

Joachim Gentz

Keywords Re-Oriented



inter  KULTUR



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Joachim Gentz

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with the collaboration
of Ella Chmielewska,
Hannah Sommerseth
and Jack Burton

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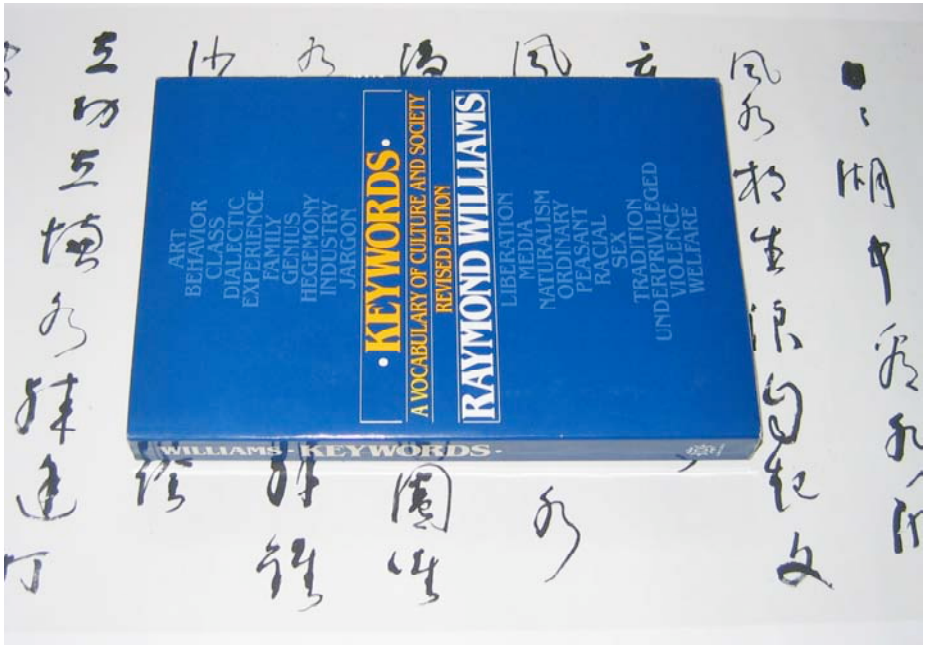
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Williams on Lin Sanzhi photo © Joachim Gentz

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Preface

This book is the outcome of a cooperative venture between Edinburgh Cultural and Chinese Studies, Göttingen University, Nanjing University, Beijing Foreign Languages University and Anhui University. The aim of this 2006–08 project, funded by the Asia Link programme of the EU, has been the development and production of teaching materials that can be used by each of the participating universities. The *Keywords Re-Oriented* course, taught in Edinburgh, with a few sessions taught in Nanjing and Beijing, has been shaped by these teaching experiences, as well as through many discussions with colleagues in the project, especially with He Chengzhou 何成洲 (Nanjing) and Sun Youzhong 孫有中 (Beijing).

In *Keywords Re-Oriented* the approach taken is to reflect from within the perspective of Western cultural studies upon the following inherent problems. First, as a discipline which claims to create general theories about culture, Western cultural studies has developed its theories purely on the basis of Western source material and concerns. Second, reflecting the range of academic traditions in the West, a multiplicity of strands have emerged within the discipline, emphasizing different aspects of culture, following different theoretical questions and employing different methodologies; the significant divergence between English, French and German cultural studies, for example, seems to suggest that a unified body of cultural studies does not exist. Third, as a result of the enormous impact the cultural studies approach has had on Western academia, it is being adapted to non-Western academic traditions, generating an even greater diversity of cultural studies approaches. Sometimes, as in China, the understanding of the meaning of ‘culture’ is so distinct from Western conceptions that entirely new cultural studies approaches are being generated. Many scholars believe that cultural studies globally in all its diversity can be unified by a combination of approaches, or in some way be ‘brought back home’.¹ However, while acknowledging that multiplicity is inherent to the nature of cultural studies, it is our contention that Chinese cultural studies, growing from such a radically different notion of ‘culture’, cannot easily be subsumed under the umbrella of Western cultural studies.

The *Keywords Re-Oriented* course critically reflects upon Western theoretical approaches towards culture through an examination of the application of Western theories to the non-Western culture of China, testing theories of culture generated in the West in their application to the Chinese field. In the process it will become obvious

¹ See for example Richard Johnson et al., ‘Multiplying Methods: From Pluralism to Combination’, in: id., *Practice of Cultural Studies*, London: Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2004, pp. 26–43. Lawrence Grossberg, *Bringing it All Back Home: Essays on Cultural Studies*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.

that many Western theoretical keywords do not work as analytical tools in Chinese contexts in the same way as they do in the West, so highlighting the necessity for any Western cultural studies theory to critically reflect upon Western theoretical approaches, especially in their application to non-Western cultures. It also specifies problems in applying certain theories in the Chinese context. Finally, this course shows how similar problems of transcultural encounter and application of theories relate within what we understand as 'the West'.

The course is the result of diverse inspirations and experiences. The interdisciplinary approach in sinology has a longstanding tradition, first of all being grounded in the Jesuit China mission and later as being part of the greater European approach of 'Oriental Studies'. In France, sinology has a strong connection to anthropology, sociology and religious studies; in Germany, to theology, philosophy and classical studies; in Britain, to text translation and Oriental studies. In German sinology an interdisciplinary approach was developed in the 'Bauer school' of Wolfgang Bauer and by a number of his philosophy-oriented students, including Rudolf Wagner, Lothar Ledderhose, Wolfgang Kubin, Michael Lackner, Michael Friedrich, Marion Eggert. From this evolved a teaching practice at the University of Heidelberg Institute of Chinese Studies of reading Western theoretical texts in combination with sinological sources. For many years I attended the weekly colloquium with Rudolf Wagner, which provided the model for the approach I have followed in my own teaching, from 1999 onwards, in Chinese as well as in religious studies. Between 2002 and 2006, together with Andreas Grünschloß, I developed and taught a course on Keywords in Religious Studies at Göttingen University, where the course still runs. Also at Göttingen University, with Joachim Grage (Scandinavian Studies) and Gerald Moers (Egyptology), in 2003–04 I taught a course on Theories of Cultural Studies, in which we made use of some of the basic texts which I take as set readings in this *Keywords Re-Oriented* course. Natascha Gentz, who was the first to create and teach a course at Frankfurt University on Chinese Cultural Studies using Western and Chinese texts, designed the MSc in Chinese Cultural Studies at the University of Edinburgh, which I have taught since 2007.

In 2005 Ella Chmielewska designed a core course based on Raymond Williams' keywords approach for the Cultural Studies Programme at the University of Edinburgh. It was designed for a multicultural context, since nearly all of the students on it came from outside the UK, mostly from China. The original *Keywords Re-Oriented* course designed for the Asia Link programme, was a continuation and further development of that core course; I then combined it with the sinological programme and the course is now taught as part of the MSc in Chinese Cultural Studies at Edinburgh University (I wish to acknowledge here that Nico Volland inspired me in my selection of some of the China-related material). As the result of the thought and effort of

many people, the *Keywords Re-Oriented* course is a reflection of something that obviously was out there in the intertextually structured general academic discourse.

Many people have helped me in the writing of this book and I would like to thank all of them for their valuable support. I am especially grateful to Ella Chmielewska, who brought me into the project and encouraged me to work further in the complex world of Cultural Studies. We designed and taught the courses together and our many hours of brainstorming were the most enjoyable and delightful time spent in the creation of this book. Hannah Sommerseth and Jack Burton contributed the chapters on gender (JB for the Western part), art (HS), representation (JB) and reality (HS), Chen Jie searched out, copied and scanned the many texts used as sources for the project, and Jennie Renton has spent hours and days patiently working with me through the whole script, discussing and rewriting most of the sentences in a most thoughtful way to make it comprehensible for an English readership. Finally, my wife Natascha Gentz, was of invaluable help in realizing the Chinese Studies side of the course.

Thanks also go to the EU for its generous funding of the project, and to our colleagues from the main team in Göttingen – Hiltraud Casper-Hehne, Irmy Schweiger, Corinna Albrecht and Cordula Hunold – who have facilitated the work in its many complicated administrative aspects and have been open and patient in dealing with any questions and problems which have arisen. For those issues which remain, responsibility fully rests with me.

Joachim Gentz, Edinburgh, May 2009

Introduction

'Culture' is a cultural concept. Although historically the notion of culture has been developed in Europe, it has been translated into most of the existing languages and is used nowadays all over the world. Cultural Studies is a historical and regional product of Western scholarship that follows basic questions which have evolved from specific academic discourses in 20th century Europe.² Cultural Studies works as a transdisciplinary practice and its methodology therefore depends on specific analytical terms that have to be defined within the field. The development of a cluster of interrelated analytical terms is a central part of the dynamics and growth of the discipline. To be aware of the particular and relational meanings of this arsenal of analytical terms, an understanding of their historical semantics and the theories in which they are grounded is one of the main requirements of any student of Cultural Studies. Conscious of the enormous importance of a correct understanding of the significance of the terms' 'general and variable usage ... not in separate disciplines but in general discussion',³ Raymond Williams in 1976 wrote a book entitled *Keywords* which has become one of the classics in Cultural Studies; with the further development of the discipline, it has been used as a basis for updates of the 'vocabulary' in similar publications, such as *New Keywords* (2005), *Key Concepts in Cultural Theory* (1999), *Critical Terms for Literary Study* (1990), etc.⁴

The *Keywords Re-Oriented* course is based on the premise that the language employed in the study of culture, in its principal analytical terms, contains specific approaches, hierarchies, values, methodologies and questions. The course regards terminology as the basis of conceptual approaches towards culture. Within different academic disciplines certain key terms have been used as common analytical tools. How these terms are defined varies according to discipline and to historical and cultural

² Throughout the book, 'Cultural Studies' will be capitalized when it refers to the discipline of Cultural Studies associated with the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (BCCCS) and the names of Stuart Hall, Raymond Williams etc., and as we find it institutionalized at academic institutions. In all other cases, when 'cultural studies' refers to the general field of research on culture throughout all the disciplines, I will use the lower case.

³ R. Williams, *Keywords*, London: Fontana, 1988, 'Introduction', p. 14.

⁴ Tony Bennett et al., *New Keywords*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005; Andrew Edgar and Peter Sedgwick (eds), *Key Concepts in Cultural Theory*, London/NY: Routledge, ¹1999, ²2002, ³2003; Lentricchia, Frank and Thomas McLaughlin (eds), *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, ¹1990, ²1995.

contexts.⁵ Any analysis of culture must therefore begin with reflection on the range of basic terms and their implicit assumptions.

This course introduces and explores concepts underpinning the study of culture and the discipline of Cultural Studies and, by way of a thorough examination of terms and discursive frames in which terminology is set, provides a crosscultural conceptual vocabulary for critical analysis of culture in its various manifestations. It also introduces a selection of key theorists and texts, positioning them conceptually, geographically and historically. Students are encouraged to explore meanings of concepts in different intellectual, cultural and linguistic traditions. Attention is paid to conceptual as well as to linguistic translation and some texts are read in original versions or across languages in different translations, capitalizing on each student's knowledge of his/her native language and at least one other linguistic territory.

Conceptual flexibility is key to critical and rigorous analysis of culture at post-graduate level and is also understood to be the backbone of intercultural and transcultural academic study. The *Keywords Re-Oriented* course therefore aims at a sustained reflection and systematic exploration of terminology employed in the study of culture. Taking inspiration from Williams' *Keywords*, an anthology of terms for studying culture and society, it focuses on the critical examination of a range of theoretical positions and paradigms embedded in disciplinary terminology, which have influenced the ways in which the study of culture has been approached. For each session participants read definitions of terms as presented in: Williams, *Keywords (KW)*; Bennett et al., *New Keywords (NKW)*; and Edgar/Sedgwick, *Key Concepts (KC)*.

Through a close reading of further theoretical and analytical frameworks, the course provides students with basic skills of critical reflection on the usages and linguistic and cultural contexts of terms. Conceptual flexibility and sensitivity so developed will afford students a better understanding of contemporary culture across its numerous manifestations and texts.

Keywords Re-Oriented introduces a series of central analytical terms in the field of cultural studies and cultural theory. It combines a general introduction to the history and different possible meanings and interpretations of the terms, as we find them in the different 'Keywords' publications, and through the reading of articles or book chapters which have become crucial for one particular important approach within the history of each term – or which might even have coined the term in its analytical usage, such as Said's 'Orientalism' or Kristeva's 'intertextuality'. The course is thus designed for reading 'classical' articles and positioning them in the broader field of cultural studies discourse, enhancing students' ability to understand and discuss difficult

⁵ See for an exemplary reflection on the terminology of a discipline Theodor W. Adorno's 1962 lectures (especially the first three) on 'philosophical terminology': *Philosophische Terminologie*, 2 vols., Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973.

theoretical texts; they will be introduced to representative forms of analytical languages and arguments, and to the writing styles of a number of key thinkers in Western cultural theory.

With its focus on both terms and theories relevant to all disciplines in the humanities, the *Keywords Re-Oriented* course can be studied as an introduction to Western cultural theory as well as to Western academic language and concepts, and is thus also crucial for non-Western students in the humanities.

The course structure is modular, each session focusing on one keyword. Although some of the keywords can be related to each other, each session is independent and can stand alone or be inserted into other courses. The selection of terms and texts is meant as a suggestion: if the teacher feels that any other keyword or important text should be incorporated into the programme of study, she should feel free to modify the selection.

The Cultural Studies discourse, with its analytical terminology, has become increasingly dominant in regional studies and in non-Western academia; the *Keywords Re-Oriented* course takes China as an example of a non-Western culture, and Chinese Studies as an example of regional studies, critically reflecting on applications of the selected Cultural Studies terms in academic studies related to the Chinese field. Using Western theory to reflect on China adds an often neglected transcultural aspect.

The course integrates study of a number of key Western theorists and texts on Cultural Studies' central analytical terms; and it reflects on these terms in application to Chinese contexts. Two set texts are given in each of the sessions 2–11: a Western theoretical text on a specific key term, and a text which makes use of this Western term in a Chinese Studies analysis. In the first part of each session, the key term of the Western theoretical text will be discussed and contextualized by a student in a short presentation, followed by a general discussion anchored by the tutor in a deepening of students' understanding of the theory. The second part of each session will consist of a critical discussion of the application of the Western key term within the Chinese Studies text.

Sessions 2–9 reflect upon a series of keywords which in Western academic discourses are very much associated with Western phenomena. In contrast, the keywords dealt with in sessions 9–11 represent concepts that carry a strong anthropological, a-historical and non-cultural inflection: i.e. notions such as 'body' and 'gender', which may be expected to be found in non-Western cultures, as opposed to notions such as 'postmodernism' or 'literary field', which have been generated in Western cultural contexts. Since the two notions of 'body' and 'gender' are associated with 'nature' rather than 'culture', they are not only the object of cultural studies but also of natural sciences, and are therefore subject to a different set of academic methodologies. The final four sessions (12–15) do not refer directly to the Chinese context or to the previously discussed cultural distance between China and the West, and the implications

this has for universal applications of Western keywords. In a parallel line of enquiry, Western keywords are now considered in terms of the discursive tensions within the Western academic field itself, revealing ‘otherness’ within that discourse. Focusing on themes of embodiment of cultural objects, sessions 12–15 deal with the diversity of cultural forms and with theories of their relationship to the cognitive, the conceptual, the ideological, the psychological, the emotional and/or the intellectual realms of meaning, of content (or of whatever the counterparts of these cultural forms are conceived to be).

To sum up: the *Keywords Re-Oriented* course aims to stimulate sustained reflection on and systematic exploration of terminology employed in the study of culture, especially Chinese culture. Through a close reading of different theoretical and analytical frameworks, it provides Western and Chinese students with basic skills of critical reflection on the usages and linguistic and cultural contexts of terms. Through the conceptual flexibility and sensitivity engendered by this process, students will be better able to understand and analyze Chinese culture across its numerous manifestations and texts.

All texts to be read in preparation for the classes will be available in a reader or as online files.

