laden views of Westerners like him, which discriminated him as a sexually promiscuous foreigner who had multiple girlfriends at the same time. Resting on the differences highlighted via discrediting and disgracing, Maroon experienced the specific use of *waiguoren* as a way to place him in the *Other*-position.

> You know, everything, whenever any topic like dating or anything comes up, always the first word out of a Chinese person's mouth is 开放 [*kaifang*]; *waiguoren* are *kaifang*. When they say *waiguoren*, they literally mean Westerners like me. In some ways, this is true. In some ways, it is not true, particularly for Americans. Americans are actually much more conservative than Europeans. They [Chinese people] don't get the idea that foreigners are different. They always say "You must have five girlfriends." But I'm not dating anyone. It's not okay to say that to me.

As Maroon disclosed above, *kaifang* was one of the first terms used by some Chinese people to describe *laowai*. The conversation presented above was considered by Maroon as the reflection of Chinese people's stereotypic views of Westerners. Due to these stereotypic views condensed in *laowai*, Maroon perceived himself discriminated as a sexually promiscuous foreigner who had multiple girlfriends at the same time. Resting on the difference made salient by *laowai*, Maroon was placed in the *Other*-position.

Besides media, the direct intergroup contact can also foster in-group members' stigmatization of out-group members (Bar-Tal, 1997). The misbehaviours of some impudent and arrogant *waiguoren* have further aggravated many Chinese people's stigmatization of this group. Consequently, the label *laowai* became the pronoun used to describe those who were criticized by Chinese people for their misbehaviours, according to Kevin.

> *Laowai* implies a type of foreigner to me, who is criticized by Chinese people for their misbehaviours. It is always used in this context from my understanding. That's where I have an issue with this label.

For the same reason, Will expressed his dislike for *laowai*, which lumped him with some highly undesirable *waiguoren* in mainland China.

> There are always foreign exchange students, who say "I am exotic here, and pretty girls are nice to me", "Cute boys are nice to me", or "All of a sudden, I am handsome, I am special and I am great", you know. Some of them are assholes and goes. Then I have a big problem because they make my life in China harder for me. They go home in six months, but I am still here.

According to these descriptions, some misbehaving *waiguoren* in China irritated many Chinese people. As a result, these Chinese people discredited all *waiguoren*,

including participants in this study, as behaving in the same impudent and insulting ways. In light of this stigma, participants were exposed to misbehaving *waiguoren*'s discredited images entrenched in many Chinese people's psychology. For example, Claire was studying in Beijing at the onset of the Jasmine revolution (2010–2011). She recalled that she was once stopped by a subway security officer for a security check just because she was seen as a *waiguoren.* Similarly, Will was checked by Chinese policemen when he and his Chinese step-son made a report at a police station in Beijing about bike theft. Will was surprised when the Chinese policemen asked for his visa first, rather than attending to his son's stolen bike. Will attributed his experience to the stereotype widely held in mainland China, specifically that *waiguoren* are troublemakers. Eventually, these Americans were indistinguishable from impudent, insulting and untrustworthy *waiguoren*, even became their scapegoats and eventually stigmatized as the unwelcomed and even unwanted *Others* in mainland China.

From these Americans' perspectives, the *Othering* practices illustrated above were considered the epitome of the widely held stigmatization of *waiguoren* as a whole in mainland China. Owing to their noticeable non-Chinese look, these Americans were recognized as *waiguoren* and then placed on the *Other*-position under such labels as *foreigner* or *laowai.* During intercultural encounters, a prevailing stereotype of migrating individuals is to view them as impudent, insulting and even untrustworthy outsiders (Lee & Fiske, 2006). Consequently, these participants were assumed to be misbehaving and suspicious in the same way, and these traits were consensually stigmatized by many ordinary Chinese people and Chinese authorities. In light of the stigmatized images, these participants were negatively evaluated as the psychologically inferior, unwelcome and even threatening *Others* in mainland China. Embedded in an asymmetric power relationship, these cultural *Others* learned they could not easily dispel these prevalent stereotypes entrenched in Chinese psychology. Against this backdrop, the perceived stereotyping via discrediting and suspicion, embodied in the stigmatization of *waiguoren*, were experienced by these non-Chinese Americans as exclusionary acts which conveyed the idea that they did not belong in mainland China. As Kathy described, the distrust she detected on many Chinese onlookers' faces when she got into disputes with Chinese people in public made her feel that she was and would always be ostracized as an outsider in mainland China.

Strategies of Dealing with Otherness

Owing to ethnic labelling as a discourse of *Othering* in mainland China, participants in this study felt differentiated as the foreignized, alienated and stigmatized *Others* in this region. Even if some Chinese habitual uses of *waiguoren*, *laowai* and *waijiao* were out of neutrality, friendliness, respect, intimacy and even admiration, these ethnic labels still left negative residual effects on participants through eliciting their sense of exclusion on the Chinese mainland. Under the circumstances, participants

adopted a variety of strategies to deal with the Chinese *Othering* enacted by ethnic labelling.

Avoidance

The first strategy utilized by participants was avoidance, defined as a pattern of verbal and nonverbal behaviours that tended to increase the psychological and interpersonal distance between the stereotyped group and dominant groups (Klein & Snyder, 2003). In terms of the transient *Othering* practices, participants usually avoided being bothered through neglecting them. For example, Tiffany and Jroux mentioned that they often overheard some Chinese passers-by calling them *laowai* while they walked outside. Given these Chinese people were strangers and the labelling was transient, Tiffany, Susan and Jroux mentioned that there was no point in caring about what these strangers said and therefore decided to avoid being bothered through ignoring their behaviours, especially when they were in a good mood or engaged in enjoyable activities. When interacting with Chinese colleagues, friends and family members, participants usually kept their opinions to themselves and avoided to ruin smooth and pleasant interactions with them. Therefore, Will kept silent when he was underestimated by his boss in terms of his capability to understand Chinese business culture as a *waiguoren*, and never argued back with his wife, who is Chinese, for her assumption that *laowai* were physically disparate from the Chinese. When it came to the stigmatized images of *waiguoren*, participants indicated that they did everything possible to avoid involvement in any disputes with Chinese strangers in public, especially when they were alone. Therefore, Kevin, Will and Kathy mentioned that they avoided engaging in conflict with Chinese strangers in public because they were overwhelmingly thought by many Chinese onlookers and Chinese authorities to be troublemakers who initiated disputes.

Confrontation

When annoyed by ethnic labelling, some participants chose to confront Chinese people who used these labels. Being seen as non-Chinese individuals, participants were stereotyped as linguistically incompetent *Others* labelled *laowai* in mainland China. These stereotyped individuals refused to follow the script of such dominant group members as Chinese people, and insisted on imposing their agendas of presenting *Self* (Klein & Snyder, 2003). As a result, these participants dispelled some Chinese people's *Othering* behaviours and prevented themselves from being continuously alienated by speaking fluent Mandarin. For instance, Susan and Claire usually displayed their ability to speak Mandarin when they heard local Chinese strangers address them as *laowai*. After realizing that Susan and Claire could speak Mandarin, the Chinese strangers, surprised to be sure, stopped labelling them verbally. This

strategy was also adopted by participants when communicating with Chinese people they know, with the hope of ensuring them that language was not an insurmountable barrier during social interaction. Therefore, Sarah encouraged her interns to get rid of concerns brought about at least partially by their stereotypical views of *waiguoren*'s linguistic capability and explain things to her in Mandarin. Stacy declined to accept the statement that *waiguoren* could not understand certain issues in China, and took a step further by requiring her Chinese classmates to explain those issues to her. In addition to dominating the conversation flow, participants also displayed their Mandarin proficiency in order to resist being taken advantage of by some Chinese strangers in public. Detecting a greedy Chinese couple intended to blackmail an American who couldn't speak Mandarin fluently for a car crash, Sarah and her American colleagues who were walking by joined this American's side and argued back with the couple in Mandarin. Eventually, the police came and decided that the Chinese couple should be responsible for the crash. Similarly, Will dismissed a Chinese lady who intended to blackmail him for RMB 2000 (USD 294) by showing his proficiency in the Beijing dialect. Initially, many Chinese onlookers held the attitude that Will was wrong because he was a *waiguoren.* But these people quickly changed their mind and went away when they heard Will speak the Beijing dialect.

Utilization

As powerless and marginalized out-group members in mainland China, participants declared that there was no way for them to escape from being called *waiguoren* or *laowai*, because they would always be perceived as foreigners everywhere in this region. Since they couldn't change the way things happen in mainland China as permanent outsiders, participants decided to make good use of their *Other*-identity to gain access to opportunities on the Chinese mainland. For example, Kevin was constantly invited by some Chinese business partners to have dinner with their friends, hoping to enhance their public images in front of other Chinese people through bringing a foreigner to gatherings. Although Kevin said he was annoyed by his role of "dancing bear" at these business dinners, he did not mind taking these opportunities to get to know local people who might benefit his business in the future. Similarly, Slater utilized his exoticness to make his strong interest in Chinese culture more valued and cherished by Chinese people. Being a *laowai* who is fluent in Mandarin and interested in learning and singing Chinese folk songs, Slater got a lot of invitations to perform at many Chinese local television stations. In addition to their uniqueness carved into Chinese society, participants also utilized their *Other*-identity to protect themselves. For example, Kathy could reject some Chinese colleagues' inquiries into her private information, such as salary and pregnancy plans, by saying that such behaviours were inappropriate to discuss with *waiguoren.* Will escaped from being persuaded by some Chinese business partners to drink liquor over business dinners by attributing his incapability of drinking liquor to the physical disparity between *laowai* and the Chinese ("*we laowai are physically not as strong as you Chinese,*

so I cannot drink liquor"). Claire was willing to be recognized as *laowai* rather than American with the hope of avoiding some Chinese people's nationalism-rooted antipathy towards Americans in general, or the possibility of being overcharged by some Chinese vendors who assumed all Americans were rich.

Conclusion and Discussion

According to the communication theory of identity, communication is internalized as identity in two ways: one is to create and exchange symbolic meanings of social phenomena through social interaction, and the other to confirm or validate individuals' social identity through social interactions when they are placed in socially recognizable categories (Hecht et al., 2005). The aforementioned social interactions with many ordinary Chinese people endowed participants with such symbolic meanings as homogeneity, alien and stigma. In the opinions stated by participants in this study, their *Other*-identity implied that they would never be fully accepted by Chinese society based on their marked phenotypical and cultural distinctiveness. As a result, they confirmed and validated their *Other*-identity by virtue of such strategies as avoidance, confrontation and utilization. Hence, the *Other*-identity was internalized from social interactions between participants and the Chinese, as well as externalized to both groups by such ethnic labels as *waiguoren*, *laowai* and *waijiao.*

A hundred years ago, Du Bois predicted "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line" (as cited in Modood, 2015, 23). One hundred years later, such an interpretation still sheds light on *Othering* which is escalating globally. Against this backdrop, it is undeniable that *Othering* enacted by ethnic labelling impairs intercultural and international relations among racial, ethnic, and national groups, even if users employ these ethnic labels out of good intention. Therefore, it is necessary to attend to migrants' perception of ethnic labelling from their perspectives, considering the discrepant and even contrasting viewpoints held by them and dominant groups. As S. Liu (2007) claimed, a truly multicultural society rests upon the mutual acceptance and equal societal participation of all cultural groups.

With continual shifts in world power, ethnic labelling of the West and Westerners, as a new but unnoticed *Othering*, has led to migrants' individual-based resistance in mainland China (Hung, 2014; Dervin, 2016; Y. Liu & Self, 2020). Although *Othering* is a two-way process, it is more urgent than ever for such dominant groups as Chinese authorities and many ordinary Chinese people to first face head on the nature of *Othering* enacted by their unconscious, subconscious or intentional ethnic labelling of Western expatriates and fully realize the negative effect left by ethnic labelling on them, given the ever-increasing number of *waiguoren* in mainland China. Future studies are suggested to include more Western expatriates with diverse nationalities and longer sojourn lengths on the Chinese mainland, and to compare their interpretations of and resistance against the aforementioned ethnic labels with participants' above-illustrated interpretations.

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Connected Through Global Environment

Val Plumwood and Lazozi in the Age of Anthropocene

Guanglin Wang

> No man is an Iland, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine; if a Clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.
> —Donne, 441

Abstract In the age of globalization, the global climate change is unprecedented and extraordinary, forcing us to rethink our place in the world. In correlating human-induced climate change with the concept of the Anthropocene, scholars caution us to look at the environment of the world in a different and more urgent perspective. In this paper, the author tries to analyzes Val Plumwood's ecofeminist philosophy in the context of the Chinese philosophy of nonduality of male versus female and human versus nature. In Plumwood's view, what lies behind Western dualistic hyper-separation of man and nature is the concept of human-centeredness, or the anthropocentric way of acting, which treats animals and nature as property and inexhaustible, and this anthropocentric, rather than ecocentric way of behavior, becomes the real focus of modern environmental crisis. Val Pumwood's analysis shares in many ways with the traditional Chinese philosophy where the use of pronouns is quite gender indiscriminate and the livings beings and nature coexist harmoniously, which may give us another perspective of looking at modern environmental crisis.

Keywords Anthropocene · Val Plumwood · Ecofeminism · Laozi · Environmental crises

What John Donne says four hundred years ago still rings true today, and more so, in the age of globalization. The global climate change is unprecedented and extraordinary, forcing us to rethink our place in the world. Since 1750, human actions have

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released 555 petagrams of carbon to the atmosphere (Lewis & Maslin, 172), this fossil-fuel-driven economy has ushered in what critics have coined as the age of the Anthropocene. The Anthropocene denotes the geological era beginning roughly at the end of the eighteenth century when human action began to alter the geological and atmospheric processes of the planet. In correlating human-induced climate change with the concept of the Anthropocene, scholars caution us to look at the environment of the world in a different and more urgent perspective. In narratives from ancient times down to the present, we can find that human beings are constantly punished for their hubris, from Kuafu's decision to chase and catch the Sun and die in the middle in Chinese mythology to Icarus' haughty flight towards the scorching sun and die in the sea in Greek Mythology, and Noah's ark and flood myth in which human beings are punished for their sins, and to their being forced out of Eden, in which human beings enjoy a time of Holocene, a geological age uncommonly hospitable to human life. The "Anthropocenic imagination" of the contemporary moment has radically transformed the temporal consciousness of contemporary fiction and contemporary culture, and transformed the traditional Sci-fi to Cli-Fi, otherwise considered a new literary genre.

In "Thinking about writing for the Anthropocene", a topic inspired by Val Plumwood, Val Plumwood contributed a paper entitled "Nature in the Active Voice", in which she calls poets and other writers to join in a rethinking that "has the courage to question our most basic cultural narratives" (Plumwood, 2009, 113). In Plumwood's words, "Writers are amongst the foremost of those who can help us to think differently. Of course, artistic integrity, honesty and truthfulness to experience are crucial in any re-discovery of 'tongues in trees'. I am not talking about inventing fairies at the bottom of the garden. It's a matter of being open to experiences of nature as powerful, agentic and creative, making space in our culture for an animating sensibility and vocabulary." (Plumwood, 2009, 126) By writers she meant storytellers, poets, and other creative communicators who could produce enlivened or re-animated accounts of the agency and creativity of nature.

Val Plumwood is a famous Australian ecophilosopher and a proponent of ecofeminism. She is, along with figures like Buddha, Chuang Tzu, Henry David Thoreau and William Wordsworth, listed as one of the fifty key thinkers on the environment in *Fifty Key Thinkers on the Environment*, published by Routledge. Ecofeminism joins feminist thought with ecological thought, insisting that one cannot fully understand the oppression of women without understanding how Western civilization has regarded nature. Plumwood thinks that the major problem of environmental crisis lies in deep-rooted western dualism, which includes reason/nature, human/animal and mind/ body dualisms, as well as male/female, reason/emotion and civilized/ primitive, these dichotomies are the great contributors of forms of colonization and environment issues. For Plumwood, dualism has deeply marked both concepts of nature and concepts of reason. The environmental crisis should be seen as a crisis of dualistic reason, a form of rationality expressed especially in the contemporary global market, which conceives rationality as self-interest in opposition both to the emotions (including care for others) and to the ecologically situated body. She argues from an eco-socialist perspective against the treatment of animals and nature as property

under capitalism and for the ecological virtues of more egalitarian and democratic social systems.

In *Feminism and the mastery of nature*, a book based on her doctoral thesis, Plumwood proposes two sets of assumptions for people to think about:

(A).

1. the identification of the female with the sphere of physicality and nature (women=nature assumption)
2. the assumed inferiority of the sphere of women and of nature (inferiority of nature assumption)
3. the conception of both women and nature in terms of a set of dualistic contrasts opposing the sphere of nature to that of reason or the human (dualistic assumption)

(B).

1. the corresponding identification of the male with the sphere of reason, of true humanity and culture (men=reason assumption)
2. the assumption of the superiority of the sphere of reason, humanity and culture to that of nature (superiority of reason assumption)
3. the conception of the human or cultural sphere in terms of a set of dualistic assumptions opposing it to nature (dualistic assumption). (Plumwood, 1993, 33)

To be defined as 'nature' in this context is defined no other than being passive, feminine, and non-agent, and the environment becomes the background of reason or culture which foregrounds their achievements or presenting trophies.

The dualistic construction of male/female, culture/nature, reason/unreason, superiority/inferiority can be dated back to Greek times, as can be seen for example in Plato's Cave metaphor in the *Republic*. The darkness and illusions of the Cave (representing the world of Appearance) are contrasted with the light of Reason, with the sublime and incorruptible world of Reason, as represented in the Forms contemplated by the philosopher. The journey out of the Cave (which resembles uterus in Plato's description) is the oedipal journey of the establishment of masculinity, which means the journey to Logos, to a higher sense of selfhood. Plato considers the journey out of the Cave as a release out of prison, and what is left behind, which includes the cave, the darkness, and the womb, and even animals, which are created after man together with women, is considered of lower order. What lies behind this dualistic hyper-separation of man and nature, in contrast to the harmony of man and nature concept in the ancient Chinese philosophy, is the concept of human-centeredness, or the anthropocentric way of acting, which treats animals and nature as property and inexhaustible, and this anthropocentric, rather than ecocentric way of behavior, becomes the real focus of modern environmental crisis. Plumwood maintains a sober mind when facing the climate changes and she is particularly critical of the western dualistic tradition in that nature and animals, mind and body are very much gendered. "Nature, the body, and the biological 'world of changes' are associated with women

and other lower groups such as slaves and animals, in contrast to a strongly separate, higher realm of reason, ideas and 'spirit' associated with elite men" (Plumwood, 2018, 98).

Plumwood tries to keep a distance from both radical feminism and liberal feminism. For Plumwood, the liberal feminism, once set off a revolutionary wave in human history, is still of practical significance as it emphasizes rational independence, educational equality, right to vote, and gender justice, among others. However, it is difficult to avoid the essentialist mentality because of their emphasis on the identity of men and women. Although the forerunners of early feminism represented by Mary Wollstonecraft have made great contributions to the history of human liberation, they are obviously incomplete. The main purpose of liberal feminism is to require women to enter the political and economic arena dominated by male elites in order to get them integrated into the mainstream social system. The transcendence of gender or an affirmation of femaleness is quite an inadequate reworking of a gender identity as it is still trapped in dualism. Plumwood believes that the liberal feminist theory does not touch on the essence of masculine control and their logic of domination. In fact, the absorption of some women into the master model of human culture excludes the inferior class of the non-human and those who are counted as less human, and the master–slave model has not changed, "That is to say, it is a strategy of making some women equal in a now *wider* dominating class, without questioning the structure of or the necessity for domination" (Plumwood, 1993, 29). According to Plumwood, liberal feminism, quite illuminating in many ways, fails to notice the implicit masculinity in the so-called uncritical equality strategy, which is manifested in elite men who are valorized with traits of objectivity, abstractness, rationality and suppression of emotionality, and which admits human domination over nature. "Thus uncritical equality endorses a model which is doubly phallocentric, for it is implicitly masculine not only in its account of the individual in society, but in its assumption that what constitutes and is valuable in human identity and culture is in opposition to nature. Second, the liberal approach fails to notice that such a rationalist model of the human as exclusive of nature is one which writes in assumptions not only of gender supremacy, but also of class, race and species supremacy" (Plumwood, 1993, 28).

Compared with the incompleteness of liberal feminist theory, radical feminism appears in a posture of total resistance and subversion, focusing on exploring the root causes of women's oppression. The radicalists believe that male culture is characterized by misogyny and is a culture of death rather than life. It oppresses and governs women and nature, and damages not only women and nature, but also western culture itself, because the rejection and defamation of female is the beginning and root of cultural distortion and alienation. Compared with liberal feminism, the radical feminism adopts an opposite path and strategy and abandons the ideal personality of man, thinking that man is rough and a flawed existence. It reaffirms the image of female nurturer and takes women as the perfect creation and therefore the model that both sexes should obey and respect, but it does not delve deeper into the reasons of sexual inequality and the masculine master model of nature, and falls therefore into another

trap of dualism, as it "conceives the alternatives for remaking culture in terms of rival masculinising and feminising strategies" (Plumwood, 1993, 31).

In an extended critique, Val Plumwood distinguishes three different accounts of the self in her reading of self-realization through identification: indistinguishability, which denies boundaries in the field of existence; the expansion of the self, which is an enlargement and extension of the ego-self; and transcendence of the self, which universalizes in a way that devalues personal relationships in favor of an abstractly conceived whole. All of these, she argues, involve an uncritical acceptance of rationalist and masculinist assumptions (Plumwood, 1993, 176). Based on her criticism of liberal and radical feminism, Plumwood put forward the idea of "integration theory" which ushers in a "process of mutual transformation or recognition, the 'dance of interaction'.... This formation involves the recognition of the other as alike (non-alien) but as different, as other" (Plumwood, 156). From this interaction the human history will proceed from *sword de deux* to *pas de deux*, and a harmony can be achieved in the world. Plumwood's construction is manifested specifically in three aspects, first, the correct understanding of nature in opposition to any form of naturalism. Criticizing the "low" construction of nature in western culture does not mean advocating the worship of nature, not advocating the abstract Pro nature position, nor blindly believing that nature is always right, that is, simply reversing the value of nature. Instead of belittling and beautifying nature, we should treat nature more seriously, critically, and politically. Second, criticizing the dualism of fertility creates the division between the body and the free subject. Plumwood advocates abandoning the rigid and inert view that female reproduction belongs to pure natural activities. She especially points out that female childbirth is not passive, inert, obedient, and non-creative, but creative. 'This effort should be understood as a women's movement beyond the dualism of nature and culture' (Plumwood, 1993, 26). This non dualistic view of reproduction, which holds that the subject and the body are no longer separated, is a more perfect and developed feminist thought, which marks the new relationship between women and nature, that is, women can actively and critically deal with the relationship with nature. The third is that women should not be simply attributed to nature, men and women are part of nature and culture. At the same time, men and women have both similarities and differences, and each has different roles and contributions. Both sexes should work together to break the cultural dualism and develop another culture.

In "New Directions for Ecofeminism: Toward a More Feminist Ecocriticism", Greta Gaard mentions the experience of a graduate seminar in 2009 on ecofeminist literary criticism at Tamkang University in Taipei, where students were quick to point out the different cultural beliefs that would be useful to developing a vegetarian ecological feminism in Taiwan. In Chinese context, Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism coexist harmoniously in history and radiates into the neighboring countries, and she calls therefore a cross-cultural perspective on ecofeminism. This experience, and Plumwood's idea as well, reminds me of the ancient Chinese philosopher Laozi, and I refrain from wondering what Laozi would think if he were alive today, in this new world context, which seems quite different from what he experienced, and what kind of dialogue can we establish across such a vast distance of time and space.

Laozi's ideas have often been described as passive and feminine, most noticeably in Joseph Needham, but meets objection from modern philosophers. Roger T. Ames, for example, opposes to the characterization of Daoism as "feminine". In his opinion, the reference to femininity must be understood in the light of a positive Daoist ideal of the consummate human being who is androgynous. In this human being, 'the masculine and feminine gender traits are integrated in some harmonious and balanced relationship'(Ames, 1981, 43). This equilibrium and harmony is achieved by means of reconciliation of the tension between these two opposites rather than the lack of love in which case one feels separate from the world, and the tragic fact is that this lack encourages people into the direction which further increases their sense of duality: those who attempt to manipulate the world for their own advantage increasingly alienate themselves from it.

If we read *Daodejing* carefully, we can find enough evidence of the androgyny and equality between man and animals. In the *Daodejing*, the words that are associated with the feminine are three: ci 雌 (vs. xiong 雄), pin 牝 (vs. mu 牡), mu母 (vs. fu 父). In Chinese language, *Ci* and *pin* are originally used to refer to animals, and in traditional Chinese poetry, prose, and set phrases, they may also be used to refer to women, thus interchangeable. In the *Daodejing*, *Ci* appears twice in Chapters 10 and 28, respectively: "Letting your portals open and shut, Can you maintain your femininity (*ci*)?" (天门开阖, 能为雌乎?); " Know the male, Stay with the female, Be the ravine of the world" (知其雄, 守其雌, 为天下溪). *Pin* appears four times in Chapts. 6, 55, and 61: in Chap. 6, "The spirit of the valley never dies; It is called the profound female (*pin*). The gateway (womb) of the profound female, Is called the root of Heaven and Earth." (谷神不死, 是谓玄牝, 玄牝之门, 是谓天地根) In contrast to the cave metaphor of Plato where womb is considered of lower order and less rational, the womb metaphor of Laozi is taken as the beginning of the world and a spirit that never dies; in Chap. 55, "One who is well endowed with De (virtue), May be likened to a newborn infant: Poisonous insects do not sting him; Ferocious animals do not grab him; Birds of prey do not pounce on him. Bones weak, tendons soft, yet his grip is firm; He knows nothing about sex, yet his penis erects: That is because his essence is in ample supply." (含德之厚, 比于赤子, 毒虫不螫, 猛兽不据, 攫鸟不搏, 骨弱筋柔而握固, 未知牝牡之合而朘作, 精之至也) In Chap. 61, "The big states lie on the lower reaches of the rivers, These are places for the female of the world, Places where the world converges. The female invariably overcomes the male by being still, And in stillness she takes the lower position." (大邦者下流, 天下之牝, 天下之交, 牝常以静胜牡, 以静为下) It can be seen that, in all the stanzas where *ci* and *pin* appear, there is a clear stress on the role of the female, who are endowed with more agency, something quite lacking in Platonic philosophy. In Chap. 10, *ci* appears without *xiong*. Since the phrasing in this chapter is almost the same as that in Chap. 28, the stanzas in the latter chapter make perfect sense without any reference to *xiong*. The occurrence of the word *mu* has the highest number. It occurs seven times in five chapters, and never together with what is assumed to be its opposite, the word *fu* (father): in Chap. 1, "Nameless is the beginning of Heaven and Earth; Named is the Mother of all things." (无名天地之始, 有名万物之母) In Chap. 20 "I alone am different from everyone else, And choose to be nurtured by my mother." (

我独异于人, 而贵食母) In Chap. 25, "There was something undifferentiated and yet complete, Born before Heaven and Earth, Soundless and formless, Independent and unchanging. Revolving endlessly, It may be thought of as the Mother of all under Heaven." (有物混成, 先天地生。寂兮寥兮, 独立不改, 周行而不殆, 可以为天下母) In Chap. 52, "The world has a beginning; That is the mother of the world. Once you get to know the mother, You understand her children. Once you understand the children, You return to the mother." (天下有始, 以为天下母。既得其母, 以知其子; 既知其子, 复守其母) In Chap. 59, "With the Mother as the guardian, the state can last long." (有国之母, 可以长久) The frequency of the occurrence of *mu* is amazing and impressive compared with the fact that the word *fu* appears only once in Chap. 42: "I shall take this as my precept (*jiaofu* 教父)." Among all the chapters where *mu* occurs, there is only one place in Chap. 20 where she is actually a feeding mother. On all the other occasions, *mu* is referred to as the origin, source, and guardian of the ten thousand things, which appears to be a metaphorical invocation. However, this can in no way weaken the centrality of *mu*, which is consonant with the principle of abiding by the female. The word *yin* (versus *yang*) has often been associated with the feminine in some other contexts. It occurs only once in Chap. 42 of the *Daodejing*: "All things have Yin on their back and Yang in their embrace; The Qi of the two converge and become harmony." (万物负阴而抱阳, 冲气以为和). It is true that an idea of complementarity of *yin* and *yang* seems to be embodied here, and readers seem to have different readings, but what is apparent is that these words are more closely related to natural phenomena and call one to the relationship between man and nature, that is, how to have a correct understanding of nature before using them to politics or other fields. It is clear that, compared with all other words bearing upon the feminine, *yin* has the remotest association with the feminine in the particular text of the *Daodejing*, and the idea of complementarity embodied in Chap. 42 is a different thing from the principle of abiding by the female. Considering the mutual inclusiveness of Yin and Yang, it is perhaps no surprise that in traditional Chinese language, there is no clear distinction between male and female as seen in the use of pronouns.

