Research Articles

Reconsidering Sinophone Studies: The Chinese Cold War, Multiple Sinocentrisms, and Theoretical Generalisation

Flair Donglai Shi

PhD Student, English Faculty, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom
donglai.shi@queens.ox.ac.uk

Abstract

Sinophone studies has improved the visibility of a range of Chinese-language cultural products and is expanding into a transnational and multilingual academic enterprise. With firm acknowledgement of the pragmatic benefits the Sinophone has brought (particularly to Anglophone and Taiwanese academia), this paper reflects on some of the problems embedded in the underlying premises and ideological mechanisms of the concept of the Sinophone that have so far been under-discussed. As a first step towards a more self-reflective meta-discourse about Sinophone studies, it highlights three areas that warrant more clarification and debate before the concept is applied to specific analyses: the significance of the Chinese Cold War; the matrix of multiple Sinocentrisms; and the double-edged sword of theoretical generalisation. In this process, I emphasise the institutional formation of the 'Sinophone' both as a cultural field and as an academic discourse, and highlight the significant role that Taiwan has been playing in this.

Keywords

Sinophone studies – Cold War – Sinocentrism – postcolonialism – Taiwan-centrism

Ever since its first mention by Shu-mei Shih in her seminal essay ‘Global Literature and the Technologies of Recognition’ (2004), the concept of the Sinophone has been steadily gaining momentum in the field traditionally known as Chinese studies in Anglophone academia, especially in the United States. Apart from Shih’s often-cited definition of Sinophone studies as ‘the study of Sinitic-language cultures and communities on the margins of China and Chineseness’, the concept of the Sinophone has always taken the study of the Chinese diaspora as one of its most important academic interlocutors, hence Shih’s key concepts ‘against diaspora’ or ‘anti-diaspora’ (Shih, 2013: 25). While acknowledging both the *heterogeneity* and *situatedness* of the Chinese diasporas, Shih emphasises the distinction between ‘diaspora as history’ and ‘diaspora as value’, and correspondingly, ‘Sinophone as history’ and ‘Sinophone as theory/value’ (Shih, 2011: 713, 2012: 5).¹ In her paradigm, ‘diaspora as history’ and ‘Sinophone as history’ overlap, in the sense that Sinitic-language speakers have long existed, and in many cases prospered, outside the geopolitical boundaries of mainland China, as well as the ethnic boundaries of Han China.

With this distinction in mind, Shih’s anti-diaspora politics, namely her advocacy for ‘Sinophone as theory/value’, assumes a strong ideological position that ‘diaspora has an end date’ and ‘everyone should be given a chance to be local’ (Shih, 2007: 185). For her, ‘diaspora as value implies loyalty to and longing for the ancestral “home”, which bind[s] the diasporic to the so-called homeland’

1 While the term ‘diaspora as value’ already appears as the main target of her criticism in Shih’s 2011 article ‘The Concept of the Sinophone’, it is in a foreword for the *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* in 2012 that Shih proposes the term ‘Sinophone as theory’ and explicitly juxtaposes it with ‘diaspora as history’ and ‘diaspora as value’. Its Chinese equivalent was raised by Shih in her 2017 conversation with David Der-wei Wang (D. D. Wang & Shih, 2017: 90). However, as the main sections of this paper demonstrate, Shih’s vision of ‘Sinophone as theory’ is firmly anchored to an anti-Sinocentric political stance, to the extent that what constitutes its theoretical vitality beyond this political need remains unclear. I am grateful to one of the anonymous reviewers for pointing this out. Indeed, corresponding to ‘diaspora as value’, Shih’s conceptualisation of ‘Sinophone as theory’ in the dyad of ‘Sinophone as history’ and ‘Sinophone as theory’ essentially boils down to ‘anti-diaspora as value’. Therefore, in order to highlight this opposition between values and to preserve a certain degree of doubt towards the nature of ‘Sinophone theory’ as such, I use the combined term ‘Sinophone as theory/value’ when referring to Shih’s advocacy for Sinophone studies based on her anti-diaspora value or anti-Sinocentric and pro-localising politics.

(Shih, 2011: 713), and this is 'problematic' because it often carries a kind of 'elite exilic sentimentalism' that renders the diasporic 'superior to the local' (Shih, 2017: 302–303, 306). While Shih has since emphasised that Sinophone studies is a 'multi-directional critique', which 'possesses possibilities for different local and trans-disciplinary criticism' (Shih, 2015b: 142), scholars engaged in the field agree that hers is 'a resistance approach' (D. D. Wang, 2017: 24). It sets up a binary antagonism between the Sinophone and its supposed nemesis, China, however ill-defined this nemesis may be. Indeed, the keyword in Shih's definition of the Sinophone is perhaps 'margins', the ontological basis of which is 'the centre(s)'.

Contrary to this binary setup, for many years David Der-wei Wang has attempted to draw up a 'revisionist cartography of Chinese language literature' in light of 'the translingual dynamics on the global scale' (D. D. Wang, 2018a: 63, 69). Instead of the 'spatial and positional politics' of anti-diaspora modelled on postcolonial resistance, Wang puts forth a positive case for both diaspora-as-history and diaspora-as-value by proposing postloyalism as an alternative framework to (re)address the temporal dimension of the Sinophone (D. D. Wang, 2015: 23). Focusing on the Sinophone as a psychological condition more than an identitarian position, Wang's postloyalism circumvents Shih's fixation on location and marginality to a large extent and enables the inclusion of mainland Chinese writers like Ge Fei (格非) in the discussion. Wang justifies this by arguing that Ge's works are also concerned with the changing meanings of Chineseness amid rapid mass urbanisation and internal migration in China, which results in 'the disintegration of the cultural imaginary, and minor acts of disobedience in routine daily life' (D. D. Wang, 2018a: 75, 2013: 103). This emphasis on the affective power of memory, with or without a postmodernist flavour, is shared by many other critics, including Lingchei Letty Chen, who similarly states that 'the emotional and psychic disruption of the diaspora is . . . the mutual ground of the Sinophone sphere' (L. L. Chen, 2015: 64). Further, early in his 2006 article 'Literary Traveling and Global Imagination', Wang had already diverged from Shih's approach and included certain cultural products from mainland China in his mapping of the Sinophone (D. D. Wang, 2006). He utilises Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia (creatively translated by Wang as '眾聲喧"華"', or 'many voices contending China/Chineseness') to formulate his strategy of 'include without'. Wang not only agrees with Shih that 'non-Han cultures within China' can be viewed as Sinophone but also pays particular attention to the linguistic heterogeneity *within* Han Chinese culture, often citing *Qin Opera* (Jia, 2005) and *Blossoms* (Y. Jin, 2013) as his favourite examples (D. D. Wang, 2006, 2014). This call for inclusivity stems from his belief that 'to truly subvert the foundation of Chinese national literature,

we should no longer consider it apart from the Sinophone literary system' (D. D. Wang, 2018a: 63), which is a critical stance shared by many other scholars, including Chongke Zhu (2010), Hangping Xu (2018), and Alvin Wong (2018). In short, coming from a place that values diaspora and the historical complexities and transregional interactions that come along with it, Wang's mapping of the Sinophone disregards Shih's proposal of 'non-relation with China' (Shih, 2007: 30), intending instead to effect what he calls 'the Sinophone intervention with China' (D. D. Wang, 2018a: 77).

Judging from the disagreement that has surfaced in a recent public dialogue between Shih and Wang in Taipei, the former perhaps would find the latter's efforts to expand the concept of the Sinophone too broad and abstract at best, and co-optative and self-defeating at worst, as such theoretical expansion runs the risk of losing the original 'targeted poignancy' of the Sinophone, namely, the critique against hegemonic Chineseness and ideological Sinocentrism (D. D. Wang & Shih, 2017: 86). However, a brief survey of recent responses to Sinophone studies in Chinese-language academia after the publication of Shih's book *Against Diaspora* (2017) in Taiwan, indicates that Wang's postloyalist argument against Shih is perhaps the mildest criticism among all. Most notable is an acerbic book review by Ng Kim Chew (Ng, 2018), which has stricken many scholars as curious considering how much Ng himself had benefitted from the international recognition that Sinophone studies affords him. Ng's short stories, especially those concerning the ethnic conflicts and communist struggles in (post)colonial Malaysia, have been frequently cited as primary texts by Sinophone studies scholars, with a relatively large number of English articles published in American academic journals.² This discrepancy, however, is explained away in his book review, where he admits that he had never paid serious attention to Sinophone studies conducted in English ('not my field of struggle') until the publication of Shih's book in Chinese, which finally makes him realise that the theory is an 'appropriation' of his own discussion on *huawen* (華文, Chinese-language) literature (Ng, 2018). Aside from this allegation, Ng also sees Shih's discussion of the Chinese diaspora in Nanyang as a kind of 'settler colonialism' deeply offensive since he views such localist views as pertaining to a form of native essentialism, or 'evil blood discourse', which feeds into the oppressive *bumiputera* (son of the soil) ideology of the Malaysian government, negates the painstaking attempts of Chinese Malaysian communities to preserve the Chinese language and culture, and deliberately ignores

2 Carlos Rojas (2016) and Alison Groppe (2013) are the most notable examples. Rojas is also the English translator of Ng's short stories, published in a collection entitled *A Slow Boat to China and Other Stories* (Ng, 2016).

the history of suffering of Chinese Malaysians.³ Moreover, Ng considers Shih's theoretical construction of the Sinophone as an act of 'turning the victim into the victimiser' (referring to the Nanyang Chinese communities), which affords her the 'prerogative' to 'occupy the most politically correct, the most morally infallible position' (Ng, 2018).