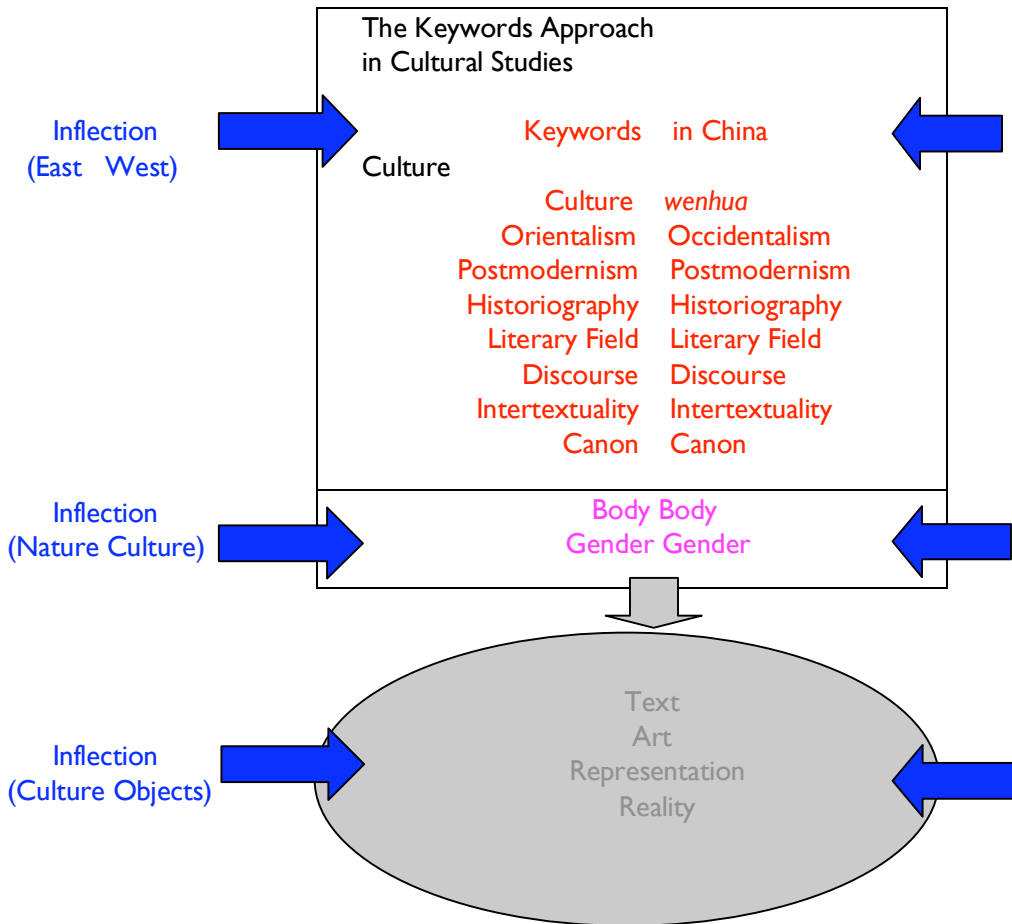
Each session includes ‘Discussion points’. While these are primarily intended as the subject of group oral discussion, whether in class or any other forum, individuals studying online, or for whom there might be limited access to group discussion, can use these as guidelines for their own reflections on course topics.

Assessment: one essay of 4000 words, to be chosen from a list of topics in the course as well as one handout of a presentation.

A diagram of the course might look like:

Preface

Introduction



Postface

Essay Topics
Bibliography

Session 1

The Keyword-approach: definitions, classifications, language, terminology and conceptualizations in China and the West

Set Texts

West

- Williams, Raymond. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. London: Fontana Press, 1983, Introduction, pp. 1–27.
- Bennett, Tony et al. *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, Introduction, pp. 17–26.
- Edgar, Andrew and Peter Sedgwick (eds). *Cultural Theory: The Key Concepts*. London/New York: Routledge ¹1999 (as *Key Concepts in Cultural Theory*), ²2002, ³2003, Introduction, pp. 1–9.

China

- Wang Xiaoming. ‘A Manifesto for Cultural Studies’, tr. by Robin Visser, in: Chaohua Wang (ed.), *One China, Many Paths*, London: Verso, 2003, pp. 274–91.
- Tao Dongfeng and Jin Yuanpu. ‘Introduction’, in: id. (eds), *Cultural Studies in China*, Singapore: Marshall Cavendish, 2005, pp. 1–25.

In this session we focus on Cultural Studies as a discipline and discuss the history and methodology of the Keywords-approach in China and the West, and the importance of critical reflection on keywords. Problems of theoretical reflection on orders of knowledge, terminology and definition used within academic discourses will be identified, and approaches to these problems, especially in the fields of Western cultural studies and Chinese intellectual history, will be introduced. As part of this session, ‘Inflection 1’ reflects upon the cultural and linguistic frame of our approach, and ‘Keywords in China’ introduces to the Chinese approach to ‘keywords’.

Discussion points

- Identify keyterms known to be important for Cultural Studies.
(Following this discussion set up a list of what you consider to be the most important terms in cultural theory, and explain your selection. Try not to anticipate the discussion of what culture 'is', which follows in Session 2.)
- Compare the selections of keywords made in: Raymond Williams, *Keywords*; Bennett et al., *New Keywords*; and Edgar/Sedgwick, *Key Concepts*.
- Try to evaluate how these particular selections have been influenced by factors such as time of publication, social and political attitudes, and possible agendas of individual authors.
- Does Raymond Williams give 'definitions' of his keywords?
- What sorts of circumstances demand/ tend to provoke new sets of keywords?

Inflection 1

In their introduction to New Keywords, Bennett et al. note that

*where Williams largely equated the “English” language with British usage, our inquiry is an international one – again, necessarily so to take account of the extent to which discussions of culture and society now increasingly flow across national boundaries, with English holding an often oppressively privileged status in limiting as well as enabling much of that flow. However, for practical reasons we focus mainly on usage in Western Anglophone countries, although in some entries (**civilisation** and **modern**, for example) the contributors explain that recognizing the complexities occasioned by the entry of particular keywords into the vocabularies of culture and society in other countries is essential to grasping their import. This recognition was also a feature of Williams’s *Keywords*: pointing out that many of his most important terms had developed key meanings in languages other than English or “went through a complicated and interactive development in a number of major languages” (1976: 17), he noted that he found it indispensable to trace some of this interaction in such cases as “alienation”, and “culture” itself. We, too, would have liked to do more translinguistic as well as transnational tracing – the changing formations of meaning linking such concepts as “liberalism,” **market, consumption**, “ideology,” and **socialism** in China today is a consequential case in point – and we would have liked to follow the often radically divergent uses of English keywords in parts of the world where English is at most a lingua franca or a second language that may be nobody’s mother tongue. An “extraordinary international collaborative enterprise” on the scale that Williams thought essential for an adequate comparative study quickly proved to be beyond us, too, for all the enlarged resources and technical means at our disposal.⁶*

*Bennett et al. assert that, while there are different local usages of English words, they all belong to one system of meaning, within which they could be explained given the technical means. Rather than pursuing this approach and primarily considering possible new dimensions for English keywords in a Chinese context, *Keywords Re-Oriented* concerns itself with the more fundamental question of whether it is possible to assume an identity of meaning for English words when used within such radically different reference systems. For example, in the Chinese context – i.e. being placed within a system of expression the linguistic possibilities of which are in some respects utterly different from anything found in the English language – the term ‘liberalism’ might well gain inflections of meaning entirely other than those derived from Western political traditions.*

⁶ Cf. Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg and Meaghan Morris (eds), *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, pp. xix–xx.

Taking sinological articles which make use of English analytical terms, Keywords Re-Oriented will critically analyse the application of selected central Western keywords in a Chinese context. In each case, not only will the adequacy of the application be assessed, but it will be questioned whether the keyword works in the Chinese context at all – even in a broadened meaning of its Western model.



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Keywords in China

In Europe, developing and teaching new interpretative approaches in various academic fields through the redefinition and fresh explication of keyterms did not begin with Raymond Williams' publication of *Keywords* (1976). Earlier exponents were Rudolf Eucken, author of *Grundbegriffe der Gegenwart* (1878) and *Geschichte der philosophischen Terminologie* (1879) and Theodor W. Adorno, who lectured in 1962 on 'philosophical terminology'. Moreover, the German historical branch of 'conceptual history' materialized in the influential publications of the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (1971–2005), the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (1972–1997) and the journal *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* (1955–) which all focus on the historical semantics of terms provided an important basis for Williams' *Keywords*.⁷

In China, the *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 by Liu Xie 劉勰 (465–522) is an early work that is organized according to a set of 49 keywords of literary criticism; with its systematic exposition of literary principles, it counts as the first literary critical work in China. The 49 chapters are organized according to literary genres (chapters 5–25) and

⁷ Cf. Joachim Ritter et al. (eds), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Basel: Schwabe, 1971–2005, 13 vols.; Reinhart Koselleck et al. (eds), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta 1972–1997, 8 vols.

keywords of literary theory (chapters 26–49).⁸ Since literary genre classification is part of literary analysis and can also be taken to function as analytical terminology in the field of literary criticism, the *Wenxin diaolong* may be interpreted as an early work on keywords in literary theory.

The *Beixi ziyi* 北溪字義, written by Chen Chun 陳淳 (1159–1223), has served a similar purpose in the unfolding of Neo-Confucianism.⁹ This work consists of a selection of 26 central analytical terms used in the then newly emerging Neo-Confucian doctrine, which are explained in the light of a new interpretation of the established Confucian knowledge of the world. (By comparison, Williams' *Keywords* contains 131 terms.)

Following this tradition, in 1936 Zhang Dainian 張岱年 (1909–2004) wrote the first Chinese outline on the origin and development of central ancient Chinese philosophical concepts.¹⁰ In 1987 he completed his *Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy*,¹¹ based on this work, in which he gives new explanations of the historical semantics of a set of 64 selected terms. In his introduction he writes:

‘Concept’ (*gainian*) and ‘category’ (*fanchou*) are both translations of Western terms. In the Pre-Qin era thinkers spoke of ‘names’ (*ming*); after the Song dynasty the term was ‘term’ (*zhi*). Chen Liang of the Southern Song (1127–1279) wrote *The Meaning of Terms* (*zhiyi*), and Dai Zhen in the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) wrote *An Evidential Study of the Meaning of Terms in the Book of Mencius* (*Mengzi ziyi shuzheng*). In both of these works the word ‘term’ (*zhi*) means ‘concept’ or ‘category’. ‘Name’ and ‘term’ are both based on grammatical function, whereas ‘concept’ and ‘category’ refer to the content of the terms. The Chinese term for ‘category’ (*fanchou*) comes from the *Classic of History*, which talks about the ‘Great Plan (*fan*) and Nine Fields (*chou*)’, which refers to the nine kinds of basic principles. This use is similar to the Western use of the term ‘category’.¹²

Yet, China also has a long tradition of dividing the world into classes (*lei*) in large encyclopaedias ordered according to classificatory sets, subsets and subsets of

⁸ See Vincent Yu-chung Shih's ‘Introduction’, in: id., *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons: Study of Thought and Pattern in Chinese Literature*, Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1983, pp. xi–xlix. See also Dore J. Levy, ‘Literary Theory and Criticism’, in: Victor Mair (ed.), *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature*, NY: Columbia University, 2001, Ch. 45, pp. 916–939, p. 928.

⁹ Cf. Wing-tsit Chan, *Neo-Confucian Terms Explained*, New York: Columbia UP, 1986.

¹⁰ Zhang Dainian 张岱年, *Zhongguo zhexue dagang* 中国哲学大纲, 1936.

¹¹ Published as *Zhongguo gudian zhexue gainian fanchou yaolun* 中国古典哲学概念范畴要论, Beijing: Acad. of Soc. Sciences, 1989. English translation by Edmund Ryden in 2002.

¹² Cf. Zhang Dainian (E. Ryden transl.), *Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy*, pp. xix–xx.

keywords to which related quotes out of the great pool of Chinese classical literature were attached.¹³ Zhang's historical approach to philosophical terms is based on an indigenous Chinese tradition of *xungu* 訓詁 philology followed by Qing scholars such as Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849) and praised by Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962) in 1923 as providing historical semantics of Chinese terms. Chen Yinke 陳寅恪 (1890–1969) identified this traditional philological work in 1936 as part of cultural history and Wang Li 王力 (1900–1986) in 1947 even published a *New Philology* (*Xin xungu* 新訓詁學) which he defined in strict historical terms and in 1980 claimed as being a part of cultural history.¹⁴

Discussion points

- Similarities and differences between traditional Chinese collections of key-words and Western Cultural Studies works following Williams' *Keywords*.
- Try to think of different reasons for redefining keywords in specific fields.¹⁵

Interest in the Western discipline of Cultural Studies and its central analytical terms is reflected in a number of Chinese language translations and academic studies starting with the translation of Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (eds) *Critical Terms for Literary Study* (1990) into Chinese in 1994¹⁶ and a number of following articles in the leading academic journal *Dushu* 读书 in 1995.¹⁷ John Storey's *An Introductory Guide to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader* (1993) was translated into Chinese in 2000,¹⁸ Williams' *Keywords* (1976) in 2003,¹⁹ Dani Cavallaro's *Critical and Cultural Theory*

¹³ Cf. Christoph Kaderas, *Die Leishu der imperialen Bibliothek des Kaisers Qianlong. Untersuchungen zur chinesischen Enzyklopädie*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998.

¹⁴ Chen Pingyuan 陈平原, 'Xueshushi shiye zhong de "Guanjian ci" 学术史视野中的“关键词”', in: *Dushu* 读书 4 (2008): 134–142 and 5 (2008): 40–47.

¹⁵ For a reflection upon the inability of experts to talk with each other and the methodological problems of mutual incomprehensible disciplinary discourses see Gertrude Himmelfarb, 'The Abyss Revisited', in: *American Scholar Summer* (1992): 337–48. See also Katherine Hayles, 'Deciphering the Rules of Unruly Disciplines: A Modest Proposal for Literature and Science', in: Donald Bruce and Anthony Purdy (eds), *Literature and Science*, Amsterdam, Atlanta: Rodopi Press, 1994, pp. 25–48.

¹⁶ F. Lentricchia and T. McLaughlin (Zhang Jingyuan 张京媛 et al. transl.), *Wenxue piping shuyi* 文学批评术语, Hongkong: Oxford University Press, 1994.

¹⁷ Cf., for example, Wang Hui 汪晖, 'Guanjian ci yu wenhua bianqian 关键词与文化变迁', in: *Dushu* 读书 (1995.2): 109–117. Repr. in: id., *Jingying yu xinshi* 旧影与新知, Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu cbs, 1996.

¹⁸ Yuchan Shidourui 約翰·史都瑞 (Li Genfang, Zhou Sufeng transl. 李根芳, 周素鳳). *Wenhua lilun yu tongshu wenhua daolun* 文化理論与通俗文化導論. Nanjing: Nanjing daxue cbs, 2000.

¹⁹ Leimeng Weiliansi 雷蒙·威廉斯 (Liu Jianji transl. 劉建基), *Guanjian ci: wenhua yu shehui de cihui* 關鍵字：文化與社會的詞彙, Taipei: Juliu 巨流, 2003, Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2005.

(2001) in 2006,²⁰ and Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle (eds) *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory* (1973) in 2007;²¹ and further Chinese editions of ‘Keywords’ or ‘Key Concepts’ (*guanjian ci* 關鍵詞) of Western Cultural Theory (*wenlun* 文論) and Cultural Studies (*wenhua yanjiu* 文化研究) were published in 2006 and 2007²² after the notion of ‘keywords’ had been introduced in the field of literary studies from 2002 on.²³ Chen Pingyuan 陈平原 has pointed out the inflationary usage of the term “*guanjian ci* 关键词” in all disciplinary fields of Chinese publications since the 90s and expresses doubt whether the term in such a context and with its various Chinese connotations still makes sense as an analytical term for cultural studies in China.²⁴

Zhao Yifan 趙一凡 in the preface and title of his *Xifang wenlun guanjian ci* 西方文論關鍵詞 (*Western Keywords of Cultural Theory*) stresses the *Western* origin of the keywords, and presents them as expressions of critical theories that could be applied with the aim of innovation within the changing capitalist context of China. One of his aims in publishing this book was to provide an exchange platform for Chinese scholars to critique Western theory, so advancing the great task of further developing scholarship in China. In contrast, in his *Key Words in Cultural Studies* Wang Ming’an 汪民安 sees the engagement with keywords as a common transnational scholarly enterprise; in

²⁰ Danni Kawalaluo 丹尼·卡瓦拉罗 (Zhang Weidong 张卫东 et al. transl.), *Wenhua lilun guanjian ci* 文化理论关键词, Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin cbs, 2006.

²¹ Andelu Bennite, Nigula Luoyier 安德鲁·本尼特, 尼古拉·罗伊尔 (eds), (Wang Zhenglong 汪正龙 et al. transl.), *Guanjian ci: wenxue, pipan yu lilun daolun* 关键词：文学、批评与理论导论. Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue cbs, 2007.

²² Cf. Zhao Yifan 趙一凡 et al. (eds), *Xifang wenlun guanjian ci* 西方文論關鍵詞, Beijing: Waiyu jiaoxue yu yanjiu cbs, 2006; Wang Xiaolu 王晓路 et al., *Wenhua pipin guanjian ci yanjiu* 文化批评关键词研究, Beijing: Beijing daxue cbs, 2007; Wang Min’an 汪民安 (ed.), *Key Words in Cultural Studies, Wenhua yanjiu guanjian ci* 文化研究關鍵詞, Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin cbs, 2007.

²³ Meng Fanhua 孟繁华 (ed.), *Dangdai wenxue guanjian ci* 当代文学关键词, Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue cbs, 2002; see also the explanatory notes to this publication by Gong Zicheng 洪子诚 and Meng Fanhua 孟繁华, ‘Qixu yu xiandu – guanyu “Zhongguo dangdai wenxue guanjian ci” de jidian shuoming 期许与限度 – 关于“中国当代文学关键词”的几点说明’, in: *Nanfang wentan* 南方文坛 (2002.3), url: <http://www.eduww.com/lilc/go.asp?id=1815> (26.3.09); Chen Sihe 陈思和, *Zhongguo dangdai wenxue guanjian ci shijiang* 中国当代文学关键词十讲, Fudan daxue cbs, 2003; Liao Binghui 廖炳惠, *Guanjian ci 200: wenxue yu pipan yanjiu de tongyong cibui bian* 关键词200：文学与批评研究的通用词汇编, Taipei: Maitian cb 麦田出版, 2003, Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu cbs, 2006. A much earlier work is the translation of Roger Fowler’s *Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms* (London, 1973) into Chinese by Yuan Decheng 袁德成, *Xiandai xifang wenxue pipin shuyi cidian* 现代西方文学批评术语词典, Chengdu: Sichuan renmin cbs, 1987, and, one year later by Zhou Yongming 周永明 et al., *Xiandai xifang wenxue pipin shuyi cidian* 现代西方文学批评术语辞典, Shenyang: Chunfeng wenyi 春风文艺 cbs, 1988.