According to Laozi, "Nameless is the beginning of Heaven and Earth; Named is the Mother of all things. Being and Nonbeing generate one another; Difficult and easy complement one another; When all under Heaven know beauty as beauty, There is ugliness. When all know good as good, There is the not good" (Laozi, 7). Central in Laozi's paradox is the concept of nothing, or doing nothing, which is not really taking any action other than taking nondual action, that is not the actual agent self but rather the workings of Dao, which transcends the duality of male and female, subject and object, in which case one can see the manifestations of Dao everywhere. Under such circumstances, *wuwei* (doing nothing) and *wu buwei* (yet nothing is not done) forms the basic paradox of Laozi's philosophy. In the tranquility in disturbance one re-achieves the simplicity of a child who is free from all desires, for the so-called logical thinking tends to differentiate things into categories often opposed to each other, like right and wrong, being and non-being, life and death, male and female, and tends to pit one against the other, which is informed in the binary opposition of Western logic and shows a preference for polarities where choices are made. But for

Laozi everything is arranged by Dao and there is no dualistic conflict. A life filled with love is blessed not because of the reward given by either side, but because of the life united is blessed. Daoist dualism is a way of experiencing the world and taking the world as a collection of interacting and discrete objects where gender discrimination and master–slave distinction is not seen.

In ancient Chinese language, the use of pronouns is quite gender indiscriminate. In *Shijing* (1046–771 BC), the first collection of Chinese poetry, for example, we have the poetical line: 所谓伊人, 在水一方 (My beloved to me, is somewhere on the other side of the river). 伊人 refers to the beloved, but no clear gender is specified, and from the context the reader might assume it is a male, but if the reader assumes that the speaker is a male, then 伊人may refer to female as well. It is a classic love poem that lives through histories. Or in Wen Tingyun (812–866)'s poetical line: 井底点灯深烛伊, 共郎长行莫围棋 (In the depth of night, I light a candle to deeply illuminate you: With my lad, I like 'long travel,' but not 'overstay'). Here 伊is used to refer to the second person pronoun, that is you, the loved one. The use of 伊as personal pronoun continues until modern times, as can be seen in Lu Xun's novels. In ancient Chinese language, the other frequent and gender-indiscriminate use of pronounce is之, which refers to the third person pronoun *he*, *she*, *his*, *her*, *it* and the most famous of which can be seen in the opening sentence of *Analects*: 学而时习之, 不亦说乎?(Is it not pleasant to learn and constantly go over what you have learned?).

In *A Cultural History of "She"* ("她"字的文化史), Professor Huang Xingtao traces the changes of modern Chinese female pronoun, attributing its modern usage mainly to Western colonial invasions. It is professor Liu Bannong (刘半农) who coined the pronoun 她 (she) to distinguish male from female, which, according to modern Chinese writer Zhu Ziqing, does not get unanimous approval from girl students as the left side 他 (he) refers to a person, and the left side of she (她) refers a female, which is quite unfair and discriminatory. (Zhu Ziqing, 86) In comparison with Western languages, the classical Chinese written language is more suggestive and becomes an excellent medium for poetry as it minimizes the use of syncategorematic words and leaves more rooms for the readers to create images and meanings through imagination. Daoist language of deference forms a contrast to language of presence, language of absence and language of difference in the west. In idealist pursuits of the Chinese philosophy, livings beings and nature should coexist harmoniously. Certainly in western discourse Chinese written language is often regarded as a script outside of the alphabeticist-narrative Western enclave, that belongs to the West and its version of man or 'Anthropos' dictates the world, and yet the Western canon are also suffused with the cultural arc that entails the specter of extinction today, the textual legacies as anticipatory which resounds with Hamlet's 'words, words, words' or Macbeth's 'tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow', where the future collapses to a condensed recurrence of the same. Modern Chinese writings, stained by the Western influence and the universalist pursuit, deviates from the wisdom of their ancestors, and goes on a Benjaminian one way too, like their western counterpart, and all seems irreversible. Chinese intellectuals and writers have embarked on a similar reflection on the tradition and modern polluted reality.

In “What Are the Novels of the Anthropocene? American Fiction in Geological Time”, Kate Marshall pointed out that “it has become difficult to take up the topic of temporality in contemporary fiction without reference to the geological concept of the Anthropocene” (Marshall, 2015 523). In ecocritics’ eyes, Australia stands out as a good example of the challenges of the Anthropocene, as the country is built mostly of urbanized areas close to the edge of the continent, and the cities dependent upon exports from outside and agricultural produce from the sparsely inhabited interior. This gulf between the city and “the Bush” creates what Val Plumwood delineates as the “split between a singular, elevated, conscious ‘dwelling place’, and the multiple disregarded places of economic and ecological support, a split between our idealized homeplace and the places delineated by our ecological footprint” (Plumwood, 2008 139). This split, induced by the dualist logic as inherent in Western philosophy, put the world into two irreconcilable camps where it is really important that the world be conscious of the devastations wreaked upon the earth by human beings and the steps taken to show more affections to the species and the very place they stay, until it is too late.

Alexis Wright in her apocalyptic imagination forecasts the future brought about by climate change in *Carpentaria* and *The Swan Book.* At the beginning of *Carpentaria* we have an apocalyptic scene:

> A NATION CHANTS, *BUT WE KNOW YOUR STORY ALREADY*.
>
> THE BELLS PEAL EVERYWHERE.
>
> CHURCH BELLS CALLING THE FAITHFUL TO THE TABERNACLE WHERE THE GATES OF HEAVEN WILL OPEN, BUT NOT FOR THE WICKED. CALLING INNOCENT LITTLE BLACK GIRLS FROM A DISTANT COMMUNITY WHERE THE WHITE DOVE BEARING AN OLIVE BRANCH NEVER LANDS. LITTLE GIRLS WHO COME BACK HOME AFTER CHURCH ON SUNDAY, WHO LOOK AROUND THEMSELVES AT THE HUMAN FALL OUT AND ANNOUNCE MATTER-OF-FACTLY, *ARMAGEDDON BEGINS HERE*. (Wright, 1 as in original)

Wright hopes that differences of culture can be reconciled into one nation, one voice, and one people, but the fact is that indigenous people continue to be colonized, excluded, forgotten and left to cultural extinction through mainstream whitewashing. In the so-called modern technology dominated by reason, the weather forecast fails to detect the coming cyclone that destroys the village, while in *The Swan Book*, the havoc brought about by the climate change is extended to the whole world and Armageddon is really coming.

Western Australian poet John Kinsella wrote a number of “counter-pastoral” poems, stories, and essays about the Western Australian wheat belt, which opposes in a radically form the neo-romantic tendency he sees in other forms of ecopoetics, which, for Kinsella, deplete the natural world of its otherness. The worsening of the environment in Australia and the ill-treatment of the animals are greatly attributed to European colonization. In papers like “The pastoral, and the political possibilities of poetry”, “Is there an Australian Pastoral”, he criticizes the idyllic sense of a pastoral eulogized by the Europeans, and the encroachment of Europeans upon the Australian landscape, characterized by economic and environmental exploitation.

What is presented in front of us is the guilt of the non-Aborigines upon the Aboriginal land. In many of his poems we can find that the beautiful land is conquered and plundered by the European settlers, and the salting of the land exacerbates the living conditions. In "Agoras", he meditates upon his paradox of being in place (in situ) or out of place (absence) and shows his attachment to Jam Tree Gully, a somewhat obscure place surrounded by the aboriginal cultures. To Kinsella, Jam Tree Gully is not just the place of human beings, a place for political debate or for markets, but also a place of non-human interactions. In the appendixes of *Polysituatedness: A Poetics of Displacement*, he begins each poetic stanza by quoting from and parodying Heidegger's *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Kinsella's work, while echoing Plumwood, Laozi and Heidegger, details his Anthropocene obsession of a more-than-human world, where man dictates the lives of animals, and is in turn dictated by the environment.

While in many ways corresponding to Plumwood's idea of environment, as well as to the idea of other animals and species, Laozi thinks that the major problem of the world lies in desire. In other words, in the Anthropomorphic world dictated by the so-called rational human beings, people are too much driven by desires which separate the human world from animal world and become therefore the culprit of all world problems. Chinese culture, greatly influenced by western ideas in modern times, is not immune from this anthropocenic presence. In 1988, the poet Xu Gang, witnessing the harsh reality of the great devastation as caused during Chinese cultural revolution, first wrote the reportage, *Those who Deforest, Wake Up*, in *New Observation*s. In 2016, the Chinese novelist Zhao Defa wrote the novel entitled *Anthropocene* to ponder over the fate of human community. The novel that has produced great repercussions so far in terms of man–nature relationship is entitled *Wolf-Totem*, which exposes how during cultural revolution, led by the thought of Man Will Triumph Over Nature, man staged a mass killing of the lambs in Inner Mongolia to clear the ground for modern development. *Wolf Totem* is a semi-autobiographical novel. Its author, Lü Jiamin, who wrote under the pseudonym Jiang Rong, is a scholar of political science located in Beijing. He was sent to the Inner Mongolian pasture to "receive re-education from the poor farmers" in the countryside at the beginning of the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), and spent more than 10 years there. *Wolf Totem* is based on the author's own experiences on the Mongolian grassland. The protagonist Chen Zhen, a young man in his 20 s, like the author, left Beijing to work in Olonbulag in Inner Mongolia during the Cultural Revolution. Chen Zhen witnesses how wolves are killed in large numbers mainly by the arriving new settlers of ethnic Han people from the agricultural regions, and eventually exterminated on the grassland. When the wolves are gone, the ecological balance on the prairie breaks down, and the grassland suffers from destructions from animals like horses, mice, rabbits, and so on. The Mongolian herdsmen have complicated attitudes toward wolves. For them, wolves are both enemies and companions. Old man Bilgee tells Chen Zhen that he hunts wolves, but not often. He explains, 'If we killed them off, the grassland would perish, and then how would we survive?' (Jiang, 2008,17), which is resonant with an old Chinese saying: with the skin gone, where should the hair be attached to?

The man–wolf story in *Wolf Totem* is intersected by representations of intra-cultural conflicts between the native Mongolians and the new arrivals, most of them Han Chinese, which adds a significant and unique dimension to the novel. Ignorant of the wolf myth, the "outsiders" come to the grassland for animals to satisfy material needs, which has its historical and cultural roots in that rational man is superior to animals. "Any historical analysis of practices and patterns of ecological imperialism, … must return to this philosophical basis, acknowledging those forms of instrumental reason that view nature and the animal 'other' as being either external to human needs, and thus effectively dispensable, or as being in permanent service to them, and thus an endlessly replenishable resource" (Huggan and Tiffin, 4). In the 1960s and 1970s, the "instrumental reason" was dominant among the new arrivals on the Mongolian grassland. Their irrational hatred of wolves and greed for meat had destructive consequences in the long run. The *Wolf Totem*, informed by the then-dominant philosophical rhetoric of struggle with heaven, earth and man which deviates from Laozi's philosophy of mutual respect and happy coexistence, shows the arrogance of man over nature. All the traditional philosophy of harmony between man and nature was destroyed. In the aftermath of cultural revolution, and driven by the consumers' sense of development, man is elevated to a position never before seen in China, and there appeared thereafter a large-scale economic reform which produced a mixed blessing in China, like the appearance of air pollution, large-scale deforestation, and SARS Epidemic in 2003, which was said to be caused by a virus and transmitted by masked palm civet, an animal certain people love to eat.

Laozi said: There is no calamity greater than lavish desires. /There is no greater guilt than discontentment (Chap. 46). But desire plays an important role in our life. Modern writers have tried to expose the excessive desire of human beings who pay no attention to others. The harmony between man and nature and between man and other species should be restored, people should really think more about the consequences of human domination of nature and man's oppression of women as well as the dichotomy of the superiority and inferiority between peoples. Plumwood emphasizes that the decline of human world is really attributed to western dualistic philosophy and the syperseparation between man and nature. "It is fundamentally nature, perhaps as our 'natural' human selfishness or greed, or as our animality and blind instinct to breed, which has led us astray ecologically" (Plumwood, 2002, 6). As a result of the excessive pursuit of desires, some ecologists see the world as being in the period of the sixth major extinction (driven this time by humans), and even those who are not willing to declare the effect quite that disastrous are willing to say that the extinction rate is higher because of humans than it would otherwise be. Currently, 8,700 species go extinct per year, more than 7,000 times the background rate.

Plumwood says that "We die of the product (the destruction of nature) and also of the process (technological brutality alias technological rationality serving the end of commodification). As the free water we drink from common streams, and the free air we breathe in common, become increasingly unfit to sustain life, the biospheric means for a healthy life will increasingly be privatized and become the privilege of

those who can afford to pay for them" (Plumwood, 1993, 13). Is it possible to find a better way to escape such an end? Perhaps it is beyond my waiting if left uncurbed.

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Internationalising Ecological Civilisation Through Connectivity

James Oswald

Abstract This chapter argues that the solutions to climate change have to embrace a new philosophy that must be founded on epistemic communities connected through a global sense of urgency and knowledge building to find a solution to the climate crisis and a new way of living in harmony with the environment. The Chinese notion of eco-civ is such a philosophy as it is increasingly being used as a form of connectedness where epistemic communities connect globally to find a solution to the environmental crisis. To make this argument, I first discuss the idea of 'epistemic communities' and how they have influence on policymaking and the spread of ideas. Following this notion of connectivity between epistemic communities, I focus on eco-civ, discuss its origins and meaning and trace its evolution before and after its adoption by the Communist Party of China. Then I move on to explore its significance in the face of the global environmental crisis and look at its acceptance by groups outside of China. While eco-civ acknowledges both the technological and normative aspects of the environmental crisis, its adoption by the Chinese state sees it associated more frequently with technology. However, when adopted outside of China, there is a heavy emphasis on globally shared values and norms. In this way, eco-civ plays an important role in connecting sub-national groups and knowledge-sharing with a view to creating a civilisation that is based on environmental sustainability principles.

Keywords China-Ecological civilisation (eco-civ) · Epistemic communities · Ecology · National People's Congress (NPC)

Introduction

The Chinese state's decision to frame its pursuit of sustainable development using the term 'ecological civilisation' (eco-civ) presents a unique approach to confronting environmental decline. Since its adoption into the Party lexicon in 2007, this vaguely defined notion is increasingly being picked up by other epistemic communities

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around the world looking to resolve the tension between development and the environment. In this chapter I argue that eco-civ is increasingly being used as a form of connectedness where epistemic communities globally come together with a common purpose: to find a solution to the environmental crisis facing humanity. To make this argument, I first discuss the idea of 'epistemic communities' and how they have influence on policymaking and the spread of ideas. Following this notion of connectivity between epistemic communities, I focus on eco-civ, discuss its origins and meaning and trace its evolution before and after its adoption by the Communist Party of China (CPC). Then I move on to explore its significance in the face of the global environmental crisis and look at its acceptance by groups outside of China. While eco-civ acknowledges both the technological and normative aspects of the environmental crisis, its adoption by the Chinese state sees it associated more frequently with technology. However, when adopted outside of China, there is a heavy emphasis on globally shared values and norms. In Australia, the same debate occurs with the Conservative government stressing technological solutions to climate change, whereas the Australian Greens Party emphasises changing social norms to save the planet (Stevenson, 2021). While official Chinese government policy, eco-civ is best understood as connecting sub-national groups and knowledge-sharing to create a civilisation that is based on environmental sustainability principles.

For decades, voices have called out for governments to act to prevent the looming environmental crisis, though the very nature of the environmental crisis requires concerted global action rather than singular actions of sole states (Parr & Henry, 2016; Stevenson, 2013, 2021). The imminence of the crisis has thus seen a trend driving people around the world to connect and work together to fight this common cause. This global imperative towards changing our development model to one which is sustainable and non-exploitative has created a dynamic between international regions and in some cases is driving a discussion under the banner of eco-civ. Importantly, the eco-civ concept was enshrined in Chinese government environmental policy which guides economic policy and development in one of China's top policymaking bodies within President Xi's 'new era' thought. Such a notion, whose fluidity of meaning may denote a place as much as process, connects people through knowledge-sharing to promote a common cause. This essay discusses the origins and meaning of the notion of eco-civ, then explores how it is adopted internationally and connects ideas and people through fostering international engagement on environment issues.

Bringing Together Epistemic Communities Under Eco-civ

I argue that eco-civ is increasingly being used as a banner term under which epistemic communities around the globe connect with a common purpose: to find a solution to the environmental crisis facing humanity. The argument looks to sub-national connectivity between people and identifies ecological civilisation as a rhetorical device that serves to bring people together through knowledge-sharing to promote

a common cause (Dunlop, 2014). Under this device, there is a cross-national movement that draws on international knowledge with a view to influencing the conversation around environmental issues in their respective geographies. Earlier, the main proponents of ecological civilisation in China formed an epistemic community there which had such an impact on leading policymakers and decision-makers that it was eventually adopted into the official Party lexicon.[1]

The term 'epistemic community' (Dunlop, 2014) traces back to the work of Peter Haas, who uses the concept as an analytical tool for discussing groups of thinkers who work on specific policy problems and who have influence over decision-makers in government. He defined an epistemic community as a:

> network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area. (Hass, 1992)

Decision-makers then adopt the ideas of the epistemic community and turn them into policies that address specific problems in governance. For the purposes of this paper, however, I will not delve into a discussion that identifies these communities on the basis of Haas' original four-fold belief system.[2] Instead, I use the term 'epistemic community' in a context closer to that which Dunlop describes as 'any group of experts giving policy advice' (Dunlop, 2011), where these experts are united in a common problem even while separated geographically, and thus also have influence on each other's ideas. As the group from the 'Ecological Civilisation Club' in Beijing had influence on decision-makers in Beijing, the idea was picked up by other epistemic communities abroad and is being developed and adapted in those countries. Before entering into this discussion, I first look at the origins of eco-civ, what it means, how it is invoked by the Chinese party-state, and how the idea is invoked in epistemic communities outside of China.

International Connections in Environmental Thought and The Origins of Eco-civ

Ecological civilisation may be a relatively new slogan, but the ideas behind it are hardly new. These ideas which gained prominence among western thinkers then influenced thinkers in China as they conducted research into ecological civilisation. Many works in the hefty body of literature that recognise that environmental issues have social causes call for people to change their relationship with the environment. This change would have us understanding that we are part of the environment so that

[1] Interestingly, one member in particular left China because, once the idea was adopted by the state, he felt he no longer had the freedom to develop ecological civilisation in the way he saw fit, and so started up an 'ecological civilisation club' in Milan.

[2] That is, shared normative and principled beliefs; shared causal beliefs; shared notions of validity; and a common policy enterprise. See (Dunlop, 2014).

we can live our lives in ways that nurture and foster the health of the environment and ecosystems.

One of the earliest works to influence the early researchers into eco-civ was called *An Ecological View of History: Japanese Civilization in the World* (Umesao, 2003). Originally published in Japan in 1956, it was first published in China in 1988 (Meizhuo Zhongfu, 1988) and is cited by the original researchers into eco-civ in China as one of their major influencing texts. It is also generally well-known among environmental thinkers in China for its insightful analysis on how the environment and environmental conditions influence human development (Unattributed, 2019). An academic who was widely influential among environmental thinkers in the Anglophone world was Murray Bookchin, who in 1962 wrote that:

> Environmentally, we are a beleaguered species—not by natural forces that inflict material scarcity and toil as unavoidable features of the human condition, but by social forces that create irrational relations and requirements as utterly needless features of our lifeways. (Best, 1998, 336)

This passage, written over 50 years ago, was also among the first in a nascent body of environmental literature to detail the social origins of environmental degradation. Later, Barry Commoner outlined his four laws of ecology, that: everything is connected to everything else; everything must go somewhere; nature knows best; and there is no such thing as a free lunch (Commoner, 1971, 33–48). In 1981, Garrett Hardin published an article called 'An Ecolate View of the Human Predicament', where he wrote that, on top of literacy and numeracy, human beings must learn 'ecolacy', a way of understanding nature by asking the question 'and then what?' (Hardin, 1981). He argues that essential to solving the environmental problem is an understanding of the interconnectedness of everything, and that every action has consequences. In 1989, Milbrath wrote of the need to create a new society that repudiates values that lead to environmental degradation in his work Envisioning a Sustainable Society (Milbrath, 1989). This shows that well before eco-civ was popularised, some of the ideas it represents were well established, if largely unheeded.

An analysis of the language in the National People's Congress (NPC) five-yearly work reports indicates that understanding of environmental issues and the role of development in causing them has historically been a part of an international knowledge-sharing process. This is at least in part due to the fact that the Chinese government has been an active participant in environmental fora since the 1970s, beginning with the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972. Thus, environmental consciousness in China was influenced by a rising global awareness of these issues, and this is reflected in official governmental discourse and its adoption of terminology in use among epistemic communities abroad. Looking at the evolution of this discourse, it shows that China has adopted many of the environmental terms that came out of international fora. The notion of ecological civilisation bucks the trend as it emerged from China and is now having an influence on how international institutions frame environmental issues, such as the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2016).

Insight into this knowledge-sharing is evident in the first use of environmental language in an NPC report. In Hu Yaobang's work report to the 12th NPC (Hu, 1982), he used the term 'ecological balance' (*shengtai pingheng*) which has its origins in the 'Gaia Hypothesis' attributed to Lovelock and Margulis (Lovelock & Margulis, 1974). In the NPC work report of 1997, the term 'sustainable development' (*kechixu fazhan*) first appears—this term has its roots in the widely influential Bruntland Report, also known as Our Common Future (UN, 1987). Another environmental term the Chinese state adopted is that of the circular economy (Pearce & Turner, 1990), which officially entered the political lexicon in 2007 and still enjoys wide currency. That same year, the then leader of the Chinese state Hu Jintao promised China would become an ecological civilisation, marking a novel approach to development that was touted as a solution to the worsening state of China's environment. Interestingly, although the first wide-scale adoption of this idea was in China, and the idea generally conforms with the model of the state's previous 'civilising discourses' (Dynon', 2008), the usage of the term was popularised after it appeared in a short news article synopsising an essay that originated in the former Soviet Union. This, likewise, demonstrates connectivity between epistemic communities from different nations, coming together with a view to finding solutions to common problems.

This article, published in the newspaper Guangming Daily (Zhang, 1985), was titled 'The way to foster ecological civilisation in individuals under the conditions of advanced socialism'. The essay which this article synopsises was written by V.S. Lipitsky, an academic from the Soviet Union, and describes ecological civilisation as a system that synthesises social science with ecological studies (Lipitsky, 1984). Lipitsky's article uses the term 'ecological culture' (экологической культуры), stressing the negative effects of development on the environment and emphasising the need for society to adopt an understanding of ecology. It defines ecological culture as an interaction between society and nature that takes into consideration ecology (i.e. the interconnectedness of nature) and the needs of society for a healthy environment. After this article popularised the term, the idea was developed further by academics Ye Qianji and Liu Zongchao. The work of the latter and his team, which he has dubbed the Su Jia school of ecological civilisation, is dedicated to finding a solution to the environmental crisis by promoting a change in the mode of development. Since that time, other important contributions have been made on the topic, such as by Jia Weilie (also of the Su Jia school), and Pan Jiahua. Their work in turn caught the attention of a group of scholars from across the Pacific. Based at Claremont Theological College in California, they have developed a framework called 'Organic Marxism' to help guide human society's transition to an 'ecological civilisation' (Clayton & Heinzekehr, 2014).

It must be noted that the expression 'ecological civilisation' had already been used in an English language text in 1995, two years prior to the first Chinese language book being published on the topic, although it did not gain much attention in the Anglophone literature until after it became popular in China (Morrison, 1995). His use of the term seems to be unrelated and uninfluenced by its use in China, although he has been subsequently been recognised by various groups within China as the first person to write about eco-civ in a book.

Beginning in the early 1990s, Liu and his research team dedicated their time and resources to researching the issue of environmentally sustainable development. On the basis of this research, they published an extensive corpus of work which was united under the theme of eco-civ. In 1997, the first book in Chinese on the topic of eco-civ was published, called *An Outlook on Ecological Civilisation and China's Trend Towards Sustainable Development* (Liu, 1997). In this text, Liu outlines the two main themes encompassed by eco-civ; that as a post-industrial society (civilisation meaning a stage of development—a noun, ecological civilisation) and that of promoting ecological values among the populace (civilisation as a process—an adjectival phrase, i.e. to become ecologically civilised). Whereas the framing of eco-civ has drawn heavily on international ideas around how society must address environmental degradation, this particular formulation and its initial development came from China. From here, however, it has found some acceptance in international organisations and other researchers devoted to mitigating human-led environmental degradation.