Although many such responses are not strictly academic and can be easily dismissed on grounds of their polemical nature (personal attacks on Shih abound), they constitute a significant portion of the social reception of Sinophone studies and require serious reflection. They are part of the ongoing negotiation about the definition and saliency of the Sinophone, which nevertheless points to the undeniable fact that Sinophone as a theory is as provocative as its proponents promised, so that Sinophone studies as an academic discipline also 'undergoes the process of becoming' and retains its relevance for as long as it is still discussed and debated (Shih, 2007: 31–32). It is also important and heartening that more and more voices from Chinese-language academia have contributed to and enriched the debate. This paper bases itself on a relatively exhaustive survey of current scholarship on the Sinophone (from 2004 to 2020) and hopes that such constant, critical interrogation from ever-varied perspectives will help bring greater conceptual clarity and interventionist efficacy to Sinophone in its dialogues with Chinese studies, postcolonial studies, as well as the studies of literatures and cultures in general. Sharing the same anti-imperialist concerns with proponents of the Sinophone endeavour, I seek to offer some observations with regard to several key questions that remain obscure and await further analyses in the ongoing debate, including the historical, geopolitical, and ideological backgrounds of Sinophone studies as a multi-sited institution of knowledge production initiated by American academia. These aspects are interlinked via the pragmatic effects and political ethics that this burgeoning school of thought generates. Therefore, having briefly summarised the current state of the field above, in the following sections I will elaborate on these questions and try to further complicate what is at stake in the rising field of Sinophone studies,

3 Shih seems to be indirectly responding to Ng's criticism here in her 2019 article published in the journal *Positions*. In a rather emotionally charged footnote, she accuses Ng of 'refus[ing] commitment either to Taiwan (since it is Taiwan-centric) or to Malaysia (since it is Malay-dominant) and tak[ing] an exclusivist diasporic-exilic position, full of masculine resentment that explodes at whatever offends his peculiar sensibility and fragile masculinity' (Shih, 2019: 60). Although the critique against Ng's masculinity also verges on the ad hominem and warrants further explanation, it is clear that the ideological clash here is between Ng's diasporic attachment to an ethnic and cultural form of Chineseness/Hua on one hand and Shih's a priori affirmation of any localist, or at least strongly localising, position on the other hand.

especially at this historical juncture when it is growing beyond its American origin and developing into a multilingual and transnational academic enterprise. My inquiry mainly revolves around three broad topics: the significance of the Cold War; the matrix of multiple Sinocentrism; and the double-edged sword of theoretical generalisation.

1 The Significance of the Cold War: Sinophone or Sinophobe?

Has Sinophone studies neglected the significance of the Cold War when it positions China as the seemingly exclusive hegemonic centre of Chinese cultural and knowledge productions? Whether explicitly (Shih's discourse) or implicitly (David Wang's discourse), Sinophone studies tends to position China as a formidable centre that exerts hegemonic power on the rest of the Chinese-speaking world. At the same time as the theory claims to carve out a space where Sinitic cultural products from outside China could receive equal attention and status as those coming from within, there seems to be a more than subtle continuation of an 'obsession with China' (Hsia, 1999: 533), which upends Chih-ting Hsia's focus on China as the victim of imperialism and places the cultural force of 'Chineseness' as the imperial centre instead. As such, the mention of 'China' often pertains to a kind of monolithic signifier that spontaneously stands for mainland China. This conceptual spontaneity relies on an assumed consensus over the rise of mainland China as a contemporary economic powerhouse and thus regional or even global political hegemon, without mentioning how relatively recent this phenomenon is in both Chinese history and the history of the Chinese diasporas. It also fails to address why political and economic power can so swiftly translate into cultural dominance over Chinese-speaking populations in more economically advanced societies (if we use GDP per capita or the United Nations' Human Development Indexes as tools of measurement), such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the United States. Moreover, the anti-hegemonic stance shared by most scholars involved in Sinophone studies seems to position mainland China as the imagined target to which the polemics and reformatory education activated by Sinophone cultural products are directed, as though this China has always been the exclusive sun around which many other smaller stars revolve. The question that needs to be raised here is: is this picture of mainland China-dominates-all the only universe that exists or has existed?

David Der-wei Wang's reference to the work, *What is China?* (Ge, 2014), in his formulation of the Sinophone reminds us of the plural and shifting definitions of China (D. D. Wang, 2015: 24). But beyond its premodern histories, what

is more relevant for the majority of the cultural products under discussion in current Sinophone studies is perhaps ‘the two Chinas’—the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC/Taiwan)—which are quintessential products of the Cold War. It is not that the significance of these ‘Chinas’ has never been pointed out before. Wang, for example, acknowledges that ‘the invocation of “Sinophone” [has been] ineluctably related to the geopolitics of modern China since the Cold War era and its literary representation in the global circuit’, because the Sinophone discourse surfaced largely as a result of ‘rethinking China “beyond” China’—a trend that had existed due to and since the Cold War (D. D. Wang, 2018a: 62). However, this fact has yet been brought to engage directly with the centre/margin and dominant/subordinate discourses of Sinophone studies when such engagement could well serve as a deal-breaker, since the question of ‘(mainland) China’ as centre and as hegemony sits at the very core of Shih’s ‘Sinophone as theory/value’. Since the 1950s, the Cold War had provided the conditions for the creation of another self-sufficient universe to exist alongside mainland China, which was then largely cut off from the rest of the Chinese-speaking world, including parts of Southeast Asia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States. Prior to the rise of China (PRC), the ROC, led by the Kuomintang (KMT/Nationalist) government and supported by the United States, served as the cultural centre to which other ‘Sinophone’ communities were drawn.⁴ The great influence of this ‘Free China’—as it was also known—is evidenced by the well-documented phenomenon of what is variously referred to as ‘transnational Sinophone Malaysian literature’ (Bernards, 2015: 82) or ‘SMLiT (Sinophone Malaysian literature in Taiwan)’ (Tee, 2010: 86). Enabled by the political and financial support of the United States (generally known in Taiwan as ‘the US Aid Culture’), the Kuomintang government provided attractive conditions for the Chinese diasporas in Southeast Asia to study and work in Taiwan as part of its anti-communist struggle (Hee, 2018: 62; Pham, 2011: 147). From the 1950s to the 1980s, the authoritarian Kuomintang government actively promoted Taiwan as ‘the true heir to the Chinese cultural

4 As the following sections would argue, positivistic impositions of ‘Sinophone as theory/value’ on ‘Sinophone as history’ can be reductive, co-optative, and confusing. In order to differentiate the two, in this paper, quotation marks are always used to contain the adjective ‘Sinophone’ when referring to ‘Sinophone as history’, such as ‘Sinophone’ communities, the ‘Sinophone’ world, ‘Sinophone’ writers, etc.; in cases where no quotation marks are used, the usage of the adjective either refers to Sinophone studies as an academic endeavour or leans towards ‘Sinophone as theory/value’, as designated by Shu-mei Shih’s ‘anti-diaspora’ position. I am aware that such divisions are less than satisfactory and can still be confusing, but these difficulties further affirm my proposition that Sinophone studies, in its current rhetorical form, needs to improve its conceptual clarity.

tradition—in contrast to Communist China, turned topsy-turvy by the Cultural Revolution’ (Chiu, 2008: 600), which has provided a strong cultural justification for the material and ideological summoning of people of Chinese descent living overseas.⁵ In other words, in accordance with many scholars’ designation of this condition as the ‘Americanism’ of post-war Taiwan (K. Chen, 2010: 165; Shih, Harrison, Chiu & Berry, 2018: 215), it is under both ‘(Kuomintang) settler colonialism’ and American imperialism that SMLiT was produced. Indeed, most of the Malaysian cultural workers discussed in Sinophone studies today, including Li Yongping (李永平), Chang Kuei-hsing (張貴興), Ng Kim Chew (黃錦樹), Chen Da-wei (陳大為), and Tsai Ming-liang (蔡明亮) came to Taiwan as overseas Chinese students against this backdrop of multiple imperialisms.

How does the PRC fit into this picture of ‘Sinophone’ cultural production governed by multiple imperialisms? This question should be considered in at least three parts. Firstly, after the Bandung Conference in 1955, the communist regime abated its racial and cultural ties with overseas Chinese communities by nullifying the system of double nationalities. A series of communiqués followed, and China’s prime minister Zhou Enlai famously urged Chinese migrants in Southeast Asia to ‘choose local citizenship and integrate themselves into local societies’ (Leo, 2015: 90). Quite ironically then, Shih’s anti-Sinocentric call for anti-diaspora/localisation finds its haunting precedent in the most unlikely place—a newly established PRC. Upon closer examination, this transhistorical convergence of localising calls indicates not the transcendental desirability of becoming the local *per se* but rather the fact that such statements pushing for local identifications necessarily succumb to contextualisable ideological agendas, be them internationalist-socialist or postcolonialist-liberalist. Secondly, if the current marginality of Taiwan (hence its being qualified as ‘Sinophone’) on the global stage is anchored to

5 It is worth noting that such claims of inheritance and authenticity with regard to traditional and early modern Chinese culture remain strong even after Taiwan’s democratisation in the late 1980s. While some Taiwanese nativists would inevitably perceive the Chinese culture promoted by the Kuomintang as extrinsic and oppressive, many Taiwanese nationalists readily use these claims to differentiate Taiwan from China via assertions of cultural superiority. In Kuan-hsing Chen’s words, ‘anti-communist and anti-Chinese sentiments inherited from the Chinese nationalist KMT era, strengthened by American neoimperialism, and exacerbated by CCP authoritarianism have allowed mainland China and the mainland Chinese to be defined as the Other and the imaginary enemy of Taiwanese nationalism’ (K. Chen, 2010: 57). Shu-mei Shih has also noted ‘Taiwan’s desire to be the representative of authentic Chinese culture to the international community’ in her 2003 article ‘Globalization and the (In)significance of Taiwan’ (Shih, 2003: 148).

its non-recognition as an independent state by the majority of nations in the world, then we must also keep in mind that it was only in 1971 that most of Europe, together with a number of newly decolonised African states voted for the PRC to replace the ROC in the United Nations. This means that prior to 1971, the PRC was an illegitimate regime that was denied the right to represent Chinese people and culture outside of the socialist bloc. In this light, can we then say that the cultural products from the pre-1971 PRC, such as early works by revolutionary writers like Zhao Shuli and Hao Ran, are also 'Sinophone' because they belong to 'the margins of China and Chineseness'? If the answer is yes, then the objects of study in Sinophone studies would have to significantly overlap with items in the national literary history of the PRC and thus compromise Shih's exclusivist agenda against this socialist China. On top of this, there is also the question of how we may deal with the self-congratulatory nationalism and ideological dogmas emanating from such works vis-à-vis Shih's 'Sinophone as theory/value': their incompatibility points towards an important observation, namely, 'Sinophone as history' does not always go hand in hand with 'Sinophone as theory/value'. Such trouble with regard to the criteria of inclusion and exclusion is a symptomatic result of Shih's presumptive treatment of the concept of marginality in her vision of Sinophone studies, whereas it is complex webs of power relations that keep shifting locations of centres and margins that constitute the actual *modus operandi* of realpolitik.