²⁴ Chen Pingyuan 陈平原, ‘Xueshushi shiye zhong de “Guanjian ci” 学术史视野中的“关键词”’, in: *Dushu* 读书 4 (2008): 134–142 and 5 (2008): 40–47.

other words, he places no particular emphasis on national differentiation. Theoretical terms, in his view, are universal tools developed by the global scholarly community to better understand the world, to apply analytically to different historical conditions, and for teaching.²⁵

Evidently there is considerable variation as to whether Chinese scholars take keywords originating in Western discourse to have an important place in their own scholarly work. Some regard Cultural Studies as a common scholarly endeavour, others as a challenge to national identity. This depends partly on what individual authors understand by 'China'. Du Guoqing differentiates between Mainland and Taiwanese culture.²⁶ Wang Xiaoming 王曉明, in his 'Manifesto for Cultural Studies', even doubts that it is possible to define China in general terms:

Thus almost every generalization about China – that it is a Communist-led socialist society as before, that at its core it is a society of traditionally centralized power, that it has virtually become capitalist, that it is a fully-fledged consumer society, or even that it is already postmodern – can be supported with examples, as can its opposite.²⁷

Wang however argues that every important change in China,

be it the rapid rise of the new rich, the increasing number of depressed regions, or the widening of the Open Door, has been not only an economic, political, or ecological phenomenon, but also a cultural one.²⁸

He therefore takes this cultural change as a starting point for his analysis of China's economy and politics:

²⁵ The same applies to Western cultural theory. In the introduction to a translation series on cultural theory, the editors from Nanjing University Press stress the general transnationality of scholarship and emphasize that cultures do profit from exchange. This affirmation is not just an empty formal talk but is a positioning of this series within a public discourse that in the year 2000 still demands explanations for translations of Western academic works, especially in the field of cultural theory. See the preface of the editors in the series Zhang Yibing 張一兵 (ed.), *Dangdai xueshu lengjing yicong* 當代學術稜鏡譯叢, title no. 2: *Wenhua lilun yu tongsu wenhua daolun* 文化理論與通俗文化導論, Nanjing: Nanjing daxue cbs, 2000, translation of: John Storey, *An Introductory Guide to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, 2nd edition, London: Prentice Hall, 1997.

²⁶ Tu Kuo-ch'ing, 'The Study of Taiwan Literature: An International Perspective', in: *Taiwan Literature English Translation Series* 2 (Dec. 1997): xiii–. URL: <http://www.eastasian.ucsb.edu/projects/fswlc/tlsd/research/Journal02/foreword2e.html> (19.03.09).

²⁷ Wang Xiaoming, 'A Manifesto for Cultural Studies', in: Chaohua Wang (ed.), *One China, Many Paths*, London: Verso, 2003, pp. 274–291, p. 275.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

There are many difficulties in trying to compose a sober analysis of economic and political realities in China today: the vastness of the nation, the limited channels of communication, the government's monopolization of the methods of collecting and publishing statistics, and unreliable data of many sorts. These make all the more urgent what is a feasible task: to take the socio-cultural scene of the nineties – especially popular culture in the coastal and urban areas – as the starting point for describing and understanding contemporary Chinese society, perhaps even diagnosing its nature and future.²⁹

Proceeding from there, Wang defines the task of cultural studies in China clearly within a national framework. He claims that around 1992 a 'new ideology' or 'new thought' emerged that 'conceals or glosses the realities of our society today'.³⁰

Announcing that China was once again moving down the path of modernization, this ideology drew on the longings and ignorances of the eighties to explain that there was no longer any cause for mourning, but rather a reason for celebration. Appealing to the common aspiration to rise out of poverty, it suggested that anything other than immediate material wealth was useless, the mere fabrication of a cultural elite who should just 'fuck off'. Strenuously lauding a 'market economy with Chinese characteristics', it touted the ensuing arrangements as the last word in rational progress and development. Proclaiming that everyone was working together to achieve a 'decent living' (*xiao kang*), and all had a chance of success, it worked especially to minimize the profound differences between classes and regions, and within politics and culture in China.³¹

The urgent task of Chinese cultural studies in Wang's view is to take this 'new ideology' or 'new thought' as its most important object of criticism. Following a quite traditional line of a scholar's nationalist concern he believes that

²⁹ Ibid., p. 288.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 288.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 288–9.

this type of housecleaning and self-reflection can help remedy the misconception that all is lost, encourage intellectuals to assume their responsibilities towards society, and recover the spirit to fight its evils.³²

According to Wang:

cultural studies in China should neither rigidly adhere to existing disciplinary confines, nor strive to become a new discipline itself. Its aim should be simply to grapple with the more disturbing question of contemporary life in China, its conditions of globalization, and perhaps to suggest some timely and vigorous responses to them.³³

Whereas Wang Xiaoming in his use of the term 'cultural studies' makes no reference to the Western discipline of Cultural Studies and defines it more in accordance to the traditional scholarly attitude of a concern for 'the light of a better culture',³⁴ other Chinese authors clearly relate it to Western discourses. At the outset, we postulated that 'Cultural Studies is a historical and regional product of Western scholarship that follows basic questions which have evolved from specific academic discourses in 20th century Europe'. This being the case, application of these analytical notions in a Chinese context either assumes that Chinese culture, especially in its contemporary globalized form, shares the same problems and questions as the West,³⁵ or that these notions have to be applied critically and with an attempt to formulate something like a Chinese enhancement or even a Chinese version of Western Cultural Studies.³⁶

Here we shall examine some issues relating to the development of other Chinese versions of Cultural Studies. In *Cultural Studies in China*, Tao Dongfeng and Jin Yuanpu emphasize that

³² Ibid., p. 290.

³³ Ibid., p. 291.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 291.

³⁵ Cf. for example Anne-Marie Broudehoux, *The Making and Selling of Post-Mao Beijing*, New York: Routledge, 2004, p. 20.

³⁶ Cf. Zhang Yinde, 'Orient-extrême: les réinterprétations en Chine des théories postcoloniales', in: *Revue de littérature comparée* 297 (2001.1): 133–149, url: http://www.cairn.info/article.php?ID_REVUE=RLC&ID_NUMPUBLIE=RLC_297&ID_ARTICLE=RLC_297_0133#,%20www.cairn.info/load_pdf.php?ID_ARTICLE=RLC_297_0133 (19.03.2009). Also Wang Ning, 'Cultural Studies in China: towards closing the gap between elite culture and popular culture', in: *European Review* 11.2 (2003): 183–191, url: <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=151221> (19.03.2009). See also the critique by: Gloria Davies, 'Theory, Professionalism, and Chinese Studies', in: *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 12.1 (2000): 1–42.

Cultural Studies and cultural criticism did not emerge in contemporary China all of a sudden. There were reasons inside the disciplines of literary studies and aesthetics and reasons outside the discipline (the problem of the cultural and social environment), reasons of the Chinese society and culture (e.g., the highlight of socio-cultural problems and the rejuvenation of the political enthusiasm of the academics and even the populace in China in the middle and end of the 1990s) as well as influences of Western Cultural Studies. Undoubtedly, the emergence of China's Cultural Studies and the subsequent cultural criticism in the 1990s were heavily influenced by the Western cultural theories (the travel of theories), however, the challenge of the local cultural realities and the change of position of Chinese culture in the global context have played a more fundamental part.³⁷

Responding to the question of what the main characteristics of China's Cultural Studies are, the authors then define the key characteristics as being

the attention to the depth of 'relationships': its relationships with other disciplines; interdisciplinary relationships; the relationships between different cultures in different regions; the relationships between different subjects, different sexes and different identities; the relationships between different paradigms and different discourses; the relationships between different communities; it seeks for 'link', 'coordination', or 'common sense' from these 'relationships', and at the same time, maintains its pluralistic independence to get the possibility for more development.³⁸

By this definition China's Cultural Studies thus appear occupied with a unified theoretical approach towards multiplicity and are understood as a means to deal with the pluralism of a Chinese reality within a unified framework of academic theory which, with all its different disciplines, can be embedded in the great unity of the concept of culture. Therefore

Cultural Studies, as a cause of grand disciplinary unification, becomes a focal object of literary study, sociology, anthropology, ethnology, phi-

³⁷ Cf. Tao Dongfeng and Jin Yuanpu (eds), *Cultural Studies in China*, Singapore: Marshall Cavendish, 2005, p. 2.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

losophy, aesthetics, ethics, politics, history, communications, bibliography, even economics, and science of laws.³⁹

The encompassing concept of ‘culture’ becomes a somewhat essentialist symbol of a traditional and still very common self-conception of China and her political agenda:

In fact, culture, as an object with direct identity is in essence diversified unity.⁴⁰

In the authors’ understanding, to reveal the truth of this essence of diversified unity is the task of Cultural Studies.⁴¹ From this perspective, Cultural Studies functions as a political instrument through which can be defined a new contemporary orthodoxy that creates ‘harmony’ among the various discourses and, as a consequence, a ‘harmonious society’.

Some scholars are outright sceptics about the possibility of developing Chinese Cultural Studies as a distinct discipline. Few even doubt that there is any possibility whatever of applying Western cultural theory to a Chinese context.⁴² Rebecca Salois cites Rem Koolhaas as saying

that ‘the Chinese city cannot be made intelligible through existing Western theoretical frameworks’.⁴³ With his team, he then creates a dictionary of new conceptual terminology for dealing with it.⁴⁴

In search of their own cultural integrity, Chinese thinkers who refuse the absolute authority of Western language and theory, sometimes find their voice in the classical language of Confucianism:

³⁹ Ibid., p. 23.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 23.

⁴¹ Ibid., end of p. 23.

⁴² This attitude is related to the more basic hermeneutical question of translatability of cultures in general, cf. Zhang Longxi, ‘Translating Cultures: China and the West’, and Wolfgang Kubin, ‘“Only the Chinese Understand China” – the Problem of East-West Understanding’, both in: Karl-Heinz Pohl (ed.), *Chinese Thought in a Global Context: A Dialogue Between Chinese and Western Philosophical Approaches*, Leiden: Brill, 1999, pp. 29–46 and 47–57.

⁴³ Cf. Rem Koolhaas, ‘Introduction’, in: Judy Chung Chuihua, Jeffery Inaba, Rem Koolhaas and Sze Tsung Leon (eds), *Project on the City 1: The Great Leap Forward*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Design School, 2001, pp. 27–29. Quoted from Rebecca Salois, ‘Invisible Qianmen: A Study in Reading the Chinese City Focused on Beijing’s Qianmen Neighborhood’, unpubl. MSc dissertation in Cultural Studies, University of Edinburgh, 2008, p. 10.

⁴⁴ Cf. Rebecca Salois, p. 10.

Nostalgia for Confucian thought, together with interrogations of how the classical language was ‘tragically’ eclipsed in China’s twentieth century, have now come to characterize the ‘linguistic turn’ in Sinophone critical discourse, quite contrary to Anglophone theory, as the redemptive pursuit of a genuine history or Chineseness,⁴⁵

writes Gloria Davies in her analysis of ‘The Language of Chinese Critical Inquiry’. She concludes that

when the term ‘post-New Era’ [*houxin shiqi*] is used to celebrate the arrival of Chineseness against a Eurocentric modernity, Sinophone postmodernism effects a radical departure from the nonessentializing EuroAmerican postmodernism it otherwise affirms. Unlike the latter’s characteristic rejection of the realist assumption that language can offer true insight into reality (that is, a truth such as ‘Chineseness’), the Sinophone version of postmodernism is supposed to work as a linguistic and cognitive tool to discover and craft just such a culturally unique truth, in resistance to the Eurocentric distortions of reality that ‘postists’ alleged were a result of intellectual inquiry during the ‘New Era.’ [...] What is clear is that the vocabulary of EuroAmerican postmodern scholarship, along with its suspicion and skepticism about the language of universalistic assumptions commonly associated with an erstwhile modernity, has been transformed to resonate with one or another Sino-centered project in the course of its assimilation into Sinophone critical discourse. Rather than a disparate set of open-ended self-reflexive interrogations of the meanings invested in art and culture, postmodern theory in its Sinophone context is burdened with the added responsibility of revealing flaws in twentieth-century Chinese thought towards achieving the telos of a pluralistic and authentic Chinese culture. [...] This desire for cultural authenticity, whether worded as ‘Chineseness’ or more theoretically as ‘a new universal culture of particularities,’ can be said to have overtaken and obscured the linguistic turn towards self-reflexivity.⁴⁶

These characteristics of a Sinophone critical discourse are mainly found in works by Chinese authors (including Tao and Jin, as seen above), who position themselves

⁴⁵ Cf. Gloria Davies, *Worrying About China: The Language of Chinese Critical Inquiry*, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2007, p. 138.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 139–141. For the whole analysis of the ‘Pursuit of Cultural Integrity’ cf. pp. 127–145.

somewhere between the radical poles of Broudehoux and Koolhaas, and analyze Chinese cultural phenomena from within the largely text-based confines of Western academic discourse.⁴⁷ As Davies highlights, among scholars in China and in the West, there is a broad spectrum of basic assumptions, both about culture in general and about Chinese culture in particular which in recent years has increasingly been identified with Confucianism.⁴⁸ In the following sessions of the *Keywords Re-Oriented* course we discuss these diverse positions in relation to selected keywords from Western Cultural Studies.

Discussion points

- Do you know of any other attempts to formulate the equivalent of ‘key-words’ outwith contemporary Western culture?
- Discuss possible problems arising from setting up Cultural Studies in China.

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⁴⁷ See the critical analysis of four examples which Salois gives in her dissertation, *ibid*, pp. 10–15.

⁴⁸ Cf. Robert P. Weller, ‘Divided Market Cultures in China: Gender, Enterprise, and Religion’, in: Robert W. Hefner (ed.), *Market Cultures: Society and Morality in the New Asian Capitalisms*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1998, pp. 78–103. (Excerpts from this article appear on pp. 32–44 in Susanne Schech and Jane Haggis (eds), *Development: A Cultural Studies Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2002, url: http://books.google.com/books?id=urjcuzMbzSkC&dq=development+schech+haggis&printsec=frontcover&source=bn&hl=en&ei=QxP7SYmMNearjAeG-b2dAw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4 (01.05.09)

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Session 2

Culture/*wenhua*

Set Texts

West

- *KW* ‘culture’; *NKW* ‘culture’, *KC* ‘culture’.
- Williams, Raymond. ‘The Analysis of Culture’, in: id., *The Long Revolution*, New York: Harper & Row, 1961, pp. 41–47.

China

- Mao Zedong. ‘Talks at the Yan’an Forum on Literature and Art’, in: Bonnie McDougall, *Mao Zedong’s ‘Talks at the Yan’an Forum on Literature and Art’: A Translation of the 1943 Text with Commentary*, Ann Arbor 1980, pp. 36–41, 53–67, 82–85.

‘Culture’, ‘one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language’ (*KW* p. 87), is the most central term in Cultural Studies and this session opens our reflection on the field of ‘culture’ to which the ‘keywords’ of cultural studies refer. The main problem of an application of this crucial keyword is the great diversity of Western meanings of the term, the absence of any Chinese equivalent in pre-modern China and the enormous importance which the neologism *wenhua* has gained in China in the 20th century as a hotly negotiated representative signifier of various visions of modernization. Raymond Williams’ approach, which is constitutive and representative for the discipline of Cultural Studies, is the main focus of the first set of discussion points.

Discussion points

- Initially, formulate your own (non-prepared) definition of culture and note it down.
- Based on your reading of ‘The Analysis of Culture’, present Williams’ argument step by step.
- Identify the three categories in his definition of culture.

- Why is it important for Williams to note that there is value in each of these three categories?
- Does he believe in universal values?
- Interpret the following central sentence:

For it seems to me to be true that meanings and values, discovered in particular societies and by particular individuals, and kept alive by social inheritance and by embodiment in particular kinds of work, have proved to be universal in the sense that when they are learned, in any particular situation, they can contribute radically to the growth of man's powers to enrich his life, to regulate his society, and to control his environment. (p. 43)

- In Williams' view, how must an adequate theory of culture relate to his three-category definition of culture? How convincing is his approach?
- As a group, discuss your own initial definitions of culture and compare these with those of Bennett (*NKW*) and Williams (*KW*).
- Discuss the difference – in terms of approach, content and methodology – between Bennett (*NKW*) and Williams (*KW*), to the meaning of 'culture'.
- Discuss which of the two approaches you find more helpful for your own understanding and for your own academic work.
- Describe Andrew Edgar's approach in his article on 'culture' in *KC*. Does it more resemble Williams' or Bennett's?
- In the light of the range of approaches available, which do you consider might be the most useful model when writing about culture within the discipline of Cultural Studies?
- How does the author's basic understanding of what cultural studies is or should be determine the way an article on 'culture' is written?