The Party-State Adopts Eco-civ

The origins of eco-civ far predate its addition into the party lexicon. It was mentioned in a CPC policy document as early as 2003 in a document titled 'Decisions on Expediting the Development of the Forestry Industry' (CPC, 2003) where under the section 'guiding concepts' it includes the line 'becoming an ecologically civilised society with a beautiful landscape'.[3] Prior to this, it was already being used in Chinese academia from the early 1980s.[4] This demonstrates that the Chinese state had taken a term that was already being used among epistemic communities within China and incorporated it into its official lexicon, sealing its fate as an environmental 'watchword'[5] used in relation to the state's efforts at remediating environmental damage. Its incorporation was not sudden, however, occurring after many years of use in academic and then policy circles.

The rapid change and development that has occurred in China, especially over the last four decades since 'reform and opening up', lifted millions from relative poverty but simultaneously devastated the local environment. It also put further stress on a global environment already under severe pressure from the development

[3] The precise expression used is *jianshe shanchuan xiumei de shengtai wenming shehui.*

[4] In Pan's 2015 work *China's Environmental Governing and Ecological Civilization* (Pan, 2015), he claims that the late Professor Ye Qianji coined it in an essay in 1984, but this is incorrect as the expression was in use before then. He also erroneously attributes that 1984 essay to Ye but the essay he refers to was in fact written by a Russian academic V. S. Lipitsky. In my PhD thesis I also incorrectly attributed the origin of ecological civilisation to the Russian article. Further research by the author has shown that the expression was in use earlier (Zhou, 1983).

[5] This is the translation of the term *tifa* used by China scholar Qian Gang on his China Media Watch website. He describes watchwords as: 'Matters of considerable nuance, *tifa* are always used deliberately, never profligately. They can be seen as political signals or signposts' (Qian, 2012).

and lifestyles of people in developed nations. To demonstrate its commitment to environmental remediation, the Chinese state incorporated the goal of, becoming an ecological civilisation, (*jianshe shengtai wenming*) into its official lexicon during Hu Jintao's presidency in 2007 at the 17th CPC National Congress. By November 2012, at the 18th National Congress, this concept was enshrined in the CPC's constitution. At its most basic, eco-civ describes a new imperative for the Chinese state—replacing the old unsustainable model of economic growth at any cost with development based on ideals of frugality in the use of energy and resources and environmental protection.

One peculiar trait of the expression 'ecological civilisation' in the Chinese language is that it can take on a double meaning. The first is that of a post-industrial stage of society, of an ecological civilisation that prioritises the environment over development. This understanding is also what is more comfortable with the Anglophone reader, where civilisation is tied to the notion of the city, and of material development. The other meaning, not so familiar to the average Anglophone, denotes an educational process, of becoming ecologically civilised. In this, it meshes well with China's existing 'civilising' discourse—the previous spiritual, material, and political civilising campaigns (Dynon, 2008)—in that it encompasses the notion of moulding the population to act in a matter mindful of the environment so that they may mitigate any potential negative consequences of their actions.

Prior to the release of Liu Zongchao's book, an important development occurred that marks the connection between the discussions of ecological civilisation in the academic sphere and its adoption by the CPC into official governmental discourse. In the mid-1990s, Liu and his research team which he called the 'Ecological Civilisation Club' applied to the National Planning Office of Philosophy and Social Sciences to conduct a research project called 'Ecological Civilisation and a Basis for Increasing Information on Ecological Ethics'. This research application was subsequently approved under the aegis of Liu's home institution, Renmin University of China. The project received official approval, and was to be conducted in conjunction with many other leading national research institutions, with some of the more prominent ones being Peking University, the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. This particular event is significant as this marks the formal acceptance of the concept by the CPC. This is because the National Planning Office of Philosophy and Social Sciences has strong connections to the Party's Central Publicity Department (Holbig, 2014). By the mid-1990s, the concept of ecological civilisation which arose from epistemic communities within China was gaining popularity among the country's policymakers and decision-makers. This lay the foundation for its full inclusion into party patois in 2007 under Hu Jintao.

Eco-civ as a Quantifiable Metric of Progress

Although it was in 2007 that Hu Jintao proclaimed that the CPC was striving to become an ecological civilisation, this was not the first time this expression was used by the party in an official capacity. As mentioned above, the expression was first

officially used in a policy on developing the forestry industry in 2003 (CPC, 2003). Also from 2003, and slightly earlier by about twenty days, the Yangzhou government published an opinion piece on its website which was titled 'How to Add Ecological Civilisation.' In this unattributed article, it is suggested that the CPC should adopt ecological civilisation as the fourth in its series of civilising discourses (following on from political, spiritual, and material civilisation).[6] From these examples, it is clear that the concept of ecological civilisation entered the lexicon much earlier than its formal adoption in 2007. In these two contexts just mentioned, ecological civilisation is used in the sense of becoming ecologically civilised more so than in the sense of a post-industrial environmentally sustainable society. This indicates that even from this early stage, the idea of ecological civilisation was linked to ideas of an ethical standard of comportment more so than as a goal that can be measured quantifiably. However, it was not until later that concrete guidelines emerged, detailing how exactly the CPC planned to transform China into an ecological civilisation and how to evaluate that transformation.

On November 8, 2012, the Eighteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China began in Beijing. It was during this meeting that the Congress ratified changes to the Constitution of the CPC to include 'becoming an ecological civilisation' as one of its goals, alongside economic, political, cultural, and social development, seen necessary to achieve a 'comfortably well-off society' (xiaokang shehui) and 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' (zhongguo tese shehui zhuyi). The incorporation of eco-civ into this constitution was an important step in the transition of this slogan from party rhetoric to important concept. It was also significant in that its incorporation warranted change to the party's previous 'four-pronged' development plan (siwei yiti) into a 'five-pronged' one (wuwei yiti). The origins of this four-in-one slogan harken back to 1982 during the Deng era, when it only had two prongs, and his idea was that these would be guiding concepts for the development of a socialist society. Later, when Jiang Zemin introduced his idea of political civilisation, it was added into the party vernacular and the plan was given an extra prong (sanwei yiti). By the Seventeenth National Congress, it had gained another prong, so that the plan for socialist development was seen to need economic, political, cultural and social development. The fact that the fifth and (so far) final prong is 'ecological civilisation', indicates that the state recognises that environmental issues must be taken into consideration when growing the economy and ensuring social stability.

The major policy document outlining the requirements for ecological civilisation, called 'An Overall Plan for Ecological Civilisation System Reform' (Plan) was approved at a Politburo meeting presided over by Xi Jinping on 11 September 2015 (State Council, 2019).[7] Importantly, this Plan's guiding concepts, a key feature of Chinese policy documents, contain examples of ecological thought which had been featured in the works of earlier researchers and academics both in China and abroad.

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[6] This document has since been taken offline. The author has a saved version before it was taken down, if you are interested in seeing it please contact the author.

[7] This reference is for the official English translation of the document. Note that 'ecological civilisation' was translated as 'ecological progress' in the official translation.

Some of these ideas include advocating the environment over development, and understanding that natural features are complex, integrated systems. The inclusion of these concepts, which are similar if not the same as ideas used among epistemic communities around the world who advocate for ecological thinking and values, strongly indicates that these policies have also been influenced through international knowledge-sharing. Sections two to nine of the policy revolve around technological changes and the legal framework needed for sustainable development, and are similar to those seen in other countries; they include institutions for determining rights to resources, spatial planning systems, environmental compensation, tax reform, emissions licencing systems and green finance. Significantly, section ten states the need for ecological values—specifically it uses the terms 'ecological culture' (shengtai wenhua) and an awareness of ecological civilised mindset (shengtai wenming yishi)—and encourages people to adopt 'green' lifestyles. Whereas the bulk of the policy document focuses on technological and systemic approaches to sustainable development, there is also a recognition that a shift in values has an important role to play in the process.

The most recent major development on this front came in 2016, when the government announced a national system for evaluating and assessing eco-civ. It formalised the measures from the 2015 policy, putting in place measures to evaluate (pingjia) and assess (kaohe) the attainment of conservation and sustainable development targets. These two discrete mechanisms have been put in place to provide practicable and visually representable indicators for measuring progress towards eco-civ. The policy document for this was released on 22 December 2016, and it stipulates that CPC and government officials are additionally responsible for meeting eco-civ goals on top of their other duties (General Office of the CPC, 2016).

The first-ever evaluation (for 2016) was released on 26 December 2017. The evaluation emerged in the form of a very unassuming chart, which gives the separate results of the regions in each of the seven evaluation categories noted above and also assigns them an overall ranking (National Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Beijing scored the highest overall on the green development index, with number 1 place for environmental governance, quality of growth, and green living. Tellingly, however, it scored second last (30th) in public satisfaction, beaten only by Hebei province at 31. Tianjin was in 29th place, so the whole area encompassed by *Jingjinji*[8] has the worst public perception as to its green development. Topping the chart for public satisfaction was Tibet, even though its overall score placed it at number 30, and it scored the lowest for environmental governance. From this initial evaluation, it seems that from the government's perspective, the level of overall development also plays a role in determining progress in eco-civ. While a lack of development seems to improve some, less weighty, scores, it diminishes the more important ones. These scores will later be included in the five-year assessment. Results for each evaluation are supposed to be completed in August the following year. Interestingly, however, the national results for subsequent years were not made public, even though they are

[8] Jingjinji or Jing-jin-ji refers to the geographical region encompassing Beijing (jing), Tianjin (jin), and Hebei (ji).

available for some individual provinces. The first assessment is to be held for 2020, although it is unclear whether the results for this will be made available next year.

While eco-civ as a concept does present a lofty idea calling for a major rethink of our relationship with the environment, such an interpretation would be extremely difficult if not impossible to quantify. Progress towards sustainable and 'green' modes of economic development, on the other hand, do lend themselves to such an analysis. Looking at how eco-civ is used by the Chinese state, it is clear that the overarching view is on the quantifiable economic changes, with the imperative being to make development 'green' and sustainable, while also seeking feedback to gauge public satisfaction. Outside China, however, such a view of eco-civ has failed to make significant inroads into the parlance of government. Hence, as we'll see, the term eco-civ as used elsewhere seeks a more dramatic overhaul of economies, which are in general the domain of more 'radical' epistemic communities.

The 'Emerging Vision' of International Eco-civ

As the CPC's use of ecological civilisation developed from its adoption in the early 2000s, it has evolved from a slogan of obscure origins, to being adopted by the party-state and becoming a shared environmental catch-cry of the Chinese academic community and government. Aside from eco-civ being an accepted framing of environmental issues among the academic community in China, the expression is frequently now used outside of China to discuss bringing about a global ecological transition that would change the global economic order, though in ways more progressive than the measures adopted so far in China. The international implications of this, and the potential flow-on effect this may have for international environmental policy is a very interesting development that is worthy of our attention.

The idea of eco-civ is now associated with groups operating outside of China. One of the key and earliest groups to do so is based at Claremont Theological College in California. Called the 'Institute for Ecological Civilization', its stated goal is to promote 'civilisational change for the long-term wellbeing of the people and the planet'. This group regularly holds conferences, podcasts, and other events on the topic. It is also not just limited to the theoretical. For example, one key area it works on is global water solutions. Further to this, it aims to work with global networks to transform economic systems, and it also aims at building global networks of experts to find solutions to the root causes of complex social and environmental challenges.[9] This group has close contacts with groups in China; I met with Institute head Dr John Cobb and his entourage on several occasions while studying in China when Dr Cobb was invited to speak on ecological civilisation and process relational philosophy.

Another example of how this idea has been embraced by a Western academic working in this space is its adoption by US author and political activist David C. Korten. He is best known for his major work *When Corporations Rule the World*,

[9] See their website here: https://ecociv.org/.

which is a widely influential anti-globalisation book. In it, he provides a critique of modern economies, especially the role of the corporation in them, arguing that societies need a counterbalance to this power to ensure environmental sustainability and a 'people-centred development'. Korten is also a member of the Club of Rome, a group formed in 1968 due to a concern of the role of mankind in environmental issues, and which has been criticised for having a 'Malthusian bias'. He has been vocal in his support for China's adoption of 'ecological civilisation' and its incorporation into its state-mandated mode of development.

This spread of the idea of eco-civ from China to the US speaks to both the global integration of ideas as well as the fact that the environmental problem is one which is a common problem to all of us. This global imperative towards changing our development model to one which is sustainable and non-exploitative has created a dynamic between international regions and in some cases is driving a discussion under the banner of ecological civilisation, bringing people together through knowledge-sharing to promote a common cause. Furthermore, with China holding the unenviable status of the world's largest polluter, any success which it has in resolving its environmental problems has the potential to influence the approaches which other governments take. Furthermore, China is still an active participant in international environmental fora—it could then use its participation in them to spread the ideas of its success.[10] The actions taken by the government in the name of the ecological civilisation campaign can serve as a lesson or example to people around the world, and as inspiration for them to adopt similar policies in the name of environmental remediation.

One such example of this is the abovementioned group who formed the Institute of Ecological Civilisation in the US. Back in 2014, they developed the ideas of ecological civilisation and used them to develop a theoretical framework based on Marxism that they call 'organic Marxism'. In their work, also titled *Organic Marxism*, they reimagine Marxism through the lens of ecological civilisation on the basis of four basic precepts: a rejection of historic determinism; a rejection of meliorism and utopian ideas; expanding the scope of analyses of production and capital to include the roles of ideas, beliefs, art and literature, philosophy and religion in addressing social inequity; and moving away from anthropomorphism, by including all living things and natural resources as relevant to the class struggle (Clayton & Heinzekehr, 2014 180–181). The ideas in this book also draw heavily on Alfred N. Whitehead's process philosophy and the 'philosophy of organism', which at its heart identifies metaphysical reality with change. Just as with researchers in China, the Institute of Ecological Civilisation understands the social roots of the environmental problem, and thus seeks to influence society and decision-makers through the various activities of their Institution, including through its publications and recordings as well as holding eco-civ–themed symposia.

The idea of ecological civilisation has also brought these epistemic communities from around the world into China to connect, collaborate, and share knowledge

[10] The effectiveness of international institutions in delivering outcomes is also a hotly debated topic; see for example (Park et al., 2008; Young, 2011).

with a view to addressing the environmental crisis. One of the most important initial meetings occurred in 2013, when around 500 politicians, scientists, and eminent persons from 23 countries gathered in Hangzhou to discuss the environmental crisis, from which the 'Hangzhou Declaration' was born, calling for a change from our exploitative industrial development model to one which looks to build an 'ecological civilisation' which would address the tension between development and the environment (Second Annual Conference of World Cultural Forum, 2013). This global imperative towards changing our development model to one which is sustainable and non-exploitative has created a dynamic between international regions and in some cases is driving a discussion under the banner of ecological civilisation. For example, the Global Footprint Network has picked up on the idea—in a 2016 publication the idea of ecological civilisation was linked to the idea of an ecological footprint (Footprint Network, 2016). It has also 'wiggled its way in' (Wang-Kaeding, 2018) to use by the United Nations Environment Programme, who even published a report which detailed ecological civilisation in China (UNEP, 2016).[11]

There is also an example of eco-civ finding influence in environmental sciences in Australia. In 2019, the Environmental Sciences Department of Deakin University submitted an article to the journal *Landscape Ecology* which invoked ecological civilisation in the context of landscape ecology and landscape sustainability science (Frazier et al., 2019). David Korten (2020) has taken the idea of ecological civilisation and began developing it, declaring eco-civ to be an 'emerging vision' that could herald a 'Second Enlightenment'.

In his words:

> Naming the future, calls us to envision it. Naming it a new civilization evokes a sense of epic transformation. Identifying it as ecological evokes a New Enlightenment understanding of life as complex, intelligent, conscious, and self-organizing. (Korten, 2020)

This global imperative towards changing our development model to one which is sustainable and non-exploitative has created a dynamic between international regions and in some cases is driving a discussion under the banner of ecological civilisation. These examples show how the idea of ecological civilisation, being that it is not well defined, is instead being used as a banner term under which various epistemic communities around the world are uniting under to focus on a common cause. In this way, it gives a degree of freedom and flexibility to fit their existing ideas under the heading of ecological civilisation which serves as a link that brings them together. Indeed, addressing the environmental crisis we are facing demands concerted, global efforts. Through the spread of this idea and the knowledge-sharing that has ensued, ecological civilisation serves to connect ideas and people through fostering international engagement on environment issues.

[11] This report has since been removed from the UNEP website. It can still be found through other portals as indicated in the references section. I also have a copy of the.pdf on my computer which I can share with interested people.

Conclusion

There is much promise in the idea of becoming an 'ecological civilisation'—a lofty aspiration founded in the knowledge that we must work together to change our development model towards one which can not only strike a balance between development and the environment, but also repair the generations of damage that we have inflicted. Western nations who were by and large the forerunners of 'development' failed to address this problem early on, instead transferring the cost of the damage to the developing world (Wen, 2013). By copying traditional western modes of development, environmental issues have accelerated to become a global crisis. As this problem is an international problem, its resolution requires international cooperation at all levels.

Looking at how the Chinese government has framed environmental issues over the years demonstrates that it has historically been a part of an international knowledge-sharing process. This process has worked in both directions, so that now ideas from epistemic communities within China are influencing those elsewhere. Interestingly, the fact that eco-civ evokes the concept of civilisation has, as Korten (2020) said, given it a sense of, epic transformation,—it evokes a dramatic paradigm shift of the kind needed as an alternative to business-as-usual. The issue, however, is that these ideas are clearly nothing new, and previous calls by leading thinkers have for the best part of a century failed to resolve the issue of humanity's negative impact on the environment.

However, being that the idea of ecological civilisation is not well defined and appeals to a sense of idealism, it is increasingly being invoked as a banner term under which various epistemic communities around the world unite under to focus on a common cause. This allows for a degree of freedom and flexibility to fit their existing ideas under the heading of ecological civilisation and serves as a link that connects them. In this way, people with a shared expertise and common goal are brought together for knowledge-sharing to find workable solutions to this shared problem. As Goron (2018) argues, the transmission of the concepts of eco-civilisation into epistemic communities has both a benefit for Chinese knowledge-sharing as it depoliticises the debate as it is constructed at a sub-national knowledge community base. Similarly, Gare (2012) contends that eco-civilisation has deep roots in the Chinese notion of a good life of and a Dao-like notion of harmony. In Australia, the notion of eco-civilisation has a similar resonance as it builds knowledge that contests the conservative government's policy of technological solutions to the climate crises. Beeson argues that Australian governmental responses to climate change exhibit a profound lack of leadership (Beeson, 2020). This view therefore reinforces this chapter's argument that the solutions to climate change have to embrace a new philosophy, whether it be the Chinese eco-civilisation or an Australian version. Regardless, such a vision must be founded on epistemic communities connected through a global sense of urgency and knowledge building to find a solution to the climate crisis and a new way of living in harmony with the environment.

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The Complementarity of Civilisations? The Ideational and Material Drivers of Australia–China Relations

Mark Beeson

Abstract It is uncontroversial to suggest that the bilateral relationship between Australia and China is not in good shape. Most explanations of deteriorating ties have focused on the tension between potentially conflicting strategic and economic interests. Understandable as this may be, we suggest that these analyses typically miss an even larger problem that will eventually define this relationship—and every other one that each country has. We refer, of course, to unmitigated climate change, which threatens to overturn the extant international order and usher in a new era of conflict and contestation if not addressed. Unlikely as it might seem at present, we suggest that cooperation between Australia and China around energy and environmental problems could provide the sort of 'win–win' cooperation that it often invoked but seldom seen.

Keywords Environmental crises · Australia–China relations · Biden administration · Morrison government

It is uncontroversial to suggest that the bilateral relationship between Australia and China is not in good shape. Given the profoundly different historical experiences of both countries, however, the wonder is that the relationship has become so important for both Australia *and* China. Although Australia's economic dependence on China is frequently noted (see Laurenson, this volume), it is also worth noting at the outset that China has few friends, and that relatively reliable economic partners have their uses. Australian iron ore has played a surprisingly prominent part in China's economic transformation; it still does. There are, therefore, good reasons for supposing that despite all the bluster and political posturing about the relationship that goes on in both Australia and China, there are good, self-interested reasons for expecting it to remain important for both countries, even if the underlying dynamic is instrumental and strained at times.

There is a well-established academic literature in both international political-economy and international relations that suggests why high levels of interdependence

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between very different sorts of countries can occur, and why that can be good for all concerned (Copeland, 2015). This is, perhaps, more remarkable than it might seem, given that both countries have very different sorts of national identities and values, and—at the broadest level—may be seen as representing different ideas about the nature of civilisational development and even purpose. One striking illustration of this possibility, as we shall see, is the intensifying competition over the nature of international governance, in which Australia and China find themselves taking different positions. And yet despite these different ideational contexts, the logic of ‘economic complementarity’ compels a degree of cooperation that might otherwise be difficult to achieve.

While this claim is also relatively uncontroversial, I shall suggest that the key driver of this reality is not simply the rational calculation of economic actors pursuing their individual interests, but the product of a broader, longer-running historical process of capitalist expansion. Although many Chinese commentators take exception to the People’s Republic of China (PRC) being described as a capitalist economy, there is little doubt that it is, albeit one with distinctive Chinese characteristics (Peck & Zhang, 2013). At the most fundamental level, this has paved the way for China’s integration into the global capitalist economy and the remarkable economic development that has occurred there as a consequence, which has been partly fuelled by Australian resources.

Unfortunately, this relatively happy state of affairs may be about to come to an end, for reasons the ideologues in the PRC really ought to have seen coming: capitalism is replete with ‘contradictions’, the most fundamental of which is the inherently unsustainable nature of endless economic expansion and exploitation (Foster et al., 2010). This underlying material reality will, I suggest, trigger an inevitable response in the political ‘superstructure’ of both countries, which could usher in an era of cooperation to address common problems, but—if history is any guide—probably won’t. On the contrary, some of the more improbable claims about ‘Thucydides traps’, ‘clashes of civilizations’, ‘tragedies of the commons’ may actually come to pass, but not for the reasons their originators imagined (Allison, 2017; Hardin, 1968; Huntington, 1996).

The Conventional Wisdom

One of the central ideas in mainstream economic thinking revolves around the notion of ‘comparative advantage’. Simply put, countries should specialise in what they are ‘naturally’ best at, and the resulting international division of labour will bring about the best of all possible worlds. This simplified heuristic has its uses, but it involves ignoring some awkward empirical realities: some areas of the economic activity are much more valuable and attractive than others; the complex nature of global production makes any straightforward idea of a ‘national’ comparative advantage increasingly problematic; the entire East Asian developmental experience, of which China is now the most important part, is predicated on a high levels of state direction

and economic assistance from highly interventionalist states. In short, Japan and its acolytes—among whom China is the star pupil—purposefully *created* a comparative advantage where none 'naturally' existed (Wade, 1990).

In Australia, by contrast, policymakers have generally been content to let market forces dictate the nature of economic activity and the nature of national 'engagement' with the rapidly industrialisation countries to its north. First, Japan and now China rapidly became Australia's principal trade partners in relationships that were firmly predicated on a mutually beneficial economic interdependence. In Japan's case, the results have been spectacular, as a former wartime foe morphed into what Tony Abbot described as 'our best friend in Asia' (White, 2014). Even Japan's very different, frequently neo-mercantilist economic policies provide no barrier to closer ties between two very different countries who were also united drawn together by their strategic reliance on, even subordination to, the United States. In the context of Australia's relationship with Japan, therefore, greater levels of economic interdependence actually encouraged closer, more amicable ties in precisely the way many economic and security specialists expected.

The relationship with China is rather different. To be sure, economic relations have deepened dramatically over the last two decades as China's rapid domestic development has gathered pace, but this has not led to a concomitant improvement in bilateral political relations. On the contrary, China is seen by Australia's strategic elites and policymakers as a potentially destabilising threat to the extant American-dominated 'rules based international order' (Hurst, 2020). To be fair, it's not difficult to see why so many analysts in Australia are concerned about the possible strategic implications of China's re-emergence as a great power and dominant force in East Asia. Consequently, it's worth spelling out the conventional strategic wisdom, too, as it helps to explain just why the relationship with China has become so difficult for Australian policymakers.

Dealing with the China Challenge

One of the more influential contributions to strategic thinking in the United States and its allies is that the world stands on the brink of outright conflict between the US and China because of the so-called 'Thucydides trap' (Allison, 2017). History, it is claimed, is punctuated by recurring cycles of rising and falling powers that more often than not lead to conflict as the extant hegemon is challenged by a dissatisfied, increasingly powerful rival. Whatever the historical merits of this argument, it faces a distinctive constraint in the contemporary period: the risk of any conflict escalating to an unwinnable and apocalyptic nuclear war seems to have had a sobering influence on state behaviour and helps to account for the remarkable decline in inter-state war (Mueller, 1989). Those who find theoretical claims about the inevitability of great power contestation, hegemonic rivalry and the pursuit of security in an 'anarchical' international system persuasive, caution that such underlying drivers of international politics are still in play (Rudd, 2020).

To be fair, such arguments are not without merit. On the contrary, China's leaders have seemingly been doing everything they of late to confirm some of the central claims of realist thinking (Beeson, 2020a). Not only has China embarked on precisely the sort on military modernisation and expansion that realists would expect of a newly enriched rising power, but they are seeking to assert their power and influence within their own 'sphere of interest' (Lind, 2018a, 2018b). The fact that we have even begun to talk about China's policies and impact in the language of nineteenth-century geopolitics is striking in itself. It may be no coincidence: the nineteenth century was also the apogee of imperialist expansion as European powers driven by a sense of superiority and civilisational destiny sought to reshape the world in ways that reflected their ideas and furthered their interests (Abernathy, 2000).

In this context, China shares one attribute with the current hegemonic incumbent: a highly inflated sense of its own historical importance and uniqueness (Zhang, 2013). While there are familiar, mundane explanations for the PRC's improbable claims in the South China Sea—control of valuable resources and the desire to push the US out of Asia—there is little doubt that such ambitions are broadly supported by the overwhelming majority of China's population. Indeed, a rising tide of state-sanctioned nationalism and pride in China's re-emergence as a great power has been one of the more noteworthy domestic consequences of Xi Jinping's domination of the PRC's domestic and foreign policy agenda (Wong, 2000). While such policies may help to reinforce the legitimacy and authority of the unelected Chinese Communist Party (CCP) at the centre of China's domestic politics, it makes it very difficult for Xi in particular to retreat from some of his more assertive and grandiose plans.

The rise of a major power with very differ ideas about how the region, if not the world, ought to be ordered would be a challenge at any time. When the incumbent hegemon is in relative decline, led by someone who has little grasp of great power politics, and who tries to apply the logic of business to complex international problems (Beeson, 2020b), this adds an additional level and uncertainty for allies of the United States. For a country such as Australia, whose policymakers have traditionally placed great emphasis on the possible importance of shared values, historical experiences and cultural norms (Vucetic, 2011), the possibility that its primary strategic partner has become unpredictable and even unreliable, has added an additional level of uncertainty and angst to an increasingly febrile atmosphere in Canberra.