Lastly, after the Cold War ended in 1989, the world has witnessed the rapid rise of a post-socialist PRC on the international stage, which, to a large extent, is enabled by its reintegration into the US-led system of global capitalism. In other words, it is not unreasonable to say that notwithstanding its various unambiguously Sinocentric discourses employed in the dealings of official international relations, this post-socialist PRC has not, until very recently, been directly involved in the production or institutionalisation of global Chinese culture, especially when compared to the role that Taiwan has played and continues to play in this respect. In this light, it can be a misleading *misplacement* to render cultural workers and products such as SMLiT as marginalised subjects via picturing the PRC as a fearsome universe that subsumes other (sub)universes. In fact, if we were to widen our lens, it would not be difficult to see that SMLiT has developed into 'a literature of transnational literary production *par excellence*' exactly because it has gained due recognition and status in a universe where the ROC shines (Chiu, 2008: 598). As Kim Tong Tee notes, Taiwan has 'been a literary "First World"' for quite a long time (Tee, 2010: 82–83). This is why I contend that an exclusivist conceptualisation of the Sinophone vis-à-vis the PRC can easily be mixed up with Sinophobia—it resembles some kind of 'Cold War mentality' that co-opts Taiwanese and SMLiT literatures into a cultural war with the PRC,

while this most formidable contemporary China has had very little control over the material and institutional development of these texts.

This concern about the instigation of a new Cold War by such exclusivist use of the concept of the Sinophone is shared by many American scholars as well. For example, Xiaojue Wang (2013: 297) declares that 'a Cold War discursive specter uncannily emerges in . . . the binary categorization of overseas Chinese and mainland Chinese in recent scholarly efforts to map out a Sinophone literature'. Indeed, when pushed to the extreme, a determinedly anti-PRC definition of the Sinophone can be reminiscent of the reactive 'Yellow Peril' discourse directed towards China whenever the country undergoes revolutionary changes, both economically and politically (the Boxer Rebellion, the Red Scare, and now the Global China Threat). More importantly, it has to be noted that this susceptibility to Sinophobia in Shih's initial formulation of the Sinophone can be uncomfortable and threatening for writers like Ng not necessarily because they disagree with the principle of provincialising China but because such anti-Chinese tendencies impose 'Sinophone as theory/value' on 'Sinophone as history', consequently trapping all 'Sinophone' writers (often categorised according to a reductive logic of 'where you come from' rather than the views and sentiments expressed in their works) in an international anti-PRC political mission that they themselves may not always consider to be their primary field of struggle. It is with this awareness of the risks of identitarian categorisation and forced political mobilisation that we may begin to comprehend why cultural practitioners like Ng reacted the way they did towards a seemingly liberating proposal of Sinophone studies.

In light of the above-mentioned dangers of theoretical *misplacement*, it is worth noting that while both Shih and Wang do acknowledge that Taiwan stands as a uniquely illustrious spot in the 'Sinophone' sphere, neither of them seems willing to relinquish their hold on a more formidable PRC as the reference point when trying to explain this unique status of Taiwan. Shih mentions that, different from the PRC, Taiwan is a place that allows for the development and survival of 'Sinophone' literature, giving writers a 'safe haven' for their artistic practices (thus hinting at the oppressive censorship system in the PRC) (Shih, 2017: 76). At the same time, she also hastens to add that perhaps Taiwan is a 'more open space that rejects being absorbed into the framework of "World Chinese Literature"' (D. D. Wang & Shih, 2017: 78). In this way, even though Shih no doubt recognises Taiwan's special status vis-à-vis other 'Sinophone' communities, she nevertheless relegates Taiwan to a subordinate position—as the victim of an imminent co-optation that it must resist. Shih performs this relegation without seeing the irony that the framework of the Sinophone may as well be another form of cultural imperialism of American academia that

co-opts Taiwanese cultural productions and again pushes Taiwan into a subordinate position.⁶ Similarly, pondering how to narrate ‘the Taiwan story’ through the lens of the Sinophone, Wang cites examples of the affinities that writers of different backgrounds have with Taiwan, including Gao Xingjian (高行健), San Mao (三毛), Pai Hsien-yung (白先勇), Li Zishu (黎紫書), and the Zhu sisters (朱天文, 朱天心), and agrees that Taiwan ‘has to expand to become an important hub for global Sinophone movements in a broad sense’ (D. D. Wang & Shih, 2017: 79). Taking into consideration the discussion above, the question worth asking here is: is Taiwan just a hub—a more open space—or is it a centre of power and influence that effectively forms an independent universe, and is not necessarily any less co-optative than the one dominated by the PRC? More frankly, how does Sinophone studies deal with its own Taiwan-centric tendencies based on a strong Othering of mainland China and the linear progressive narrative of openness and diversity (modelled after that of the United States) that often comes with it?

This binary politics of the progressive margin versus the repressive centre manifests further when Sinophone studies intersects with other disciplines that also focus on the marginal, such as queer studies. Howard Chiang has most recently raised the concept of a ‘Sinophone modernity’ pitched against China, which is purportedly evidenced by the relatively early development of queer studies and cultures in Taiwan and Hong Kong in the 1990s. His reinterpretation of the classic film *Lanyu* (2001) as a ‘queer Sinophone’ cultural product relies heavily on the director Stanley Kwan’s Hong Kong identity (rather than any detailed textual analysis) and puts forth a progressive image of the queer Sinophone (embodied by Han Dong, the American returnee) vis-à-vis its PRC counterpart (embodied by Lanyu, the Chinese countryside boy studying in Beijing). In Chiang’s loose allegorical re-reading, Lanyu is seen as an agent of ‘colonialism and imperialism’, which is precisely why he must die at the end of the film (Chiang, 2019: 159). Not unlike the pinkwashing practices of Israel in the Middle East criticised by scholars such as Jasbir Puar (2007),

6 I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for bringing this point up. In fact, Shih is definitely aware of the complicity between the Sinophone framework and the hegemonic power of English-language scholarship from the United States when she admits that ‘Sinophone Studies, in its beginning, was indeed discussed in English and has admittedly taken advantage of global English’ (Shih, 2015b: 142). However, she has not dug into the institutional entanglements behind the spread of Sinophone studies in the same way this paper does, and she has yet to fully explain how to reconcile this disposition of cultural imperialism embedded in the concept of the Sinophone with her advocacy for margins and localness in places like Taiwan, where many would actually prefer to be designated as just ‘Taiwanese’ rather than ‘Sinophone’.

such reductive evocations of an enlightened 'Sinophone modernity' versus a not-so-modern, not-Westernised-enough Chinese Other run the risk of what Petrus Liu calls 'neoliberal homonationalism' (especially at this historical juncture when Taiwan has become the first in Asia to legalise same-sex marriage) (P. Liu, 2015: 9). In other words, such ideological re-readings constitute an Othering practice that serves to differentiate a progressive Sinophone subject from a backward and oppressive PRC subject, which conflates Chinese people with the state while ignoring the translocal flow of queer people, an affect that has rendered it 'harder than ever to conceive of mainland Chinese queer cultural life as sealed off from that of Sinophone queer communities outside China' (Martin, 2015: 43). Awareness of such issues is not completely lost on Howard Chiang as his latest co-edited volume, *Keywords in Queer Sinophone Studies* (Chiang & Wong, 2020), includes a study by Mian Chen (2020) on a homosexual murder case in Tianjin in 1947, but this volume by and large does not take Martin's advice on board and excludes discussions on contemporary queer life in China. His decision to stick to an exclusivist paradigm is likely to be strategic because including queer communities in China necessarily means that other 'marginal' communities, such as the disabled, the rural migrants (like Lanyu), and the poor shall all qualify as 'Sinophone', and together they actually form a significant proportion of mainland Chinese population that Shih's paradigm seeks to exclude in the first place. Notwithstanding such troubles of inclusion and exclusion, one thing is for sure: if Sinophone studies is to realise its proclaimed mission of anti-imperialism and speak for the marginalised across different sociopolitical boundaries, it is important that we do not create a neo-Cold War between everything PRC and everything Sinophone.

In sum, motivated by the obsession with China/Sinocentrism and the urge to critique PRC hegemony, scholars in Sinophone studies are at risk of obscuring the significance of the different stages and locations of the Cold War for 'Sinophone' cultural productions and in turn oversimplifying the *modus operandi* of multiple imperialisms led by the United States. In addition to making the idealistic statement that Sinophone studies is a 'multi-directional critique' against all kinds of centrisms, we have to reflect on our own positionalities that are readily embedded in the intersections of multiple imperialisms (Hee, 2015: 186). To avoid the pitfalls of geopolitical misplacement and binary antagonisms, it is imperative to first interrogate the position(s) from which the dominant mode of Sinophone critique is uttered—mainly (East) Asian/Chinese studies departments in America and Taiwan—in order that this critique may reach the core of the problem rather than expending all its energy on shooting easy and mismatching targets. In this regard, it is crucial to ask and clarify: whose Sinocentrism are we dealing with in Sinophone studies in the first place?

2 The Institutionalisation of the Sinophone: *Whose Sinocentrism?*

David Der-wei Wang's call for the 'historicization' of Sinophone studies is important, as such self-reflection helps to investigate its analytical potency as a mode of critique (D. D. Wang, 2015: 25). In its rapid development for over a decade, Sinophone studies has produced an intellectual trajectory that can be traced in the three major fields: its genesis in American academia; its spread to Taiwan; and its mixed reception in mainland China. Rather than a singular ideological force of Sinocentrism always emanating from the PRC, these three fields deal with three different Sinocentrisms, each of them motivated by different interests in different geopolitical contexts.

Firstly, if we take a step back and compare it to postcolonial studies or Anglophone studies, we may observe that Sinophone studies first developed in an Anglophone space (rather than a 'Sinophone' space), namely American academia. According to Shu-mei Shih, her proposal of the Sinophone is motivated by a strong dissatisfaction with the dominant mode of postcolonial inquiry in the United States, which has 'centered the West as the most deserving object of critical attention and intellectual labor' (Shih, 2011: 709). At the same time, she also sought to disrupt the dominant paradigms of area studies by bringing race and racism into the discussion (Shih, 2017: 272, 2019: 37). Notably, both postcolonial studies and area studies are Western intellectual formations about the non-West, created and mediated by leftist and conservative forces within American academia respectively.⁷ This is precisely why it is possible for non-Western critics like Ng Kim Chew to—until recently—disassociate themselves from Sinophone studies. David Der-wei Wang is correct when he questions whether Sinophone studies may risk becoming 'a Sinitic brand of popular

7 This is of course a loose binary division that can be further complicated by different factions within these fields of studies. For example, Arif Dirlik points out that there has been a kind of 'benign Orientalism' in China studies in the West, which always sees the PRC as an anti-colonial leftist regime against the American and European capitalistic order and thus serves to 'override whatever qualms outsiders may have about the PRC regime's oppressive policies at home and aggressive expansionism abroad' (Dirlik, 2018: 19). On this point Shu-mei Shih would readily agree as she is also troubled by certain groups of China studies scholars in America, especially their 'sense of mission to speak for China' and their 'romantic sentiments towards Chinese communism' (Shih, 2016: 67). However, we should recognise that such benign Orientalism can also be present or influential in the ways in which the liberal camps in the West, utilising the discourse of 'universal values', perceive Taiwan and Hong Kong as democratic and progressive bastions against a PRC regime that is assumed to be evil by default. Hence, my point here is precisely that such reductive Orientalist logic can go both ways and we shall always be alert to its West-centric origin and how it serves the interests of the speaker more than those of the people spoken about.

theories in North America, such as postcolonialism, multiculturalism, diaspora studies, and empire studies' (D. D. Wang, 2018a: 60). Although the stakes of Sinophone studies are said to be located within Chinese-speaking societies, the initial parameters of this playing field seem to be designed with specific reference to the current state of certain disciplines in American academia.