Edgar concludes his article with the comment that: 'cultural studies is necessarily concerned with artificiality, and the political struggle to find and defend meaning.'

- How is this understanding of cultural studies reflected in the way Edgar's article is written?
- How far does the discipline of 'Cultural Studies' rely on a specific understanding of the central term 'culture'?
- How interculturally valid are the definitions given for 'culture' in the texts discussed in this session?

- For comparative questions, why is the term ‘culture’ analytically important and, indeed, necessary?

In the second part of the session we turn to a consideration of the term ‘*wenhua*’ which in modern Chinese translates the Western term ‘culture’. First, let us look at its etymological roots: the earliest occurrence of the combination of the characters *wen* and *hua*, not as one word but as complementary terms in parallel construction, can be found in the *Book of Changes (Yijing)*, where they have the implication of educating the people with virtue; there is a dynamic and progressive, yet pedagogical and political connotation, which it retains today. The introduction in the late 19th century of ‘*wenhua*’ as a translation of the modern Western term ‘culture’, led to an intense discussion of that term and of that concept in relation to the identity and essence of Chinese culture, as opposed to the globally dominant European culture associated with advancing technology and modernization. Since then, the term *wenhua* has been used in the names for many of the crucial movements in China’s modern history. Scholars, including Liang Shuming, Cai Yuanpei and Liang Qichao, defined ‘*wenhua*’ differently, according to their own political agendas, and with the New Culture Movement (*Xin wenhua yundong* 新文華運動), during the years 1915–1921, the term ‘culture’ was made the focus of Chinese modernization in a Western sense (science, technology, democracy) and was mainly directed against what was understood as traditional Confucian culture.⁴⁹ With Marxism, a new definition of ‘*wenhua*’ became prominent, the most influential being given by Mao Zedong in 1940: ‘A specific culture (*wenhua*) is a mental reflection of a particular type of social politics and economy.’⁵⁰ Here Mao bases the concept of culture, as Marx and Engels did 100 years before, on human work and material production. With this Marxist notion, *wenhua* in the Mao-era became associated with the working class whereas before it had mostly referred to elite culture. In this sense it was understood in the ‘Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution’ (*wuchan jieji wenhua da geming* 无产阶级文化大革命). As Lenin had differentiated cultures socially and ascribed them to different classes, so is culture differentiated by Chinese politicians and intellectuals in spatial and in racial terms, according to different regions and different races.⁵¹ This allows (or forces) us to as-

⁴⁹ Furth, Charlotte, ‘Intellectual change: from the Reform movement to the May Fourth movement, 1895-1920’, in: John K. Fairbank (ed.), *Republican China 1912-1949, Part 1, The Cambridge History of China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 322-405. Also Leo Ou-fan Lee, ‘Some Notes on “Culture,” “Humanism,” and the “Humanities” in Modern Chinese Cultural Discourses’, in: *Surfaces* 5 (1995): 5-29. URL: <http://www.pum.umontreal.ca/revues/surfaces/vol5/lee.html> (3.7.09).

⁵⁰ Mao Zedong 毛泽东, ‘Xin minzhu zhuyi de zhengzhi yu xin minzhu zhuyi de wenhua 新民主主义的政治与新民主主义的文化’, in: *Zhongguo wenhua* 中国文化 1. (1940).

⁵¹ See for example Wang Weifu 王威孚 and Zhu Lei 朱磊, ‘Guanyu dui “wenhua” dingyi de zongshu 关于对“文化”定义的综述’, in: *JiangHuai luntan* 江淮论坛 2 (2006).

sume special features of Chinese culture, which, of course, demand different methodologies (politics) to be dealt with – in opposition to, for example, Western culture, which ‘wrongly assumes’ that its own cultural assumptions are valid across cultural borders.

Discussion points

- Reflect upon the particularities of the different definitions of the Chinese term ‘*wenhua*’ in their relatedness and tension to different European definitions of ‘culture’.
- Discuss the Chinese concept of ‘*wenhua* 文化’ and compare it to both, your own definition and William’s article.
- How would Williams’ definition as another variant of a Marxist conception of culture fit within different Chinese renderings of the term ‘*wenhua*’?
- How does the concept of culture and cultural politics as expressed in Mao’s Yan’an talks differ from pre-modern Chinese notions of ‘*wenhua* 文化’?
- Given the strong influence of Marxist thought to modern Chinese (Maoist) theoretical concepts, does it make sense to oppose the ‘Chinese’ term *wenhua* to the Western term of ‘culture’?

In recent years, however, voices in China which emphasize the spiritual side of culture have become stronger.⁵² Since the 1980s, starting with the ‘cultural fever’ (*wenhua re*),⁵³ the term *wenhua* has again been instrumentalized by many different interest groups to give authority to their own position. From the 1990, however, the intellectual attention has mainly shifted to the debate between representatives of a new liberalism and new leftists.⁵⁴ Wang Jing argues that the Chinese word *wenhua* (culture) has gained new meanings since the 1990s as the Chinese state develops new political strategies that make use of and redefine the concept of *wenhua* in new public discursive constructions.

⁵² Cf. Sun Xianyuan 孙显元, ‘Wuzhi wenhua gainian bianxi 物質文化概念辨析’, in: *Renwen zazhi* 人文杂志 3 (2006).

⁵³ Cf. Zhang Xudong, ‘Cultural Discourse’, in: id., *Chinese Modernism in the Era of Reforms: Cultural Fever, Avant-garde Fiction, and the New Chinese Cinema*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1997, pp. 35–100; see especially: ‘Main Trends in the Cultural Fever’, pp. 35–70.

⁵⁴ Cf. Chen Lichuan, ‘The Debate Between Liberalism and Neo-Leftism at the Turn of the Century’, in: *China Perspectives* 55 (2004), online (from 29.12.08), url: <http://chinaperspectives.revues.org/document417.html> (15.06.09). Cf. also Wu Guanjun 吴冠军, ‘Chinese Thought and Intellectual Practice in the 1990s’, (15.06.09).

We are definitely in the presence of a buzzword. *Wenhua* is the talk of the town. More curiously, it emerges as the top agenda item for public policy makers, city planners, and both the central and local states. Although the elitist connotation of culture resonates in the humanists' debates (1994–1995) on the moral idealism of high culture, yet the word *culture* today strikes a very different chord in the consumer public and in the busy minds of policy makers. I propose to examine three interlocked trajectories through which the motion of a society in transition can be captured: first, the popularization of the discursive construction of leisure culture (*xiuxian wenhua*) since 1994; second, the burgeoning policies of cultural economy (*wenhua jingji*) that promote the collapse and convertibility of cultural capital into economic capital. As the postsocialist state is the key player in initiating and consolidating both trends, does it mean that the Chinese state has not shed much of its totalitarian character? I argue the opposite by naming the third trajectory of China's epochal transformation as the metamorphosis of the post-1989 state apparatus from a coercive to a systemic regulatory body of governance. All three trajectories demonstrate how culture is reconstructed in the 1990s as the site where capital—both political and economic capital—can be accumulated. That is to say, not only has the postsocialist state not fallen out of the picture, but it has rejuvenated its capacity, via the market, to affect the agenda of popular culture, especially at the discursive level. The state's rediscovery of culture as a site where new ruling technologies can be deployed and converted simultaneously into economic capital constitutes one of its most innovative strategies of statecraft since the founding of the People's Republic. This proves that all crises have only perfected the state machine instead of smashing it—parodying Marx and remembering 4 June 1989.⁵⁵

Discussion points

- Which post-marxist tinges of the term '*wenhua*' do you know?
- Are these new meanings of *wenhua* inspired by Western notions of 'culture' or do we see an emergence of a new elitist notion of *wenhua* that continues traditional Chinese concepts of learning and cultivation?
- Is *wenhua* used in an educative sense by the state? Is it presented as an instrument suitable to teach the people to become good citizens?

⁵⁵ Wang Jing, 'Culture as Leisure and Culture as Capital', in: *positions* 9.1 (2001): 69–104, pp. 71–72. Url: <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/positions/v009/9.1wang02.pdf> (15.06.09).

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Session 3

Orientalism/Occidentalism

Set Texts

West

- KW ‘—’; NKW ‘Orientalism’; KC ‘Orientalism (other)’
- Said, Edward. ‘Introduction’, in: *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1979, pp. 1–28.

China

- Chen Xiaomei. ‘Occidentalism as a Counter-Discourse: The Heshang Controversy’, in: id., *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter-Discourse in Post-Mao China*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002 (2nd ed.), Ch. 2., pp. 27–48.

This session brings under scrutiny aspects of the complex term ‘Orientalism’. Historical, political and analytical usages of the term will be identified and discussed in order to create awareness of the problems inherent in the application of this term and the associated debate. The main issue with this important keyword is the inherent directionality and cultural orientation of this term expressing a European perspective, and its close and highly specific connectedness with the Islamic world.

Edward Said’s influential *Orientalism* (1979) effectively created a discursive field in cultural studies, stimulating fresh critical analysis of Western academic work on ‘the Orient’. Although the book itself has been criticised from many angles, it is still considered to be the seminal work to the field.

In his Introduction to *Orientalism*, the Western set text for this session, Said sets out the main principles of his argument, outlines his political and methodological approaches, and explains what he wishes to achieve in terms of cultural analysis with his newly coined definition of the term ‘Orientalism’.

Discussion points

- Based on the student's presentation, discuss further Edward Said's biographical background, the innovative perspective of *Orientalism* and the criticism levelled against it.
- Is China part of 'the Orient' and thus subject to 'Orientalism'?

Although, in *Orientalism*, Said focuses on the Islamic World of the Middle East, in 1984 he extends his scope to India in his foreword to Raymond Schwab's *The Oriental Renaissance*.⁵⁶ His perspective has come to be applied by other scholars to the analysis of perceptions of the East in general, including Asia.⁵⁷ For example J.J. Clarke, 'for the sake of convenience', employs

the word *orientalism* to refer to the range of attitudes that have been evinced in the West towards the traditional religious and philosophical ideas and systems of South and East Asia. This is a debatable choice. 'Orientalism' has become a highly problematic term, one which is difficult to use in a neutral sense, and which according to the Islamicist Bernard Lewis 'is by now ... polluted beyond salvation' (1993: 103). Moreover, it is a word which in recent years has been more typically associated with attitudes towards the cultures of the Middle East than with those of South and East Asia which are the concern of the present study.⁵⁸ The term first appeared in France in the 1830s, and has been employed since then in a variety of different ways: to refer to Oriental scholarship, to characterise a certain genre of romantic-fantasy literature, to describe a genre of painting, and – most significantly in recent times – to mark out a certain kind of ideological purview of the East which was a product of Western imperialism. The latter connotation is famously associated with Edward Said, whose ideas are seminal to any

⁵⁶ Raymond Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680–1880* (orig. in French, 1950), transl. by Gene Patterson-Black, foreword by Edward W. Said, New York et al.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1984.

⁵⁷ J.J. Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter Between Asian and Western Thought*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1997; J.J. Clarke, *Tao of the West: Western Transformation of Taoist Thought*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2000; Chandreyee Niyogi (ed.), *Reorienting Orientalism*, New Delhi; Thousand Oaks, Calif.; London: SAGE Publications, 2006.

⁵⁸ There is a large and growing literature on the Orientalism associated with Islam and the cultures of the Middle East, but which is beyond the scope of this study to discuss. The following should be mentioned in so far as they have close links with the themes of the present book: Amin 1989, Hourani 1991, Huff 1993, Kabbani 1986, Lewis 1993, Rodinson 1988, Said 1985, and Turner 1994.

debate on the subject-matter of this book, as well as in the broad domain of postcolonial theory.

[...]

To be sure, Said's concern in that book was, for the most part, with the Islamic world of the Middle East. Our concern in the present book, by contrast, will be with the philosophical/religious systems associated with the countries of South and East Asia, and which are usually known under such names as Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. Nevertheless, as a consequence of Said's writings the whole debate about Europe's relationship with its 'other' has been refigured, and has extended its terms of reference outwards to engage with a whole range of contemporary intellectual debates, into issues concerning, for example, multi-culturalism, postcolonialism, subaltern studies, discourse theory, and postmodernism, one consequence of which is that any study of the West's relationship with Eastern thought must be contextualised within the debate which Said's work helped to initiate. (pp. 7–8)

From the early 1990s, arising out of identification with Said's concept of 'the Orient', there has been vigorous debate among Chinese intellectuals about China's relation to the West.⁵⁹

Europe has never met China in the way it met Islamic power and culture in Spain and in Jerusalem. Jesuits and Enlightenment philosophers shared a vision of a rational, bureaucratic Chinese state built on ritual order and of the 'natural reason' of Confucian wisdom; whereas the European vision of Islam is very different, because Islam's theological doctrines, sciences, material culture, economic strength and military power were more challenging for a Christian Europe, where Islam has provoked intense attraction, while at the same time being perceived as a religious, economic, and military threat, for centuries. As a result of European attitudes born out of these distinct historical relationships, China and the Arabic world are invested with specifically different tinges of Orientalism.

⁵⁹ Cf. Zhang Kuan, 'The Predicament of Postcolonial Criticism in Contemporary China', in: Karl-Heinz Pohl (ed.), *Chinese Thought in a Global Context: A Dialogue Between Chinese and Western Philosophical Approaches*, Leiden: Brill, 1999, pp. 58–70.

Discussion points

- Why is Orientalism not much discussed in relation to non-muslim countries in Africa?
- Within the framework of the Orientalist discussion, can the West's encounter with Asia, and with China in particular, be analysed along the same lines as its encounter with the Islamic world?
- To use Said's terms of analysis, is there in the West the same 'internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient', the same 'relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony' and the same form of 'corporate institution for dealing with the Orient' and a similar body of practices in relation to China? Identify specific variant approaches and terms.

The problem of the ambivalence of the keyword 'Orientalism' as a cultural studies term, its oscillation between theoretical and historical meaning, finds clear expression in the two articles on Orientalism in *New Keywords* and in *Key Concepts*. Whereas in *New Keywords* Dirks concentrates on the historical connotations of the term, Sedgwick equates it to the term 'other'. Their articles can thus be taken as starting points for further discussion and analysis of how Said's *Orientalism* might be interpreted.

Discussion points

- In your own analysis, how can the term 'Orientalism' be used?
- In which interpretation of the term 'Orientalism' does the term 'Occidentalism' make sense?
- In which way is the term 'Orientalism' itself Orientalist?

Chen Xiaomei's counter-concept of 'Occidentalism' should be reflected on in the light of the above discussion points. Obviously related to Said's notion of 'Orientalism', her concept seems to mean something quite different and in no way poses a systematic opposition to Said.

Discussion points

- Where do the basic differences in Said's and Chen's concepts lie?
- How is the notion of power used analytically in Chen's model?
- In her analysis, how is Occidentalism related to the differentiation of official and anti-official discourse?

- How useful is it to create ‘Occidentalism’ as a counter notion to ‘Orientalism’ if this only denotes, in reverse, the Orientalist perspective on the ‘other’, but this time applying to the West?

Consider the following quote from the epilogue to the ‘Chapter on the Western Regions’ in the *Houhan shu*, the official history of the Later (or ‘Eastern’) Han Dynasty (25–221 CE) compiled by Fan Ye (d. 445 CE):

The Western Hu are far away. They live in an outer zone. Their countries’ products are beautiful and precious. But their character is debauched and frivolous. They do not follow the rites of China. Han has the canonical books. They do not obey the Way of the Gods. How pitiful! How obstinate!⁶⁰

- Does this express an Orientalist attitude? And should it be named differently because of its reverse spatial orientation?
- Is ‘Orientalism’ thus a spatial term, and if so, does this mean we need further terms such as Southernism and Northernism to denote similar attitudes for other spatial relationships? Southorientalism, Northoccidentalism?⁶¹
- Read the following passage and try to define what Chen Xiaomei means by the term ‘Occidentalism’:

Indeed the very act of public writing is itself a form of anti-official Occidentalism and thus a critique of Mao’s antiurbanism, which, as we have seen, is itself a result of, and a reaction to, Chinese Orientalism. Yet the creation of an anti-official Occidentalism by the Chinese intelligentsia for diverse and complicated reasons is more than a coincidental product of its literacy. It was preconditioned by the parameters of Maoist political discourse, which categorized anything opposed to its political dominance as ‘Western’ or ‘Westernized’. To prevent China from being ‘Westernized’ or ‘capitalized,’ for instance, was commonly advanced as the reason for starting the Cultural Revolution and for persecuting numerous intellectuals. In this situation, the adoption of an Occidentalist discourse was a strategic move by dissenting intellectuals. Accused of being ‘Western’ both by virtue of their cultural status and their

⁶⁰ John E. Hill, Annotated Translation of the ‘Chapter on the Western Regions’ from *Hou Hanshu* 88, 2nd Edition, 2003, Section 29 Epilogue, translated from Chavannes (1907), p. 220, n.5 in his e-edition: http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/texts/hhshu/hou_han_shu.html (01.05.09)

⁶¹ For an anthropological view on that problem see Carrier.

political sympathies, they had little choice but to assert that the Western Other was in fact superior to the Chinese Self. [...] By suggesting that the West is politically and culturally superior to China, they defended their opposition to established 'truth' and institutions. In the process, these urban intellectuals created a form of anti-official Occidentalism that stands in the sharpest contrast to the official Occidentalism pervasive in government and party propaganda in contemporary China. (pp. 23–24)

- Does Chen Xiaomei's systematically different concept of Occidentalism follow from the above mentioned difficulty of defining a spatial counter-concept to Orientalism?
- Discuss Chen Xiaomei's binary strings of opposition in regard to her analysis of the cultural symbols in the film *He shang*, such as dragon, earth, Yellow River, Great Wall and a 'Confucian' ideology whose monolithic social system resists plurality and change.