Geoeconomics Versus Geopolitics

If there is one thing that policymakers in Australia and China do seem to implicitly agree on it is about the underlying nature and drivers of international politics. In both Beijing and Canberra 'realist' strategic thinking prevails and results in national self-assertion in China and ever-greater dependence on the United States on the part of Australia's security establishment. This is less surprising that it may seem given that the strategic cultures of both countries—and most of their counterparts around the world, for that matter—are imbued with the foundational assumptions of realist

thinking: power is the crucial variable in and determinant of international political outcomes (Beeson & Zeng, 2017; Johnston, 1995). Such thinking and the strategic rationales it encourage help to explain much about the security policies of both countries and how they reinforce the notorious ‘security dilemmas’ that provide an underpinning set of assumptions about the nature of international politics and strategic policy in both countries (Liff & Ikenberry, 2015).

Given that inter-state war has been in precipitate decline for decades (Pinker, 2012), the obsession with military preparedness and strategy takes some explaining. Policymakers in both countries might claim that their first duty is to protect their own people and that they have to prepare for every possibility, no matter how unlikely. While the prospects for old-fashioned inter-state warfare may have diminished, this has not eliminated great power competition or inculcated cordial relations between rival powers. Unfortunately for smaller, trade-dependent states such as Australia, this means that they can become collateral damage in international struggles they had little part in creating. The escalating trade war between the United States and China is the quintessential example of this possibility, and one that Australian policymakers can do little to resolve, despite its immediate and detrimental impact.

The potential problem Australia faces in attempting to reconcile its competing economic and strategic imperatives has been widely noted and is proving especially difficult for a Coalition government that instinctively leans towards the US strategically, but which is being damaged by China economically (Grigg, 2020). Indeed, one of the more striking features of recent Chinese diplomacy has been its increasingly aggressive ‘Wolf Warrior’ character as China seeks to send unsubtle messages about its grievances and capacity those who its leaders judge to be hostile. Such bellicosity has been matched by Australia’s own self-declared ‘wolverines’ (Curran, 2020). More tangibly, however, China has significant ‘geoeconomic’ leverage over its bilateral trade partners and has demonstrated an increased willingness to use it where it judges its vital national interests to be threatened. China’s targeting of agricultural and coal exports from Australia is not only designed to hurt Australia economically but to drive a potential wedge between the Liberal and National parties who make up the Coalition government (Riordan, 2017).

Australian sensitivity about ‘interference’ in its domestic political system was already high, but it has been further inflamed by concerns about intelligence gathering, the role of the Chinese diaspora in Australia, and Australia’s general exposure retribution for actions China deems unacceptable. It is noteworthy that there has been a growing recognition in Australia of just how dependent it is economically on a country that has the capacity, and the demonstrated willingness, to use its geoeconomic power—or economic instruments that can be utilised to pursue geopolitical ends—to further its interests. There has been a predictable response from Australia’s security establishment and a call for greater national resilience and less vulnerability to China (Jennings, 2020).

And yet, there is nothing uniquely Chinese about such policies. On the contrary economic statecraft has been a long-standing part of international diplomacy and a fundamental part of the United States ascension to superpower status following World War 2. It still is. The United States continues to apply a range of economic

sanctions to the likes of Iran, North Korea and other 'rogue' states of which it does not approve—a list that potentially includes the PRC, of course (Gilsinan, 2019). Indeed, the Trump administration has made threatening and/or criticising China the centrepiece of its foreign policy agenda over the last 4 years. Whatever the merits of the US's claims about 'unfair' Chinese economic practices and intellectual property theft, the outbreak of geoeconomic conflict between its two most important bilateral partners make life increasingly difficult for Australian policymakers. Unfortunately for Australia, it's entirely possible that unpalatable choices and options may become an institutionalised part of the evolving international order.

Living with Uncertainty

Identity politics have become a surprisingly prominent part of contemporary politics (Fukuyama, 2018), and one that has implications for international relations, too (Greenhill, 2008). If China's current self-identity is increasingly one of a great power restored and one worthy of respect if not deference, Australia's is a that of a not inconsequential middle power. While China's sheer material importance means that it can leverage its geoeconomic advantage to pursue its national interests, Australia must rely on the content of its character, to paraphrase Martin Luther King. Indeed, whatever international influence middle powers may have is largely dependent on the strength of their arguments, and the example of their behaviour, either as a principled actor, or as the beneficiary of a superior brand of enlightened self-interest (Beeson & Higgot, 2014). By either measure, Australia's recent performance has not been good, and China's re-emergence at the centre of regional affairs—no matter how the region may actually be defined—has contributed to the middle power malaise.

One of the more striking and illuminating illustrations of Australia's increasingly conflicted foreign policy has occurred in response to China's increasingly active, not to say grandiose foreign policy initiatives. As part of the PRC's 'Belt and Road Initiative' (BRI), China's leaders are attempting to create an institutional architecture that is both an expression of their preferred norms and values, and a practical aid to financing their quite literal concrete realisation. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is one mechanism through which China is helping states to pay for badly needed infrastructure in a region where money for such investment is often in short supply (Wilson, 2019). While this may seem like the sort of 'win–win' diplomacy much invoked by Xi Jinping, it has created discomfort in Australia and outright alarm in the United States which is—rightly—concerned about the impact of such coordinated developmental projects may have on America's status in Asia (Blackwill & Tellis, 2015).

What is most significant about the inauguration of the AIIB in retrospect is not simply that it represented a step-change in the ambitions and content of Chinese foreign policy, but that Australian policymakers signed on to become members—despite very significant pressure from the administration of Barack Obama not to do so. Australia was not the only long-standing ally to defer to China either;

Britain's accession made Australia's actions less damaging to the alliance relationship, perhaps, but the whole episode was widely seen as emblematic of a change in the relative status and practical importance of both the US and China (Miller, 2017).

Even though some of the misgivings about the impact of the AIIB may have proved unfounded, concern about China's ambitions generally and the influence of the BRI has only gained in strength. Many strategic analysts in Australia fret about the long-term consequences of China's so-called 'debt trap diplomacy' (Kehoe, 2018), especially among the impoverished Pacific island nations that have suddenly become such a focus of attention and competition between China and Australia (Callick, 2018). Closer to home, Chinese investment in Australia itself has been subjected to closer scrutiny over recent years, and particular concern has been raised about high-profile developments such as China's control of the port of Darwin, and Victoria's participation in the BRI. All of these developments feed into an increasingly heated, not to say slightly paranoid, domestic Australian debate about the possible extent of China's influence following what has been called its 'silent invasion' (Hamilton, 2018).

To be fair, there is plainly something to worry about. China does have a highly developed intelligence gathering network, and does seek to expand its influence where it can (Secretary of Defence, 2020). Most countries do, of course. What is distinctive about China is the growing sophistication of its surveillance capacities, much of which are directed towards the allegedly more recalcitrant elements of its own population (*The* Economist, 2018). This is yet another source of friction between authoritarian China and its democratic economic partners, and one that reflects very different historical experiences and views about the type and extent of the role the state has with civil society (Teets, 2014). Significantly, there is absolutely no guarantee that China's economic and political development is going to replicate the experience of the West and 'converge' on some sort of international best practise. On the contrary, China has—until relatively recently, at least—been accumulating significant amounts of 'soft power', manifest in the number of admirers that can be found of the 'China model' of development (Halper, 2010; Jacques, 2009). This is why the China challenge is one that extends beyond simple military confrontation, worrying and potentially catastrophic though that may be.

Hope Springs…

Part of the rapidly emerging conventional wisdom about the bilateral relationship between the United States and China is that they—and by implication, the rest of the world —are being drawn inexorably into a second Cold War. According to one of the more perceptive and persuasive observers of this possibility, Michael Lind (2018), 'Cold War II has been caused by the bid of the United States—the sole global power at the time—for unlimited global hegemony in the 1990s and 2000s, and China and Russia's hostile reaction to the American power grab'. In this reading, traditional realist balance of power politics explains the behaviour of other states

worried about the possible consequences of a ‘unipolar’ actor intent on remaking the world in its own image. That such efforts have recently ended in catastrophic failure and undermined the material basis of American primacy, should not blind us to the persuasiveness of the underlying argument: overly dominant and assertive great powers can be unsettling and even directly threatening for less powerful states, and it would be surprising if they did not respond to this.

What takes more explaining, perhaps, is why some states choose to enthusiastically ‘bandwagon’ with the dominant state—despite the fact that this flies in the face of mainstream international relations theory—potentially leaving the junior partner susceptible to pressure from the dominant power (Jerdén, 2017). It is not necessary to rehearse the extensive literature on the nature of alliance politics and the dangers of ‘entrapment’ or the fear of abandonment to recognise that policymakers who consider themselves to be strategically vulnerable and incapable of surviving on their own are more likely to ingratiate themselves with their more powerful patrons and find genuine policy independence difficult to achieve (Snyder, 2007). The point to emphasise here is that where an alliance is supposedly based on civilisational values that—in part, at least—transcend normal alliance politics, the junior partner will feel more comfortable allying with a ‘friend’ rather than a notional ‘enemy’.

Not only are such relationships a reminder of just how much ideas and inherited cultural proclivities can influence foreign policy behaviour, but they also assume particular salience at a time when some observers argue that ‘unless the United States acts to countervail it, China is likely to become the undisputed master of East Asia, from Japan to Indonesia, by the late 2020s’ (Westad, 2019: 90). Even in Australia, some prominent observers have argued that, with or without President Trump, there is a real possibility that the United States will be unwilling to risk direct conflict with an increasingly powerful PRC and will consequently gradually withdraw from the ‘Asia–Pacific’ (White, 2017), or at least those parts that are actively contested by China.

Somewhat paradoxically, despite the mainstream security discourse in Australia being firmly predicated on the idea that the country’s security and continuing independence is wholly dependent on the strategic alliance with the United States—no matter who may be its president—this has not led to a concomitant diminution in defence spending. On the contrary, in a further irony, being a reliable alliance partner is judged to require more outlays on new weapons systems as a way of demonstrating alliance credibility. Despite the fact that even this increased defence spending will not provide Australia with the capability to independently influence the strategic policies and behaviour of China, this has not stopped its supporters from making it a key part of government policy; policy that has been subjected to remarkably little public debate or scrutiny (Gottliebsen, 2018).

The response in China is entirely predictable. Not only has Australia’s—or America’s, for that matter—increased defence spending had no discernible impact on China’s strategic behaviour or ambitions, but it has confirmed the belief in the PRC that Australia is simply a compliant stalking horse for a declining great power (Anonymous, 2020). To be sure, there is much that is self-serving and generalised about such assertions, but they feed into a Chinese narrative about American attempts

to contain China, which are being assisted by the likes of Australia and that other great historical nemesis of China, Japan. It is not difficult to see why so many in China might think such views might be accurate. The 'Quadrilateral Dialogue' (Quad) that has been enthusiastically championed by Australia and Japan in particular, and which additionally involves the United States and India, can be read as a systematic attempt to contain China and respond to its destabilising, assertive foreign and strategic policies (Biegun, 2020).

Whatever the merits of such policies or the claims the Quad members make about the need to respond to China's rise, there is little doubt that they are not well received in China and that this adds an additional layer of complexity and bad feeling to the relationship with Australia. 'Security dilemmas' are notorious for being impossible to overcome and corrosive of good relationships between states. The deterioration of the diplomatic and discursive connections between China and Australia make improving strategic relations and perceptions especially problematic, which is unfortunate to say the least when Australia, and to a lesser extent China, find themselves in the middle of intersecting economic and public policy crises. This might not seem an auspicious moment to advocate a reset of the relationship, but given its continuing fragility, even unlikely ideas may have their uses and actually be driven by underlying material reality.

The Great Environmental Reset?

If there is one thing that China and Australia do have in common it is a rapidly deteriorating natural environment that will, according to the overwhelming scientific consensus, have a huge negative impact on their respective economies, strategic outlooks, not to mention the citizens of both countries, of course (Lenton et al., 2019; Worland, 2020). Given the history of ineffective international cooperation to address what former prime minister Kevin Rudd famously described as 'the greatest moral challenge of our time', it is hard to be optimistic about the prospects of dealing with what might now be described as the greatest security challenge of our time (Beeson, 2019). Nevertheless, hope springs eternal, and the immediate and existential nature of the threat posed by unmitigated climate change could actually provide the basis for some otherwise unlikely cooperation.

Both Australia and China—like every other country on the planet—have very powerful reasons for wanting to do something about a problem that is already affecting both countries in dramatic and increasingly visible ways. As the driest continent on Earth, Australia is especially exposed to the destructive impact of continuing global warming, despite the incumbent government's difficulty in admitting this or its own responsibility in exacerbating the problem (Fernyhough, 2020). In China, the impact of environmental degradation has already been profound, and not just as a consequence of global warming. To be sure, increased global temperatures are exacerbating China's water scarcity problems (and, paradoxically enough, its susceptibility to flooding), but such global impacts come in addition to other problems caused by an

historically instrumental, short-term approach to the environment (Economy, 2007; Shapiro, 2001). Crucially, the scale of China's problems are already having an impact on the economy and—even more problematically from the perspective of the PRC's unelected ruling elites—fomenting social unrest amongst the expanding ranks of the middle classes (Steinhardt & Wu, 2016).

Remarkably enough, however, authoritarian China has arguably made a greater contribution to climate change mitigation than any other country on Earth. Apart from the notorious one child policy—without which there might be 500 million more upwardly mobile, consumer-oriented people in the PRC—China is the biggest investor in renewable energy in the world (Chen & Lees, 2016). To be sure, it is still investing in new coal-fired power plants, which explains the symbiotic trade relationship with Australia, but there is little doubt that the PRC's leadership understands the climate science and the need to follow through on some of its claims about creating a world-leading 'ecological civilization' (Hanson, 2019). Australia's current leaders, by contrast, live in a perpetual state of politically motivated denial about either the immediacy of the problem or their role in helping to make it worse.

To be fair, some of the Morrison government's arguments make sense, at least when judged from a highly parochial, short-term perspective: it really won't make that much difference to dangerous greenhouse gas emission levels if Australia shuts down all its coal mines tomorrow. If the likes of the US, India and the PRC don't take similarly drastic actions, there is little hope of anyone halting the rate of global warming. If we are serious about addressing the greatest collective action problem we have ever faced, however, stopping coal exports to China is actually vital, and something the PRC government ought to actually welcome. To suggest that either outcome is likely would be the ultimate triumph of hope over experience, but global warming is going to profoundly reshape international relations one way or another, as is increasingly recognised by the security establishment in the US (Campbell et al., 2007). The hope must be it is in ways that we actually try to determine ourselves, rather than the environment doing it for us.

Unfortunately, the basis for cooperation at the ideational or policy level is not good. Australia's demand that an independent inquiry be instigated into the origins of the Coronavirus epidemic, predicably infuriated the Chinese, and triggered a series of geoeconomic retaliations (Raby, 2020). The fact that the virus appears to have been caused by our collective treatment of, and continuing intrusion into, the natural environment highlights how multifaceted the challenge of controlling the problems created by the breakdown of the biosphere can be, however (Vidal, 2020). Equally saliently, China's highly effective response to the pandemic stands in marked contrast to that of many liberal-democracies, especially Australia's key strategic ally, the United States (Beeson & Chako, 2020).

Does all of this mean that Australia will switch sides in the emerging Cold War for environmental reasons? Hardly. But it might mean that regional cooperation to address common climate problems could become increasingly attractive as the impact of global warming becomes increasingly clear and undeniable. In the absence of climate leadership from the United States, the PRC has an opportunity to pose as the saviour of the environment and improve its relationship with counties like

Australia in the process. Given that there are very credible plans that could make Australia a renewable energy superpower (Garnaut, 2019), the potential to reset the trade relationship along more sustainable environmental and ideational lines is actually slightly less unlikely than it may seem.

Concluding Remarks

Economic complementarity can produce unlikely partnerships. Material imperatives can be just as influential as the ideational variety; perhaps more so, especially when the welfare and prosperity of the nation are at stake. The possibility that such partnerships might have a benign, pacific effect on the participants, still looks credible, despite all the recent upheavals. Perhaps the remarkable thing is that the relationship is recognised and treated as consequential by both China and Australia, and that bilateral trade continues despite all the apparent ill-feeling and suspicion. This possibility should not have surprised either liberal trade theorists or the diminishing band of Marxist scholars in China. Indeed, if there was one thing Marx got unambiguously right, it is that we make our history in circumstances that are not of our choosing: this not only includes our economic and strategic partners or rivals, but also the very material environment within which such relationships are conducted.

In both China and Australia our dialectical relationship with the biosphere is presenting us with daunting challenges and uncomfortable trade-offs between short and long-term goals, and between economic development and environmental sustainability. None of these contradictions and tensions will be easily realised; they won't be realised at all without unprecedented and unlikely levels of international cooperation. And yet China and Australia have a greater need and potential capacity than most nations, even if the contingent driving forces of their respective political and economic systems look very different. At a more fundamental level, however, figuring out what sustainable economic relationships look like in an inherently expansionary capitalist system is a challenge for the ages. Given that it has become increasingly commonplace to suggest that civilisation of any sort is facing real and immediate danger (Spratt & Dunlop, 2019), it is difficult to think or a more compelling reason to think creatively and cooperatively about this bilateral relationship—and every other one for that matter. We must only hope that our respective leaders are up to the challenge.

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Connected Through Texts and Cultural Practices

National Extinctions: China, Australia and Narratives of Extinction

Fan Ni and Tony Hughes-d'Aeth

Abstract China and Australia have many differences, but each became nations in the modern sense in the early twentieth century. In this chapter, we explore the particular role that animal extinctions play in the respective national narratives of China and Australia. The connection between species extinction and nation might seem surprising at first, but in the national era, the environment is often seen as expressive of a national spirit or essence, and nationalism typically draws on the environment to provide a natural basis for its imagined unity. In this chapter, we compare environmental writing in China and Australia by focusing on two celebrated novels which detail extinction, Jiang Rong's *Wolf Totem* (狼图腾 Láng Túténg, 2004) and Julia Leigh's *The Hunter* (1999). Drawing on Ursula K. Heise's book *Imagining Extinctions* (2016), we propose that these two novels of the disappearing wolf—one Mongolian and one Tasmanian—are narratives of national extinction which give expression to 'hopes that a part of one's national identity and culture might be preserved, revived, or changed for the better if an endangered species could be allowed to survive or an extinct one could be recovered' (Heise, 2016, 49). Moreover, we also contend that extinctions increasingly take on a transnational significance, particularly in the case of novels such as *The Hunter* and *Wolf Totem* which, as well as being celebrated within their national contexts, became global novels (each adapted into films) and circulated in the global literary and cinematic systems.

Keywords Species extinction · Jiang Rong's *Wolf Totem* · Julia Leigh's *The Hunter* · National narratives

In the national era, the environment is often seen as expressive of some national spirit or essence, and nationalism typically draws on the environment to provide a natural basis for its imagined unity. In literary studies, the analysis of creative literature in environmental terms is known as eco-criticism, and it emerged in the

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United States in the 1980s, spreading quickly through the Anglophone world and then beyond, including East Asia in the 1990s. During this time, there was also an ecological turn within literature, with literary texts dramatising environmental problems with increasing frequency, attempting to deal with issues such as species and habitat loss, pollution and contamination, and more recently, climate change. So, in the contemporary period, we have a growth in both eco-writing and eco-criticism (Buell, 2001; Glotfelty 1996).

In this chapter, we would like to compare environmental writing in China and Australia by focusing on two novels which detail extinction, Jiang Rong's *Wolf Totem* (《狼图腾》*Láng Túténg*, 2004) and Julia Leigh's *The Hunter* (1999). We want to explore whether extinction has a particular *national* quality by comparing these two novels. Here, we are drawing on the proposition made by Ursula K. Heise in her book *Imagining Extinctions* that 'narrating the endangerment of culturally significant species becomes a vehicle for expressing unease with modernization processes' and that extinctions are used as a 'synecdoche' for loss within 'the cultural history of modernity' (32).

> [E]legiac stories about declining species often index histories of modernization and colonization … [In] extinction narratives … the loss of a particular species comes to stand in for the broader perception that human relationships to the natural world have changed for the worse. As such stories unfold, part of national identity and culture itself seems to be lost along with the disappearance of a nonhuman species … worries about nature, on one hand, and on the other hand, hopes that a part of one's national identity and culture might be preserved, revived, or changed for the better if an endangered species could be allowed to survive or an extinct one could be recovered. (48–49)

Heise cites Judith Butler's assertion in *Precarious Life* that we should view 'the obituary as an act of nation-building' (Butler, 24; qtd in Heise, 34). In that sense, species extinctions can be perversely sanctified as acts of national mourning. But as well as the way that extinction narratives function as what Fredric Jameson called 'national allegory', we also wish to consider whether it is possible that extinctions might also be increasingly taking on a transnational significance. This possibility is made more plausible by the fact that both *The Hunter* and *Wolf Totem*, as well as being celebrated within their national contexts, became global novels, and then global films, circulating in the global cultural sphere.

Wolf Totem is semi-autobiographical and draws on the experience of its author (Jiang Rong is the pen-name of Lü Jiamin) during the Cultural Revolution. The novel details the ambitious (and indeed disastrous) project of the Chinese government in the 1960s and 70s to turn the grasslands of Inner Mongolia into crop farms. The novel's narrator Chen Zhen is, like Lü himself, a man sent from Beijing to Inner Mongolia, where he lived with a nomadic Mongolian family. There, Chen becomes fascinated with the relationship that the Mongolian herders have with the grassland wolves, who are the apex predators in this bioregion. While the wolves would seem to be the natural enemies of the herders, instead (at least in the novel) they revere the animal and it forms an essential part of their spiritual life. As the story presents, they worship the wolf, as their totem. As the conversion of grasslands to farmlands gathers pace, the wolves themselves are also hunted into extinction from the inner

Mongolian plateau. In that sense, the wolves are significant not just for themselves, but as a metonym for a whole way of life, the ancient dispensation of human nomadic farming in the steppes of Eurasia.

Julia Leigh's novel *The Hunter* is set in Tasmania and also concerns the extinction of an ancient apex predator, the thylacine, known variously as the Tasmanian Tiger or the Tasmanian Wolf. The thylacine was the largest marsupial predator in Australia at the time of colonisation. It was once widespread in Australian but had become extinct on the mainland, probably around 3000 years ago, roughly coinciding with the arrival of the dingo. However, it survived in Tasmania, only to be driven to extinction by the arrival of European colonists, who exterminated the animal as a threat to livestock, in particular sheep. The last known thylacine died in 1936, though for a long time there were unconfirmed sightings, and the presence of the animal took on the quality of myth. In this respect, the case of the thylacine is quite similar to the extinction of wolves in Japan. The Hokkaido wolf became extinct in the late nineteenth century, while the last known Honshu wolf died in 1905, but sightings of these wolves continued throughout the twentieth century. Such 'ghost species', says Heise, exemplify the way that 'the extinction of a charismatic species is integrated in cultural history and become[s] a symbol of crisis' (39), that is, the crisis in identity caused by the alienating effects of industrial modernity. Leigh's novel is set in the present and follows a character identified in the text as 'M' who has been sent to covertly capture a thylacine on behalf of an unnamed bio-science company who wants to acquire the genetic material from this animal, again, for an undisclosed purpose. To mount his expeditions, M befriends a single mother, and her two children, at the foot of the ranges where the thylacine is thought to be still living. In the end, M does indeed find the thylacine, killing her and harvesting her reproductive organs.

There are significant differences between *Wolf Totem* and *The Hunter*. *The Hunter* is a slender, taut novel—almost a novella—written in a spare style, while *Wolf Totem* is lush and sprawling. While *Wolf Totem* was a runaway bestseller in China, *The Hunter* was only modestly successful as a publishing phenomenon. On the other hand, as literary fiction, Leigh's novel has received significant critical attention and is taught in universities and schools, and has attracted the attention of international writers like Toni Morrison, J. M. Coetzee, Don DeLillo and Hillary Mantel. *The Hunter* is widely admired as a penetrating study of the limits of the natural and for its exploration of the human–animal interface. *Wolf Totem*, by contrast, is considered a popular rather than an intellectual novel. And, despite its popular success, *Wolf Totem* has also been controversial. Some scholars praise the book's environmental concern because the story defends the indigenous knowledge of grassland ecological balance, showing how the state-decreed conversion of the grassland into cropland became a human and environmental catastrophe (Zhang, 2013; Lei, 2005; Li, 2013). However, other scholars have disparaged the book for showing dehumanising tendencies (Ding, 2011; Li, 2005), and the German sinologist Wolfgang Kubin (qtd in *Eastern Morning Post,* 2006) found the book to display a proto-fascist linkage of race and destiny.[1] Notable Mongolian writer Guo (2015) and some other scholars (e.g. Ye, 2006) have also disputed the ethnography in the novel, claiming there is no evidence that the wolf held a totemic place within the traditional belief systems of Mongolian nomads.[2]

Yet, while *Wolf Totem* and *The Hunter* are in many ways very different novels, there are also some striking parallels. Each of these novels stands out as probably the most significant eco-novel in their respective national literary cultures. Both books were adapted as successful films, with the film *Wolf Totem* released in 2015 (a Chinese-French co-production, directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud) and *The Hunter* released in 2011, starring the American actor Willem Dafoe as M. At the level of their narratives, both books, as has been noted, revolve around the extinction of an ancient apex predator which becomes suddenly inconvenient to new forms of human agriculture and is vanquished as a result. They are both, indeed, novels about wolves. Even though the thylacine, or 'Tasmanian Wolf', is a marsupial rather than a placental mammal, its resemblance to canine species is an arresting example of convergent evolution in which an almost identical body pattern evolves separately. Thus, in terms of the symbolic coordinates of settler Australia, the thylacine is a wolf and evokes the associations of that animal. More particularly, we might say that Leigh's novel, like Jiang Rong's, is concerned with a *totemic wolf*. Another aspect that *The Hunter* shares with *Wolf Totem* is the way that M's passage to the thylacine, just like Chen's passage to the wolf, is mediated by his adoption into a localised family. In each case, this host family causes a revaluation in the subject. In M's case, the family (Lucy and her two children) does not ultimately divert M from his ecocidal goal, but they do detain him and form a seemingly unwanted complication to his instrumental needs.