Tellingly, while 'the postcolonial begin[s] ... when Third World intellectuals [from the former colonies] have arrived in First World academe [in the former imperial centres]' (Dirlik, 1997: 52), the Sinophone was not initiated by scholars of 'Sinophone background' working in the Chinese departments in the PRC, or even Taiwan, for that matter. This difference in disciplinary foundations is important because in its initial stages of theoretical formation, Sinophone studies may have conveniently neglected its distant and powerful location of utterance (the United States) vis-à-vis China and Taiwan. To be more specific, while most Anglophone and Francophone writers discussed in postcolonial studies received their education and published their books in London and Paris, most of the 'Sinophone' writers under discussion did not do the same in the PRC. In other words, the relationship between the PRC and most of the 'Sinophone' writers and scholars under discussion, if viewed from the angle of publishing industries and academic institutions, does not seem to parallel that between Britain and France and their former colonies, neither does it constitute a simple 'imperial centre versus colonised margins' paradigm.

Yet Sinophone studies (especially Shih's paradigm) as practised in American academia nevertheless mobilises the political and moral power of postcolonialism to counteract the Sinocentrism of Chinese studies. This can only make sense if the Chinese studies in question here is identified first and foremost as an American field, and this triangulation of the Sinophone, Chinese studies, and America further differentiates the situation at hand from the classical postcolonial paradigm based on the dichotomy of the coloniser and the colonised. In other words, whether acknowledged or not, the Sinocentrism that Sinophone studies seeks to challenge, at least initially, is the inherent Orientalist logic embedded in area studies—America's obsession with China, first as the communist Other during the Cold War and then as the authoritarian Other in the post-Cold War world order. Such Sinocentrism is, in nature, palimpsestic and US-centric as it is primarily concerned with the strategic importance of 'China' (either the PRC or the ROC) for the United States, which was precisely what resulted in the marginalisation of and ignorance about Sinitic-language cultural products from elsewhere in American classrooms. Once this Sinocentrism of the United States is made clear, we can observe with greater clarity what Sinophone studies as initially developed in the United States actually does: 'Sinophone as theory/value' can serve as the justification for more non-PRC writers to be

included in curricula of Chinese studies *in America* and in the process inspire comparative studies of 'Sinophone' literatures and films from different regions, which would not be put into dialogue otherwise. As Chih-ming Wang (2017: 23) says, 'the proposal and subsequent development of Sinophone Studies is actually based on the importance of China Studies in Western academia and has as its background the Western imagination of China's rise as a threat'.

In this regard, as a pragmatic strategy of inclusion and diversification, Sinophone studies has indeed been a successful endeavour, bestowing cultural and academic capital upon the writers and researchers involved respectively. In principle it can also increase the visibility of Chinese-language literatures in Asian American studies, but it has not been as successful in this area as the discipline continues to exclude 'Asian languages in favor of American English as the main language of critical studies' (Tsai, 2013: 39). However, while the circulation and interconversion of such intangible forms of capital take place in America, the obvious paradox is that the majority of the 'Sinophone' populations under discussion do not live or study in America, nor are they necessarily concerned with being recognised and included by America. Therefore, if the desirability of the institutional inclusivity enabled by Sinophone studies is taken as a given, this would challenge the American obsession with China but at the same time also reinforce the status quo in Asia–America relations where 'American' and 'international' are often used interchangeably, a model of unequal interactions based on America's imperial 'ability to insert itself into a geo-colonial space as the imaginary figure of modernity, and as such, the natural object of identification from which the local [Asian] people are to learn' (K. Chen, 2010: 127). In simpler terms, if we are willing to see through and forego the conservative 'trend of leaving Asia for America' and vouch for its de-imperialising reversal—'leaving America for Asia'—then we can provincialise Sinophone studies for local needs (K. Chen, 2010: 120). In contrast, without critically reflecting on its problematic replication of the postcolonial paradigm, Sinophone studies as an Anglophone practice may (unwittingly) strengthen the centrality of American academia and its Sinocentric concerns instead.

Secondly, the spread of Sinophone studies to Taiwan via its translation as *huayuyuxi* (華語語系) constitutes another interesting academic phenomenon, which warrants critical reflection. On one hand, the import of Sinophone studies has enabled Taiwanese scholars, such as Min-xu Zhan, to challenge Taiwan's own Sinocentrism in history, especially in the cultural policies implemented by the Kuomintang government before the lifting of martial law in the late 1980s, and ask important questions such as 'why can Taiwan see the *mahua*/Malaysian Chinese' (Zhan, 2013: 74). For a long time after losing its

seat in the United Nations in 1971, Taiwan continued to serve as a Chinese cultural centre where most writers discussed in Sinophone studies are published, including those from Malaysia (Li Yongping, Ng Kim Chew), Hong Kong (Dung Kai-cheung, Chan Koonchung), the West (mostly PRC exiles like Gao Xingjian and Ma Jian), and even mainland China (mostly partially censored writers such as Wang Lixiong and Sheng Keyi).⁸ As confirmed by Kam Loon Woo (himself a Chinese Malaysian settled in Taiwan), former editor-in-chief of one of Taiwan's biggest literary publishers, Linking (聯經), 'the publication of Sinophone literatures outside of China is mainly located in Taiwan' (Woo, 2018: 240). Zhan's question, therefore, differs from the pragmatic paradigm of Sinophone studies practiced in the United States and constitutes a more localised attempt at self-reflection on the literary institutions and markets in Taiwan. As he convincingly argues in a series of articles on the development of SMLiT, the Sinophone as a process of literary institutionalisation (facilitated by prominent literary prizes such as United Daily News Literature Award and China Times Literature Award) is constructed by multiple places outside of the PRC, in which Taiwan serves as 'the centre of the recognition mechanism, rather than a passive object waiting to be recognised by others' (Zhan, 2017: 96, 2018: 214). This Taiwan-centrism also explains why *mahua* literature published in Malaysia gathers much less attention in Sinophone studies both in the United States and in Taiwan. On this point, we must bear in mind that the Taiwanese power of cultural recognition was so strong in the 1990s and early 2000s that many 'Sinophone' writers of PRC background who are highly commercially successful today, such as Yan Geling (嚴歌苓), had first established their reputation via awards in Taiwan. This then enabled them to collaborate with prominent global Chinese film directors and become famous back in

8 An interesting omission/exception here is Sinophone Singaporean literature. While the Chinese language is increasingly marginalised by the dominance of English in the country, the Singaporean government, based on its official bilingual policy and promotion of racial equality within the Chinese-Malay-Indian-Others framework, does actively distribute economic and institutional resources for Sinophone cultural production to operate domestically. Local methods of recognition, such as the Singapore Literature Prize (新加坡文學獎), are almost always directly sponsored and managed by government departments. For this reason, even without a big local readership, productive Singaporean writers working in Chinese, such as Yeng Pway Ngon (英培安), do not need Taiwan as a springboard for visibility and success. However, this government control also makes Singapore a more inward-looking space in terms of the development of Chinese-language literature, which explains why most *mahua* writers would rather come to Taiwan despite Singapore being just next door. I thank Min-xu Zhan for sharing his valuable observations on these issues with me.

China. Yan's early works, such as *Siao Yu* (1992)⁹ and *Tianyu* (1996),¹⁰ are exemplars of this process. Therefore, rather than fuelling the already strong anti-PRC sentiments on the island, a provincialised and further localised Sinophone studies in Taiwan provides a poignant opportunity for Taiwanese scholars to first and foremost examine the issue of 'Taiwan-centrism' as 'the reincarnation of [American] imperialism' that has secured its superior position in relation to 'Sinophone' communities elsewhere, including subaltern groups from the PRC (K. Chen, 2010: 35). For example, in cases where mainland-spouse literature (陸籍配偶文學) like Lan Xiaolu's (藍曉鹿) *Under the Eave* (屋簷下, 2016) is studied via the lens of the Sinophone, it can actually free us from the clichéd Orientalist-despotic perception of the PRC and instead help us achieve a better understanding of the 'gendered racism' PRC migrants may face in Taiwanese society as individuals (Huang, 2019: 58). In such cases, as Sheldon Lu reminds us, 'it is the Sinophone world that would be the source and site of the exploitation and debasement of women' (Lu, 2008). Indeed, a self-reflective turn is needed before we declare our 'multi-directional critique' against all centrism.

On the other hand, we need to bear in mind that the resistance approach taken by Shih's initial formulation of the Sinophone is only one among many ways to articulate Taiwan's cultural history, and this articulation is not new in Taiwanese academia. According to Shih, a Sinophone perspective on Taiwan should focus on its history of 'serial (settler) colonialism' since from the seventeenth century onwards, the island has been occupied and ruled, to various degrees, by the Dutch, the Spanish, the Ming loyalists, the Japanese, and the Kuomintang Nationalists (Shih, 2013: 31). Similar views on Taiwan as a quintessential postcolony have been raised by local critics such as Fang-ming Chen (2002) and Liang-ya Liou (2014). Moreover, in practice most of the literary works brought into American classrooms by Sinophone studies, such as those by the Zhu sisters, Chang Kuei-hsing, Li Yongping, Ng Kim Chew, Zhong Lihe (鍾理和), Wu He (舞鶴), and Li Ang (李昂), had already been studied under the frameworks of Taiwanese or *huawen* literature in Taiwan for some time, hence the absence of 'disciplinary shift' activated by Sinophone studies in Taiwanese academia (Tee, 2012: 67). In other words, since the literary works under discussion have already secured various levels of cultural and academic capital in Taiwanese society, the imported paradigm of Sinophone studies could only operate within the existing fields of interest with slightly different

9 *Siao Yu* first appeared in a Taiwan newspaper, *Central Daily* (中央日報), in 1992. It was later published as a book (Yan, 1993).