He shang concludes that the yellow earth and the Yellow River cannot teach contemporary Chinese people much about the spirit of science and democracy, both of which are necessary for life towards the end of the twentieth century, when the film was made. Traditional cultural monuments, it suggests, will not provide the Chinese people with 'nourishment and energy' and are no longer capable of 'producing a new culture' (Chen, p. 26) etc. especially as related to the 'Occidental Other, which [...] represents youthfulness, adventure, energy, power, technology, and modernity'. (Chen, p. 27)

- Which role do metaphors of life and death play on both sides of Chen's binary strings of opposition? To what extent might these metaphors be part of an identical cultural discourse which perhaps centres more around categories of life and death, power and energy than around Self and Other, East and West?
- Is the import of Eurocentrism (in its Orientalist form) into a Chinese discourse itself a form of Eastern 'Orientalism'?

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Videos

Various YouTube videos on Edward Said and Orientalism.

Session 4

Postmodernism

Set Texts

West

- KW ‘--’; *NKW* ‘postmodernism’; *KC* ‘postmodernism’
- Jameson, Frederic. ‘Postmodernism, or the Logic of Late Capitalism’, in: Thomas Docherty (ed.), *Postmodernism: A Reader*, New York: Columbia UP, 1993, pp. 62–92.

China

- Lu, Sheldon H. ‘Introduction: Postmodernity, Visuality, and China in the Late Twentieth Century’, in: id., *China, Transnational Visuality, Global Postmodernity*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001, pp. 1–28.

The term postmodernism is intrinsically linked with globalization and seems therefore to apply to any culture which belongs to and creates the global network. An application of that keyword to China should therefore be utterly unproblematic. However, the intense inner-Chinese debate on postmodernism has generated analyses and points of view that are very different from the European discourses. Frederic Jameson’s influential article, rather than defining the term ‘postmodernism’ or narrating a history of postmodernism, offers us an analysis of the reader’s postmodern condition in the 1980s, when the essay first appeared. Departing from conventional discourse focusing on postmodernist style, art and aesthetics, Jameson analyses the *political* dimension of postmodernism. He argues that postmodernism, as a cultural dominant, reflects the dominance of capitalist institutions, and as such, becomes one itself. In light of the diverging political conditions and intellectual analyses of the postmodern condition in China the applicability of this keyword to China is highly questionable.

Discussion points

- Discuss Jameson's approach: what made it so attractive to the intellectual world at the time of its publication?
- In what sense is Jameson's analysis a Marxist one?
- In the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels we find only very general and basic reflections on literature and culture. Why then is Marxism so important to the Cultural Studies approach?
- Explain how Marxist philosophical, historical, political and socio-economical premises serve as the basis of particular Cultural Studies theories?
- Discuss the five constitutive features which Jameson defines as characteristic of postmodernism, in their interrelatedness to the new world economic system: a new depthlessness (referring to Baudrillard's notion of *simulacrum*); a breakdown of the distinction between 'high' and 'low' culture; a weakening of historicity; the waning of affect, a new type of emotional ground tone that he calls 'intensities'; and a whole new technology.
- What sort of examples does Jameson use to demonstrate his analytical points?
- What concept of 'culture' are his examples based on?
- Do these examples fit in with his own description of what postmodern culture is?
- How does China fit into his account of late capitalism?

In 1985, one year after he first published his article, Jameson gave a lectures series on 'postmodernism and theories of culture' at Beijing University; yet the representation of China is not revised in later publications of that article, and it still essentializes the category of the Third World.⁶² However, according to Sheldon H. Lu, WTO negotia-

⁶² Cf. Jameson, 'Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism', in: *Social Text* 15 (1986): 65–88, url: <http://www.jstor.org/sici?sici=0164-2472%28198623%2915%3C65%3ATLITEO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-A> (05.06.09), repr. in Michael Hardt and Kathi Weeks (eds), *The Jameson Reader*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2000, pp. 315-339, url: http://books.google.com/books?id=5PHqYHpGcBAC&pg=PA315&lpq=PA315&dq=Third-World+Literature+in+the+Era+of+Multinational+Capitalism&source=bl&ots=ou61omEgww&sig=wm3OQmMHSO_IymSAemyLTkfbu4&hl=en&ei=N0UpSuSzFNmZjAe4vpHhCg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=5#PPP1,M1 (05.06.09). Cf. the brilliant polemic against this article by Aijaz Ahmad, 'Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the National Allegory', in: *Social Text* 17 (1987): 3–25 and the more balanced judgements by Imre Szeman, 'Who's Afraid of National Allegory? Jameson, Literary Criticism, Globalization', in: *South Atlantic Quarterly* 100 (2001): 803-827, url: http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/south_atlantic_quarterly/v100/100.3szeman.html (05.06.09) and Margaret Hillenbrand, 'The National Allegory Revisited: Writing Private and Public in Contemporary Taiwan', in: *positions: east asia cultures critique* 14.3 (2006): 633–662, url: <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/positions/v014/14.3hillenbrand.html#front> (05.06.09).

tions led to the total integration of the Chinese economy into the capitalist world system after 1992.

Discussion points

- How does Lu approach the question of postmodernism in regard to China?⁶³
- In Lu's eyes, how far are non-Western countries, especially China, important for the discussion on postmodernism?
- What is Lu's analysis of Jameson's approach to China?
- What does Lu mean by 'hybrid postmodernity' and how does his view on China differ from Jameson's?
- What role does historical periodization play in the study of postmodernism?
- Describe Jameson's problematization of historical periodization and oppose his approach to the way Lu approaches this problem in the Chinese context.

Lu writes:

One cannot periodize historical processes neatly in the Chinese case, and there is no clear temporal pattern for the successive states of the ancient world, modernity, and postmodernity, as in the West (p. 13)

- Why does China pose such a problem of historical periodization?
- Does the fact that the Western historical periods have no parallels in China mean that historical processes cannot be periodized in China?

Lu continues:

Contemporary China consists of multiple temporalities superimposed on one another; the premodern, the modern, and the postmodern coexist in the same space and at the same moment. Paradoxically, postmodernism in China is even more 'spatial' and more 'postmodern' than its original Western model. (p. 13)

- Is the situation described by Lu indeed so different from the situation in the West and would Lu find such a situation paradoxical?

Lu writes:

⁶³ Cf. for other approaches for example Anthony D. King, and Abidin Kusno, 'On Be(i)ing in the World: "Postmodernism", "Globalization", and the Making of Transnational Space in China', and other approaches in: Arif Dirlik and Xudong Zhang (eds), *Postmodernism and China*, Durham: Duke UP, 2000, pp. 21–40.

Spatial coextension, rather than temporal succession, defines non-Western postmodernity? (p. 13)

- Could it be the other way round, i.e. that the Chinese case makes certain complex aspects of a postmodern situation more explicit than does the Western case? And does this call into question common understandings of the concept of postmodernism, not only for China but also for the West. Does this mean that we are not dealing with alternative postmodernities but with the same?
- How does Lu expand his argument differentiating Western and Chinese postmodernity?
- What reasons does Lu give to answer the question why China does not fit into the postcolonial paradigm of any other countries?
- Is Lu's argument convincing?
- Following Lu's argument, think of further reasons for the specific otherness of China, especially in terms of what he assumes to be China's particular structures of time and space.

Said and Jameson were among the first Cultural Studies texts translated into Chinese; both had a huge impact on the Chinese discourse about culture and identity.⁶⁴ Regarding the Chinese adoption of the concept of postmodernism, Gloria Davies remarks critically:

when the term 'post-New Era' [*houxin shiqi*] is used to celebrate the arrival of Chineseness against a Eurocentric modernity, Sinophone postmodernism effects a radical departure from the nonessentializing EuroAmerican postmodernism it otherwise affirms. Unlike the latter's characteristic rejection of the realist assumption that language can offer true insight into reality (that is, a truth such as 'Chineseness'), the Sinophone version of postmodernism is supposed to work as a linguistic and cognitive tool to discover and craft just such a culturally unique truth, in resistance to the Eurocentric distortions of reality that 'postists' alleged were a result of intellectual inquiry during the 'New Era.' [...] What is clear is that the vocabulary of EuroAmerican postmodern scholarship, along with its suspicion and skepticism about the language of universalistic assumptions commonly associated with an erstwhile

⁶⁴ For a short overview on the history of Cultural Studies in China see Tao Dongfeng and Jin Yuanpu, 'Introduction', in: id. (eds), *Cultural Studies in China*, Singapore: Marshall Cavendish, 2005 pp. 1–25 and the chapter on postmodernism in that book.

modernity, has been transformed to resonate with one or another Sino-centered project in the course of its assimilation into Sinophone critical discourse. Rather than a disparate set of open-ended self-reflexive interrogations of the meanings invested in art and culture, postmodern theory in its Sinophone context is burdened with the added responsibility of revealing flaws in twentieth-century Chinese thought towards achieving the telos of a pluralistic and authentic Chinese culture. [...] This desire for cultural authenticity, whether worded as ‘Chineseness’ or more theoretically as ‘a new universal culture of particularities,’ can be said to have overtaken and obscured the linguistic turn towards self-reflexivity.⁶⁵

The term ‘postmodernism’ can thus serve as an excellent example of the problem, not of the Western application of a Western Cultural Studies keyword to China, but of the Chinese adaption of a Western Cultural Studies keyword for their own political, nationalist, ideological purposes in a positive and negative interpretation of the concept.⁶⁶ The debate on ‘humanism’ in the 1990s was mainly started by urban intellectuals who felt the loss of humanism caused by the development of ‘postmodernism’. Wu Guanjun thus writes:

Before criticism against Chinese “post-modernism” respectively by “classical liberal” and “new left wing” intellectuals gained momentum, the main force of criticism against so-called “post-modernism” was launched by a great number of intellectuals who got together under the banner of “humanism” (ren wen jing shen, its directly and literally translation is “humanitarian spirit”). For these humanist intellectuals, “post-modernism” was nothing more than moral nihilism and an ideology of consumerism. [...] Facing the paramount importance of money, moral nihilism and social disorder in the commercialized market society and facing the temporary clamor of Chinese “post-modernism”, a few of these intellectuals put forward the proposition of “the loss of human-

⁶⁵ Cf. Gloria Davies, *Worrying About China: The Language of Chinese Critical Inquiry*, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2007, pp. 139–41.

⁶⁶ See the five features of Chinese post-modernism that are analyzed by Wu Guanjun in his ‘Chinese Thought and Intellectual Practice in the 1990s’, url: <http://www.culturalstudies.com/community/wuguanjun/200506/2073.html> (15.06.09). See also the analysis of Xu Jilin 许纪霖, ‘What Future for Public Intellectuals? The specialisation of knowledge, the commercialisation of culture and the emergence of post-modernism characterise China in the 1990s’, in: *China Perspectives* 52 (2004), online (from 23.04.), url: <http://chinaperspectives.revues.org/document799.html> (15.06.09).

ism". It was not by chance that this discussion was first started by Shanghai scholars.⁶⁷

Critical Chinese scholars such as Liu Kang, Wang Jing and others, in contrast, have clearly formulated the difficulties of imposing the Western concept of 'postmodernism' on any analysis of China and have criticized the concept on that grounds.⁶⁸

Discussion points

- Discuss the enormous impact the concept of postmodernity had on Chinese intellectuals from the late 1980s.
- In light of the analogous dynamics of re-orientalism, discuss the complex dynamics of how 'the vocabulary of EuroAmerican postmodern scholarship [...] has been transformed to resonate with one or another Sino-centered project in the course of its assimilation into Sinophone critical discourse' (see Davies' quote above).

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⁶⁸ Cf. Liu Kang, 'Is There an Alternative to (Capitalist) Globalization? The Debate About Modernity, Postmodernity, and Postcoloniality', in: id., *Globalization and Cultural Trends in China*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004, pp. 23–45, see especially p. 26. Cf. Wang Jing, 'Culture as Leisure and Culture as Capital', in: *positions* 9.1 (2001): 69–104, p. 72 and especially p. 84. URL: <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/positions/v009/9.1wang02.pdf> (15.06.09).

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The number 24.3 of *Boundary 2* (1997) is a special issue related to Postmodernism in China (available through JSTOR). A number of articles from that issue have been reprinted in Arif Dirlik and Zhang Xudong (eds), *Postmodernism and China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

Session 5

Historiography

Set Texts

West

- KW 'history'; NKW 'history'; KC 'historicism'.
- White, Hayden. 'The Historical Text as Artefact', in: id., *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, pp. 81–100.

China

- Yang Daqing. 'The Challenges of the Nanjing Massacre: Reflections on Historical Inquiry', in: Joshua A. Fogel (ed.), *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, pp. 133–72.

Postmodern thinkers such as Foucault and Derrida have deconstructed the notion of truth as a value in the West. These new perspectives on truth as a will to power in discourses, as an endless play of signifiers or as a choice of literary tropes, have had a deep impact on theories of history and history writing. One of the main claims of modern historiography is that any reconstruction of history is necessarily a construct of a cultural determined perspective and that it never represents something as essential and fundamental as the historical 'truth'. Truth and power cannot be separated anymore; 'reality' always moves within set frames of discourse and within the prison of language. This session will address the question whether this new postmodern approach applies to Chinese history writing. If historical truth was never at the focus of history writing in China,⁶⁹ how can it then be deconstructed? Or, in other words, is it not a well-known fact, and therefore redundant to stress, that historiography in China was constructed in literary tropes? Either for educative purposes: to teach

⁶⁹ Cf. Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, Achim Mittag, Jörn Rüsen (eds.), *Historical Truth, Historical Criticism, and Ideology: Chinese Historiography and Historical Culture from a New Comparative Perspective*, Leiden: Brill, 2005.

through praise and blame of historical precedents, or to serve particular interests of political and social legitimation for those who held power?

Hayden White, a leading postmodern thinker on historiography, bases his literary analysis of historical texts on the assumption that historiography operates within the frame of a set number of literary tropes, which in turn are determined by culturally specific developments of a literary tradition.

Historical situations are not *inherently* tragic, comic, or romantic. They may all be inherently ironic, but they need not be emplotted that way. All the historian needs to do to transform a tragic into a comic situation is to shift his point of view or change the scope of his perceptions. Anyway we only think of situations as tragic or comic because these concepts are part of our generally cultural and specifically literary heritage. *How* a given historical situation is to be configured depends on the historian's subtlety in matching up a specific plot structure with the set of historical events that he wishes to endow with a meaning of a particular kind. This is essentially a literary, that is to say fiction-making operation.⁷⁰

The historian shares with his audience *general notions* of the *forms* that significant human expressions *must* take by virtue of his participation in the specific process of sense-making which identify him as a member of one cultural endowment rather than another.⁷¹

Discussion points

- What is the relevance of White's position for the discipline of history?
- According to White, why should a historical text be read and analyzed as a literary artefact?
- What does a reading which according to White is based on recognition of familiar literary figures imply about the reader's understanding of historical texts?
- What does it mean for the understanding of the function of history writing?
- How could, on that basis, any relationship between two events be judged?
- Critique White's hypothesis, that historiography is always narrative.

⁷⁰ Cf. Hayden White, 'The Historical Text as Artefact', in: id., *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, Baltimore, 1978, p. 85.

⁷¹ Cf. White, op. cit., p. 86.

- Does the fact that there is a difference between ‘reality’ and narration render the narration invalid or useless?
- What implications does White’s approach have for the *intercultural* reading of historical texts?
- How can a reader understand texts written within an unfamiliar set of literary tropes?
- How valid are the rhetorical figures White uses for an analysis of Chinese texts, which operate within entirely different linguistic and rhetorical moves?
- In terms of White’s theory, how would a methodology of analysis of Chinese historical texts look?

Looking at the function of traditional Chinese historiography, the main points of Western historiographical theory might not be relevant: in China, the notion of ‘truth’ is not a claim of history writing, which is seen as the task of recording events in order to express ‘praise or blame’ and to present them as moral precedents for the ruler. Although from Song times (960–1279), historical causation became a theme in Chinese historical thinking, the revelation of the *dao* at work and the related correct moral judgement of historical events – rather than the record of some empirical, event-focused truth – are the main aims of traditional Chinese historiography.⁷² Hence different genres play a major role in Chinese history writing. For instance, Chinese dynastic histories are in great part composed of biographies, which, in the later dynastic histories, make up the greatest part of the long works; we shall now discuss this important historiographical genre in sufficient detail to then relate it to the application of Hayden White’s theory.