A less obvious similarity is that both *Wolf Totem* and *The Hunter* are *postcolonial* novels, where we understand 'post' to mean 'in the aftermath'. Kylie (2010) has drawn out the postcolonial dimension of *The Hunter*, even though it is not necessarily evident at first blush, and we return to this matter below. In the case of *Wolf Totem*, colonialism is not a lens which features prominently in the analysis of Chinese literature. But in *Wolf Totem,* colonisation does indeed form the novel's explicit content as it depicts the destruction of an indigenous people, their way of life and the natural world by an invading agricultural modernity. The point of witness is that of the humanitarian anthropologist, Chen, who is both an emissary of the invader and its critic. But Chen is also ethically complicated by his own pursuit of ethnographic knowledge, and despite his subjective misgivings, he can be understood to be conquering the indigene in a different way. He is not making off with their land, but their sacred knowledge; in short, their *totem.* In this sense, he does not seem so different from M in *The Hunter* who has been tasked with tracking and capturing the thylacine, and acquiring its genetic information. This element is exacerbated by a lengthy afterword in *Wolf Totem* in which the author claims that the wolf totem is not only a feature of Mongolian cosmology, but in fact the ancient (and now forgotten) totem of the Han Chinese people (See 'Rational inquiry: A lecture and dialogues on wolf totem'理性探掘: 关于狼图腾的讲座与对话 364–408).

Double Displacement: *The Hunter*

It is notable that *The Hunter* only deals in the very slightest terms with Indigenous Australians, when M is briefly sent musing on their fate by his encounter with a ring of blackened stones (57) in a remote part of the mountains. On the one hand, this is not especially surprising, since in fairness to Leigh and her story, *The Hunter* is taking place long after the convulsive colonial violence that raged through Tasmania in the 1820s to the 1830s, a time which many historians, and indeed contemporary witnesses, described as a war—the so-called Black War, or Tasmanian War. Unlike *Wolf Totem*, or indeed a later Tasmanian novel like Rohan Wilson's *The Roving Party* (2011), *The Hunter* is not a frontier novel. But, on the other hand, as a figure, M resembles quite closely the kind of frontiersman that is a common feature in the cultural imaginary of settler-colonial states like Australia, Canada and the United States. He is able to live and survive off the land, even in the harsh alpine regions of Tasmania's west—a modern day Daniel Boone. As Rob Nixon wrote in his review of *The Hunter* for the *New York Times*, M is 'an old-style frontiersman with a high-tech twist' (Nixon, 2000; qtd in Crane, 2010: 117). So, while we are not apparently on a frontier, in the colonial sense of this word, we do find ourselves in the company of a frontiersman.

This curious situation can be partially understood if we think of the close connection that exists in the Australian psyche between the thylacine and the Aboriginal Tasmanians. There are thought to have been from three to fifteen thousand Aboriginal people living in Tasmania at the time of colonisation in 1803, but the population collapsed dramatically and numbered only around 400 by 1835, and this had sunk to 47 twelve years later. When the Tasmanian woman Truganini died in 1876, it was reported across the world that the last Tasmanian Aborigine had died, and the race was extinct. For more than a century, the story of the Tasmanian people circulated as a sad, though inevitable consequence of history arriving on the doorstep of primitive peoples. This was still more or less how the matter was popularly conceived until the 1980s. However, in the past 40 years, there has been a substantial renaissance in Tasmanian Aboriginal culture, and the declared 'extinction' of this people was shown to rely on a very narrow and racialist conception of what constituted a people. Today, as many as 23,000 people identify as Tasmanian Aboriginals.

It is important to trace two key displacements that sit underneath the way Australians might read *The Hunter.* The first is the displacement of Aboriginal genocide onto the extermination of the thylacine. At the psychic level, there is a close connection between the fates of the thylacine and the Aboriginal Tasmanians. If, for instance, one googles the words 'Tasmania Extinction', the first result is the Wikipedia page, 'Aboriginal Tasmanians', and the second is the Wikipedia page, 'Thylacine'. In her discussion of Leigh's novel, Kylie Crane notes: 'Like the Tasmanian tiger, the Tasmanian Aborigine is a mythic being … both species widely believed to be extinct' (114). The second displacement that operates in *The Hunter* is the fact that Tasmania functions as a microcosm of Australia—as if the Tasmanian island was a miniaturisation and intensification of Australia as the island continent. So, while

human, animal and plant extinctions raged throughout Australia—and continue to—it is the Tasmanian situation that has become exemplary. The Australian Jewish comedian, Jonathan Safran, once said that Jews are just like everybody else … only more so. And, according to this same logic, Tasmania is just like Australia … only more so. Theirs is a difference, in other words, born of displacement. Just as Jews became the bearers of culture's excess (its abject remainder), Tasmania carries the excess of Australia. For example, Australia was settled as a penal colony, but it is in Tasmania where convictism is widely thought to have reached its apogee. This is also what explains the appearance of the 'Tasmanian Gothic' as a literary mode, first described by Jim Davidson in 1989, and since developed by critics such as Gerry Turcotte and Philip Mead. The gothic is a mode of excess in which cultural qualities that exceed official discourse re-emerge as supernatural and persecutory agents. We can see the mechanism of double displacement (Australia onto Tasmania, and Aboriginal genocide onto thylacine extinction) as a way of processing cultural excess. And it is in this way that *The Hunter* becomes a story of what we are calling 'national extinction'. By this we mean, a story in which the elimination of a species is made to talk to the limits of nationhood, and to its excluded excess.

Wolfology and National Character: *Wolf Totem*

One of the peculiarities about *Wolf Totem* is that the protagonist expresses his obsession with the wolves both as an environmental concern and as an 'obsession with China' (to borrow the term from Hsia Chih-tsing (or C. T. Hsia 夏志清 1971)), a deep, insistent concern with the fate of the Chinese nation. By singling out the 'obsession with China', Hsia wants to designate what he sees as 'a moral burden in modern Chinese literature' engendered by 'patriotic provinciality' and powered by a compensatory 'naiveté of faith' (Hsia, 1971: 536). Hsia regards the 'obsession with China' as a flaw which mars modern Chinese literature throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and precludes the writing from developing as a cosmopolitan critique which addresses 'the illness of modern civilizations'. Although Hsia's comments would certainly be contested in China and are based on a Western modernist paradigm, his observation helps pinpoint the ambivalences of *Wolf Totem*. Most particularly, Chen Zhen's enduring concern about the fate of the Chinese nation complicates the discussion about environmentalism, identity politics and cultural criticism. In joining both complexes, the demise of the wolf and the fate of the Chinese nation, the novel clearly displays the quality we are calling 'national extinction'.

In its graphic depiction of the ecological destruction that took place in the 1960s and 1970s, *Wolf Totem* does not just act as a plea for ecological preservation in the grasslands but also serves to reflect on Chinese modernity by reinitiating the discussion of its national fate, since this destruction took place in the name of national advancement. *Wolf Totem* is thus also a novel about 'Chinese national character (*guominxin* 国民性)', a popular topic in China since the late nineteenth century. The concept of 'national character' was introduced into China from Meiji Japan by Liang

Qichao (梁启超), a prominent Chinese intellectual and political activist.[3] Liang had fled to Japan after the failure of the Reform of the Wuxu ('100 Days' Reform') (戊戌变法) in 1898 (Lv, 2020 47).[4] In a famous series of essays, Liang spoke in favour of national renewal, addressing 'the renewed people' (新民) that have discarded the old morality and embraced the modernity that gave Western nations such a decided advantage (Liang 1902, qtd from Lu, 2020). The issue of 'Chinese national character' was developed by Lu Xun (Li Dongmu, 2019 25–26) and the generation radicalised in the May Fourth Movement. The issue of national character remains a persistent feature in the Chinese intelligentsia, with contributions such as Boyang (柏杨)'s *The Ugly Chinese* (《丑陋的中国人》, 1985), and Sun Lung-kee's (孙隆基), *The Chinese National Character From Nationhood to Individuality* (or *The Deep Structure of Chinese Culture*《中国文化的深层结构》, 1983, and republished in 2003) and *The Not-yet-weaned People* (《未断奶的民族》, 1996). National character was also at the heart of the recent and controversial bestseller *The Giant Baby's Country* (《巨婴国》, 2016) by the psychologist Wu Zhihong (武志红).

This concern with national character might also be described as postcolonial. While China was never formally colonised, it was forced to cede territory and sign blatantly unequal and exploitative treaties with Western imperial powers. The humiliation of this situation for an Empire that was used to thinking itself as endowed with a heavenly universality, caused a profound crisis which can be seen in the 'national character' debates. Thus, while it seems strange that Chen Zhen, the protagonist and narrator of *Wolf Totem*, and a youth from Beijing, would seek the 'cultural roots' of the Han Chinese in the Mongolian grasslands, the historical context of national humiliation offers an explanation. As noted, the novel concludes with a 'lecture' by Chen Zhen situated as an afterword to the main narrative. This lengthy tract is usually omitted from English translations of the novel. In this lecture, Chen Zhen explains that the ancestors of the Han Chinese, the *Huaxia* (华夏) ethnicity, were nomadic people like the ancient Mongols. But as they adopted agriculture, and then a feudal hierarchy, they lost their primitive 'wolfish spirit'. So, he reasons, it is only through emulating their primordial Mongolian kin, who have kept this ancient connection to the wolf, that the Han Chinese can regain their lost vitality. In an interview, Jiang Rong (with Ding Chenxi, Yingni, 2004), stated: 'I hope we Han Chinese can therefore realize that we are actually nomadic people's descendants. Han Chinese are both the descendants of the agrarian people and that of the nomadic people'. In the novel's lecture, Chen Zhen tells his listeners: 'Wolf totem is the most precious local spiritual resources for the contemporary Chinese to change its national character. "The sleeping lion of the Orient" will be really awaken and spirited because of the revival of wolf totem spirit'[5] (377).

In this way, Chen Zhen's *guominxin* revitalisation project in *Wolf Totem* gives new meaning to the Confucian saying called 'It is from the remote rural regions that one may be able to find the lost rituals in the court' (礼失而求诸野).[6] While the character 野 originally refers to periphery, rustic spaces remote from the centre of civilisation, in modern Chinese, 野 literally means 'wild' and 荒野 is the equivalent vocabulary for 'wilderness'. In Chen Zhen's *xungen* (root-seeking) pilgrimage, it is exactly the Mongolian grassland wilderness, with its elusive, enigmatic and potent wolves, that

is the source of his rejuvenation and, as he explains in his lecture, the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. This wolf totem, as Chen sees it, is the antidote for the ossifying rituals 礼 that have destroyed the vitality of the Han Chinese. Therefore, he argues, to catch up with the 'Western modern wolf' (西方文明狼), the Han Chinese need to preserve their minority Mongolian borderland in a primitive and 'natural' state. Chen sees himself as being carrying on Lu Xun's 'Outcry' (or *Call* to *Arms*《呐喊》) to modernise China. Also, like a physician, Chen feels that he has finally diagnosed the pathogen at the root of China's illness, which is the sheep-like conformity that has settled into the Chinese 'national character'. His prescription is to inject 'the wolfish blood of the Nomadic pastoralism' (游牧民族的狼性血液) (374) into a Han Chinese made soft by centuries of agrarian settlement.

Conclusion: Extinction and Comparative Critique

It remains to draw these two novels back together. Analysing them separately reveals seemingly distinct mobilisations of the concept of extinction. *Wolf Totem* seems the more openly ideological. Its faux-anthropology provides a relatively flimsy cover for an impassioned allegory of nationalist rejuvenation. Chen's vitalist account of Chinese national character is a highly tendentious characterisation of a complex history, and manifestly absurd in most respects. Nor does the fetishisation of the wolf and the 'wolfish spirit' as a proxy for subjective and national potency seem to have much in common with ecological principles of deference, interconnectedness and relationality.

On the other hand, the novel repeatedly highlights the counter-intuitive idea that wolves are central to life on the plains. The wolves would seem, for instance, to be the natural enemy of the nomadic pastoralists in that they prey sporadically on their herds. But in the novel, the herdsmen see the bigger picture in which the wolves also control populations of gazelles that would otherwise significantly reduce the pastures their sheep depend on. At this level, the novel echoes the famous ecological essay by Aldo Leopold, 'Thinking like a Mountain', in which the removal of predators allows deer to proliferate, strip the mountain of its forest cover and cause uncontrolled erosion. Thinking like a mountain allows one to see the crucial role that predators play. This capacity to think relationally and iteratively at the level of the ecosystem—or as Leopold puts it, *like a mountain*—is presented as a revelation to Chen and a sign of the wisdom of the Mongolian nomads. By contrast, the Han Chinese socialist modernisers who have come to these ancient grasslands to transform them into grain factories are exposed as disastrously devoid of this capacity to think ecologically.

Certainly, *Wolf Totem* does repeatedly shift its ecological values toward the debate of Chinese 'national character' and, in truth, these debates are never very far away at any moment in the text. According to Shu Chunyan (2013 93), *Wolf Totem* is a notable example of political criticism under the guise of 'criticism of national character' (国民性批判) because the regime has a relatively higher tolerance for cultural criticism, and in that sense, Chen's 'often deliberately radical cultural statements' are tolerated.

However, ecological relations are not reduced to the status of pure national allegory. When the grassland is destroyed, for instance, Chen comments disconsolately: '"the sandstorm of the political system" is more terrible than the sandstorm from the desertificating grassland, for the former is one of the real causes of the latter' (356). In this statement, we see that the destruction of the grassland is caused by flaws in the national character (or its 'political system'). But we also see that the destruction of the grassland is the *evidence* of these flaws. And in this sense, the novel seeks to tether the health of the environment to the success of the state and of social life more generally.

In the case of *The Hunter*, the extent to which it functions as an ecological novel rests on a number of grounds, but seems most directly centred on the way that M is figured as the embodiment of a mentality or underlying logic. Indeed, the figure of M is cast as an agent of transnational capitalism—a soulless machine harvesting genetic information for use as biotechnology. Complicating this is the intriguing way that M also finds himself identifying with the thylacine. In the long, painstaking tracking of his quarry, we see M, as it were, *becoming animal*. In other words, identifying with the deep specificity of its world—or, in Leopoldian terms, *thinking like a thylacine* (Hughes-d'Aeth, 2002 26; Freeman, 2013: 192 & 200). But the major difference we find when comparing *The Hunter* with *Wolf Totem* is the status of nation. In *Wolf Totem*, the nation (and more specifically 'national character') was seen as causative of extinction, and crucially the nation (i.e. China) was seen as the responsible party. The effect of the narrative was to demand a reckoning with the goals and principles that could so callously ruin a world. By contrast, in *The Hunter*, extinction is not presented as caused by the folly of nationalist modernisations, even though that was certainly a major cause of the thylacine's destruction. Although there is a sensitive rendering of the Tasmanian mountain wilderness, at a certain level, the story could be anywhere, or even on another planet. The novel's international circulation has been driven by its evocativeness as ecological allegory rather than for its display of Australian local colour. Indeed, the fact of nationality is quite muted in Leigh's novel, to the extent that the question remains open whether we were correct to regard *The Hunter* as a novel of 'national extinction'.

The conundrum was partly solved by exposing how the link back to nation in *The Hunter* functions implicitly and, to a large extent, extra-textually. For, as we saw, the national component depends on the particular resonance that the thylacine has within the Australian national imaginary, and followed what we described as a logic of double displacement (Australia onto Tasmania, and Indigenous people onto the thylacine). Yet, just as the comparison with *The Hunter* helped expose the essentially (post)colonial quality of *Wolf Totem*, the fact of nation in *The Hunter*, and its effective submersion, is helpfully exposed by its comparison with *Wolf Totem*. In this respect, while it does avoid the clumsy co-option of peoples and species into the rehabilitation of 'national character' that mark Jiang Rong's novel, Leigh's novel might be accused of an opposite failing; namely, the eliding of national responsibility for the destruction of peoples and species. This destruction, after all, is not simply a glaring failing in Australia's colonial past but, to use the phrase coined by Lorenzo Veracini, a pervasive feature of its 'settler colonial present'. Similarly, the

deracinated transnational capitalism of M seems to deplete responsibility for actions that Australians have taken and continue to take that destroy the environment. A recent example was the particular role that the Adani coalmine played in the Federal election of 2018. The mine, like many extractive projects in Australia, was financed by a transnational corporation, but the voters of Queensland (where the mine was situated) voted strongly in favour of the conservative parties who supported the mine. The opposition Labour party has since adjusted its position to offer qualified support for a mine, even though the mine will have devastating ecological impacts, and the Labour party is notionally in favour of environmental protection. In this respect, at least, it might well be helpful for Australians to begin a more searching debate of their 'national character', which tends to remain postulated within national discourse as an unexamined virtue.

Notes

1. '*Wolf Totem* is fascism to a German; and this book is shameful for the Chinese people'. Wolfgang Kubin in an interview in 2006, *Eastern Morning Post*.
2. 'Historically, we Mongols first believed in Shamanism and then converted to Buddhism. Wolves are the natural enemies of us Mongols; the wolves have no team spirit but fight with each other. Also, the wolves are greedy, selfish, and cruel, propagating the wolfish spirit is misanthropic fascism. We reserve our legal rights to defend our ancestors' and our people's culture'. Guo Xuebo in his *Sina* microblog.
3. National character was closely connected to national building in Meiji Japan, and books such as *Ten Essays on National Character* (1907) by Haga Yaichi (芳賀 矢一, 1867–1927) influenced Chinese intellectuals such as Liang Qichao and Lu Xun.
4. Reform of the Wuxu year was a short-lived socio-political reform in late Qing dynasty China. Led by the then young Guangxu Emperor and a group of reform-minded young Confucian intellectuals, the reform only lasted 104 days from 11 June to 22 September, 1898.
5. The English translation that appeared in this paper is based on Howard Goldblatt's translation, but some passages (such as this line) are translated by NI Fan because Goldblatt sifted out them from the original book in the English edition. The page numbers are therefore aligned with the Chinese edition.
6. It is generally believed that Confucius (551–479 BC) spent his life travelling between different states during the Spring and Autumn period (770–476/403 BC), trying to persuade these kings to revive the rituals of the Western Zhou Dynasty and to govern the country benevolently. In *the History of the Former Han Dynasty* by Gu Ban, Confucius is reported as saying that the old rituals, though lost in the royal courts, can still be found in the most remote rural regions. (《汉书. 卷三十. 艺文志》: 仲尼有言: "礼失而求诸野。"方今去圣久远, 道术缺废, 无所更索, 彼九家者, 不犹愈于野乎?若能修六艺之术, 而观此九家之言, 舍短取长, 则可以通万方之略矣。).

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Yiwarra Kuju—One Road: Storytelling and History Making in Aboriginal Art

David Carter

Abstract The notion of "connected civilizations, connected humanity" does not refer only to connections between nations, as if nations defined ethnically or culturally homogenous peoples. Within nations there are equally challenging and potentially enriching relations between ethnic minority and majority populations and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. And increasingly we have seen "transnational" relations developing at once beneath and beyond the level of the nation: for example, in terms of what one recent book calls "Indigenous transnationalism" (Ng, *Indigenous transnationalism: Alexis Wright's Carpentaria*, Giramondo, 2018); or, again, in the links that certain Chinese scholars have begun to explore between Australian Indigenous and Chinese ethnic minority communities through traditional story-telling and other creative expressions. This chapter will explore these issues through the case study of a major cultural project and series of exhibitions developed first in the remote north-west of Australia, bringing together Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists, storytellers, film-makers and curators, then presented nationally, and finally taken to international audiences as simultaneously local-Indigenous, national and international. The artworks and stories produced re-examine the Indigenous and colonial histories of a specific region in Australia but in such a way as to address broader questions of connected civilizations and entangled histories.

Keywords Indigenous Art · Indigenous transnationalism · Indigenous and Chinese creative connections

I

This essay began life in Chiba Prefecture, to the east and south of Tokyo, Japan, and took me to a place in my own country to which I had never been, remote north-western Australia. It was at the Ichihara Lakeside Museum in Chiba that I first saw the exhibition *One Road: Aboriginal Art from Australia's Deserts* in October 2016

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(Kubota, 2016).[1] The exhibition itself had already been on a long journey, having been shown earlier in Osaka and Kagawa (Shikoku Island), and later heading to Hokkaido, while from 2008 associated exhibitions, drawing on a range of different materials, had been held locally in Port Hedland, Wiluna, Perth, Sydney and Brisbane, at the National Museum of Australia (NMA) in Canberra, and internationally in Beijing, Chengdu, Taipei, Mexico City, New Delhi and Rajasthan (Davenport Acker, 2015, 190–91). The largest, most inclusive exhibition was that held at the NMA, *Yiwarra Kuju (One Road): The Canning Stock Route* from July 2010 to January 2011, the most successful exhibition ever held at the museum in terms of visitor numbers. It is from the NMA's collection that the *One Road* exhibition shown in Japan was drawn.

One Road was a worthy successor to the extraordinary large-scale retrospective exhibition of artist Emily Kame Kngwarreye from the Central Australian community of Utopia. *Emily Kame Kngwarreye: Utopia: The Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye* was shown in Japan between February and July 2008, first at the National Museum of Art in Osaka, then the National Art Center in Tokyo where it filled three generous floors of exhibition space (Tunks et al., 2008). The Australian organizer was again the NMA, with sponsorship from large Australian and Japanese private companies plus government agencies including the Australia-Japan Foundation and Australian Embassy in Tokyo, Tourism Australia, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Public diplomacy is an important dimension, but in many ways possible only because of the power the art itself carries as it crosses borders. The Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd visited the exhibition in Tokyo, so too members of the Japanese Imperial family. In a later exhibition to celebrate the National Art Center's tenth anniversary, the poster for Emily Kngwarreye's exhibition found its place "naturally" alongside that for Picasso's, held later in 2008.

Discovering a new range and dimension of contemporary Aboriginal art in Japan—that striking combination of the Indigenous and the international—is part of the story I want to tell. For it is a story of intense localness, of "localization", a story of Indigenous belonging to country, but also, on a different scale, a story of national significance that reframes a major aspect of the nation's colonial-settler past while also serving as an instrument of Australian public diplomacy. As indicated, the Japanese exhibitions and many of the other international events have been sponsored or hosted by Australian diplomatic agencies. In this way, the national takes us to the international scale; but in this case, crucially, to something more as well, something that might best be captured in the phrase "Indigenous transnationalism", the title and organizing theoretical frame of a 2018 book centered on the novel *Carpentaria* by Indigenous Australian author Alexis Wright (Ng). The Indigenous in this conceptualization cannot be contained within the boundaries of the nation or the minority status of Aboriginality inside the nation. It works at once beneath and beyond the level of the nation such that there is no simple scalar hierarchy from local to national to international. The Indigenous and the transnational, the Indigenous and the modern, are discovered co-extensively.

Both dimensions—Indigenous transnationalism and contemporaneity—are critical to the extraordinary "mobility" of contemporary Aboriginal art. It cannot be

contained within the "folkloric", the traditional or the anthropological, the conceptual containers so often used to identify, project or archive minority Indigenous or ethnic cultures: on the one hand to acknowledge them but also in effect to cut them off from contemporaneity or the future, and from any meaningful present-day transcultural communication. In contrast, Aboriginal art exists not just inside the collections of the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris as anthropological artefacts but vibrantly on the ceilings and external walls of the museum's administrative building as contemporary international art. In China, contemporary Aboriginal literature has made a significant impact within certain literary and academic circles, with translations of important novels, not least Wright's *Carpentaria*, a series of non-fiction books and another series of children's/Young Adult titles. Traditional Aboriginal verse and song practices in contemporary translation (Cooke, 2014) have sparked interest among scholars researching traditional ethnic minority literatures in China.[2] There has been a particular interest in Aboriginal cultures, both traditional and contemporary, from scholars in Inner Mongolia, where parallels with Mongolian cultures present themselves.

II

The story of the *One Road* exhibition goes back to 2006, when a Perth-based arts organisation, FORM, took on a project "to explore the artistic and family links between some of the Western Desert's Aboriginal art communities" (Davenport, 2010; Davenport Acker, 2015, 179). From that modest beginning, the project—*Ngurra Kuju Walyja: One Country, One People*—grew very quickly through alliances with Indigenous art and cultural centres throughout Western Australia's remote regions. Many Indigenous communities across these regions have art centres or artists' groups which are often crucial to the community's survival. The aim was "to produce an exhibition and publication that explored the complex history of the Canning Stock Route" (Davenport Acker 180), which is the "one road" referenced in the exhibition titles. The invitations for artists to participate went beyond commissioning paintings to involve "recording family connections and mapping these associations across the deserts" (Davenport Acker 180). More than one hundred Indigenous artists, plus Indigenous film-makers and photographers and Indigenous and non-Indigenous curators participated, producing artworks, photographs, multimedia videos, oral histories and more (La Fontaine and Carty, 2011).

Even at this local stage, the vision for the project was global: "an artist's history must be shared locally with families for present and future access and second, that artist's history and culture must be shared with global audiences" (Davenport Acker 186–87).

Most ambitious and ultimately the most significant of all the activities conducted was a six-week return-to-country expedition along the Canning Stock Route in 2007. Groups of artists and curators met at key sites on the track, camping and painting, painting country *on* country. The project brought many people back to

country, back to the traditional lands of their kin, while also creating new collaborations between Aboriginal groups and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal curators, artists, media-makers and other actors. For some it was the first time they had been back on country since moving decades earlier to missions (reserves run by church or government agencies) or pastoral stations (large grazing properties). For younger folk, it was often the first time they had seen their own country (Davenport Acker 181–82). As curator Cathy Davenport Acker summarises:

> More than two hundred works of art were produced in Country and built incrementally through the many multiarts development workshops and visits to the art centres. Encasing this body of works was a repository of over one hundred and twenty oral histories, one hundred and sixty new media short films and thousands of photographs. A collaborative curation process was used to shape this raw material into a compelling collection… The final Canning Stock Route Collection comprised 130 works of art: paintings (on canvas, board and paper), carvings, fibre works and ceremonial wear. (185)

In 2008, the NMA, which had been involved in the project from early on, decided to acquire the whole Canning Stock Route Collection and this led to the major *Yiwarra Kuju* exhibition. The fact that the artworks were embedded in a rich collection of other forms of story-telling—alongside the stories of country embedded in the artworks themselves—meant that the collection as a whole was also engaging with the story-telling work of history, re-visioning the colonial history of this land and telling its other stories from Indigenous perspectives (Scott, 2011).

III

The Canning Stock Route can be seen as an emblematic episode in the history of white settlement in Australia and in the processes of dispossession and violence towards Aboriginal peoples that such settlement or invasion entailed. Established in the early twentieth century, the stock route is a track extending from Sturt Creek in the Kimberley region of north-west Western Australia to Wiluna in the central west, a distance of around 1850 kms. The trail linked more than fifty wells or waterholes through arid, largely desert country, and was designed to enable the movement of cattle ("stock") from the grazing areas in the north to the growing gold mining settlements further south.