10 *Tianyu* first appeared in a newspaper in Taiwan in 1996. It was later published as a book in mainland China (Yan, 2005).

terminologies rather than create a new (albeit parasitic) field as it did in the United States. Therefore, while taking advantage of the self-reflective inter-Asian dialogues Sinophone studies may bring to Taiwan, scholars need to prevent the theory from co-opting Taiwanese cultural products into an exclusive mode of analysis and reinforcing the 'Western-centric' 'academic dependency' Taiwan has on American academia (Shih, 2003: 146, Shih et al., 2018: 215).

This in effect brings us back to the questions of what is at stake and for whom is the playing field designed for: is Sinophone studies still relevant if Taiwan scholars or writers (can afford to) choose to disengage with the United States? Can we not use local scholar Kuan-hsing Chen's (2010: 211) 'Asia as method' to effectuate the same transnational dialogues in the Taiwanese context? These questions require more comparative works to be fully explained, but what I wish to emphasise here is that no matter to what ideological end we are employing the Sinophone as a relevant theoretical import from the United States, we should not treat its anti-hegemonic claims as axiomatically universalist and instead always be ready to highlight local academic needs and structures. Only through this self-reflective process can we transform Sinophone studies beyond how it has been shaped by American academic dynamics.

Lastly, we need to think harder about how a more inclusive and interventionist formulation of Sinophone studies can become an effective model of critical categorisation and cultural empowerment when it comes to dealing with the entrenched Sinocentrism in PRC-based cultural and academic institutions. Attacking the ideologies and practices of Sinocentrism emanating from within China, as critics like Shu-mei Shih, David Der-wei Wang, and Kim Tong Tee all do, is by and large deemed as politically correct and also quite the ideological mainstream in American and Taiwanese academia today, but the pragmatic question to ask is: how can Sinophone studies actually change such Sinocentric status quo *within* mainland Chinese institutions?

For the ethnic minorities in the PRC, certain similarities can be found between their 'Sinophone' condition and that of the Anglophone and Francophone in the West. Unlike SMLiT practitioners, non-Han 'Sinophone' writers within China, such as Alai, Tsering Norbu, and Zhang Chengzhi, do study and publish in mainland China and they occupy a peripheral position vis-à-vis the official discourse of Chineseness promoted by the state. However, for these writers, to embrace Shu-mei Shih's advocacy of 'Sinophone as theory/value' means that they would have to categorise the Chinese rule in regions such as Xinjiang and Tibet as 'colonialism' and confront such state Sinocentrism as part of the 'precarious literary alliances' formed with Hong Kong, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, and the West (Tsu, 2010: 13). Needless to say, this confrontational approach may be sound as a political ideal but is often unpragmatic in practice: rather than

gaining more cultural space, they risk losing the practical benefits that the current Chinese arrangement of internal multiculturalism and ethnic tokenism affords them, and this is consequential because for this group of writers, their means of publication and recognition is mainly within the country itself.¹¹ It is their strategy to publish, distribute, and circulate their works within the nation-state (thus accumulating cultural and political capital in the process) in order to bring about subtle and gradual changes from within. Imposing a highly politicised Sinophone theoretical framework on them from the outside can interfere with their efforts to bring awareness to and negotiate with the state about the cultural conditions of ethnic minorities in the PRC. In other words, not only is this a risky and high-stake literary alliance to make, it can also be unethical for Sinophone studies scholars residing outside of the precarious political environment of the PRC to demand these ethnic minorities to make such alliances compulsorily. Indeed, while the increasing institutionalisation of Sinophone studies in America and Taiwan does offer non-PRC 'Sinophone' subjects more space for their voices, what has not been adequately discussed is the conditions and stakes of the marginal groups that reside and create within the PRC, especially how exactly they may appropriate this exogenous theory to secure their space of survival and maximise their own interests domestically. Examined with this sensitivity to the situatedness of its ideological efficacy, anti-Sinocentric rhetoric outside of the PRC can easily turn into a paradoxical performance of academic idealism, which appears politically correct and earns pragmatic gains in one hegemonic context (the United States and its protectorates) but turns into a somewhat hypocritical call for self-sacrifice in another (the PRC).

In order to achieve the same kind of pragmatic gains as it has done in the Chinese studies programmes in the United States, Sinophone studies engaging with the PRC needs to be localised in ways that do not foreclose collaborations with state affirmative actions and multi-ethnic policies. In this particular context, a realist Sinophone scholar may have to justify why it is in the PRC's national and institutional interests to designate these works not as merely ethnic minorities but also Sinophone. This is a serious and onerous task that cannot be easily accomplished on the idealist grounds that Sinocentrism, like all centrisms, is by default bad and undesirable. After all, at the practical

11 The most prominent example of such mechanisms of recognition might be the Junma Prize (駿馬獎), which was co-established by China Writers Association and State Ethnic Affairs Commission in 1981 and is awarded every three years to ethnic minority (*shaoshu minzu*) writers working in various languages. Many of the *shaoshu minzu* writers discussed by Sinophone studies scholars in America, such as Huo Da (霍達), Alai (阿來), and Zhang Chengzhi (張承志), gained literary prominence in the PRC via this prize.

level, multilingual Asian American literatures often need to emphasise (no matter how unwittingly) that they are no less 'American' than the mainstream white literatures written in English in order to secure a 'process of becoming American' and thus be accepted by the academic and cultural mainstream in the United States (Tsai, 2013: 39). Similarly, it should be up to the practitioners of multilingual minority literatures within the PRC if they want to adopt assimilationist strategies to 'become Chinese' in order to subvert Han-centrism from within. When it comes to the issue of national interests, there may not be any fundamental difference between a democratic America and its authoritarian Chinese counterpart, and if we are aiming to localise the interventionist agendas of Sinophone studies in the 'enemy's house', the least we can do is avoid ideological double standards that (sub)consciously favour one over the other.

Compared to the difficult task of transforming or incorporating ethnic minorities into Sinophone, mainland reception of designating non-PRC works as 'Sinophone' seems to be more mixed. On one hand, many mainland academics, including Jun Liu (2015) and Jin Jin (2019), are receptive to Shih's criticism of Sinocentric literary historiographies and express a strong willingness to improve the visibility of non-PRC 'Sinophone' writings within the state. However, all of them agree that it is problematic to allocate an a priori conception of hegemonic Chineseness to PRC academic discourse and cultural production and view PRC–Sinophone relations in the cultural domain via an antagonist postcolonial framework without historical nuances. For example, Jun Liu (2015) stresses that mainland academia has had the disciplines of 'overseas Chinese literature' and 'world Chinese literature' for decades and the paradigms of investigation do not simply stagnate at the nationalist sentiments of 'Great China-centrism'. In a clear statement, he declares that 'academics who study Taiwan, Hong Kong, and overseas Chinese-language literatures or world Chinese-language literatures in the PRC have long moved on from the [nationalist or China-centric] situation mentioned by David Der-wei Wang' (J. Liu, 2015). While it will take a lot more than words to confirm how (non-) Sinocentric mainland academia actually is, the very fact that these mainland academics can express their disagreement with both Sinocentric historiography and the external accusations of them desiring and promoting such historiography is significant and worthy of our respect and encouragement. It at least shows that mainland academia is not homogenous and possesses the ability to self-reflect and self-critique. In turn, for scholars in Sinophone studies based in the West or in Taiwan, it is upon us to reflect more deeply why we have not engaged with mainland Chinese academia on a more intellectual level and whether a predetermined exclusion of China is really the best means through which to position our anti-imperialist concerns.

On the other hand, there have been more institutional efforts in the PRC to enable Chinese-language writings published outside of the mainland, such as SMLiT, to claim a more prominent position in the academic and cultural fields of the PRC—a reform in the dominant system that many proponents of the Sinophone (at least with David Wang's 'Sinophone intervention with China') want to achieve in practice. An indicative case in point is the inaugural 'Wang Moren-Zhou Anyi World Chinese Literature Award' (王默人-周安儀世界華文文學獎) set up at Peking University in 2018, which had Sinophone forerunner David Der-wei Wang as one of the main judges and Ng Kim Chew as one of the winners (the other winner was Jia Pingwa). As the name of this newly established prize clearly shows, while the PRC is more than willing to provide institutional support and rewards for non-PRC Chinese-language cultural works, mainland institutions still have reservations about the label 'Sinophone', let alone establishing an entire field of interest under this rubric. Moreover, for a more conservative group of mainland scholars, Sinophone studies is interpreted as first and foremost a political, rather than literary or cultural, discourse—one that seeks to undermine China's rise and fundamentally contradicts with 'the core socialist values' of China (Huo, 2017; J. Liu, 2015). These conservative voices may over-exaggerate the Sinophobic elements of Sinophone studies and leave no room for the endeavour to localise. As such they present the most serious challenges to the interventionist agenda of the Sinophone, and rather than harsh attacks from a safe distance *without*, they are perhaps best dealt with together with allies from *within*. In the end my main message from this part of the discussion is clear: if Sinocentrism emanating from the PRC is one of the imagined target enemies of the Sinophone endeavour, its mixed reception within the People's Republic requires us to treat the PRC as a multifaceted and heteroglossic cultural space and identify the more sympathetic and collaborative forces to subvert ethnic nationalism from within.

As laid out in the previous section, the entanglement of multiple imperialisms and multiple Sinocentrisms brings complex challenges to the localisation of Sinophone studies in different contexts, especially in China. Admittedly, Sinophone studies scholars can disregard these practical difficulties and advocate Shih's 'non-relation with China' as long as they make it explicit that it is not the Sinocentrism of the PRC they are engaging with but the Sinocentrisms emanating from elsewhere, such as the Kuomintang's historical Sinocentrism in Taiwan or American area studies' Orientalist obsession with China (Shih, 2007: 30). However, not only is this 'non-relation with China' at odds with Shih's later advocacy for 'relational comparison' (Shih, 2015a: 430), it refuses to reify the abstract 'Sino-' in both '*Sinocentrism*' and '*Sinophone*' and misses the

chance for Sinophone studies to localise in academic contexts where it is perhaps most needed. Furthermore, we need to actively search for means to move beyond preoccupations with a neo-Cold War structure of 'China-centrism versus US-centrism' (with Taiwan-centrism caught in between as a shifting field of struggle) and uncover local intellectual contributions that may predate as well as circumvent such restless antagonisms (Shih, 2003: 145). In this regard, Wai-siam Hee's recent efforts at bringing Sinophone studies back to its roots in Southeast Asia are of great importance and can truly broaden our horizon to visions beyond the three academic fields discussed above. He has noted that the concept of the Sinophone, both in Chinese (華語, *huayu*) and in English, actually originated in the Nanyang Chinese intellectual communities in the 1950s and 1990s respectively, which he considers as the 'pre-history' of the Sinophone, or 'Sinophone Studies 1.0' (Hee, 2018: 44, 2019: 8). Via his archaeology of knowledge on the works of Yi Shui, Fang Hsiu, Chen Peng-hsiang, and Lim Kien Ket, Hee reminds us that 'Sinophone Studies 1.0' inherited 'the legacy of anti-colonial Third Worldism', which had sought dialogues and collaborations among people of Chinese descent in multiple regions to facilitate their local struggle against British imperialism and Malay *bumiputera* ideology (Hee, 2019: 10). I agree with him that there are many similarities and continuities between 'Sinophone Studies 1.0' and David Der-wei Wang's interventionist Sinophone Studies 3.0, as both prioritise inclusion over exclusion, pragmatism over idealism, and local specificities over sweeping statements. With this rapport between Sinophone Studies 1.0 and 3.0 in mind, in the final section of this paper, I briefly explore the risks and opportunities the extant theoretical generalisations in Sinophone studies have put forth and how we can utilise them to address broader concerns in the development of literary theory and cultural studies at large.