The concept of *bios* or *vita* is absent in Chinese tradition, as is the concept of biography in the Western sense. Instead, we find a mass of biographical writing in China, in different literary genres ranging from grave records (*mu zhi*), grave inscriptions (*mu zhi ming*), grave notices (*mu biao*), inscriptions on the avenue to the grave (*shendao bei*), epitaphs (*bei*), funerary odes (*song*), sacrificial odes (*ji wen*) and eulogies (*lei*), to collections of biographies (*lie zhuan*) in the dynastic histories (*zheng shi*), in local gazeteers (*fangzhi*), collections of Buddhist (*gaoseng zhuan*) and Daoist (*xian zhuan*) hagiographies, as well as of loyal officials (*zhong chen*) or Confucian scholars (*xy-ru xuean*, *xy zong zhuan*), up to family biographies (*jia zhuan*) and year-by-year accounts of a man’s life (*nianpu*).

The earliest form of Chinese biographical writing which most resembles Western ‘biography’ is the ‘*zhuan*’, which comes up with the first of the dynastic histories, the *Shiji* of Sima Qian (finished around 100 BC), and either means ‘tradition’ or ‘commen-

⁷² Cf. Thomas H. Lee, ‘Introduction’, in: id. (ed.), *The New and the Multiple: Sung Senses of the Past*, Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2004, p. xiii.

tary' (to the Basic Annals *ben ji*). These historical biographies appear in such a rigid and formalized form that precursory literary models for this genre have to be assumed. The sources of official biographical writing probably were writings connected with clan cults, funeral odes and grave records in the context of the cult of the ancestors.

The official compilers of later historical biographies in the dynastic histories drew on officially compiled works of genealogy, personal dossiers kept by the Board of Civil Office (*li bu*) and the Accounts of Conduct (*xing zhuang*) provided by the Department of Merit Assessments (*gao gong si*). However, funeral writings continued to be one of the major sources for official biography. Though intended for ritual use, as with the work of the official historian, these writings aim to present a picture of the subject as an example and moral precedent for future generations.

The function of these 'historical biographies' is not to provide a comprehensive account of a certain age; rather, they serve a didactic purpose. Similarly, the aim of traditional Chinese biography writing is not to present a vivid profile of an individual or give clues to a certain personality, its development and character, but rather, to illuminate given moral norms and model behaviour by creating a narrative which portrays an exemplary life. Such an exemplary life is never the life of a hero. Chinese traditional biographies are no hero biographies. They reflect social norms and precepts upon which the reader should model his own life.

The arrangement of Chinese biographical writing is always chronological. A typical *zhuàn*-biography of the dynastic histories starts with the names and the native place of the subject and gives the basic information to place the subject in his genealogical context of family relationships. Then the biographical data are given, constructed around an outline of the subject's career. The barely dated skeleton of this *curriculum vitae* is filled out by a variety of devices: formulaic passages, lengthy quotations of notable memorials submitted to the throne by the subject, and accounts of the actions of the individual in his official capacity. The biography ends with the death of the subject, posthumous honours, eulogy and brief account of his descendants.

The Chinese biographical style is that of a disconnected and episodic narrative. Hayden White's thesis seems, therefore, not to cause any challenge to the traditional understanding of these history texts. We do not find reflections on the interactions of an individual with his contemporary milieu or his relationship to historical circumstances; nor are there considerations of influences – whether of the subject being influenced by history or of the subject influencing history. Chinese biographies are essentially descriptions of members of a social or hierarchical group, rather than accounts of individuals, their personal development, motivations and contexts.

The approach to an individual's life in Chinese biographical writings is a functional one, which seldom gives any hint of personality beyond professional function. Official biography, being derived from the eulogistic writings of family cults, became

in practice the imitation of those writings, concerned with highly selective aspects of the subject's life; it almost exclusively concentrated on members of the same social group as that of the author.

Chinese biographies appear mostly in collections and are not meant to be independent units to be read as isolated texts without consideration of the other biographies. Chinese collections of biographies have to be taken as one text with a net-like structure. They could thus adapt seamlessly to an internet-like medium: every biography contains a great number of 'key notes' referring to events reported in other biographies in the collection; any name occurring in a biography has to be taken as a 'link' which should be mouse-clicked on in order to get the whole message intended by the author. If the intertwined structure of these collections is not recognized, contexts and relationships are missed which are crucial to the central message and subtle evaluation of the subject as expressed by the author through the collected biographies.

How would the analysis of a genre like biography be affected by the perspective of the linguistic turn? Chinese historians would certainly not contradict any claim that history is narrative: the literary quality of great works of history, such as *Zuo zhuan* and *Shiji*, is recognized as being precisely what makes them exemplary texts from which moral lessons can be learned. Of course, in modern times Chinese historiography has been adapted to Western styles of history writing.⁷³ However, the focus of Marxist history writing in the PRC still lies very much on the correct use of language and the adequate judging of right and wrong.⁷⁴ Apter has shown how much Communist history evolved out of the narrative skills of Mao Zedong:

Like virtually all great political ideologists, Mao Zedong was a great storyteller, especially during his Yan'an days when he and his associates combined storytelling with truth-telling. They were able to draw from individuals the materials which formed a collective mythology. In turn this mythology was made to yield higher truths, a theory textualized as a dialectical logic.⁷⁵

Apter then further relates this storytelling to traditional history writing:

⁷³ For the introduction of modern histories see Rudolf G. Wagner, 'Importing a "New History" for the New Nation: China 1899', in Glen Most (ed.), *Historization – Historisierung*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001, pp. 275–92.

⁷⁴ Cf. Geremie R. Barmé, 'History for the Masses', in: Jonathan Unger (ed.), *Using the Past to Serve the Present*, NY: Sharpe, 1993. See also Michael Schoenhals, *Doing Things with Words in Chinese Politics: Five Studies*, Berkeley: University of California at Berkeley, 1992. See also session 9 of this book on the key-word 'canon'.

⁷⁵ Cf. David E. Apter, 'Yan'an and the Narrative Reconstruction of Reality', in: *Daedalus* 122 (1993): 207–32, p. 207.

this tradition was crucial insofar as Chinese ‘history’ was always myth-making, and not the ‘historians history’ of the professional as the term is understood today.⁷⁶

Yet, to call such storytelling *fabrication* in the sense of lying is to trivialize it. Of course there was manipulation and machination. But to work on a collective level, storytelling must do more than tell a story. It must by the same token become an art form utilizing all the opportunities for dramatic performance and embellishment which by its very nature it embodies. Among these is the significance of space as an identifiable and symbolically significant place for coming together, for the intersubjective communication of shared experiences, a function of orality first and writing later, of speaking first and modifying afterwards, the oracular pronouncement followed by the logical argument, of event as metaphor and theory as praxis. It is in the immediacy of the first that an initial lexigraphic system of dialectical thinking evolves, moving easily between classical references and sinified-Marxism, a praxis of developmental socialism which is textualized and *writ*-ualized.⁷⁷

The ‘dramatization’ of historical events and ‘novelization’ of ‘historical processes’, which Apter (following Hayden White) quotes from François Furet,⁷⁸ is very much in line with White’s approach; Apter explains it on the grounds of an indigenous Chinese tradition of oral storytelling.

Discussion points

- Is Chinese traditional historiography thus postmodern? Try to differentiate.
- What is the difference between an indigenous Chinese tradition of oral storytelling and official Chinese historiography?

Let us now turn to Yang Daqing’s analysis of the historiography of the Nanjing massacre and how he relates his approach to White’s. Yang writes:

The tendency to deny any correspondence between history and reality, however, as Friedländer and other participants at the 1990 conference have pointed out, can have disturbing implications, especially when ap-

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 217.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 229.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 222 quoting White, *The Content of Form*, p. 44.

plied to an event like the Holocaust. An extreme case of mass criminality such as the extermination of the Jews in Europe, they argue, challenges theoreticians of historical relativism to face the corollaries of positions otherwise too easily dealt with on an abstract level. Namely, if an event in history is open to any kind of 'emplotment', as has been suggested, does that mean that Holocaust denial, in the theoretical sense, is just as valid as other interpretations? An interpretation falls into the category of a lie Hayden White has in fact argued 'when it denies the reality of the events of which it treats, and into the category of untruth when it draws false conclusions from reflection on events whose reality remains attestable on the level of 'positive' historical inquiry.'⁷⁹ It is significant that even White, arguably the most important historian under the influence of postmodernism, not only recognizes the reality of historical events but also accepts positive historical inquiry as of some use in attesting to them. At the same time, many others have come to emphasize the need to problematize the process of historical enquiry itself before we can reach a better understanding of past events. (p. 137)

This exposition explains Yang's subsequent shift to a focus on the material, social and psychological restraints of the sources on the Nanjing massacre in his article.

Discussion points

- List and discuss these restraints.
- What role does orality play in Apter's interpretation of Communist historiography as a *writ*-ualized oral tradition of storytelling?
- How does Yang relate the restraints of his sources to the question of historical truth?

It is a truism that all historical writing is the product of a particular moment in time that shapes historians' decisions about what needs to be explained. (p. 149)

Historical understanding is never static. The pool of evidence is unstable. Just as new evidence may appear, some old evidence may prove flawed or even false. New questions have to be asked, and earlier conclusions may need to be challenged, modified, or even reversed. All of this requires that the historian keep an open mind and be prepared to

⁷⁹ *The Content of Form*, pp. 77–78.

revise his or her presumptions and hypotheses, especially in the face of new evidence. Moreover, the meaning of the past event is not always a constant. In this sense, there is some truth in the saying that each generation writes a different history. (p. 150)

The past comes to life by the way in which it relates to the present and to plans for the future. (p. 153)

Yang even quotes Novick's proposition:

'every group its own historian'. (p. 165)

- How do Yang's concepts of contextual meaning (p. 166) and interpretative communities (p. 167) relate to what he criticises as 'historical relativism' on p. 137 (see quote above)?
- How can the restraints of the sources and associated problems mentioned by Yang be related to the limited set of literary tropes which White talks about?
- When Yang writes: 'Politics and moral judgement continue to influence how evidence is produced' (p. 156) does that also relate to the literary forms?
- What is it about Chinese historiography that White helps us to understand better?

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Session 6

‘Literary field’

Set Texts

West

- KW ‘literature’; NKW ‘--’; KC ‘literary criticism’
- Bourdieu, Pierre. ‘The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed’, in: id., *The Field of Cultural Production*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, pp. 29–73.

China

- Hockx, Michel. ‘Introduction’, in: id. (ed.), *The Literary Field of Twentieth-Century China*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999, pp. 1–21.

This session takes Bourdieu’s ‘objective’ sociological approach to literature to the Chinese field and proves whether the notion of a ‘literary field’ can be used in a meaningful sense when applied to Chinese social conditions. It questions Bourdieu’s model not on the cultural differences of the subjective side of writing or reading literature. It questions it on the cultural assumption that the social actors of the Chinese literary field are determined by analogous conditions and thus moved by the same dynamics as those in the European literary field which Bourdieu analyses so convincingly.

Starting from ethnological fieldwork in the 1950s, Bourdieu became interested in the dynamics of social relationships, rituals of gift exchange and symbolic power relations among the Kabyle people in north-eastern Algeria. He then continued to investigate family relationships in rural France, and in the 1960s became more and more interested in the French educational system and its reproduction of social class relationships. He also began to do research on art and social perceptions and interpretations of art. Bourdieu’s sociological approach to literature is in line with his broader sociological analysis (developed out of his strong personal engagement with art), in which art is seen as playing a crucial role as one of the central and most complex factors in the process of (re)production of social power relations. Insight gained in his early field research into the ritual and symbolic side of the exchange of commodities,

its relation to social positioning and the symbolism of social positions, opened the way for his formulation of innovative analytical terms, which – perhaps due to their transcultural and transdisciplinary origins – have become significant in cultural studies. The different sorts of ‘capital’ (cultural, social or symbolic), ‘habitus’, and his different non-geographical and non-physical kinds of ‘space’ (‘space of positioning’, ‘space of possibilities’, ‘space of works’, ‘space of consumption’ etc.) and ‘field’, are among the most important concepts of Bourdieu’s theory. Economic, social and artistic realms are integrally connected for Bourdieu: in his analysis, these realms necessarily relate to each other. Thus, his sociological approach to literary works, focusing on the rules of the power play within the literary field, can be seen to be very much in tune with his analytical perspective in other areas of research. In his rejection of substantialist and structuralist modes of thought, Bourdieu might be taken to be a poststructuralist; as research objects, art and literature enabled him ‘to make a radical break’ with these modes of thought. He writes at the beginning of the first chapter of *The Field of Cultural Production*:

Few areas more clearly demonstrate the heuristic efficacy of *relational* thinking than that of art and literature.⁸⁰

Instead of developing rules for literary production purely from within literary texts themselves, Bourdieu explains them in terms of the social dynamics which operate outside the texts. Approaching literature thus, from a sociological point of view, Bourdieu’s theory of the ‘Field of Cultural Production’ has become such an influential and powerful tool of analytic operation within literary and cultural studies that it has long been used to analyze literary productions in different times and cultural spaces.

However, it is crucial to address the question of how applicable this model is for contexts outside the European social structure which shaped Bourdieu’s model. As Hockx shows, Bourdieu’s model misses at least one important analytical category required to fully understand and explain the cultural dynamics of the literary field within a Chinese social and political context. But he conceits:

It seems to me that this form of representation has considerable cross-cultural potential, since it does not base itself on a subjective understanding of what literature is or should be, but rather on the objective observation that a phenomenon called ‘literature’ (or *wenxue* or whatever) exists in many societies and that it incorporates institutions which can be described. (p. 7)

⁸⁰ Cf. Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, New York, 1994, p. 29.

The problem of cross-cultural applicability does not so much concern subjective understanding as opposed to objective observation, but rather that of a cultural perspective on literature, literary production and related kinds of 'capital'. Any 'objective observation' of a phenomenon called 'literature' and its institutions always seems to start from a specific cultural perspective, as the European model of Bourdieu illustrates so clearly. Hockx, therefore, continues with a reflection on method:

The next question is one of method: how is the literary field (in this case the literary field of twentieth century China), its principles and its institutions best described? (pp. 7–8)

He responds to this question by providing his own more encompassing definition of the literary field:

The literary field is an interest community of agents and institutions involved in the material and symbolic production of literature, whose activities are governed by at least one autonomous principle that is fully or partially at odds with at least one heteronomous principle. (p. 9)

Hockx criticizes Bourdieu's limiting of his focus to the mid 19th century onward:

That Bourdieu denies the existence of literary fields before the advent of Flaubert is confusing and, in my view, unnecessary, because it creates the impression that the only true literary fields are those in which the two main principles are the symbolic and the economical. (p. 9)

Arguing that in Europe, and most certainly in China, the same sort of field can be found much earlier, he offers an analytical scheme of the literary field for modern China, broadening Bourdieu's theory to encompass modern Chinese literature:

To my mind, the main reason why modern Chinese literary practice does not allow itself to be schematized as easily in terms of only two conflicting principles, the way Bourdieu described modern French literary practice, is the presence of a third principle, partly but not fully heteronomous, which motivates modern Chinese writers to consider, *as part of their practice*, the well-being of their country and their people. It would be incorrect to view this 'political principle' as part of the autonomous principle, for two reasons: first, because overly utilitarian writing has never been accorded high literary value by the Chinese liter-

any community and, second, because ‘politically correct’ writers can be upwardly mobile in terms of ‘political capital’ *within* the field, even if they are immobile in terms of ‘symbolic capital’. (p. 12)

Discussion points

- Explain in which respect Hockxs’ definition of the literary field given above is more encompassing than Bourdieu’s.
- Compare Hockx’s Figure 3 on p. 17 with Bourdieu’s Figure 2 on p. 49 and design a differentiated diagram of the Chinese Field of Cultural Production, making it as detailed as possible.
- Is anything such as Bourdieu’s social group of the ‘Bohemia’ known in China? (See the excellent documentary film *Mangliu, liumang*, produced in Beijing between 1988 and 1990, when such a social group in some way seemed to develop.)
- What sort of *habitus* is displayed in this film?
- How would bourgeois art – art for the art’s sake – be described within a socialist society?
- What role does the market, the public space and the state play as regulating forces, and how do they play this role?
- From a China-related perspective, formulate a critique on the general value of Bourdieu’s theory against the background of a detailed analysis of the Chinese context of Cultural Production.

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Session 7

Discourse

Set Texts

West

- *KW* ‘--’; *NKW* ‘discourse’; *KC* ‘discourse’.
- Foucault, Michel. ‘The Order of Discourse’, (orig. ‘L’Ordre du discours’, 1970) Ian McLeod transl. in: Robert Young (ed.), *Untying the Text: a Post-Structuralist Reader*, Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, pp. 48–78. Also in the translation by Rupert Swyer: ‘Orders of Discourse’, in: *Social Science Information*, 10.2 (April 1971): 7–30; repr. with the title ‘The Discourse on Language’, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Pantheon Books, NY, 1972. Also as ‘The Order of Discourse’, in: M. J. Shapiro, *Language and politics*, New York, 1984, pp. 108–138.

China

- Apter, David Ernest and Tony Saich. *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao’s Republic*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994, Ch. 1, pp. 1–30.