The scheme thus brought together the two industries—the pastoral and mining industries—that were largely responsible for the rapid expansion of white settlement in Australia from the middle of the nineteenth century. The grazing of sheep over large territories for the export of wool, then the grazing of cattle for beef, spread pastoralism across northern Australia from east to west, while gold mining expanded significantly in Western Australia in the 1890s and early 1900s. Historians have been struck by the scale and rapidity of pastoral expansion in Australia. For David Day, the pastoralists completed "the physical occupation of a continent in the shortest time the world had ever witnessed" (Day, 1996, 159); for Geoffrey Bolton, the settlers "took possession of the country with devastating rapidity" (Bolton, 1981, 21).

Bolton's focus was mainly on the environmental effects of such rapid expansion, but many would now think first and foremost of the devastating impact it had on the Aboriginal communities on whose land it occurred. Aboriginal people had been living in the north-west for at least 30,000 years before colonization, and the Canning Stock Route itself cut across the country and custodial sites of several different Indigenous communities, with impacts on many more:

> More than 15 language groups can be found within the broad region crossed by the Canning Stock Route, and though not all of these groups have territorial rights over the Country within the stock route corridor, all are associated in some ways with its story, through cultural, familial and historical connections to the route and its custodians, or to sites along the major Dreaming tracks or songlines. (La Fontaine, 2010, 14)

One of the most powerful items in the *One Road* exhibition is a map that shows the stock route like a long scar cutting through the Dreaming tracks or songlines of several Aboriginal groups. Then again, to look differently, perhaps as a result of having been absorbed in the Aboriginal artworks in the exhibition, what we see is rather multiple Dreaming tracks crossing over the single line of the stock route, reasserting an Aboriginal map of the land both older and newer than the white man's map. The Aboriginal story lines appear to exist both underneath and on top of the white man's drawing, shrinking its significance dramatically.

The stock route was named after Alfred Canning, appointed by the Western Australian government in 1906 to survey a possible cattle trail from the north. His team surveyed the route in less than six months, relying on Aboriginal guides (some willing, some captured) to traverse the desert and locate the absolutely essential water sources. Many of these water sources were crucial to Aboriginal people as well, not only for physical survival but as Dreaming sites, places of cultural and spiritual significance within the landscape. Canning took neck chains and handcuffs to secure his local Aboriginal guides and forced them to lead him to water, although it is likely they also directed the survey party away from some important sacred sites ('Of mining and meat', 2010, 34). His treatment of Aboriginal people during the trip—the use of chains, the pursuit of Aboriginal women, and the destruction of Aboriginal water sources—was later subject to a Royal Commission in 1908 after one of the survey party's members raised complaints, but although the Commission was critical, Canning's party was cleared of all charges. Canning then supervised the construction of the route. Many wells were built, and in such a way that they prevented Aboriginal access to the waters. This action produced conflict: the first drovers to bring cattle down the track, in 1910, were killed by Aboriginal peoples at one of the wells. This led to a punitive expedition in which at least ten Aboriginal people were killed.

The stock route thus represents an episode or series of episodes in the nation-wide history of settler-Aboriginal conflict over land, resources and sacred sites. Ironically perhaps, the route was barely used again until the early 1930s. Many of the European-style wells were damaged by Aboriginal people seeking to regain access to the water source. After renovation of the track in 1931 stock transport increased, but even so there were less than forty cattle drives between 1910 and the last in 1959.

For such minimal economic benefit the cost to Aboriginal people was massive. Some avoided the route, moving away from traditional country in the process. Others used the track to move out of the desert to towns and church missions or to pastoral stations where many found work as stockmen and women, crucial to the north-western cattle industry. Many families were dispersed widely across the region and beyond. In the process the Aboriginal history of this land was largely forgotten in Australia—except by the Aboriginal people themselves. Oral histories and other storytelling practices, including sand drawing (drawing stories in the desert sand), maintained not only the traditional meanings of the land and its tracks but also the more recent history of contact: of meetings, massacres, and the movements of people. More recently, changes in the legal recognition of Aboriginal land rights and native title have enabled some Aboriginal people to move back onto their traditional lands, while new communities have been established in areas that were once missions or pastoral stations. It was in such areas that the contemporary art movements were established in the 1970s and 1980s.

The emblematic nature of the Canning Stock Route story thus comes from the way in which it brings together complex white-settler and Indigenous histories, histories of conflict and disruption but also of continuity and adaptation, reclamation and revival, shared histories as well as disputed histories. Pastoral expansion finally met its match in the desert regions of Australia, meaning the Canning Stock Route could be projected in the early twentieth century as a heroic, nation-building effort to defeat this final challenge to complete possession of the continent. (The fact that the route remains popular as a track for 4-wheel drive adventures suggests it still carries some of these earlier pioneering connotations.) To understand its significance today, however, is also to engage with the multi-layered Aboriginal histories of this land: the traditional meanings of "country" and of the Dreaming stories and songlines which hold that meaning; the disruptions and transformations in Aboriginal lives caused by the stock route as many were forced or chose to move out of the desert country; the ongoing ties to the land and its stories, maintained despite these disruptions; and last but not least the emergence of the Kimberley and Western Desert Aboriginal art movements from the 1980s that enabled these links to country to be expressed in contemporary art forms.

IV

At the opening of the *One Road* exhibition, curator John Carty from the NMA described the contemporary Aboriginal painting movement—the transformation of sand drawing and ceremonial body art onto the flat plane of the canvas—as one of the great stories of twentieth and twenty-first century art internationally. To offer a very brief account of this complex story, the contemporary art movement began in the period 1971–1973 when a white school teacher, Geoffrey Bardon, worked with Aboriginal elders on a central Australian Aboriginal settlement, Papunya (Bardon & Bardon, 2004). Traditional practice had involved designs on the body for ceremony

and story-telling through drawing in the earth, in sand, while narrating Dreaming stories of land, law, history and identity. (There was no tradition here of bark painting as in northern Australia.) Bardon introduced western materials and encouraged the men to tell their stories, to convey their knowledge through painting. This required negotiations among the men themselves about "secret-sacred" stories, about what could be made accessible and to whom; sacred stories were sometimes shared, although mostly these could not be "read" by outsiders. The internationally famous "dot painting" style arose in this area (the dots sometimes seen as one way of keeping sacred stories secret), although it was soon only one style among others.

By the 1980s, with modern materials introduced to communities, especially the use of acrylic paints allowing quick drying vibrant colors, painting Dreaming stories that were both deeply traditional, based on the lore of country and creation, and strikingly modern, using bright colors, adapting symbolism, sharing knowledge, introducing new design and figurative elements, grew rapidly and spread widely. The new painting movement spread to other communities across central, then northern and Western Australia, with many art centres established to support artists and send paintings into the marketplace (the deals not always a happy experience for the artists or communities). The explosion of these art movements in a remarkable outburst of adaptation and innovation, and the national and international recognition accorded to them, relatively quickly, really is an extraordinary story (Caruana, 2012, Kleinert & Neale, 2000, McLean, 2016, Myers, 2002, Sutton, 1989). Aboriginal art was soon for sale in Sydney, New York, Paris, and beyond as a multi-million dollar export industry in a series of complex interactions extending from remote, often disadvantaged Aboriginal communities, through community art centres and mostly non-Indigenous intermediaries, to elite high art markets, galleries, dealers, and collectors—from "local Dreamings" to "global consumption" (Ryan et al., 2008). As Ryan et al. put it: "Indigenous Australian visual art is an outstanding case of the dynamics of globalization and its intersection with the hyper-local wellsprings of cultural expression" (284).

Many paintings have a close connection still to sacred stories. They function both as "maps" of country and histories of kinship, of belonging to the land and having responsibility for it. Paintings have been used in courts as evidence of connection to country in land title claims. It could be misleading or diminishing to describe the artworks as a form of storytelling or as representations of the land, although both dimensions are characteristic. In western culture we tend to think of the story telling dimension of art as a minor feature compared to its formal or symbolic dimensions, almost a definition in itself of a minor art form, "mere" illustration or reliance on narrative elements from beyond the aesthetic core of the work of art itself. This was not the case, however, for much of the history of western art before the eighteenth century, or some might say the Renaissance, in religious art. Paintings were not merely illustrating the story of Christ or the saints or God and creation, but rather embodying that story, that truth, becoming iconic and sacred in their own right, much more than mere decoration or an aesthetic object as long as belief structures survived. Obviously we would not want to push this comparison too far, but the parallel with Aboriginal artworks is that for the most part (there are exceptions of course) they are

not merely illustrating stories as a secondary function but are themselves embodying that story in color and pattern—not so much a representation of the story after the fact as the *story itself*, in the present. Aboriginal people often speak of "singing" the land, and this is what the paintings are also doing: maps of country but also of stories in the land, stories defining people's relations to specific sites and songlines.

The paintings are also very different as "landscapes' from traditional western and Chinese or Japanese landscape in that they are not painted from a perspective outside the landscape itself, the viewer separate from the image, looking at the landscape as a framed scene. There is no such perspective in the Aboriginal paintings of country. On one level, we have a view that is larger than any single human perspective; on another, we are never simply looking at the landscape. There is no "outside"; it is more as if we are in the *presence* of that country in its multi-layered meaningfulness, however much of that escapes our own capacities to read those layers. Many paintings on canvas or boards are painted flat on the earth (often, for larger works, with the artist seated on the canvas, *in* the painting as it is composed); and in many ways they are best viewed in this manner, although that is rarely possible in exhibitions.

It was, however, strikingly the case at the *One Road* exhibition for the largest painting on display, *Martumili Ngurra* (*This is all Martu's Home*, 2009) by six Martumili Parnngurr women artists, Kumpaya Girgaba, Jakayu Biljabu, Ngamaru Bidu, Thelma Judson, Nola Taylor and Jane Girgaba (https://www.nma.gov.au/explore/collection/highlights/martumili-ngurra-canvas). This must surely be among the greatest paintings ever produced in Australia, a stunning representation of part of the country through which the Canning Stock Route travels but with the stock route itself buried within a rich, brightly colored pattern representing the burning and regeneration of country and of multiple other tracks encircling and overlaying it, Aboriginal tracks tracing the songlines, stories and cultural sites of the Martu people entangled with tracks the settlers built which both led the Martu people off their land and brought them back to it. Looking at this very large painting—over 3 m by 5 m —from above or at its own level of thickly-textured layers enabled its full impact as a physical, intimate, communal and spiritual map of country to be revealed, to be experienced. In the words of painter Ngalangka Nola Taylor:

> When you look at this painting, don't read it like a whitefella map. It's a Martu map: this is how we see the Country, this is how we use a painting to tell stories about our country. (*Yiwarra Kuju* 179)

And as described in the *Yiwarra Kuju* catalogue:

> The relationship between the history of the desert region, the practice of painting and remote community life today is embodied in *Martumili Ngurra*, the vast collaborative painting created by Parnngurr artists to tell the story of their Country. In this work, the artists locate the Canning Stock Route at the margins of their story: it sits in the lower half of the painting but exists only as the sequence of Aboriginal waters it always was, not as the road it became…
>
> … All of these narratives, past and present, unfold within a landscape created by the travels of ancestral beings from the Jukurrpa [Dreaming] whose tracks crisscross this land. Of particular importance to the artists here is the story of the Minyipuru (Seven Sisters), who passed through this land and whose creative acts continue to animate Country today. Other

> tracks visible in *Martumili Ngurra* reveal the paths Martu take through their homeland as they visit family, hunt and care for their Country…
>
> … *Martumili Ngurra* is not a historical painting. The story it tells is not a history of people leaving their home, but one of people continuing to make their homes in the desert. Just as hunting on and caring for the land remains an enduring concern of Martu life in remote communities, so too has painting Country become an important part of the modern economy in these places. *Martumili Ngurra* doesn't merely tell that story, it is that story. In this way, like all desert art, it is so much more than just a painting.

Certainly the work is not historical in the sense of merely relating stories of the past, but on another level I would want to insist that it is profoundly "history making": making history in the present, revealing and reaffirming, reasserting and rediscovering the Aboriginal history of this country both before and after colonization, past and present and future. The painting, in short, tells multiple stories. One of these is the story or history of the Canning Stock Route itself, but in this perspective the Stock Route emerges as a relatively minor thread in a much more complex, multilayered history. A truer history of country.

This historical dimension was also prominent in many of the artists' own accounts of the project and their art. As artist Clifford Brook put it:

> We wanna tell you fellas 'bout things been happening in the past that hasn't been recorded, what old people had in their head. No pencil and paper. The white man history has been told and it's today in the book. But our history is not there properly. We've got to tell 'em through our paintings.

V

The force of contemporary Indigenous Australian art and the source of its extraordinary transnational or transcultural mobility is the way that it can simultaneously embody elements or dimensions of meaning usually taken as opposites: its history-making in the present or, we might say, the living *presence* of its history; its intense, enacted connection to local sites and stories which become nonetheless the very source of its cross-cultural meaningfulness (and global marketability in another dimension); and, above all perhaps, the manner in which it overturns the fundamental western oppositions between traditional and contemporary, ancient and modern (Muecke). The rise of Aboriginal art on the international scene was such that by the mid-1990s, "It had become a contemporary art in its own right, and it was actively setting the terms of its own reception" (Smith 2007, 25); as Smith (25) continues: "A cultural movement can, when its gains momentum, force a shift in perception of 'quality', largely by its own force as an emerging paradigm."

The impact of Aboriginal art might be suggested by the title of the recent scholarly book *How Aborigines Invented the Idea of Contemporary Art* (McLean, 2011). Art critics and historians of the movement in their attempts to explain and frame

the phenomenon have been drawn, in provocative titles, to notions of the cross-cultural—*Becoming Art: Exploring Cross-Cultural Categories* (Morphy, 2008)—and the transcultural—*Double Desire: Transculturalism and Indigenous Contemporary Art* (McLean 2014). Another book proclaimed the *Remote Avant-Garde: Aboriginal Art Under Occupation* (Biddle, 2016).

Many of the paintings in the *One Road* exhibition would stand any interrogation we might make of them as works of art. There is no need of supplementary anthropological “investment” to make the pictures talk. At the same time, they are about much more than art alone; they embody and express the world from which that art emerges and the politics of the history of place. The great achievement of the *One Road* exhibition and *Yiwarra Kuju* before it was that the art forces us to re-examine the history—the multiple histories—and to begin to see it in new ways, while the process of engaging with this history in turn forces us back to the *art* with a new vision, to see it, I think, in at least three dimensions at once:

- in terms of the traditional and ongoing attachments to country of the Aboriginal people in the regions traversed by the stock route (but also more broadly across Australia);
- in terms of the history of settlement and invasion of Aboriginal lands, the violence and dispossession, but also the shared, intersecting, entangled histories of living and working in the land;
- and in terms of the contemporary stories that Aboriginal cultures are telling about themselves, to their own communities and those outside prepared to listen, as vibrant, living cultures making demands not just on our sense of the past but also on our sense of the present and the future.

It is these three dimensions together that give the art, at its most powerful, its intense localness and locatedness, its profound national significance, and its transcultural, transnational reach into the contemporary world well beyond country or nation—but never leaving country behind.

Notes

1. *One Road* was produced by the National Museum of Australia and supported by the Australia-Japan Foundation, the Australian Embassy in Tokyo, the Minister for the Arts Catalyst—Australian Arts and Culture Fund, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Cathay Pacific.
2. In the years 2016–2018 on behalf of the Australian Humanities Academy (AHA) I led delegations from Australia to China (2016 & 2018) and hosted the Chinese Academy of the Social Sciences delegation at the University of Queensland (2017) for a series of literary symposia. There was particular interest from the Chinese side in 2017 in presentations on Aboriginal verse songs, which they had requested, and in particular the work by Stuart Cooke (Griffith University). The following year, the AHA was invited to a symposium held in Guizhou province, hosted by Guizhou Minzu (Minorities) University focused directly on the links between traditional ethnic minority literatures and Aboriginal songs, performance and art. Indigenous novelist Kim Scott was among the AHA delegation,

and spoke strongly when the delegation visited the Institute for Miao Cultures in Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture.

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Analysis of the Online Discourse of "zhengnengliang" in the Representation of 2017 "Two Sessions" in China

Weimin Zhang and Min Ling

Abstract In China, online media is often demanded to form and deliver zhengnengliang, meaning positive momentum, to the netizens for security and educational purposes. This study conducts a case study of @ the Center of the Communist Youth League in its representations of the "Two Sessions" [liang hui] of the government of 2017, through an examination of how Chinese governmental micro-blog formulates zhengnengliang for Chinese youth which account for the majority of Chinese netizens. It seeks to understand how these government media programs work within the frame of online media through a transcultural lens. The findings reveal that nationalistic discourse is closely engaged with at online space in constructing zhengnengliang, suggesting that online governmental media is effectively deployed in espousing, educating and consolidating the conception of Chinese identity of Chinese youth.

Keywords Online media · @ *the Center of the Communist Youth League* · *Zhengnengliang* · The discourse of positive energy · Chinese nationalism

Introduction

There are eight hundred million Chinese netizens, and this number has been on the rapid increase. To enhance ideological security, Chinese government draws on technological and cultural measures in supervising the cyberspace that is often metaphorically named as a new "battlefield" for defending cultural security of the state against

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ideological transgenosis or “color revolution”. This issue has been under investigation in a few studies. As a “firm undercurrent” in Chinese cyberspace discourse, there is the left school, so labeled for their implied Leninist approach (Schneider, 2016), which advocates taking stern action to potential challenges in regard to ideological safety, emphasizing the urgency for containment in managing online media (Hu, 2007 233). In more detailed analysis on particular online discourse, a recent survey indicates that online political satires are a form of communication that is seen as a challenge to authority and is therefore under surveillance via government regulations (Luwei, 2017). As Li contends, the control over even satirical communication is caused by the inclination of Chinese government to contain the growth and extension of the nascent civic society, which is often assumed to ensue whenever the netizen gaining alternative channels for accessing more information and taking part in public discussions with more transparency (2010).

However, this control should not be interpreted as netizens in China having neither the interest nor channels to engage with critical public discussion online. Content analysis of the information in the websites indicates that Chinese portals serve as platforms for providing opportunities of civic participation and increasing online transparency, which are necessary for relieving social tensions (Jiang, 2009). Examination of the posts at micro-blogs, it is evident that Chinese bloggers tend to deliver diversified “unofficial” comments including social criticisms (Zhou, 2009). Very often, the netizens’ critiques of public events have demonstrated that they are creating, disseminating, and circulating online satires, deployed as a method for grassroots participation in analyzing social events (Yang & Jiang, 2015). In Chinese Internet, it is also usual to encounter fan culture and digital populism in online participation (Guo, 2018). In examining online discourses, Yang proposes, it is important to take into consideration cultural factors that impact netizen’s minds (Yang, 2014). A survey finds that nationalism is spread broadly in Chinese online space, which is even more prominently articulated in the discussions around “online politics” (Qiu, 2006, p. 125). Likewise, interviews show that young Chinese demonstrate seemingly apolitical stances in online platform; however, they have active involvement in the issues associated with nationalistic sentiments (Liu, 2012). In a more macroscopic assessment, scholars claim that Chinese netizen formulate kaleidoscopic discourses that may be placid, critical, or even radical (Gleiss, 2015; Liu & Ouyang, 2016; Hyun, 2016). Therefore, it is necessary to conduct more nuanced investigations on in what circumstances and for what social groups and through what mechanism governmental discourses are constructed and used for containing the netzine Web space or in vitalizing the discussions towards a particular direction.

The ‘post-1980’s generation’, defined as people who were born after 1980, form a major part in the community of Chinese netizen (Zhang, 2013). As a large part of Chinese online media users are young people, it is significant to investigate how the Chinese youth can be engaged with in the online space and how the government integrates them into a ruling ideology. Addressing this question would provide insights as to how the on-line youths are supervised at the vibrant cyberspace, which is often considered as a vast challenge to social integration. This study focuses on this question and conduct an in-depth case study of the process by which official micro-blog

construct discourses for shaping, in an integrative manner, meaning production in the online space, which we call the production of *zhengnengliang,* meaning positive momentum, for the Chinese young micro-blog users.

Microblog is Chinese version of Twitter. In China, the governmental official microblog was set up soon after this platform was opened as a communicative space on the Internet. The first governmental micro-blog registered in China is named "taoyuan net" run by Taoyuan County Government of Hunan Province. It is even earlier than the advent of what Chinese netizens call "the beginning year of the microblog" in 2010 when the micro-blog entered into a phase of fast development. In 2010, the numbers of microblog users surged, occupying vast online space and having profound impact on the formation and development of public opinions and social sentiments. In this new context of information dissemination, governments at all levels took the initiative to study and use the micro-blog space for facilitating governance. Either using their real identities or anonymously, the government employed bloggers constantly experimenting with new modes of political communication and exploring approaches for mastering discursive power in this field. In 2011, known as 'the first year of Chinese governmental micro-blog using', China's official micro-blog had an explosive growth both in quantity of using and manners of applications in public communication (Zhang, 2013 1). The *2017 People's Daily Report on the Influence of the Governmental Microblogs* shows that by the end of 2017, the number of China's governmental micro-blogs had reached 173,569 (*China's Daily*, January 23, 2018). According to the statistics of the thirty-ninth report of CNNIC, Chinese netizens are composed mainly of young people aged from 10 to 39 years old. Among them, the group who are most active in terms of user frequency and participation of the Internet are college students (CNNIC, January 22 2017).

Consequently, how to provide guidance for young people, supervise their online behavior, and shape their value system through micro-blog and other online media becomes a great challenge brought about by new media technologies for the government. On June 20, 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping, in meeting with the new leadership team of the Central Communist Youth League, stressed the importance of the ideological and political work of the young generation, pointed out that the ideological and cultural development of the young generation was closely related to the future of the country, and that the Communist Youth League system should be armed with the scientific and politically correct theory to shape the younger generation. He also mentioned the importance of inspiring young people's positive ideals and engaging them with specifically structured ideological and cultural endeavors. On August 19th of the same year, President Xi further emphasized the importance of ideological work at the National Conference on Propaganda and Ideological Work. According to Zhang, 'As a national agency responsible for the ideological work of the youth, the Communist Youth League has a keen sense of smell for adjusting its propaganda positions.'(2013, 13–14). In the age of micro-blog communication, for the ruling government, how to guide the young generation which constitutes a large part of the Chinese netizens has been an important topic to be addressed.

Pressed by the challenge for the social governance caused by micro-blog use among Chinese youths, the Communist Youth League, which is set the task of

conducting studies on the effectiveness of ideological work on the youth and is directed to set the youth as the main working group, working with the cultural needs of the young Chinese. This requires the Communist Youth League to establish and maintain its own channel of information dissemination in the space opened by micro-blog. To meet the requirements for facilitating their work, a series of micro-blogs of the Communist Youth League system have been set up one after another. Among them, the most representative and authoritative one is @ the Center of the Communist Youth League at Sina. As the representative micro-blog of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, it has attracted much more netizen's attention than the other micro-blogs in the system of the Youth League across the country (Sina, January 22 2017).

The @ the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League was started up in December 27, 2013. The day was very special, for it was the day after Chairman Mao's birthday, indicating an epochal implication of carrying forward the national cause pioneered by him. The main contents of this micro-blog include information about the life and work of the younger generation. By March 17 of 2017, this site attracted 4,781,066 fans, having made 15,257 posts with 13 daily posts on average. These posts on the site had been forwarded 8,480,000 times in 2016. Statistics shows that the fans of @ the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League are mainly aged 14 to 28, of whom netizens aged from 20 to 28 are the most active users (Sun, 2017). *2017 People's Daily Report on the Influence Of the Governmental Microblogs* appraised and elected the top ten central governmental micro-blogs in the country, @ the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League was ranked the second. In the first quarter of 2017, it was ranked the first in the political affair # measurement index in a succession of three months. In this measurement index, the communicative capability and interactive competence of @ the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League received maximum scores.

The Issue of Positive Energy

Chinese online media such as micro-blog, WeChat, and website forums pose new challenges to the construction and communication of mainstream discourse which have dominated in news dissemination since the founding of the People's Republic. The decentralized mode of information flow in online platform diminishes the space of the dominant channels that were possible before the online media appeared. Social media renders possible the channels for message posting in an unprecedented manner, which reduces the degree of civilians' dependence on the mainstream media. In turn, the decentralized information releasing and sharing also has the potential to challenge the stability of existing social value systems and ideologies, and the potency of the mainstream media to shape public opinion, confronted by the competition from alternative opinions online. In this context, for the government, the issue of cultural security that is closely associated with information dissemination at online platforms becomes a serious question to be addressed.

It was under these circumstances, the term "positive energy" emerged and became popular in Chinese public discourse in 2012 when ten Chinese civilians participated the torch relay event during the period of London Summer Olympics. The enthused Chinese netizens praised them for the immense significance of their great job in actively communicating Chinese culture to the Western countries. Later, Chinese netizen viewed the acts as a process of forming positive representations that "motivated confidence and pride for Chinese netizens" (Ma & Liu, 2014 28). The construction and far-ranging dissemination of positive energy in Chinese online space emerged not just by chance. It is a discursive construct aiming to change perceptions of social reality and subjective needs. Challenges to Chinese social stability, such as unbalances in regional economic levels, threats from hostile forces and separatists of national integrity and so on, need to be seriously as well as systematically dealt with (Ma & Liu, 2014 28). In the meantime, the issue of national cultural security has also been set on the agenda for deliberate reflection. The conundrums of changing spiritual pursuits of Chinese civilians include the apathy to others, comparing psychology, deteriorating interpersonal trust and verbal attacks to the government, are accumulating to be a form of disruptive thoughts of serious impacts. In order to counteract this potential threat, the government proposed 'positive momentum' [*zhengnengliang*] (Ma & Liu, 2014 28). The discourse of positive energy is deployed as a communicative strategy employed by the media for shaping positive social cultures. As General Secretary of CCP Xi Jinping expounded at the national conference on propaganda and ideological work in August 2013, Chinese media should 'adhere to the principle of solidarity and stability, carry out positive information delivery', and 'extol the mainstream rhythm (thoughts), communicating positive energy'. It has also been incorporated into the project of promoting central values of the Party, particularly after the 18th national congress when the concept of "the Chinese dream" and the socialist core values were proposed.

Theoretic Framework and Analytical Method

Chinese nationalism emerged in the late Qing Dynasty when imperialist invasions made salient the sense of national resistance and sovereignty in China. The Opium War from 1840 to 1842, the war between China and Japan in 1895 and the foreign aggression stimulated Chinese intelligentsia to understand the importance of constructing a narrative that became the modern Chinese nationalism. This is because the nationalistic discourse could be used to unify and mobilize a state in its struggling against the invaders and in forming collective unison for accomplishing social purposes. Liang Qichao, the prominent Chinese scholar as well as a social reformer, introduced the concept of nationalism into China and aroused a wide range of support. Chinese nationalism is "nationalism of self-protection" aiming for safeguarding life conditions in the face of national crisis" (Xiao, 1996 59). Yu (1981, 558) adds that "In recent one hundred years of Chinese history, all of the political, social and cultural movements that raised Chinese people's strong sentiments, if

given an in-depth analysis, were backed by nationalism either overtly or covertly" In contemporary China, nationalism becomes an integrative discourse articulated at public spaces such as online media for strengthening national unison and consolidating a cultural foundation required for social mobilization when it is necessary (Zhang, 2015, 2017).