3 The Future of Sinophone Studies: Theoretical Generalisation as a Double-Edged Sword

If we were to consider book-length works—both edited volumes and monographs—published thus far that adopt a full-scale Sinophone analytical framework, it is not difficult to discover that the push for cultural diversification is at the heart of their theoretical conclusions. Whether the research is about Sinophone Malaysian literature (Groppe, 2013; Tan, 2013), Sinophone Taiwanese literature (Wu, 2016), queer Sinophone cultures (Chiang & Heinrich, 2014; Pecic, 2016), Sinophone cinema (Hee, 2018, 2019; Peng & Raidel, 2017; Yue & Khoo, 2014), or cultural studies addressing a mixture of mediums (Jin, 2019),

they successfully demonstrate that Chinese-speaking communities around the world exhibit great diversity in terms of languages, experiences, and, ultimately, loyalties and identities. This diversification of the cultural archive and objects of study is commendable and should be welcomed. However, the fact that this process hinges on many important concepts in postcolonial studies, such as hybridity, creolisation, and intersectionality, can be a double-edged sword for the future development of Sinophone studies. On the one hand, to prevent it from becoming 'a Sinitic brand of popular theories in North America', we need to balance the ways in which these concepts are applied to primary texts so as to overcome ideological reductionism or, in David Der-wei Wang's words, the dangers of 'formulaic dogma and ideological blindness', which one often finds in modes of literary and cultural studies driven by predetermined political agendas (D. D. Wang, 2018a: 60, 2017: 27). On the other hand, if managed well, the shared concerns with larger fields like postcolonial studies and cultural studies can lead Sinophone studies to a direction opposite to being co-opted and instead enable us to make original theoretical contributions to areas beyond the confines of area studies and ethnic studies and challenge the dominant paradigm of Western theory versus local reality. This double-edged sword warrants more self-reflectivity within Sinophone studies and can be addressed in several ways.

Firstly, with regard to the danger of ideological reductionism, Shu-mei Shih may, in a way, be addressing this problem when she emphasises that localism is not static. In the case of 'Taiwanese-ness', for example, she cautions that 'Taiwanese-ness is constantly developing, constantly changing and, in relation to the world, constantly being created and constituted. Therefore, when one talks about localism, one is not referring to a never-changing essence, but a living and diverse localism' (D. D. Wang & Shih, 2017: 78). In fact, the same can be said about just any such '-ness' (including Chineseness), either as an identity marker or a local cultural force. This means that even though localism is the explicit apex to be reached in Shih's brand of Sinophone studies, there nonetheless is, at least in principle, a plethora of analytical possibilities, since this apex can exist in innumerable shapes and patterns. It implies that being politically driven does not necessarily lead to the dead-end of un-innovative and un-generative research. Therefore, whether it is Shih's statement that 'diaspora has an end date' (D. D. Wang & Shih, 2017: 81), or Wang's assumption that 'no one wants to be diasporic' (D. D. Wang, 2018b: 255), as long as we do not let these presuppositions on the part of academics and their theoretical ambitions override the 'living and diverse' messages in local case studies, Sinophone studies is able to proceed towards an ever-expanding repertoire of cultural resources.

Secondly, we need to be aware that the establishment of Western theory, including postcolonial theory, has reflected on its own universality and analytical vitality, which actually offers Sinophone studies opportunities to intervene in the current divisions in global knowledge production. The proliferation of theory in Western academia since the 1980s, often in the form of French *geneses*/production coupled with American explication/dissemination, has more or less been tied up with the development of identity politics in the post-Cold War capitalistic world order. In this context, feminist, queer, disability, post-human, and postcolonial theorists occupy territorialised positions of ideological critique on a spectrum spanning binary resistance at one end and postmodernist blurring of boundaries at the other, generating academic comfort zones wherein members of each zone more or less already agree with one another. This has created an increasing number of academic 'monocultures' perpetuated by 'the hermeneutics of suspicion' (the heuristic act of always reading against the canon from a presupposed ideological perspective), as Rita Felski (2015: 9) and Aamir Mufti (2016: 18) put it. As such, Western scholars are worried about 'popular theories in North America' becoming stagnant and repetitive. If, as Edward Said (1990: 38) says, 'imperialism is the export of identity', it would then be no overstatement for one to say that unreflective impositions of the logic of Western identity politics and its academic derivatives on Chinese-speaking (con)texts, such as an unmodified postcolonial creation of an all-binding 'Sinophone' identity or modernity *vis-à-vis* a (mainland) Chinese one that is assumed to be always stable and hegemonic, can easily fall into the trap of a kind of neo-imperialism that denies Sinophone cultural workers the freedom and agency to move beyond such identitarian and political concerns. At the same time as Shih declares that 'the time of the derivative glory from Chinese studies is over' (Shih et al., 2018: 216), it is perhaps also imperative for Sinophone studies scholars to reflect and at least try to do away with 'the derivative glory' reaped from Western theory and identity politics, so that Sinophone studies itself would not fall prey to reductionist, self-contradictory, and neo-imperialistic tendencies.

In this regard, David Der-wei Wang's concept of postloyalism possesses great potential to counter Western theoretical dominance and be developed into a critical tool of humanistic nature—one that is based on a broad array of Sinophone (inclusively speaking) historical experiences and is useful in addressing similar cultural struggles elsewhere. Building upon a homophonic play of three different kinds of *yimin*—'loyalists' (遺民), migrants (移民) and barbarians (夷民) in the history of Chinese peoples and cultures moving out and about, postloyalism focuses on the psychology, memory, and effect of loyalties and disloyalties instead of preselected positions of marginality

and victimhood (D. D. Wang, 2007: 7). According to Wang, the prefix 'post' in 'postloyalism' not only marks 'the end of an era' but also suggests the ways in which an era, a dynasty, a bygone regime, or an identity *démodé* can 'terminate without ending' (D. D. Wang, 2007: 6), for its anachronistic relevance must be retained as long as it still exists in the loyalist memories and imaginations of the survivors. When put in practice, postloyalism is essentially a remapping of postcolonialism at the ideational level, in which the more subjective and creative dimensions of diaspora are emphasised over the conventional contextual matters pertaining to the historical details of colonialism, localism, and creolisation. It offers a more accommodating and flexible understanding of diaspora coupled with an emphasis on the creative agency of the cultural workers themselves and therefore affords greater analytical possibilities to the study of culture. As Chien-hsin Tsai puts it, 'postloyal criticism calls attention to loyalty's imaginary quality, and to the fact that it is media and invented traditions that help ground and reaffirm it in everyday practice' (Tsai, 2017: 288); as such it focuses more on the ideas expressed in a given work than on the ethnic, linguistic, or national background of its creator. Since it would be hard to argue that conditions and sentiments of exile, nostalgia, and abandonment are unique to Chinese-speaking societies, postloyalism as a more outward-looking method of Sinophone studies can indeed be projected and applied to other contexts beyond the Sinophone. For example, Wang's formulation of postloyalism can easily be adopted to analyse postcolonial classics by writers such as J. M. Coetzee and Derek Walcott, as the themes of (in)voluntary displacement, cultural loss, and split loyalties abound in their works. In the same spirit, it can also be applied to analyse the diasporic as well as localising experiences of other people groups in other languages. Therefore, postloyalism shares a similar set of thematic foci with postcolonialism, acquiring a kind of genericism that carries it beyond the 'targeted poignancy' of Sinophone studies or at least calls for a thematic turn in the concrete applications of the concept of the Sinophone. As a theoretical innovation rooted in a sophisticated understanding of Sinophone experiences and languages, postloyalism can thus break the entrenched division between Western theory as framework and Chinese reality as primary text, an academic status quo that many scholars, including Longxi Zhang (1992) and Margaret Hillenbrand (2010), have long found unsatisfactory.

Lastly, this thematic turn in Sinophone studies echoes a point briefly discussed in the first section of this paper that is worth reiterating: it is important that we do not impose 'Sinophone as theory/value' on 'Sinophone as history' or unintentionally conflate the two. In other words, we need to realise that diverse voices and affiliations exist in contexts we may designate as 'Sinophone as history'—it is possible for a local Taiwanese intellectual to be pro-China, as

much as it is possible for a localist Hong Kong activist to be racist towards mainland Chinese tourists. The fact that the subjects involved in 'Sinophone as history' do not always agree with Shih's 'Sinophone as theory/value' should not exclude them from the dialogues Sinophone studies has generated. We need to ponder, for example, how Sinophone studies would deal with leftist Taiwanese intellectuals like Chen Yingzhen (陳映真), Guo Songfen (郭松棻), and their successors such as Ning Yingbin (甯應斌) and Lucifer Hung Ling (洪凌), who, despite being part of 'Sinophone as history' due to their exile in America and/or local struggles in Taiwan, do not embrace 'Sinophone as theory/value' but instead yearn to be affiliated with the PRC, in order to fulfil a more cosmopolitan vision of Marxism? In this case, affinity with mainland China is precisely the 'localism' that this 'Sinophone' community seeks. Likewise, how would Sinophone studies deal with the more radical camps of localists involved in Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement in 2014 and Anti-Extradition Movement in 2019, who called for the return of British colonialism and labelled all mainland Chinese as 'locusts' that should be destroyed? (Sautman & Yan, 2015; Vukovich, 2019: 8) It is easy to see how, in this context, the Sinophobic elements in an exclusivist formulation of Sinophone studies could potentially lend theoretical backing and strength to such hate-mongering, bolstering populist anti-PRC sentiment that is unhelpful in fostering constructive dialogues and debates.