Though absent from Williams’ *Keywords*, the discourse on ‘discourse’ has shaped one of the most powerful analytical perspectives in Cultural Studies. Since it is a reflection on modes of expression, including academic modes of expression, it can also be taken as an autocritical reflection. This first point should be discussed in detail. What exactly does the shift from ‘archaeology’ to ‘cartography’ mean in Foucault’s work? And what impact does this programmatic shift have on the field of Cultural Studies? The term ‘discourse’ is nowadays used broadly to refer to any sort of public discussion without necessarily implying the parts which are constituent to the sort of discourse Foucault tries to define. It can thus very generally be taken as any theory which analyses forms and contexts of utterances. In the philosophy of Jürgen Habermas, ‘discourse’ denotes the space of communicative rationality through which intersubjective truth is achieved. With Foucault’s work, however, the term gains a processual aspect through its focus on the process of the formation of truths, which is based on a complex in-

terplay of different factors. This process follows specific principles of restraint, which are based on rules of control, exclusion, rarefaction and application. According to Foucault, these principles can only be understood if they are analyzed in their relation to power. In his consideration of the conditions allowing the possibility of cultural or textual utterances, Foucault seeks regularity in such conditions; the recurring patterns of this regularity he sees as constituting something like an archive of an epoch as a historical *a priori* of any formation of thought and speech. The session aims at making students aware of the manifold meanings of this important keyword and of the difficulty to make use of Foucault's particular notion of discourse, especially within the Chinese field.

Discussion points

- Does Foucault's notion of 'discourse' differ from Apter's approach to discourse analysis (see Apter and Saich, Chapter 1)?
- How do Apter and Saich apply the term 'discourse' to a historical situation in China?

Apter and Saich write:

We have been able to probe rather deeply into the events of what was certainly a heightened political moment. It was the point during Chinese revolution when the discourse community was reformed and generated sufficient power to change the course of China's history. Indeed our fundamental concern is with discourse and power. In Yan'an we can see how the one produced the other, deliberately, with great shrewdness, and with consequence. (p. 2)

Discussion points

- To what extent does the historical analysis of Apter and Saich exemplify and illustrate the working mechanisms of a discursive formation, as defined by Foucault?

Apter and Saich further write:

Within the larger framework of discourse theory, two model tendencies can be identified. One is logocentric; the other one is econocentric. Long-term politics favors the second, but in any concrete system, from

time to time, tendencies towards the first may occur. [...] As a discourse community Yan'an represents the logocentric model. Today the problem for China is how to transform the discourse according to the rules and practices of the econocentric model. (p. 2)

explaining a logocentric model thus:

At the center of the logocentric is *collective individualism*. The logocentric model is concerned less with choice than with projections made on the basis of some doctrinal definition of necessity that specifies its own rules and theoretical principles and for which it provides its own logic. Deterministic rather than probabilistic, the logocentric model 'works' when it persuades people to 'convey' their private narratives and personal interpretations to the collectivity. [...] Yan'an remains a prime example of how power can be generated by an inversionary discourse community that, while constructing its own language of belief, bundles it together with ideological, ethnic, religious, and linguistic strands. (p. 4)

It is not surprising that inversionary discourse communities form, converting a history of such grievances, real or imagined, into new forms of truth, and turning episodes and events into coded narratives and sacred texts. (p. 5)

Discussion points

- How could further basic keywords such as 'author' or 'commentary', which are important notions in Foucault's text, be applied to the text of Apter and Saich?
- To what extent can Mao Zedong as principal agency be regarded as the author of the Yan'an discourse and what dynamics further shaped the discourse in later political contexts?

Recalling what Apter wrote in 1993, we shall now proceed to link our questioning to the field of historiography:

Like virtually all great political ideologists, Mao Zedong was a great storyteller, especially during his Yan'an days when he and his associates combined storytelling with truth-telling. They were able to draw from individuals the materials which formed a collective mythology. In turn

this mythology was made to yield higher truths, a theory textualized as a dialectical logic. By this means a discourse was constructed which separated ‘insiders’ from ‘outsiders.’ It established a boundary around Mao’s followers within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP, founded in 1921), and between the CCP and the Guomindang (GMD). Within this boundary, individual self-interest was broken down in favor of ‘collective individualism.’⁸¹

We should at this point remind ourselves of what we discussed in Session 5: Historiography. We examined how Apter relates storytelling to popular oral tradition, inferring that

this tradition was crucial insofar as Chinese ‘history’ was always myth-making, and not the ‘historians history’ of the professional as the term is understood today.⁸²

Yet, to call such storytelling *fabrication* in the sense of lying is to trivialize it. Of course there was manipulation and machination. But to work on a collective level, storytelling must do more than tell a story. It must by the same token become an art form utilizing all the opportunities for dramatic performance and embellishment which by its very nature it embodies. Among these is the significance of space as an identifiable and symbolically significant place for coming together, for the intersubjective communication of shared experiences, a function of orality first and writing later, of speaking first and modifying afterwards, the oracular pronouncement followed by the logical argument, of event as metaphor and theory as praxis. It is in the immediacy of the first that an initial lexigraphic system of dialectical thinking evolves, moving easily between classical references and sinified-Marxism, a praxis of developmental socialism which is textualized and *writ*-ualized.⁸³

In reflecting on the points made in the above quote, rather than pursuing questions of historical truth and historiography as we did in the earlier session, we now turn our focus on the relationship of history writing and discourse formation in China:

⁸¹ Cf. David E. Apter, ‘Yan’an and the Narrative Reconstruction of Reality’, in: *Daedalus*, 122 (1993), p. 207.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 217.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

Discussion points

- Is this storytelling, this ‘narrative reconstruction of reality’, which Apter and Saich analyse in detail (see the three narrative elements on pp. 14 and 15) also a central concern for Foucault’s analysis of discursive formations and how does it relate to Foucault’s basic cultural studies questions?
- What is an ‘inversionary discourse’?
- What is an ‘inversionary discourse community’?
- Akhieser postulates an ‘inversionary type of culture’ as opposed to a ‘mediation culture’.⁸⁴ How do ‘inversionary discourse’ and ‘inversionary discourse community’ as defined by Apter and Saich relate to Akhieser’s ‘inversionary type of culture’?

Apter has developed his ideas of an ‘inversionary discourse community’ in his discussion of violence:

By treating acts of violence as ingredients of narrative, and as well as basis for logical projection, the myth, the moral and the logical intertwine. Embodied in texts that define both a negative pole and a logic of transcendence, sin and redemption, re-enactment [...] the effect is to turn a discourse community into a chosen people. Once begun violence develops within its interiority, its own rationality. It sets itself apart and above the rest of society often in the name of those marginalized. The interpretations and explanations need not be convincing for outsiders but to insiders, followers supporting clienteles.⁸⁵

Discussion points

- Is Apter using the same notion of power as we find in Foucault’s work?
- Does Apter identify the same relationship of discourse and power as analyzed by Foucault?

⁸⁴ ‘This *mediation culture* tends to resolve all conflicts through the search for the ‘middle’ (intermediate course), a synthesis of contradicting requirements and behavior imperatives. The opposite to that, the *inversionary type of culture*, excludes the possibility of compromise and implies a permanent oscillation from the one extreme to another (Akhieser 1991, vol. 1, p. 40).’ Quoted in Anton N. Oleinik, ‘The Costs and Prospects of Reforms in Russia: An Institutional Approach’, in: *Theme (Teme, University of Niš, Serbia)*, 26.4 (2002): 491–517, p. 501.

⁸⁵ Apter, David E. ‘Political Violence in Analytical Perspective’, in: id. (ed.), *The Legitimization of Violence*, New York, 1997, p. 17.

- Do we find central institutions and procedures highlighted in Foucault's analysis – such as prohibition, reason/madness, true/false, commentary, author, discipline, ritual, societies of discourse, doctrine or education – also present in the analysis of the Yan'an discourse given by Apter and Saich?
- Compare the different settings of the discourses analyzed by Foucault and Apter and Saich. Discuss exclusivity and inclusivity of the discourses and the relationship of the discourse to the elite and the masses.
- Does the difference between a minority alternative discourse originating in a situation of crisis in the Yan'an case, as opposed to a dominant intellectual discourse which Foucault analyses, make a substantial difference in theory?
- Which role do 'emotional roots' (Apter and Saich p. 5) play in Foucault's analysis?

Further Reading

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Session 8

Intertextuality

Set Texts

West

- *KW* ‘--’; *NKW* ‘--’, *KC* ‘intertextuality’.
- Kristeva, Julia. ‘Word, Dialogue and Novel’ (orig. 1972), in: Toril Moi (ed.), *The Kristeva Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1986, pp. 34–61.
- Barthes, Roland. ‘The Death of the Author’ (orig. ‘*La mort de l’auteur*’, 1968), in: David Lodge (ed.), *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, London: Longman, 1988, pp. 166–72.

China

- Wang Jing. ‘Intertextuality and Interpretation’, in: id., *The Story of Stone: Intertextuality, Ancient Chinese Stone Lore, and the Stone Symbolism in Dream of the Red Chamber, Water Margin, and The Journey to the West*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1992, Ch. 1., pp. 1–33.

In this session different understandings of ‘intertextuality’ and the critique against these more and less radical positions will be explored. The notion of ‘intertextuality’, a term first defined by Kristeva, will be analyzed in relation to models conceived by Barthes and Bakhtin, who both had an important impact on Kristeva’s theory. The relationship between intertextuality and theories concerning ‘text’ and ‘author’ will also be discussed. Finally, Chinese traditional notions of intertextual referentiality will be critically compared with the Cultural Studies theory of intertextuality.

Kristeva’s notion of intertextuality has become one of the major analytical concepts within diverse fields of cultural studies. Adoptions which define the term as broad and inclusive include all sorts of textual references in literary figures such as allusion, quote and citation which possess different degrees of marking:

The debts of a text to other texts are seldom acknowledged (other than in the scholarly apparatus of academic writing). This serves to further

the mythology of authorial ‘originality’. However, some texts allude directly to each other – as in ‘remakes’ of films, extra-diegetic references to the media in the animated cartoon *The Simpsons*, and many amusing contemporary TV ads (in the UK, perhaps most notably in the ads for Boddington’s beer). This is a particularly self-conscious form of intertextuality: it credits its audience with the necessary experience to make sense of such allusions and offers them the pleasure of recognition.⁸⁶

In contrast, intertextuality can also be defined as a term with a narrower scope, which

should not be, but frequently is, used to refer to literary relations of *conscious influence* (between, for example, Samuel Beckett and James Joyce, or P.B. Shelley and William Wordsworth). Intertextuality should not be, but frequently is, used to refer to the *intentional allusion* (overt or covert) to, citation or quotation of previous texts in literary texts. This is a term, it would appear, which possesses within it a potential for misuse; a potential which is still today regularly activated by literary and cultural critics. To understand the concept, therefore, we need to look closely at what it meant for post-structuralist theorists like Kristeva and Barthes and then to survey some of the other, significant ways in which it has been employed in subsequent theoretical and critical work.⁸⁷

Applying this narrow definition to Kristeva’s text, we can identify the tremendous influence Bakhtin and Barthes have had on Kristeva and also analyze the structure of Kristeva’s argument. In the early text ‘Word, Dialogue and Novel’, Kristeva elaborates Bakhtin’s basic analytical notions by constructing a dualistic chain of opposites.

Discussion points

- Discuss this binary mode of analysis critically, in the light of Kristeva’s own plea for a Bakhtinian *dialogism* against *binarism* at the end of her article.
- Which notions are grouped together on either side of the binary chain?
- Are these groupings relevant to the Chinese context of cultural production?
- Can the same oppositional pairs be found in China and be grouped in the same way as Kristeva suggests for the European context?

⁸⁶ Cf. Daniel Chandler in his ‘Semiotics for Beginners’, URL: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem09.html> (05.05.09)

⁸⁷ Cf. Graham Allen, ‘Intertextuality’, in: *The Literary Encyclopedia*, 24 January 2005, <http://www.litencyc.com/php/stopsis.php?rec=true&UID=1229> (05.05.09)

- If the notion of intertextuality should be developed out of Kristeva's text, how has it to be understood?
- How does Kristeva's notion of intertextuality apply to Barthes' and Foucault's notions of the role, existence and function of the author?
- How does it draw on the concept of 'discourse'?
- How does it relate to White's analysis of historiography as literary action?
- Discuss the radical dimension of Kristeva's argument, which basically comes from Barthes.

This radical dimension has been harshly critiqued by, among others, William Irwin, whose argument is summarized in his essay 'Against Intertextuality':

Perhaps the notion that social and historical phenomena are texts is not such a difficult pill to swallow. Historians and lay people alike speak of such things as their interpretations of the French Revolution or the Clinton presidency. If a text is just an object of interpretation, such things can and should be recognized as texts. It is not just eminent and lofty socio-historical matters that Kristeva would have us take as part of the textual system, however. Rather, as Manfred Pfister says, for Kristeva, 'everything—or, at least, every cultural formation—counts as a text within this general semiotics of culture.'⁸⁸ Everything is a text; not just revolutions and administrations, but professional wrestling and detergent are texts to be interpreted—as, in fact, they are by Barthes. Still, even this is not too disconcerting when taken in the proper spirit. Certainly an adept interpreter can garner interesting insights about the drama and symbolism of professional wrestling and the marketing ploys that determine the color of our detergent. This is not all that Kristeva has in mind, however. There is no separation of the social text and the literary text, but rather the two must be woven together to produce the tapestry. As Graham Allen captures Kristeva's point, 'we must give up the notion that texts present a unified meaning and begin to view them as the combination and compilation of sections of the social text. As such, texts have no unity or unified meaning on their own, they are thoroughly connected to on-going cultural and social processes'. (p. 37)⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Manfred Pfister, 'How Postmodern is Intertextuality?', in: Heinrich F. Plett (ed.), *Intertextuality*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991, pp. 207–224, p. 212.

⁸⁹ Cf. William Irwin, 'Against Intertextuality', in: *Philosophy and Literature* 28.2 (2004): 227–42, p. 229.

Ancient Chinese texts typically deploy plenty of quotes and allusive cross-textual references.⁹⁰ Starting with the obligatory quotes from the classics, from philosophers such as Confucius and Laozi, from poems and from the mass of proverbs from the corpus of ancient literature, the incorporation of quotes is one of the central features of Chinese literary products and is used to place them into the cultural memory of given texts. Categories such as ‘author’, ‘originality’ or ‘plagiarism’ do not play any role in Chinese literary criticism. We find, rather, that highly differentiated classification of literary forms and modes of expression are the focus of the Chinese interpreters’ and analysts’ attention, because they express and reflect particular emotional states, or states of mind, which in turn are linked to moral qualities. This is one of the reasons why reference back to ‘aesthetical/ethical’ normative texts is frequently taken.⁹¹ Discussing ‘intertextuality’ in the context of pre-modern Chinese literature, Wang Jing writes in her introduction:

Although the concept of intertextuality emerges as a post-structuralist idiom in the West it is a universal phenomenon that defines the communicative relationships between one text and another, and, particularly in the case of age-old writing traditions, between a text and its context. (p. 2)

However, she then (footnote 5, pp. 280–81) subscribes to the poststructuralist concept of ‘text’, referring to definitions by Derrida and Barthes to link it back to an alleged traditional Chinese text-concept. She argues:

If some complain that this new concept of ‘text’ is an imported critical category alien to the Chinese writing convention, I would argue that the earliest appearance of the notion of *wen* (*wen* contains the earliest concept of the Chinese script and signifies a wide spectrum of meanings: script / sign / pattern / configuration / text / textuality / literature / culture) in the ‘Hsi-tz’u’ Commentaries (the most authoritative among the ten Confucian Commentaries on the *I Ching*) by no means suggests that the Chinese concept of ‘script/text’ is from the very beginning enclosed within the boundary of the monologic ‘written space’.

⁹⁰ Cf. Christoph Harbsmeier, *Science and Civilisation in China, vol. 7.1: Language and Logic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 97ff.

⁹¹ See Dore J. Levy, ‘Literary Theory and Criticism’, Ch. 45 in: Victor Mair (ed.), *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature*, NY: Columbia University, 2001, pp. 916–39. See also Vincent Yu-chung Shih’s ‘Introduction’ in his *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons: Study of Thought and Pattern in Chinese Literature*, Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1983, pp. xi–xlix. Look at the role of the classics and the classificatory composition of Liu Xie’s *Wenxin diaolong*.

Although she is aware that ‘this discussion does not bring us to the conclusion that the Chinese concept of *wen* and the post-structuralist term “text” can be considered and evaluated in equal terms,’ she sees something in the early Chinese myth of the origin of writing which ‘problematizes the very logic of the self-containedness of the latter’. (p. 281)

Discussion points

- Where does Wang see overlaps and where does she see differences in the two concepts of *wen* and ‘text’?
- Why and how does the ancient ‘Xici’-passage serve her argument?
- In the quoted footnote on the concept of ‘text’ how does Wang further clarify her usage of the notion ‘intertextuality’?