Nationalism is an ideological construct forming in Anderson's seminal theory an imagined community (Anderson, 1983). It is a cultural imagination shaped for the integration of the nation, which is built on shared narratives about the history, common ancestors, shared land, benefits and challenges (1983). Nationalistic representations could construct a mental unison for the members of the nation (1983). In sharing stories of the nation, interpreting meanings the nation represents, the national community is enforced and clearly identified, which enhances social cohesion (Hall, 1996 613). Media depends on a framing process in constructing national community. As Goffman explains, frames are formed to organize meanings required for understanding the implications of the information in the realities. "[I]ndividuals in our society expect that a 'simple' or 'natural' explanation will soon be discovered" for understanding a social situation or event (Goffman, 1986 28–29). The framing acts indicate a selecting process of an event and giving meanings based on the selection, in such a way as to present a defined attitude (Entman, 1993 52).

This study selects the posts of *@ the Center of the Communist Youth League* during the "Two Sessions" [lianghui] in 2017, which are the fifth session of the 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and the fifth session of the 12th National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China (NPC), held in Beijing from March 3 to 13 and from March 5 to 15, respectively. "Two Sessions" and especially the media representations of them attracted considerable public attention of the Chinese. Studying how the events are covered in the online space provides a cross-section of the way by which the "positive energy" demanded by the government is shaped at the platform which were designed to maximize dominant appeal to Chinese audience. During the "Two Sessions" *@ the Center of the Communist Youth League* released 264 posts. Three of them are copied from other sites, which were then deleted and are therefore invalid. The remaining 261 posts were collected for analysis.

In analyzing the posts, we categorized those sharing the same focus into a set of topics, counted the quantity of the posts under each topic, calculated their percentages among all of the posts, and summarized the key words most frequently deployed under each topic. The key words are termed as 'hot words' in this study. We then conducted a quantitative analysis ranking the times of each posts being forwarded, with an assumption that the frequency of a post being forwarded indicates the degree of its influence and resonance among the viewers. Then the posts having been forwarded by more than 1000 times are analyzed for examining their discursive orientations in terms of "positive energy" formations.

Findings and Discussion

Analysis reveals that 70 posts were forwarded more than 1,000 times, accounting for 26.5% of the whole posts, and the average frequency among the 70 posts exceeded 2,000 times. 75% of these 70 posts are thematically concerned with the topics of state, nation or construction achievements. Following figures display statistics about the overall topics, posts mentioning the state which were forwarded more than 1000 times and the ranking of them.

As observed from the contents published by @ *the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League* during the 2017'Two Sessions', the interpretative scheme of nationalism occupies a prominent position in the process of transmitting 'positive energy' in this micro-blog. As shown in Fig. 1, the elements of the nation are fairly salient, either from the proportion of topics in this respect, or from the hot words that are closely associated with this topic. There are 76 posts directly linked to the notion of the nation, accounting for 29.11% of the total number of posts. The contents of the topic "encyclopedia of life" rank the second in terms of the number of posts, comprising the Chinese tradition, the national spiritual ethics, and a number of expressions with similar connotations. Other topics, although do not directly point to the meaning of the nation, more or less allude to the construction and emphasis on the elements of the theme, such as Chinese modernist construction, beautiful scenery of China, and the memory of Lei Feng, a well-known national hero and cultural symbol of the Chinese. At the same time, the topic on China's diplomatic activities mentions Sino-Japanese relations, narrating stories of the national heroes and martyrs, which is a projection of the Chinese history reaffirming and consolidating national cultural memories.

Topics	Quantity	%	Hot Words
"two sessions"	23	8.81	education, Hong Kong independence
ideology security	8	3.06	socialism, atheism, communist party members
diplomatic and national issues	76	29.11	Japan,remember the martyrs, don't forget the history
Chinese sceneries	12	4.59	aerial photography, hometown, beautiful scenery
construction achievement	19	7.27	aerospace, high-speed rail, One Belt And One Road, soldiers
the "positive energy"	33	12.64	Earnest, good, filial, sensible
memory of Lei Feng	6	2.29	to discredit, learn, and spirit
adolescent growth	18	6.89	food safety, cyber violence
other news	14	5.36	Thaad, South Korea, wanted, terror
encyclopedia of life	52	19.92	tradition, ethos, popularity

Fig. 1 The overall topics in @ the Center of the Communist Youth League during the "Two Sessions"

Among these topics, the concept of ‘positive energy’ is explicitly used to guide netizens and enhance their affirmation of the society with rationality, loyalty and enthusiasm. As a matter of fact, it is not only under the topic of “positive energy” that the micro-blog develops the relevant meaning, but that the meaning relevant to the “positive energy” is also constructed from the implications contained in other topics and hot words. This is because micro-blog tends to deliver the desired “positive energy” in a way that is embedded and incarnated through a complete process of releasing posts. Therefore, the essential discursive orientation of the “positive energy” lies on the overall effect of the micro-blog posts, instead of constantly repeating the term. The target of this formulation is to procure positive cohesion of the micro-blog culture in which the cultural resources of Chinese nationalism are highly deployed.

As it can be seen from Table 2, the contents of this micro-blog posted in the period of the 2017 “Two Sessions” are mainly constructed in the perspective of state and the nation, and issues about international relations is stressed. On the topics that were forwarded more than 1000 times, the posts about the nation and international diplomacy account for 62.79% of all, hold a predominant status. The micro-blog has made comprehensive use of short videos, pictures, cartoons and other illustrative forms to narrate vividly the stories of this category. Among the posts forwarded more than 1000 times, the topic ranking the second is ideological security, accounting for 11.63% of all posts. And the content directly associated with “positive energy” is 6.98%, indicating that cultural security is an unavoidable concern in the discourse. Factually, the cohesion, integration and security of online culture are the critical aspects contained in the essence of the “positive energy”. Such an orientation is incarnated in a series of narratives, which cast light on national spirit, national culture and national cultural identity, all tending to consolidate the core values of cultural security. So how to make the cultural content of the nation to be effectively represented online has become a weighty task for the Chinese online media in their endeavors to construct “positive energy” and thereby maintain cultural security.

Nationalistic meanings are espoused and vividly displayed when the posts highlight the covering and interpreting of international stories. Through mediated representations of the interactions with other nations, the national consciousness of the Chinese viewers rises, the sense of national identity becomes salient, and the national pride, cohesion and enterprising spirit more strengthened. In this manner, the nationalized ‘positive energy’ is cultivated, condensed, and articulated. Examining the news stories with more than 1000 forwarding times posted by this micro-blog during the event, it is shown that the stories in this respect occupy a considerable proportion of seventy-five percent. As shown in Fig. 3, of the top 40 news stories concerned with the theme of the nation, 23 are explicitly related to international relations or national subjects, and the other ones are indirectly associated with national culture or national memories.

The stories set in nationalistic perspectives procured the highest amount of audience’s responses, indicating that the thematic category of the nation causes strong resonance and responsive reactions among the viewers. In today’s Chinese culture,

nationalism is a vibrant public discourse, which is embedded in the minds of the netizens due to the governmental efforts in maintenance and strengthening of this theme. Such a cultural approach is enforced by state institutions such as schools, media organizations and local communities across the nation. The discourse becomes a formative and a normative cultural resource in Chinese society. It is seen that @ *the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League* conducts positive energy construction and dissemination not only through selecting and delivering stories based on the intentionality of the media, but also taking into account the prospective resonance from the netizens. This process is carried out in the interaction between *Weibo* and netizens in a context of nationalized meaning sharing where the micro-blog deployed nationalistic signs including images, texts, short videos and other visually striking forms, which are shown in Figs. 2 and 3.

An analysis of the data in Figs. 1, 2 and 3 reveals that the reports of the "Two Sessions" were factually not a main part being showcased in this *Weibo* account, while nationalistic narratives dominated. The degree of response to these narratives is much more active than the response to the topics that are directly concerned with the event. As shown in Fig. 1, in this period, the total number of posts in this micro-blog is 261, of which there were just 23 postings on the event of the "Two Sessions", accounting for 8.81% of the total; however, there were 154 posts about Chinese nationalism, accounting for 59% of the total, implicating that nation building gets foremost attention. Analyzing the data in Fig. 2, it is found that among the news stories forwarded over 1,000 times, there are only three posts about the "Two Sessions", accounting for only 6.98% of the total; while there are 38 news stories embedded into the theme of the nation, accounting for 88% of the total. It can be seen that the news stories on national issues are far more concerned than those around the conferences.

The most prominent feature of this *Weibo* representation of the "Two Sessions" in 2017 is how it deployed eye-catching images of this event in shaping and disseminating "positive energy". The specific topics and contents of the sessions were captured in the scheme of positive energy. This discourse forms a context for

Contents	Quantity	%	Video	Picture	Picture and Words	Long Weibo	Words	Cartoon Emojis
two sessions	3	6.98	2	1				
ideological safety	5	11.63	2	2		1		
diplomacy, nation	27	62.79	12	5	3	4	2	1
the beauty of Chinese	1	2.33	1					
social achievements	1	2.33	1					
positive energy	3	6.98	2		1			
memory of Lei Feng	1	2.33		1				
adolescent growth	1	2.33	1					
other news	1	2.33	1					

Fig. 2 Topics forwarded more than 1000 times

	Titles of the Posts	**Forward**	**Comments**	**Like**	**Form**
1	"Watch out, beautiful girls! Ban on Lanzhi skin care products checked for germs."	8835	7726	10602	Picture and words
2	"Today, world wildlife day."	5818	4129	4158	Short video
3	"Reminiscent of dear Premier Zhou."	5242	1754	13493	Picture
4	"The surviving "comfort women" at Hainan Province died at home."	4508	535	2860	Picture
5	"Foreign spies may be around you!"	3580	1852	4296	Short Video
6	"The Chinese ambassador has voted for a veto on the scene of siege by the U. S. in the UN."	3499	1600	7542	Short video
7	"Refusing to take off the T-shirt, the Chinese embassy protests again!"	3464	3070	2855	Picture
8	"Three thousand pounds: to defame China?"	3267	2321	8428	Short Video
9	"After they were confused by Chinese language..."	2671	1221	7942	Short Video
10	"What does the commentator of *People's Daily* say about TFBOYS?"	2496	1225	2075	Short Video
11	"Anti-THAAD"	2172	675	3738	Picture and words
12	"Do the Japanese really laugh at the phenomenon that 'the Chinese are boycotting all day'?"	2160	1303	3831	Long Weibo
13	"Don't forget the 38th parallel! Be happy and appreciate it."	2083	913	3417	Short Video
14	"Haruki Murakami's latest book is rejected."	1955	698	4304	Short Video
15	"A collection of decisive responses by Fu Ying. Have you been surrounded by the fans?"	1928	1221	5595	Short Video
16	"Murakami's new book admits Nanjing massacre. Japanese netizen become angry ."	1832	1472	6327	Short video
17	"The United States and South Korea? China?"	1771	1035	4257	Picture and Words
18	"National tourism bureau releases travel tips for South Korea"	1678	1434	3990	Picture and words
19	"The atmosphere suddenly becomes awkward."	1632	2034	5371	Picture
20	"Liberating Taiwan is just a quarrel? Cynicism against National unity is not wanted ."	1632	3115	5210	Long weibo
21	"The Chinese team is the champion!"	1556	483	7345	Short Video
22	"The police story."	1540	551	5530	Picture and words
23	"Nine resounding and classic responses of the foreign minister!"	1432	628	3703	Short Video
24	"The military honor guard of the people's liberation army (PLA) was first inspected by parents."	1403	694	4572	Short Video
25	"Today, miss Lei Feng."	1392	638	3809	Picture
26	"Public service ads."	1368	437	2538	Short video
27	"This American 'economic killer' tells you how they control the economy of other countries!"	1349	700	1611	Short Video
28	"Chen Daoming: Never join in the 'anti-Japanese god show' and the fake historical drama!"	1343	474	8710	Short Video
29	"Chinese-style change giving: how hard is to calculate 3473 minus 2973?"	1324	1210	3251	Long Weibo

Fig. 3 (Part one): The ranking of posts about the nation. (Part two): The ranking of posts about the nation

30	"Do you support legislation for protecting heroic reputation-on behalf of the commissioner?"	1321	1309	4405	Picture
31	"Will China take over the TPP?"	1245	1280	3046	
32	Those who support "Hongkong independence" and "Taiwan independence" come to make a fortune in business? "Ji Xiaolan" does't agree!"	1172	935	5179	Short Video
33	"If you don't work hard, will you be confident to inflect the past?	1168	542	3130	Picture
34	"The chairman said the Chinese have no backbone."	1136	1021	1595	Long Weibo
35	"Aerial photography of China: looking at China from an unprecedented perspective."	1097	410	2001	Short video
36	"Zhu Weiqun: close adherence and propaganda of atheism."	1093	1189	1910	Long weibo
37	"Watch out, he beats his dog will easily find a stick."	1078	3514	4663	Picture
38	"15 minutes, I felt it very long in America and very short in China..."	1066	3221	999	Short Video
39	"Today in history: the big bombing in Tokyo, Japan."	1040	1549	2618	Picture
40	"I don't want that 'free media'! Be alert to color revolution."	1034	1387	2296	Short Video

Fig. 3 (continued)

discussing public issues in this case and resorts to audience's nationalistic sentiment to garner the power of cultural guidance. Among all of the 3233 posts issued by this *Weibo* from August to March in 2016, the top topic was about national achievements, amounting to 970 posts, accounting for 30% of the total (Sun, 2017 15). Although there were major news events such as the U.S. general election and the G 20 Summit during that period, the amount of the posts on these respective topics were scarce, while the topic on the country-nation was the focus of this micro-blog. Arguably, the main role of this micro-blog as an official online media is carrying out the mission of the positive energy transmission stipulated by the central government. As a governmental micro-blog, the proportion of its news attributes is conspicuously weaker than its discursive attributes. It also indicates that the theme of Chinese nationalism serves as a significant perspective in constituting "positive energy" discourse that is specifically completed in the posting practices. Such a prevailing impact would rise to a much higher degree when influential social events are followed up.

Such orientation of communication is because this micro-blog belongs to the government, and it is laden with the mission for ideological shaping. Cyberspace, as exemplified by *Weibo*, has become an indispensable platform for implementing social education in contemporary China and among the target groups, Chinese young bloggers are prominently featured. The young minds are in the process of maturation in terms of their social values and beliefs and are "the fairly precious intellectual assets, the hope of the nation, the future of the motherland, as well as the most important objects of ideological and political education" (Tang, 2010 32). They are quick in grasping new technologies and ideas and have a strong tendency to be innovative. In addition, their active minds, patterns of thinking, ways of gathering information that shape their values, are unprecedentedly impacted by the Internet (Tang, 2010). Within the Cyberspace, the government realizes, the multi-dimensional presence of neoliberal influence, democratic socialist thoughts, consumer values, may not be

consistent with the official socialism with Chinese characters, so it is critical to carry out organized, planned and deliberate guidance in regard to the building of value system directed at them (Han, 2015 47). Currently, two main channels and frontlines correspondingly appear in conducting ideological and political education for Chinese youth, the first being the course provisions and teaching in the school, while the second being the online platform (Tang & Yang, 2013). "Wherever the youth like to express their ideas and opinions, we ought to proactively display our flag, voice and our stances; wherever the youth enjoy congregating, we should organize, guide and advise them with no qualms" (Tang & Yang, 2013 131).

The governmental project of education provided for Chinese youth shows certain similarities with the process of educating or disciplining the general public, which include supervising acts within home, in school as well as across the society, all of which relies on various forms of media to transmit information and communicate ideas. At home, mentoring young people are processed mainly with discourses between younger and elder generations; in the school, this work is completed via textbooks and teachers' accounts of them; in the broader society, the ideological and political shaping is carried out in the cultural space formed by the media such as newspapers, radios, TV and so on. Arguably, education of the public indicates a combination of enculturation and cultural disciplining, the former meaning a person's mindset being naturally integrated into the value system of a cultural space, while the latter referring to educators consciously deploying media and symbolic methods to influence the consciousness of those viewing the messages from media outlets (Tang & Yang, 2013 131). In an era in where online media exemplified by *Weibo,* as examined in this study prevails, education across living spaces bears pervasive impact from the media forms and patterns made possible by the Internet technologies that, due to their substantial power of information processing, are therefore soon incorporated into the cultural control mechanisms.

Statistics have shown that in a case study of *Sina Weibo*, 62.02% of the contents are propaganda-oriented, the principal operators of these are government propaganda departments (Xiang, 2012 64). Xiang's study of the representation of the "Two Sessions" in 2011 at *Sina Weibo* reveals that civic livelihood, information about the Sessions, official corruption, economy, and legal questions were the principal topics (2012). The study also shows that the discourse of "positive energy" using nationalism as a carrier is not consistently embodied in *Sina* micro-blogs including @ *the Center of Communist Youth League.* However, as observed from the contents posted at @ *the Center of Communist Youth League* in the period of the 'Two Sessions' in 2017, it is evident that the 'positive energy' structured within nationalistic storytelling accounts for the largest part. One explanation could be the result of governmental emphasis on 'Chinese Dream' and the attenuated stressing on "national rejuvenation" in China's public discourse. It could also be traced to the guideline of disseminating the "main rhythm", meaning a proactive coverage of the social achievements, the positive energy, and notions about the nation, which has been embodied in official micro-blogs. With government paying close attention to the critical status of online media in maintaining ideological security, governmental propaganda departments have begun deploying micro-blogs to contain this field with communicative

skills fit for the characteristics of this platform and compliant to audience's cultural traits. For instance, in presenting stories, *@ the Center of the Communist Youth League* adheres to a guideline of "avoiding posting overly partisan news and vulgar entertaining contents" forming a genre more acceptable to young netizens. Such an initiative demonstrates the vision of the state.

The national narrative of *@ the Center of Communist Youth League* and the "positive energy" represented by it are boosted by the ideological pursuits of the 'Chinese Dream', 'national rejuvenation' and 'positive energy dissemination'. On November 29th, 2012, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China Xi Jinping declared 'Chinese Dream' for the first time during his visit to the 'the Road of Rejuvenation' exhibition in the National Museum. He explained that rejuvenating the Chinese nation is the greatest dream for Chinese people since modern times. At the closing session of the 12th National People's Congress Conference on March 17, 2013, Xi Jinping systematically expounded the "Chinese Dream". When the newly elected Chinese President delivered his declaration of office to the National People's Congress, he mentioned the "Chinese Dream" nine times in the speech which lasted for about 25 min. Xi's insightful discussion of this notion was welcomed by ardent applause (Lu, 2014 45).

"Chinese Dream" is interpreted as a dream of the nation and also a dream of every Chinese, which has touched and inspired the "sons and daughters" of the nation to strive for the wellbeing for themselves, for the families, for the motherland, and for the rejuvenation of the nation" (Sheng, 2013 9). In August 2013, President Xi gave a speech on the work of propaganda and ideology, calling for the comrades to "consolidate and spread mainstream thoughts and public opinion, promote main rhythm, disseminate positive energy, and gather forces to enhance progress and cohesion of the society" (*Xinhua Net*, 20, August, 2013). He then demanded in the talk that media should create new forms for transmitting "positive energy" in attaining an effect of "having the masses enjoy watching, listening and easier to resonate with the contents in this regard, and making full use of the potential of the positive energy for spurring up the masses" (*Xinhua Net*, 20, August, 2013). Also, in this talk, Mr Xi mentioned that '[h]istory and realities have repeatedly proved that whether or not ideological work can be done well is related to the Party's destiny, the country's long-term stability and the cohesion and centripetal force of the nation' (*Xinhua Net*, 20, August, 2013). The talk stressed the fundamental, strategic, and supporting function ideological work serves to the nation.

Since then, the pursuit of national dreams, the constant creation and transmission of positive energy has been an important work for Chinese media. Liu Qibao, member of the Political Bureau of the CCP Central Committee and minister of the Central Propaganda Department, stressed that implementing propaganda and education of the "Chinese Dream" should be a critical task. '[We must] muster up the positive energy for the national cause through information transmission and education and guide the mass to assiduously strive for national renaissance, having "Chinese dream" realized as fast as possible' (Sheng, 2013 9). Chinese media has stipulated specific plans for vigorous publicity of the "Chinese dream" and the effective transmission of positive energy discourse. In April 2013, the Chinese Journalists Association and 25

media including *People's Daily*, *Xinhua News Agency* and *CCTV*, jointly launched an initiative to construct positive energy with a strong sense of social responsibility, advocating national media to apply effective manners of communication to back up the national vision (Lu, 2014 45).

The context within which this discourse is proposed is the crisis challenging China's cultural security since modern times. It is assumed that China once led the world's cultural trends in the history and Chinese people had a strong sense of pride, identity, and belonging to their own cultural traditions and values. Further, it is believed that Chinese culture has attracted assimilation of different cultures in the political transformation throughout the dynasties. It has become the only civilization that has been preserved and passed down to the present in human history (Wang, 2008). However, since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with the rise of the European industrial revolution and China's closed doors policy, its development has lagged behind the West. Faced with China's defeat in confrontations against foreigners and the failures in military struggles, the cohesion of Chinese culture gradually broke up. As China became a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country under the invasion and division from colonial powers, Chinese social culture underwent drastic turbulence, causing mainstream cultural thoughts in the state constantly shifting and contradicting between the East and the West.

China's positioning of itself was completely different after the nineteenth century. Before the nineteenth century, it was a kingdom of heaven, while in the twentieth century, China became a "primary school student" of the West and even became a "primary school student" of Japan (Wang, 2008. 219). From then on, the cultural confidence and cultural identity of the Chinese could not be firmly identified or even got lost in the profound national crisis. And Western countries' cultural aggression against China is carried out in an organized and systematic scheme. For instance, the United States, in the guise of advancing so-called "modernity", instigates the total westernization of third-world countries, plans to deconstruct and dispel the original national identity of third-world countries, and adopts ideological and academic infiltration to third-world countries (Wang, 2008 221). The purpose of cultural infiltration is to replace their national culture with Western culture and disintegrate their national identities in order to achieve a "color revolution" (Wang, 2008 221). "Without strong national cohesion, any country will collapse in internal frictions." (Wang, 2008, 221). This is a cultural war with no visible smoke. 'An American magazine, called *Lingua Franca,* revealed that: in order to complete a strategic goal of competing with the Soviet Union, the Central Intelligence Agency planned and manipulated the cultural cold war, and some world-renowned authors and artists were turned into tools of the Cold War intentionally or unintentionally' (Wang, 2008 214). In China, on experiencing cultural shocks and social reshaping in the twentieth century, the market rule centering on economic construction has once become a dominant doctrine, which immensely promoted social and economic development, but also brought about huge impacts on social values. The market rules have led to rampant money worship, hedonism, and concentration on self-interest, leading to loss of constructive value system.

In this situation, Chinese government formulated a ‘two-handed’ policy comprising ‘material civilization’ and ‘spiritual civilization’. The proposition of ‘Chinese dream’ of national rejuvenation and the construction of the positive energy discourse demonstrate China’s continuous advancing of discursive practices used for spiritual engineering. In 2004, the Fourth Plenary Session of the 16th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China officially announced the project for safeguarding political security, economic security, cultural security, and information security. It shows that the Chinese Communist Party has begun incorporating the issue of cultural security into a vision for strategically defending national security (Huang, 2009 97). In specifically enforcing such a scheme, articulating positive energy functions as a rational approach in dealing with cultural challenges. “Cultural security is founded on the preservation of the uniqueness, integrity, stability and creativity of a culture” (Huang, 2009 97). When a culture faces a crisis, it will have difficulties in its inheritance, lack of renewal, loss of national characteristics, and so on (Huang, 2009 97). It is in this historical background that the highly cohesive national culture has become an important sally port in constructing positive energy discourse.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Chinese government via its communication strategy is gaining cultural security in the on-line space via applying the frame of Chinese nationalistic identity in the representation of social agenda. This study examines the posts released by @ the Center of the Communist Youth League during the Chinese ‘Two Sessions’ in 2017. As one of the most popular micro-blogs, it showcases a cross section of the online discursive practices for guiding netizens’ mindset. In this study, the micro-blog posts are classified according to the thematic differences and commonalities among the topics, and then the frequency of forwarding for the posts are calculated. The findings reveal that whether in terms of quantity or the frequency of being forwarded, themes of nationalism and national identity were vibrant in interpreting meanings and significance of the news events and for attaining positive social psyche, which works as a macro-level approach for managing meaning production and enhancing social consensus. Chinese nationalism incorporated into the shaping of the positive discourses resonates with the nationalistic roots of the netizen who are cultivated within Chinese national culture from childhood. It is worth noting that the specific contents of the ‘Two Sessions’ occupies only a little portion of the posting space in this event, proving that the representation of the ‘Two Sessions’ is principally targeted at supervising the netizens, especially the Chinese youth, with thoughts of shared national identification. It is not an accidental occurrence considering that China’s strategy for safeguarding cultural security and articulating Chinese dream is a consistent project in its communication strategy. Equally, the paper has shown that netizens actively engage with and in a transcultural manner satirize, reinterpret and take what they want from a discourse that is overlaid with nationalist tropes.

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Transgressive and Creative Liminal Smellscape in Brian Castro's Transnational Writing

Lurong Liu and Zhong Huang

Abstract Among Chinese Australian writers, Brian Castro is arguably the most widely recognized pioneer of transnational writing. *Birds of Passage* and *After China* are two of Castro earliest works, both of which describe Chinese migrants' lives in Australia and reveal the struggle the protagonists experience in the process of transforming from a national identity to a transnational one. Studies of the transnational turn of literature have run parallel with the increasing application of interdisciplinary approaches to transnational literature since the end of the twentieth century. In this context, this paper focuses on the relationship between changes of geographical space, disruption of mental space and identity transformation, in relation to the theory of Liminality and the concept of sensory space—smellscape—from Sociology. Liminality, an analytical framework originally from Anthropology, examines the in-between state during identity transition. This paper investigates why the smellscapes in these two works can be treated as Liminality and how the liminal smellscapes recruit transnational identity with their transgressive power to dismantle the rigid boundary between race and class, fantasy and reality, and sexual desire and creative desire, to prevent transnational individuals from being trapped in a perilous permanent Liminality.