On the other side of the equation, it should not be taken for granted that people in mainland China—by default—do not share what counts as 'Sinophone values' at the level of psychology and affect. A novel like PRC author Zhang Yueran's *The Promised Bird* (2012), set in premodern Nanyang and translated in Singapore, is no less Sinophone in content and spirit than the works by Li Yongping or Ng Kim Chew. In other words, it is possible that PRC writers sometimes share 'Sinophone' concerns as well, especially in an age when sites of publication, routes of translation, and ways of information dissemination have all become increasingly multiplied and intermixed. Ultimately, my main point here is that Sinophone studies does not have to be an overly agenda-driven theoretical generalisation that confines memories, imaginations, knowledges, and narratives of lived experiences in a singular, moralist, and hierarchical mode of reading.

4 Coda: Against Normalisation

What started off as a concept raised to target specific problems plaguing specific fields in American academia would not have come to define a new field and be exported so quickly to other parts of the world if certain priming

conditions and enabling power structures were not in place. Pedagogically speaking, certain groups of students and academics hitherto exposed only to big traditions of the big civilisation-state of China now learn to value works that have long been obscured under its shadow. More recently, the attention drawn to the 'Sinophone world' has also inspired—or coincided with—an enthusiasm in organising existing literary archives into comprehensive readers such as *Sinophone/Xenophone: Contemporary Sinophone Literature Reader* (Wang, Gao & Woo, 2016) and *Memorandum: A Reader of Singapore Chinese Short Stories* (Hee & Quah, 2016), though they may not always choose to feature the label 'Sinophone' in their titles. On the academic side, the Cambria Sinophone World Series (2011–) led by Victor Mair and the recently established Sinophone Studies book series (University of California Press, 2019–) led by Shu-mei Shih would surely help consolidate the field's relevance and vibrancy in the long run. These efforts can challenge the status of a single, authoritative China-dominated canon and are helpful in encouraging a spirit of inclusivity and open-mindedness in the field traditionally known as Chinese studies, and in Asian American studies as well. It is thus never my intention to disagree with Sinophone studies on the importance of the marginalised Chinese-language cultural products currently under discussion, and I also fully acknowledge the pragmatic gains the conceptual paradigm of the Sinophone has managed to achieve in multiple academic contexts. However, our appreciation for the discursive diversification brought by a wider range of Chinese-language cultural products requires us to remain alert to the trend of normalisation with regard to the label 'Sinophone', which seems to be increasingly used by academic opportunists without the need for justification, often adopted uncritically without explaining the specific theoretical implications of using this term. A case in point would be Sheng-mei Ma's monograph *Sinophone-Anglophone Cultural Duet* (2017), which features 'Sinophone' in its title and presents a collection of essays on China–US cultural exchanges, and yet Shu-mei Shih's theoretical discussion is only mentioned in passing in one short paragraph on page xiii and David Der-wei Wang's further elaborations are not cited at all. Neither does the book come up with its own Sinophone theory to explain what enables the discussions on Jiang Rong, Ha Jin, Park Chan-wook, Lee Chang-rae, and Spike Lee to be subsumed under the same framework. Not only is such casual usage of 'Sinophone–Anglophone' (as the more fashionable substitute for 'China–US') reductive, it also amounts to a kind of theory abuse that essentially takes away from Sinophone studies any effective agency it has against other dominant paradigms of academic practices in the United States and beyond. By bringing issues relating to the Chinese Cold War, the

matrix of multiple Sinocentrism, and the double-edged sword of theoretical generalisation into the ongoing Sinophone debate, it is my hope that this paper has at least identified areas where different usages of the concept of the Sinophone can be further clarified and explored and adds a meta-academic spirit of self-reflection to its development, in order that these normalising trends do not nullify the efforts by Sinophone studies scholars to effect concrete institutional and intellectual reforms.

Acknowledgements

The conceptual seed for this project was first conceived in the Sinophone studies workshop held at New York University's Shanghai Campus in the summer of 2016. I thank Howard Chiang and Celina Hung for allowing me to participate in this workshop and thus giving me the chance to hear many different ideas in the ongoing debate in Sinophone studies; despite many of our disagreements, I have learned a lot from their hard work. My gratitude also goes to Shu-mei Shih, Wai-siam Hee, Chih-ming Wang, Min-xu Zhan, and many others who have generously shared their research with me. I am also tremendously grateful for all the conversations and collaborations I have had with my friend and colleague, Min Hui Yeo, without whose support and contribution this project would not have taken place. Many of the reflections presented in this article are the result of numerous conversations with like-minded colleagues, and I must express my gratitude to Jon Solomon, Daniel Vukovich, Bo An, Yuan Gao, Yunwen Gao, Po-hsi Chen, Linshan Jiang, Han Song, Yunyun Zhou, Veronica Wang, and Hyeijin Kim for indulging in these conversations with me in the last few years.

Notes on Contributor

Flair Donglai Shi

is completing his PhD degree in English and comparative literature at the University of Oxford. His thesis focuses on the Yellow Peril as a travelling discourse in a range of literary and cultural materials in English and Chinese, which cover historical as well as ongoing racial tensions in England, South Africa, and Hong Kong. His co-edited volume (with Gareth Guang-ming Tan), *World Literature in Motion: Institution, Recognition, Location*, has been published by Ibidem Press and distributed by Columbia University Press in 2020.

References

- Bernards, Brian (2015) *Writing the South Seas: Imagining the Nanyang in Chinese and Southeast Asian Postcolonial Literature*, Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Chen, Fang-ming (陳芳明) (2002) 後殖民台灣 [Postcolonial Taiwan], Taipei: Rye Field Publications [in Chinese].
- Chen, Kuan-hsing (2010) *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization*, Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press.
- Chen, Lingchei Letty (2015) 'When does "diaspora" end and "Sinophone" begin?' *Postcolonial Studies* 18(1): 52–66.
- Chen, Mian (2020) 'Recognition, reproach, repression: The Ren Likui Case in 1947 Tianjin and the cultural politics of homosexual murder in the Sinophone world', in Howard Chiang and Alvin Wong (eds), *Keywords in Queer Sinophone Studies*, London: Routledge, 153–174.
- Chiang, Howard (2019) 'Sinophone modernity: History, culture, geopolitics', in Chunjie Zhang (ed.), *Composing Modernist Connections in China and Europe*, London: Routledge, 142–167.
- Chiang, Howard and Heinrich, Ari Larissa (eds) (2014) *Queer Sinophone Cultures*, London: Routledge.
- Chiang, Howard and Wong, Alvin (eds) (2020) *Keywords in Queer Sinophone Studies*, London: Routledge.
- Chiu, Kuei-fen (2008) 'Empire of the Chinese sign: The question of Chinese diasporic imagination in transnational literary production', *Journal of Asian Studies* 67(2): 593–620.
- Dirlik, Arif (1997) *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Dirlik, Arif (2018) 'Taiwan: The land colonialisms made', *Boundary 2* 45(3): 1–25.
- Felski, Rita (2015) *The Limits of Critique*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ge, Zhaoguang (葛兆光) (2014) 何為中國? [What is China?], Hong Kong: Oxford University Press [in Chinese]. Translated by Michael Gibbs Hill as *What is China? Territory, Ethnicity, Culture, and History*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018.
- Groppe, M. Alison (2013) *Sinophone Malaysian Literature: Not Made in China*, New York: Cambria Press.
- Hee, Wai-siam (許維賢) (2015) '華語語系研究不只是對中國中心主義的批判: 史書美訪談錄' [Sinophone studies is irreducible to a critique of China-centrism: An interview with Shu-mei Shih], *Chung Wai Literary Quarterly* 44(1): 173–189 [in Chinese].

- Hee, Wai-siam (2018) 華語電影在後馬來西亞：土腔風格，華夷風與作者論 [Post-Malaysian Chinese-language Film: Accented Style, Sinophone and Auteur Theory], Taipei: Linking Publishing [in Chinese].
- Hee, Wai-siam (2019) *Remapping the Sinophone: The Cultural Production of Chinese-Language Cinema in Singapore and Malaya Before and During the Cold War*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Hee, Wai-siam and Quah, Sy-ren (eds) (2016) 備忘錄：新加坡華文小說讀本 [Memorandum: A Reader of Singapore Chinese Short Stories], Singapore: Global Publishing [in Chinese].
- Hillenbrand, Margaret (2010) 'Communitarianism, or, how to build East Asian theory', *Postcolonial Studies* 13(4): 317–334.
- Hsia, Chih-tsing (1999) *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, 3rd ed., Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Huang, Maoshan (黃茂善) (2019) '鄉關何處：準台北人，屋簷下，與華語語系文學' [Out of place: Quasi-Taipei People, Under the Eave, and Sinophone literature], *Taiwan: A Cultural Studies Quarterly* (文化研究季刊) 166: 49–65 [in Chinese].
- Huo, Yan (霍艷) (2017) '另一種“傲慢與偏見”：對“華語語系文學”的觀察及反思' [Another kind of 'pride and prejudice': Observation and reflection on 'Sinophone literature'], *Wenyibao*, 31 May, Literary supplement section [in Chinese].
- Jia, Pingwa (賈平凹) (2005) 秦腔 [Qin Opera], Beijing: Zuoja Publishing [in Chinese].
- Jin, Jin (金進) (2019) 冷戰與華語語系文學研究 [The Cold War and the Study of Sinophone Literature], Shanghai: Fudan University Press [in Chinese].
- Jin, Yucheng (金宇澄) (2013) 繁花 [Blossoms], Shanghai: Shanghai Wenyi Publishing [in Chinese].
- Leo, Suryadinata (2015) *The Making of Southeast Asian Nations: State, Ethnicity, Indigenism and Citizenship*, Singapore: World Scientific Publishing.
- Liou, Liang-ya (劉亮雅) (2014) 遲來的後殖民：再論解嚴以來的台灣小說 [Belated Postcoloniality: Post-Martial Law Taiwanese Fiction], Taipei: National Taiwan University Press [in Chinese].
- Liu, Jun (劉俊) (2015) “華語語系文學”(概念/理論)的生成、變異、發展及批判——以史書美、王德威為論述中心' [The creation, mutation, development and critique of 'Sinophone literature'—with critical focus on Shu-mei Shih and David Der-wei Wang], *Literature & Art Studies* (文藝研究) 11. Retrieved 28 June 2020 from <https://wenku.baidu.com/view/d1613c7e777f5acfa1c7aa00b52acfc789eb9ff9.html?re=view> [in Chinese].
- Liu, Petrus (2015) *Queer Marxism in Two Chinas*, Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press.
- Lu, Sheldon (2008) 'Book review of *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across the Pacific*', MCLC Resource Center (of the *Modern Chinese Literature and*