Keywords Chinese Australian writing · Brian Castro · Liminality · Smellscape · Transnational identity

Since the shift of cultural policy to multiculturalism, Australian migrant literature has been witness to the 'transnational turn' in literary studies, which, according to Paul Jay (2010), is characterized by an increasing focus on 'pluralities, differences, hybrid identities, and complicated transnational geographies' (p. 4). Wenche Ommundsen (2011) asserts that "ethnic minority writers in Australia…have evolved complex,

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sophisticated, and innovative methods for exploring the past, the self, and the intersections between cultural difference and writing" (p. 511). This is true of Chinese Australian writing, one of the major branches of migrant literature in Australia. For all the vicissitudes of cultural and political policies concerning Chinese migrants to Australia to date, this transnational turn in terms of literary production and criticism may face a backlash in the foreseeable future with multiple sociopolitical frictions adding strain to the bilateral relations between China and Australia in recent years. This counterproductive political atmosphere consequently calls for a retrospection of Chinese Australian literature to rediscover a sense of intimacy and affinity between the two cultures in an effort to establish a coherent basis for coping with the upcoming unforeseen changes.

One of the pioneers in adopting a transcultural point of view in writing about Chinese migrants in Australia is Brian Castro. Castro, of Chinese, English, Portuguese, Spanish and French descent, has abundant cross-cultural experience, having lived in Paris, Hong Kong, Sydney and other cities around the world. Brian Castro's rise to fame has a lot to do with Australia's policy of multiculturalism, implemented from the 1970s, before which the White Australia Policy prevailed, from 1901. With his Asian appearance, Castro easily fell victim to the toxic legacy of racism in Australia. His perpetual alienation on the margins of society makes him a keen beholder of Australian culture. Castro reveals racism and nationalism rooted in the Australian national imaginary and became one of the leading writers to deconstruct the notion of cultural authenticity. In an interview with Ouyang Yu in 2001, Brian Castro said that 'to be a writer is to be a spy…one doesn't become a writer to gain a nationality and it always seems to me that the celebratory aspects of a national culture miss the point' (p. 74). Following this postcolonial trajectory which highlights hybridity and other kinds of discrepancy, the transnationality of Castro's work is revealed in characters with multi-ethnic origins and high geographical mobility across the world. As Ouyang Yu (2008) has concluded, 'hybridity and marginality comprise two important characteristics of Castro's writing career and his ideological position' (p. 353). And this accounts for the reason why a sense of being unsettled is a recurring sentiment in the characters in Castro's novels. From another perspective, the main body of criticism of Castro's interpretation of transnationalism is focused on his ingenious employment of language and narrative form, which is strongly suggestive of postmodernism. Castro celebrates the borderlessness of language usage as a form of creative agency that resists fixed meaning. As Bernadette Brennan (2008) has noted in *Brian Castro's Fiction: The Seductive Play of Language*: 'Castro discovered that language was something that respected no borders' (p. 3) in a way that allows writing to escape the essentialisation of identity. One of the innovations of Castro's writing is to incorporate literary theories and philosophies into the text and to tell stories in multiple voices to produce a liminal textual space, which, in Guanglin Wang's reading (2005), may also be understood in terms of Foucauldian heterotopia and a process of deterritorialization, in Deleuze and Guattari's terminology. Castro (1995) has his own comprehension of heterotopia: 'In heterotopias, on the other hand, things are cast adrift. Old hierarchical models are discarded for lateral provocations in which the imagination is allowed to roam' (p. 178). Moreover, Castro

renders imagination, paradox, and unfamiliarity, as evoked by writing, as essential in the search for heterotopias. When applied to narrative, the creation of heterotopia is substantialised via polyphonic narrative or narrative duality, as captured primarily in Castro's debut novel *Birds of Passage* (1983).

Castro's status as a cosmopolitan or transnational writer is evident as the textual space in his works is mediated by the play of language and narrative, which inevitably leads to the marginalization of the lived space where the transnational subjects engage as social beings. Therefore, approaching from one particular dimension of sensorial studies—smellscape—this paper focuses on the physical and psychological space and their interactive relationship with the textual and narrative space. Drawing on the theory of Liminality in anthropology, a state that often occurs in the process of identity transformation, this paper further probes the question, in this increasingly fragmented and fluid world, of whether one is to live in "a perpetual state of liminality" (Cohen, 2008, p. 134). In other words, whether transnational migrants will end up in perpetual Liminality or will successfully pull through the liminal period and shift to a transnational identity is a question that entails further study. Two of Castro's award-winning works, his debut novel *Birds of Passage* (1983) and *After China* (1992) (hereinafter referred to as *BOP* and *AC*), explore two critical periods in the history of Chinese migration to Australia, namely, the Gold Rush, from the 1850s to the 1860s, and after the end of the White Australia Policy, from the 1980s to the 1990s. The spatial practices of the Chinese migrants during their transformation to a socially and culturally transnational identity in the above two works can yield valuable information for unraveling the postcolonial nexus of massive displacement and transcultural intimacy at this critical juncture in history, fraught with anxiety towards globalization.

Liminality and Smellscape

Liminality as a theory reflects a process of status transition between previous status and new status which can be applied to a person as well as a group in almost every realm of social, economic, and political life. The idea of Liminality was introduced into the field of cultural anthropology by Arnold Van Gennep in his work *Les Rites de Passage* (1909; *The Rites of Passage*), which was translated into English in 1960. Van Gennep described the rituals in human society, such as those held for birth, coming of age, marriage, and death, with the following three-part structure: preliminal, liminal, and post-liminal, or in other words, separation, threshold, and re-assimilation. To be specific, "the rites of separation from a previous world, preliminal rites, those executed during the transitional stage liminal (or threshold) rites, and the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world postliminal rites" (Van Gennep, 1960, p. 21). Drawing upon Van Gennep's concept of Liminality, Victor Turner has elaborated on the characteristics of Liminality from his fieldwork on an African tribe called Ndembu in Zambia; for Turner (1969) the prominent attribute in the liminal period

in the tribe of Ndembu is the dismantling of social hierarchy and the creation of "communitas" (a kind of community in Turner's words), whose main properties are 'homogeneity, equality, anonymity, absence of property", in contrast to the secular world characteristics of "heterogeneity, inequality, systems of nomenclature and property' (p. 106). In this vein, the communitas expresses the pursuit of an equal society, and the creative and liberating strength in it is recognized. Moreover, Liminality differs from daily existence in that it focuses on human subjectivity and affects. The participants engaging in the ritual will develop a sense of camaraderie, which is not "the pleasurable and effortless comradeship that can arise between friends, coworkers, or professional colleagues any day" but a kind of hard-won affection rising from their 'transformative experience that goes to the root of each person's being and finds in that root something profoundly communal and shared' (p. 138). Liminality enables humans to be liberated from the bonds of the institution and, instead of using their rationality to address difficulties, the mutual effects and emotion turn out to be more important in connecting with others for the sake of enduring ordeals together.

The theory of Liminality has been developed by many other anthropologists. The concept of "permanent liminality" was introduced by Aprad Szakolczai to elaborate a much more complicated liminal situation in the real world. In the three phases of separation, liminal period and reaggregation, 'liminality becomes a permanent condition when any of the phases in this sequence becomes frozen, as if a film stopped at a particular frame'(Szakolczai, 2000, p. 212). And at this time, this transitory period can be extended to a permanent state, which is noted by Bjørn Thomassen (2012) as 'a pure danger', as it induces 'a constant proliferation of empty spaces or non-spaces', forming the 'void' and 'abyss' (p. 30) of "nothingness" and 'infinity' and generating 'a gradual loss of the distinction between liminal and ordinary spaces' (p. 31). Szakolczai (2017) also provides a solution to fix 'permanent liminality', contending that Liminality is about affectivity, so to end the trap of 'permanent Liminality', one has to rely on 'heart' as defined in Pascal's philosophy, which is 'not identical to emotions', but "the condensed essence of life experiences, personal integrity, and the intactness of the self…beyond the Enlightenment schism between 'rationality' and 'emotivity'" (pp. 234–235). The stability of 'heart', which also governs the reasoning power, will help the liminal entities to get rid of the static, void, and meaningless state of 'permanent liminality' and boost the re-integration into a new status of being.

The unique spatial experience inspired in Liminality is in many ways attuned to the appeal of the 'body turn' in the 1980s and the 'sensorial turn' in the 1990s, both of which reinforce the significance of studying the human body and the five senses, not merely as a physiological subject but also as a social and cultural phenomenon. By the same token, Constance Classen et al (1994) have made it manifest that "smell is a social phenomenon" on the front page of *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell*. They highlight that "odours…can enforce social structures or transgress them, unite people or divide them, empower or disempower" (Preface). Smellscape is a concept combining the sense of smell with space, and it was first raised by J. Douglas Porteous (1985), who distinguished landscape from smellscape in literary representation, remarking that 'while one may stand outside a visual landscape and

judge it artistically, as one does a painting, one is immersed in smellscape; it is immediately evocative, emotional and meaningful' (p. 360). The key point is "immersed" here, as it does not mean to establish a kind of hierarchy between the perceiver and the smell, but a rather close and impartial interaction between them. Moreover, as a sense that has been suppressed by the visual sense, which is regarded as the most advanced and rational of the human senses, smelling is regarded as the very opposite of the modern imperative of rationality and reason. The smellscape aligns itself with postmodernity as a liminal mixture of fleeting odours with 'boundary-transgressing propensities' and 'emotional potency' (Constance et al., 1994, p. 5). It is in this sense that smellscape can be related to Liminality. It is possible to research the liminal smellscape in order to unravel the matrix of the changing perception and feeling of transnationals in the transitional period of identity. Brian Castro has a propensity to use the sense of smell in his writing. His protagonists interact with the smellscape whenever their sensitive bodies are immersed in an olfactory ambience related to memory and place. Straddling the breach between reality and imagination, registering temporal and spatial distortion, and constantly experiencing self-renewal and transformation, Castro's liminal smellscape provides a fresh perspective in understanding the ambiguous relationship between smell and identity in the time of globalization.

Shared Olifactory Memory: Transgressing Boundary and Building Intimacy

Scent has long been one of the key signals by which animals and humans distinguish the familiar from the foreign, with the dichotomous effect of dividing people, especially with the xenophobic mentality of imperialism and colonialism. As an illustration of the hierarchical worldview imposed by feudal or imperial imperatives, this dichotomy can be captured in the smellscape before the characters in the two novels under discussion enter into the liminal state. In *BOP*, Castro parallels the life of Seamus O' Young, an Australian-born Chinese living in the 1980s, with that of his imagined Chinese ancestor Lo Yun Shan, who ventures to Australia in the 1850s for gold-digging, both of whom struggle to identify who they are in Australia. When the story begins, Lo Yun Shan, who lives in a seaside village in Guangdong, China before he sets out on a journey to Australia, acts as a detector sensitive to the smellscape of his home country redolent with poverty and depression. Born as a member of the gentry class, Shan perceives the discrepancy of the smell inside and outside of the sedan chair carried by the coolies. Inside the 'perfumed mustiness' is 'not unpleasant', while outside the smell emitted by the coolies is 'redolent of sweat' (Castro, 1983, p. 2). The class difference is vividly depicted through the smellscape of this little sedan chair, as the very token of the feudal society. The other work, *AC*, features transcultural communication via storytelling between a Chinese architect You Bok Mun who flees to Australia during the Cultural Revolution in China and a dying Australian female writer, a single mother with a young daughter, after their

encounter on the coast of Australia. Here You foregrounds the painful experience of colonial invasion that lingers in the smellscape while recalling his childhood in Shanghai after the Second World War: 'the foreigners have gone, but the river still stinks' (Castro, 1992, p. 12). On this account, the smell in the memory of Lo Yun Shan and You Bok Mun before their journey abroad encapsulates the recurring theme of the structure, hierarchy and heterogeneity of modernity.

Nonetheless, similar to the communitas educed by Liminality, the smellscape that Castro depicts with intense commitment is a way of uniting people. He departs from traditional migrant literature that emphasises difference and confrontation of cultures, instead reaffirming the connections between. In both *BOP* and *AC*, some major smellscapes are crafted with the aim of patching the seam between different social classes and ethnic groups, and a sense of comradeship is conjured up, negotiating intimacy for transnational individuals. In *BOP*, the voyage by sea from Guangdong to Australia might be regarded as quintessential Liminality for Shan who has already separated from his home but has yet to embrace the unknown country on the opposite shore. While huddling together with other mostly lower class gold seekers in the enclosed space under the deck, Shan detaches himself from the aura of incense and opium associated with his well-to-do family and enters into the fusion of a variety of smells, including tea, food and sweat and urine: 'almost every swell carries up the acrid fumes of urine…throughout the hold there is also a perfume of tea, becoming now a nauseating smell' (Castro, 1983, p.31). This unpleasant smellscape becomes a shared experience for all the people in the same space, and there is no boundary by which individuals can resist this diffuse smellscape. According to Constance et al. (1994), 'odours cannot be readily contained, they escape and cross boundaries, blending different entities into olfactory wholes' (p. 5). The mingled smellscape transforms the independent entities with distinctive smell into a comprehensive whole, in which comradeship also comes into being: '…we felt as one, linked to each other and to our produce in a foreign ship upon a foreign sea' (Castro, 1983, p.40). In the process of immersing oneself into the smellscape created by all, the rigid social hierarchy maintained by the norms of feudal China is unremittingly undermined and a subtle affinity between people develops.

The liminal smellscape as a transgressive force can also be identified in *AC* in its alliance with memory. The encounter between the Chinese architecture You and the Australian writer on an anonymous island east of the Australian continent presupposes a romantic affair. Yet it is surprising to discover later that the romantic relationship between them is less sexual and more imaginative and creative, their intimacy mediated via the exchange of stories in which a shared olfactory smellscape in memory ensures some emotional and mental leverage. The childhood of You and the writer are both dominated by a lingering stench. As recounted by the narrator in You's story: 'Smells of tar, herbal medicine, fish. His father a saltfish merchant…his father's mouth bears the expression of a hapless groper. Twenty varieties of the stink. A stinkfest for the Shanghai Co-operative'(Castro, 1992, p.13). The narrator hates the school that 'like a jail, had been a jail during the war' and the odour on the bus further attests to this distressing life: 'Each morning the smells of sleepless nights, wet clothes, foul breaths, fried batter and congee and each morning the view

of grey sky and roof"'(p. 72). The stench does not only remain in his living place but is also diffused to almost every corner of society, indicative of the oppressive social and political environment in Shanghai at the time of unrest. By the same token, the writer's father is a well-known fisherman in his neighbourhood and is adept at catching worms for fishing. He used to fill old stockings with smelly worms and as a result 'the stink was driving the whole family out of the house' (p. 29). Notwithstanding, this disagreeable stench becomes a precious as well as a traumatic smellscape related to the writer's father after his sudden death in a boat accident. Another essential element in the olfactory memory of the writer is related to her failed relationship with a Chinese poet, who leaves the writer a posthumous child. The experience of giving birth to the baby girl and raising her is no less traumatic than her father's death. This partly accounts for the purgatorial scene when Cec discovers an abandoned child in a dumpsite: 'the garbage festered more than usual underneath…nacreous fish-heads-with sunken eyes, tin buckling and bottles cracking and drums imploding, poison filling the air with acrid green clouds' (p. 59). The stinking and even poisonous smellscape in the female writer's fantasy has a ring of truth as it mirrors her painful experience of love and family, which almost evolves into a source of horror and anxiety.

You once used the nuance of smell to depict the subtlety mediated by transcultural relationship: 'A foreigner attracts. It is the different smells, different skin, and, above all, a failure to communicate' (p. 16). You understands well that as a foreigner in Australian society he should not expect a genuine relationship because his charm may not reside in himself but in his exoticism. He believes that this fetish for exotic scents is an invisible block to effective communication. Consequently You resigns from dreaming about love: 'Hell, I don't want a relationship, but what about a little intimacy?' (p. 16). The ideal condition of intimacy is immediately induced from the invasion of You into the private space of the writer, which is a liminal smellscape that dissolves the wall between reality and memory. The dominant stench in the olfactory memory of the father begins to be converted to fragrance after the female writer shares with You her own father's story. The fragrant aura is pervasive as You imagines that he is dancing with the writer: 'her perfumed cheek close to mine, her fingers up to my lips' (p. 101). In the enclosed space of aroma, You recognises his father from the dancing gestures of the writer in his vision: 'All these inhabiting me, and yet I know nothing of them, gestures of a dead father whom I hardly knew, performing ghost-like in the darkening room' (p. 101). In this regard, the aromatic smellscape is not enabled by You's carnal desire for the writer, but by his affection for his father. Coming back to the issue of intimacy, Brain Castro (2007) has contended in the essay 'Written Kisses': 'The intimate gesture is always the intermittent gesture'(p. 187). Castro illustrates this point in relation to Baudelaire's poem, 'To a woman passing by', saying that the poet may fall in love with an unknown woman passing in the street. It exerts an effect on his heart: 'the aura of love was a momentary one, and rapidly deteriorated' (p. 187). In the same vein, the fleeting intimacy inspired by identifying the Australian writer with You's father in the illusion is captured by the liminal smellscape which dovetails with 'silence, reticence, intermittence' in 'the aura of intimacy', in Castro's words (p. 187). The mutual olfactory memory deriving

from their similar life experiences is the very basis of transcultural intimacy between You and the Australian writer. As indicated by the above analysis, the comradeship beyond social hierarchy and the intimacy drawn from memory are both precious strengths of 'heart' and motivations for these transnational individuals to adopt a new multicultural status and thus avoid being trapped in 'permanent liminality'.

Seductive Smellscape: Provoking Imagination and Creativity

Besides the uniting power unleashed by the memory of smell, the liminal smellscape, when combined with the dynamics of the textual space, is further revealed through its destabilization of the narrative structure. In *BOP*, the thread connecting the two protagonists, namely, Luo Yun Shan who worked on the goldfields of Australia in the mid-nineteenth century and the orphan Seamus O'Young who lives in Australia in the 1980s, is Shan's journals written in Chinese. The dual narratives alternating between the voice of Shan and that of Seamus unfold the relationship between the two protagonists, with the former assuming absolute authority as ancestor-author over the latter as descendent-reader both in terms of genealogy and narratology. However, similar to the rites of passage held by the African tribes to subvert the authority of the leader, the double hierarchy formed between Shan and Seamus becomes precarious in the ambience of the alluring smell. The smell that Seamus detects in the forest near the goldfield where Shan worked more than a century ago guides Seamus to find the journals left by Shan. In that sense the smellscape becomes the liminal space accessible to both the writing space in the journal and the physical space in the forest:

> I ran, driven by two demons; the demons of the body, the continuous present, and the demon of the mind, which harboured the other life, intent only on seeing into the past…Sometimes the warmth of the morning garnished my run with distinctive smells. One place in the forest offered a smell of Goldfaber pencils, another place a smell of old books, the kind with rough, uncut pages. Along one section of the track which leads away from the house into the hills, and which stops abruptly at a huge boulder, there was a strong smell of ink, a sweetish smell which I suspected emanated from a small creek and its attendant undergrowth. These smells for some reason, always made me hungry. (Castro, 1983, p. 47)

Seamus realises that his identity is undergoing a division that runs counter to the fusion of various captivating scents, which are not merely the product of imagination but also deeply bound up with the place. As Porteous (1985) notes: 'The concept of smellscape suggests that, like visual impressions, smells may be spatially ordered or place-related' (p. 359). In this case, the mysterious space of the forest in proximity to the goldmine draws together Seamus's affection for the town where he spent his childhood and Shan's life on the goldfield as an 'Other' to the white majority. Beyond the strong attachment to the place, the smellscape consisting of the smell of pencil, book and ink is explicit as a transcendental property within the textual space. The tension between the real space and the textual space stirs the compelling desire of Seamus to track the smell to discover Shan's journals. When the two spaces converge, Seamus's identity stops splitting: 'the real and the abstract had already

begun to merge: I had a craving for a bowl of rice'(Castro, 1983, p. 52). Seamus's racial identity undergoes a deterritorialisation when the schism between the Chineseness and the Australianness is disclosed by the liminal smellscape. Yet this process is immediately followed by a reterritorialisation when he acknowledges his desire for rice, which suggests the awakening of the other half of his self that has long been repressed. The deterritorialisation and the reterritorialisation of identity can be torturous as well as productive in a way that proves Seamus capable of destabilising the former ancestor-author (Shan) and descendant-reader (Seamus) hierarchy, effectively promoting Seamus's own creativity amid Liminality. Correspondingly while Seamus is reading the journals, he feels that 'Shan's journals, real and imagined, have merged…Not only am I the author, the originator, but I am his progenitor, having impregnated myself with these fictions' (p. 58). The prior cognition of his status as the derivative and secondary is now being replaced by the capable image of being the original and dominant. Accordingly, the dramatic episode of Seamus' encounter with Roland Barthes on the train is designed by Castro to make it manifest that what Seamus attempts to achieve is in tune with Barthes' concept of 'The Death of Author', which means that by usurping the authority of Shan's writing, Seamus can have the voice and words of his own. After Seamus enters into the pine forest, he begins to undergo the transformation of cultural identity in the contact zone of the smellscape and the narrative space, where he brings to an end the former configuration of his identity as a silent Australian living on the margins of Australian society, bereft of his own voice. He also begins to realise the hybridity in his cultural identity from his connection with Shan, his Chinese ancestor, and to understand the history of Chinese migrants during the Gold Rush from his journal-reading and reimagination. On this account, the liminal smellscape is a mysterious yet no less creative zone in which Seamus regains the agency of writing and creation.

The seductive smellscape in *AC* differs from that in *BOP* for it is primarily dominated by the aphrodisiac aura that is capable of disrupting the boundary between sexual desire and the creative impulse in art production. Paradoxically, the protagonist in *AC* is an architect but the building he designs and the stories he tells all convey the sentiment of 'structural phobia' (Brennan, 2008, p. 76). You Bok Mun's anti-structuralism stance is partly due to the affliction he endured during the Cultural Revolution in China. In the quest to liberate himself from the restraint imposed by any form of structure, You is dedicated to retaining the currency of his artistic productivity through the innovative designing of architecture and the creative act of story-telling. According to You, the ultimate liberation of imagination and creation is through the 'quest for a revolutionary erotica of art' (Castro, 1992, p. 71), which is what You, both as an architect and a storyteller, endeavours to embody in either his architecture or his story. This pursuit is well captured in the story told by You to the female writer in which the seductive smellscape once again plays the role of lifting sexual restriction and political oppression in service of a blurring of sexuality and creativity. The story of the artist Tang Yin is a prime example:

> Men's work can begin in the cool of the evening, but it is always better around midnight, upon that change of wind, when the jasmine loses its suffocating perfume and wind that is almost cold stirs the house and all is silence and men are entirely alone at their desks.

> Nightwork is writing. Nightwork is pure joy, when the brush sweeps into the ideogram and the character discovers that its being is as fragile as tissue and as perfect and eternal as a vein of jade. Look how the ink finds its flight, its departure from meaning in the whiskers of the Dragon and the flames of the Phoenix. (p. 104)

The perfume of jasmine has an aphrodisiac effect upon Tang Yin, an established artist in Ming Dynasty China. Though the smellscape does not directly result in sex, it indeed pacifies the anxiety and trauma of the artist through the exertion of his talents and imagination. Jasmine is a popular fragrance used in the human world as one of the most essential materials for perfume production. As Mandy Aftel (2006) notes in one chapter of *The Smell Culture Reader*, the unique function of jasmine is to "stimulate one of the deep desires of the obsessive as well, to capture, to experience most fully, what is elusive, evanescent and irreplaceable"; to be more specific, 'Jasmine is almost narcotic in its ability to seize the senses and the imagination. Yet powerful as it is, jasmine refreshes rather than oppresses, possessing antidepressant as well as aphrodisiacal properties' (p. 214). What Aftel accentuates here can account for the reason why Castro chooses jasmine in a story full of sexual innuendo and creative desire. Tang Yin's obsession with jasmine is not so much out of his longing for sex as out of his quest for the essence of sexuality and more importantly its connection with artistic creativity. Tang Yin marries Lin Lin who believes that sex is a dirty subject and a taboo. In this sense, they have never enjoyed the pleasure of sex. Tang Yin's repressed sexual desire is mediated by the fantasy of himself as the Taoist Chuang-tzu dreaming of a butterfly in sleep and as a tiger seeking a mate in the forest. Yet Tang Yin identifies in pornographic drawing a distinctive pleasure, a pleasure derived from a mixture of the transcendental satisfaction of carnal desire, artistic creativity and the exciting transgression of social norms. Tang Yin 'experiences something new to him in this field'. 'He experiences illicitness…a teaching over, a swelling of artistic borders, and finally, a sub-version of codes and genres that had real consequences' (Castro, 1992, p. 106). In this regard, the aphrodisiacal smellscape of jasmine makes the space where Tang Yin creates pornographic art alone in the night liminal, enabling him to escape the social coercion imposed on either sexual freedom or artmaking.

It is interesting to find that Tang Yin's dilemma is in tandem with the storyteller's experience in that You is symbolically castrated as well due to a severe train accident back in China. In You's own words, 'After China, it has been impossible' (p. 37). As sexuality has been interlocked with creativity, You's sexual disempowerment is meanwhile suggestive of the waning of his creativity. The blatant discussion of sexuality in Tang Yin's tales compensates for the relationship between You and the female writer that is devoid of sexuality. The tales about ancient China told by You, according to Marilyne Brun (2011), highlight 'the respectful chastity of his relationship with the writer and represents a narrative compensation for the sexuality that he is unable to offer her' (p. 18). This narrative method, similar to the *Arabian Nights*, delays the satisfaction of sexual desire and the arrival of narrative climax and therefore reaches the eternity of narrative time. The perpetually deferred sexual satisfaction ultimately expels the eroticism and sensuality that is supposed to be essential to male–female relationship and thus becomes more akin to the pure intimacy dreamed by You. To conclude, as a threshold between the writing space and the actual space, between

sexuality and creativity, the seductive smellscape actively engages in the exploration of what Castro is most concerned with, namely, writing, sexuality, time and creativity.

Conclusion

Brian Castro attunes the smellscapes in these two works to the key attributes of Liminality summarised by Victor Turner, among which the concept of communitas is of paramount importance in this analysis. With the end of creating the communitas in view, the smellscape discussed above, as the natural and social environment the human body always unconsciously reacts to, works to unite people from strikingly different social classes and ethnic groups through promoting comradeship or stimulating shared olfactory memory. Moreover, when combined with the more metaphysical space of writing and art, the smellscape also serves to overthrow the root-tree hierarchy attentive to causality along chronology and to favour the rhizomatic ontology that can afford huge potential in freedom and creativity. The seductive smellscape traverses the boundary between sexuality and creativity through the deconstruction of social prohibitions on sex. The foremost meaning of the liminal smellscape is to discover a possibility for transnational individuals to regain intimacy in the precarious state of displacement and resettlement without dismissing the creativity that is vulnerable to the cultural and social violence of racism and nationalism. In the communitas induced by the liminal smellscape, the transnationals could convert this precious intimacy, though fleeting and momentary, into a force of inner stability to resist a 'permanent liminality' and thus pave the way for a new identity as a transnational and cosmopolitan being.

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