- Culture* journal). Retrieved 30 September 2018 from <https://u.osu.edu/mclc/book-reviews/visuality-and-identity/>.
- Ma, Sheng-mei (2017) *Sinophone-Anglophone Cultural Duet*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Martin, Fran (2015) 'Transnational queer Sinophone cultures', in Mark McLelland and Mackie Vera (eds), *Routledge Handbook of Sexuality Studies in East Asia*, New York: Routledge, 35–48.
- Mufti, Aamir (2016) *Forget English! Orientalisms and World Literatures*, London and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ng, Kim Chew (2016) *A Slow Boat to China and Other Stories*, trans. Carlos Rojas, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Ng, Kim Chew (黃錦樹) (2018) '這樣的“華語語系”論可以休矣！——史書美的“反離散”到底在反甚麼？' [Such 'Sinophone studies' should stop! What exactly is Shu-mei Shih's 'against diaspora' up against?], *Speaking of Books*, 2 January. Retrieved 28 June 2020 from <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/yotu/1k6GM8rSYbo> [in Chinese].
- Pecic, Zoran Lee (2016) *New Queer Sinophone Cinema: Local Histories, Transnational Connections*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Peng, Hsiao-yen and Raidel, Ella (eds) (2017) *The Politics of Memory in Sinophone Cinemas and Image Culture: Altering Archives*, London: Routledge.
- Pham, Ya-moi (范雅梅) (2011) '去祖國：二次戰後國民黨僑務政策中的地緣政治' [Decentering Homeland: The geopolitics of Taiwan's post-war Homeland Policy], *Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies* (台灣社會研究季刊) 83: 137–177 [in Chinese].
- Puar, Jasbir (2007) *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Rojas, Carlos (2016) 'Language, ethnicity, and the politics of literary taxonomy: Ng Kim Chew and Mahua Literature', *PMLA* 131(5): 1316–1327.
- Said, Edward (1990) 'On Jean Genet's late works', *Grand Street* 9(4): 24–42.
- Sautman, Barry and Yan, Hairong (2015) *Localists and 'Locusts' in Hong Kong: Creating a Yellow-Red Peril Discourse*, Maryland Series in Contemporary Asian Studies No. 2, Baltimore: School of Law, University of Maryland.
- Shih, Shu-mei (2003) 'Globalization and the (in)significance of Taiwan', *Postcolonial Studies* 6(2): 143–153.
- Shih, Shu-mei (2004) 'Global literature and the technologies of recognition', *PMLA* 119(1): 16–30.
- Shih, Shu-mei (2007) *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across the Pacific*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Shih, Shu-mei (2011) 'The concept of the Sinophone', *PMLA* 126(3): 709–718.

- Shih, Shu-mei (2012) 'Foreword: The Sinophone as history and the Sinophone as theory', *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 6(1): 5–8.
- Shih, Shu-mei (2013) 'Against diaspora: The Sinophone as places of cultural production', in Shu-mei Shih, Chien-hsin Tsai, and Brian Bernards (eds), *Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader*, New York: Columbia University Press, 25–42.
- Shih, Shu-mei (2015a) 'World studies and relational comparison', *PMLA* 130(2): 430–438.
- Shih, Shu-mei (史書美) (2015b) '華語語系研究對台灣文學的可能意義：為「中外文學」華語與漢文專輯所寫' [Implications of Sinophone studies for Taiwan literature: A response essay], *Chung Wai Literary Quarterly* 44(1): 135–143 [in Chinese].
- Shih, Shu-mei (2016) '理論台灣初論' [A preliminary discussion of Theory Taiwan], in Shu-mei Shih et al. (eds), *知識台灣* [Knowledge Taiwan], Taipei: Rye Field Publications, 55–94 [in Chinese].
- Shih, Shu-mei (2017) 反離散：華語語系研究論 [Against Diaspora: Discourses on Sinophone Studies], Taipei: Linking Publishing [in Chinese].
- Shih, Shu-mei (2019) 'Racializing area studies, defetishizing China', *Positions* 27(1): 33–65.
- Shih, Shu-mei; Harrison, Mark; Chiu, Kuei-fen; and Berry, Michael (2018) 'Forum 2: Linking Taiwan studies with the world', *International Journal of Taiwan Studies* 1(1): 209–227.
- Tan, E. K. (2013) *Rethinking Chineseness: Translational Sinophone Identities in the Nanyang Literary World*, New York: Cambria Press.
- Tee, Kim Tong (2010) '(Re)mapping Sinophone literature', in Jing Tsu and David Der-wei Wang (eds), *Global Chinese Literature: Critical Essays*, Leiden: Brill, 77–91.
- Tee, Kim Tong (張錦忠) (2012) '華語語系文學：一個學科話語的播散與接受' [The dissemination and reception of Sinophone literature as a disciplinary discourse], *Modern Chinese Literature* (中國現代文學) 22: 59–74 [in Chinese].
- Tsai, Chien-hsin (2013) 'At the crossroads: *Orphan of Asia*, postloyalism, and Sinophone studies', *Sun Yat-sen Journal of Humanities* 35: 27–46.
- Tsai, Chien-hsin (2017) *A Passage to China: Literature, Loyalty, and Colonial Taiwan*, London and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Tsu, Jing (2010) *Sound and Script in Chinese Diaspora*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Vukovich, Daniel (2019) 'A city and a SAR on fire: As if everything and nothing changes', *Critical Asian Studies* 52(1): 1–17.
- Wang, Chih-ming (王智明) (2017) '華語語系 (與) 一九四九：重新表述中國夢' [The Sinophone (and) 1949: The Chinese Dream rearticulated], *Sun Yat-sen Journal of Humanities* (中山人文學報) 42(January): 1–27 [in Chinese].
- Wang, David Der-wei (王德威) (2006) '文學旅行與世界想像' [Literary traveling and global imagination], *United Daily News*, 8–9 July, Literary supplement section [in Chinese].

- Wang, David Der-wei (2007) 後遺民寫作 [Post-loyalist Writing], Taipei: Rye Field Publications [in Chinese].
- Wang, David Der-wei (2013) 'Post-loyalism', in Shu-mei Shih, Chien-hsin Tsai, and Brian Bernards (eds), *Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader*, New York: Columbia University Press, 93–116.
- Wang, David Der-wei (2014) 'Sailing to the Sinophone world: On modern Chinese literary cartography', public lecture at Cambridge University, 21 May. Retrieved 25 June 2020 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2F5ZdEyMgA8>.
- Wang, David Der-wei (2015) '根'的政治, '勢'的詩學: 華語論述與中國文學 [The Politics of 'Root', the Poetics of 'Disposition': Sinophone Discourse and Chinese Literature], Kaohsiung: National Sun Yat-sen University Press [in Chinese].
- Wang, David Der-wei (2017) 'Introduction: Worlding literary China', in David Der-wei Wang (ed.), *A New Literary History of Modern China*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1–28.
- Wang, David Der-wei (2018a) 'Sinophone intervention with China: Between national and world literature', in Huan Saussy (ed.), *Texts and Transformations: Essays in Honor of the 75th Birthday of Victor H. Mair*, New York: Cambria Press, 59–79.
- Wang, David Der-wei (2018b) '重構南洋圖像: 理論與故事的交鋒' [Reconstructing the image of the South Seas: Confrontation between theory and story], in Siou Wei Chong and Kim Tong Tee (eds), 華語語系與南洋書寫: 臺灣與星馬華文文學及文化論集 [Sinophone and Writing Southeast Asia: Essays on Sinophone Literature and Culture in Taiwan, Singapore, and Malaysia], Taipei: Center for Chinese Studies, 249–262 [in Chinese].
- Wang, David Der-wei; Gao, Jia-qian; and Woo, Kam Loon (eds) (2016) 華夷風: 華語語系文學讀本 [Sinophone/Xenophone: Contemporary Sinophone Literature Reader], Taipei: Linking Publishing [in Chinese].
- Wang, David Der-wei and Shih, Shu-mei (2017) "華語語系與台灣"主題論壇' ['Sinophone and Taiwan': Thematic forum], *Modern Chinese Literature* (中國現代文學) 32: 75–94 [in Chinese].
- Wang, Xiaojue (2013) *Modernity with a Cold War Face: Reimagining the Nation in Chinese Literature across the 1949 Divide*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wong, Alvin (2018) 'Including China? Postcolonial Hong Kong, Sinophone studies, and the gendered geopolitics of China-centrism', *Interventions* 20(8): 1101–1120.
- Woo, Kam Loon (胡金倫) (2018) '從華語語系到華語圈: 馬華作家在臺灣' [From Sinophone to a Sinophone community: A Malaysian Chinese writer in Taiwan], in Siou Wei Chong and Kim Tong Tee (eds), 華語語系與南洋書寫: 臺灣與星馬華文文學及文化論集 [Sinophone and Writing Southeast Asia: Essays on Sinophone Literature and Culture in Taiwan, Singapore, and Malaysia], Taipei: Center for Chinese Studies, 233–248 [in Chinese].
- Wu, Chia-rong (2016) *Supernatural Sinophone Taiwan and Beyond*, New York: Cambria Press.

- Xu, Hangping (2018) 'Beyond national allegory: Mo Yan's fiction as world literature', *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 30(1): 163–189.
- Yan, Geling (嚴歌苓) (1993) 少女小漁 [Siao Yu], Taipei: Erya Publishing [in Chinese].
- Yan, Geling (2005) 天浴 [Tianyu], Guangzhou: Huacheng Publishing [in Chinese].
- Yue, Audrey and Khoo, Olivia (eds) (2014) *Sinophone Cinemas*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Zhan, Min-xu (詹閔旭) (2013) '認同與恥辱：華語語系脈絡下的當代台灣文學生產' [Identity and effects of shame: Contextualizing contemporary Taiwanese literary production in the Sinophone world], doctoral dissertation, National Cheng Kung University, Tainan [in Chinese].
- Zhan, Min-xu (2017) '多地共構的華語語系文學：以馬華文學的台灣境遇為例' [Sinophone literature as places-based production: On the predicament of Sinophone Malaysian literature in Taiwan], *Bulletin of Taiwanese Literature* (台灣文學學報) 30: 81–110 [in Chinese].
- Zhan, Min-xu (2018) '在世界的邊緣寫作：李永平成為台灣作家之路' [Writing on the margin of the world: Li Yongping's road to becoming a writer of Taiwan], *Dong Hwa Journal of Chinese Studies* (東華漢學) 27: 211–240 [in Chinese].
- Zhang, Longxi (1992) 'Western theory and Chinese reality', *Critical Inquiry* 19(1): 105–130.
- Zhang, Yueran (2012) *The Promised Bird*, trans. Jeremy Tiang, Singapore: Math Paper Press.
- Zhu, Chongke (朱崇科) (2010) '華語語系的話語建構及其問題' [The discourse construction of Sinophone and some problems concerned], *Academic Research* (學術研究) 7: 146–153 [in Chinese].