Such intertextual relations cover the entire spectrum of permutations, ranging between the poles of convergence and reversal. Whether a text converges with or diverges from a series of prior-texts, it must communicate with them in order to signify meaningfully. Textuality suggests pluralistic composition and presupposes the encounter between multiple volumes of texts and between heterogeneous signifiers. (p. 2)

- Discuss this also in reference to the whole passage until p. 4 of Wang’s article.
- Discuss Wang’s understanding of ‘intertextuality’.
- Does Wang use a broad or a narrow meaning of the term?
- Does Wang by ‘intertextuality’ mean the same as Kristeva – is, for example, the phenomenon of ‘the encounter between multiple volumes of texts’ which Wang finds in Chinese traditional literature indeed ‘intertextuality’ in Kristeva’s sense? If not, how does it differ?
- To Kristeva, is ‘intertextuality’ a consciously applied instrument of signifying meaning?
- Taking into account Wang’s explanatory differentiations (pp. 4–10), differentiate concepts such as ‘allusion’, ‘imitation’, ‘parody’, ‘reference’, ‘quote’, ‘citation’, ‘patchwork’ and ‘collage’ in the light of both the broader and the narrower meaning of the term ‘intertextuality’

The passages quoted from the Chinese literary tradition by Wang (pp. 2–3) seem to

indicate that the phenomenon of ‘intertextuality’ has long been embedded within the Chinese tradition of textuality in its broadest sense. (p. 3)

Discussion points

- Discuss the passages quoted from the Chinese literary tradition by Wang in the light of her previous explanation of ‘text’ and ‘intertextuality’, highlighting the conclusions Wang draws from them.
- How does the concept of ‘intertextuality’ serve Wang’s analysis of the stone lore underlying certain literary works in Chinese tradition?
- Is Wang’s use of the term ‘intertextuality’ a successful application of a Western Cultural Studies concept to the realm of Chinese culture?
- Give different possible readings of the term ‘intertextuality’. Discuss its attractiveness and potential for interpretation. Relate its openness to interpretation to the way the term itself is constructed, i.e. as a combination of the two notions of ‘inter’ and ‘text’ which play a central role in Cultural Studies as *interpretative* terms.

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Session 9

Canon

Set Texts

West

- *KW* ‘--’; *NKW* ‘canon’, *KC* ‘canon’.
- Ter Borg, Meerten B. ‘Canon and Social Control’, in: Arie van der Kooij and Karel van der Toorn (eds), *Canonization and Decanonization*, Leiden: Brill, 1998, pp. 411–23.

China

- Schoenhals, Michael. *Doing Things with Words in Chinese Politics: Five Studies*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, Ch. 1, pp. 1–29 (and optional Ch. 2, pp. 31–53).

This session reflects on the difference between a formal control of a canon and a control built on the interpretation of contents. Whereas a Western understanding and requirement (including Cultural Studies) of canon mainly focuses on contents, there is a strong Chinese tradition of canonical formalized public articulation. The main question is whether a cultural studies theory is able to explain both on a common analytical ground.

As a cultural phenomenon, the process of canon-building lies in the focus of attention of Cultural Studies. Canon is interpreted as a tool intrinsic to the representation of social groups, or as governing the distribution of ‘cultural capital’ in institutions that regulate access to literacy and to cultural knowledge.

In relation to Cultural Studies, the idea of a single and exclusive authoritative canon has long been disputed (see for example the controversy raised by the publication of Harold Bloom’s *Western Canon* with its purportedly authoritative list of Western literary masterworks). The notion of multiple canons is also questioned. Within Cultural Studies canon formation is not universally accepted as a self-evident necessity (note that this argument applies somewhat differently to the cultural studies approach as opposed to Cultural Studies, the academic discipline).

Let us now examine why ‘canon’ is a keyword not only within Cultural Studies but also relating to Cultural Studies.⁹² Does the discipline of Cultural Studies have a canon? Should it have a canon, and if so what should it include? These questions relate to the larger question of the definition and identity of Cultural Studies. It is a new discipline (mainly within the Humanities but also outwith that field), cutting across established disciplinary borders and focusing on new objects of research. Therefore it is crucial – indeed, a matter of survival – for Cultural Studies as an academic discipline to establish through canon-building the validity of its research topics and its innovative cross-boundary analytical approaches.

Furthermore, canon, as a mode of organizing and constructing knowledge, an expression of power structures and as the basis of discourse formation, can be seen as being of utmost importance for any analysis of different cultural formations. Ter Borg defines canon (‘A canon is an objectified standard rule’, p. 411), describes its types (open and closed), forms (abstract rule or narrative), forms of authority (autocratic, democratic and interpretative), and explains its functions (‘it governs behaviour and belief’, ‘it constitutes the core of a culture or a religion, or a world view’, pp. 414–15) and dynamics.

Discussion points

- Critically discuss any limitations you see to Borg’s clear-cut systematic definitions of canon.
- What are the anthropological assumptions supposed by the sociological perspective from which Borg proceeds.
- How would Cultural Studies evaluate Borg’s sociological perspective?
- What would a Cultural Studies sociological approach look like?

Turning to our second text relating to China, Schoenhals’ study deals with the canonical language of the Chinese Communist Party as a formalized, linguistically impoverished, restricted code. Although the formalization of speech is used as a means of social control, Schoenhals draws out the *mouvance*⁹³ of this ongoing process of ‘orthodoxisation’. This *mouvance* is a constant negotiation and interpretation of appropriate and inappropriate formulations in contexts of shifting political power constellations and agendas. As such, it is reminiscent of the formulaic language employed in ritual practices and in Confucian classics such as the commentarial literature on the *Spring and Autumn Annals (Chunqiu)*. The sentence which Schoenhals quotes from the Communist organs *The People’s Daily* (p. 7) and the *Internal Manuscripts* (p. 10): ‘Where (the

⁹² And, indeed, it is missing in William’s *Keywords*, whereas *New Keywords* by Bennett et al. contain it.

⁹³ Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale*, Paris: Seuil, 1972.

formulation) is off the mark by one millimetre, (the theory) will be wrong by a thousand kilometres' is originally from the 'Shuo gua' chapter of the *Book of Changes* (*Yi-jing*), where it refers to the careful attention required when embarking on anything (it appears also in the ritual books *Liji* ('Jingjie' chapter) and *DaDai Liji* and is used in *Chunqiu* literature). The association with divinatory, ritual and linguistic practice is obvious here, since all of these practices are based on fixed sets of 'appropriate' forms, which carry specific normative (canonical) meanings. Any deviation from the formal pattern of that set norm/canon is interpreted as a deviation from the orthodox order and hence as a disruptive heterodox force, which has to be dealt with severely by exegetical specialists, who are in control of the power of words.⁹⁴ In exactly the same manner, formulations are used in the People's Republic of China as formal patterns which can be bent in a number of directions. Even the focus on the meaning of the (ritual) sequence of the words (p. 12) and of the absence of words (p. 16) – which follow logically from any formal interpretation of language and which were two of the basic exegetical techniques in the hermeneutics of the Confucian Classics – is continued into modern times. The setting in bold print of quotations from Mao is also a continuation of the formal emphasis applied in traditional Chinese texts to any word connected to the emperor. Schoenhals underlines the importance of this tradition:

Language formalization – as a form of power manipulated by the state – thus has a bearing upon all aspects of Chinese politics. The subject of the use and abuse of formulations is subject to constant strategic deliberation at the highest levels of the CCP. In some cases the process of policy making is indistinguishable from the process of policy formulation. (p. 3)

Discussion points

- Is control of the *form* of language more effective than censorship of content in terms of state manipulation of power (see Schoenhals quoting Maurice Bloch and Ter Borg explaining canon formation)?
- Discuss control of the *form* of language as a typical feature of ritualistic traditions in China, distinguishing the way content and form are unified in that context and comparing this to your own knowledge and perception of Western traditions of text control.

⁹⁴ Cf. Joachim Gentz, 'Ritual Meaning of Textual Form: Evidence from Early Commentaries of the Historiographical and Ritual Traditions', in: Martin Kern (ed.), *Text and Ritual in Early China*, Seattle/London: University of Washington Press, 2005, pp. 124–48.

- In China, are the focus on textual form and the function of textual form caused by a specific aspect of how the Chinese language works; and/or is it the consequence of a textual tradition which, for purposes of social ordering, makes use of formulaic textual patterns and intertextual references?
- Is the attention paid in China to textual form a consequence of a worldview of a recurring eternal order, as Schoenhals writes (p. 26); and/or is it born out of a sense of continuity with and emphasis on the past?
- What are the presumed effects of the sort of rigid regulation of language used by the CCP in China?
- What are the consequences of such rigid regulation, in terms of literary and intellectual modes of expression, possibilities of linguistic developments, historical recording, 'intertextuality' (ambivalence and monologism in Kristeva's sense), and reading strategies?
- How do the attitudes dictating this sort of language regulation manifest in terms of regulation and control of other artistic forms such as music, opera and the visual arts?

Schoenhals summarizes how inadequately the issue of language in relation to power and politics in China has been treated by Western scholars:

Under these circumstances, why is it that Western scholars with so few exceptions have tended to regulate the role of language to the periphery, rather than to the center, of Chinese politics? Why are there so relatively few studies of the political uses and function of formulations and of censorship and propaganda in China? Why is it that the art of doing things with words so dear to China's *homo politicus* has not received the same attention as, for instance, the 'art of *guanxi*'? The first explanation that comes to mind has to do with academic training. Political scientists are unlikely to regard language as being of fundamental importance in itself and rarely look upon it as anything but a kind of container, a 'conduit for the communication of the essence of thought or reality' (Mark Hobart). Historians, in the words of Hayden White, also tended to 'treat language as a transparent vehicle of representation that brings no cognitive baggage of its own into the discourse', but this situation appears to be changing as a new generation of historians of culture use new methods of literary techniques to develop methods of analysis (White, *Tropics of Discourse*, p.127). Political anthropologists take a somewhat greater interest in issues related to the relationship of language to power and politics, but they hesitate to concern themselves with the issue at stake here

because they do not see it, except perhaps in an extended sense, as a legitimate ‘anthro’ problem. (pp. 5–6)

- In the light of what Schoenhals writes above, make your own analysis of Chinese and Western approaches to language.
- Is language formalization a typical feature of idiomatic languages and thus more present, for example, in Chinese and English than in German, Polish or French?
- Is Ter Borg’s model applicable to the formal aspect of canon as Schoenhals analyses it in regard to the Chinese case.

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Inflection 2

We continue our comparative investigation of the application of Western keywords to Chinese contexts in the following sessions on 'Body' and 'Gender'. However, we now shift to terms which in most contexts of use claim to lie outside historical and cultural boundaries. Gender difference, sexuality, diseases and medical treatment are things which humans of all cultures share. These terms are therefore not restricted to the academic language of the Humanities but are also used as concepts in the Natural Sciences widening the range of their interpretations and how they may be understood. This might suggest that these terms can be universally analyzed in relation to any culture. However, applying Cultural Studies theories to ostensibly 'non-cultural' concepts such as 'body' and 'gender' in the Chinese context, one encounters issues and problems specific to China which reveal their 'cultural boundness'.

Session 10

Body

Set Texts

West:

- *KW* ‘--’; *NKW* ‘body’; *KC* ‘body’.
- Csordas, Thomas J. ‘Introduction: the body as representation and being-in-the-world’, in: id. (ed.), *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self*, Cambridge/ NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 1–24.

China

- Lévi, Jean. ‘The Body: The Daoist’s Coat of Arms’, in: Michel Feher (ed.), *Fragments of a History of the Human Body*, New York: Zone, 1989, pp. 105–126.
- Anagnost, Ann. ‘The Politicized Body’, in: id., *National Past-Times: Narrative, Representation, and Power in Modern China*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1997, pp. 98–116.

In this session on the body a discussion of a set of Western body theories will be taken to interpret a pre-modern religious and a contemporary social model of body in China. The main question will be whether the traditional Chinese Daoist theory of the body as described by Lévi or any of the Western models of the body as presented by Csordas are more suitable to explain the contemporary social body in China as analyzed by Anagnost.

The concept of the body has received much attention in very different areas of academic and public discussions in the last two decades. In the history of the last 100 years we can see political phases reflected in body culture: the strict disciplining of muscular *Übermensch* bodies, and associated athletic-aesthetic stereotypes in socialist- and fascist-realist traditions, as part of strong and aggressive national bodies; ‘liberation’ through sexual revolution, drugs and reaction against athletic and military training, from the ’60s onwards; in the ’70s, a prioritizing of human consciousness over the cultivation of physical strength and its symbolic value; in the ’80s, a slow and silent reverse movement, starting with a soft focus on the body in terms of health and well-

being, developing towards an ascetic and disciplined body culture of body-building, piercing, tattooing and athletic training, which from the '90s onwards is connected to competitive achievement, performance and efficiency, leading to urban art forms such as (break-) dance, beat-boxing, free running, multi-level moving and parkour.

Discussion points

- Identify views and usages of the body in cultural practices such as medicine, ritual, performance, sexuality, work, fight etc.
- Discuss the relevance of and possible reasons for emergent (or declining) body culture in your own cultural context.
- How are holistic health therapies, sensual entertainment, sports, cooking and such leisure-time activities expressions of contemporary Western body culture?
- Does contemporary Western body culture influence technical and scientific approaches to the body such as artificial intelligence, robotics and genomic research? And/or do these approaches in turn influence body culture?
- How are science fiction and cinematographic depictions of bionic ideal humans related to what Lévi-Strauss, quoted by Csordas, calls 'the end of one kind of body and the beginning of another kind of body'?

Csordas gives a summary of different academic approaches and offers reasons for the relevance of the body as an analytical category for different research areas and questions. Having himself a clearly defined and contrasting view to most of the theories under discussion, he sets himself the task of drawing out

some of those theoretical implications and to seize this methodological opportunity. Neither of these aims is to be taken for granted, since among anthropologists facing the 'obsolescence of the body' and a related 'death of the subject' the jury is still out as to whether the body will persist as a central analytic theme, the 'existential ground of culture and self' [Csordas 1990], or whether interest in the body is merely an intellectual fad. (p. 4)

Discussion points

- Outline Csordas' main arguments and show how they are structured.
- What is the philosophical basis of his concept of a non-representative body as an 'existential ground of self' and 'being-in-the-world'? Do you know these

expressions, especially the latter, from any philosophical tradition? What consequences does that have for our understanding of Csordas?

- Discuss the term 'body' with reference to what Csordas describes as its special position between *object* and *concept*.
- Summarize in your own words theoretical approaches to the body as *object* and/or *concept*, as discussed by Csordas, and the relevance of these theories for different disciplines.
- Discuss Csordas' account of representation theory and its critics.
- What is Csordas' main critique against representation theory and how should a non-representational body-concept be understood?
- Reconstruct the two opposite chains of concepts connected to the nominal and the conditional, the semiotic and the phenomenal etc.

In endeavouring to understand body concepts in Daoist religion and in Chinese Communist politics, the first question should be whether the body is thought of in a representational mode or in an existential way. Jean Lévi seems to help us to answer that question with his first subtitle: 'The Body as Representation of the Cosmos'. Beyond this subtitle, however, Lévi makes no further use of the term 'representation'. Instead he uses terms such as 'replica', 'equivalence' and 'reproduction', and states that the body 'was the universe' or 'contained the universe':

In China the body is perceived as a replica of the universe. Whereas during the imperial period – the third and fourth centuries B.C. – philosophers essentially derived from this a political principle, starting in the following century this equation of the two orders was articulated in a veritable cosmogonic system. The emblems structuring the universe, the numbers cataloging the intimate and pertinent relations among things could be found in the human body, whose organization was marked by the same algorithmic formulas. [...] To them [i.e. the Daoists], the body was not merely constructed on the basis of the celestial model and norm, it was the universe, it contained the universe in its totality. The equivalence between microcosm and macrocosm in the *Wufu* (*Book of the Five Talismans*), for instance, is absolute. (p. 105)

Discussion points

- How does Lévi use the term 'representation'?
- Is the Daoist body concept which Lévi describes thus a representational one?

- Does the Daoist body concept fit into any of the other categories which Csordas introduces?
- Recollect the main aspects and constituents of the Daoist body and try to formulate your understanding of the whole system of the Daoist body (without going into the minute level of detail given in Lévi's text).

How should the politicized body of Anagnost be related to this discussion? Anagnost uses the term 'body' as a metaphor rather than as a term denoting the human body itself. She asserts that individual subjects, through ritual acts such as classificatory naming, bestowal of status honours and issuing of ritual markers, are organized into a totalized symbolic system, which constitutes the social body:

The bestowal of status honors, through the issuing of ritual markers and public processions, demonstrates the power of the state to define discursive positions in political culture through its classificatory strategies, its power to name, to sort persons into the hierarchically arranged categories of a moral order. I would assert that while this power to name does not go unchallenged (for example, by competing discourses of family, kinship, social relations, or ritual hierarchies), it does exert a powerful force in defining the subject in contemporary Chinese political culture. (p. 100)

The negatively defined other is excluded through similar ritual acts. This classification is compared to the classical Chinese philosophical distinction between *shi* (this) and *fei* (not this) and its focus on ritual naming, 'rectifying of terms' (*zheng ming*) and historical precedents (models), which continued into the socialist period:

Confucianists conceptualized government as guiding this process of discrimination and setting up models for the moral edification of the masses. In the late imperial period, these models were promulgated by the local gentry who were deeply inculcated in Confucian values. In the socialist period, the local party organizations have replaced the gentry as the responsible agents for guiding the design of models for local emulation. (p. 101)

Another important feature in the socialist era is that the non-conforming elements are not excluded forever but are absorbed into a process of a reforming of their behaviour, which aims at the transformation of those elements. This transformation can be

understood as an effort to perfect the social body in a process directed towards a socialist modernity.

We would therefore be in error if we attempted to understand these rituals of objectification solely in terms of their specified ends – the reformation of behavior. They are also rituals of subjection, of subject making; they produce docile bodies that transform these bodies into signifiers that figure in a master narrative of progress toward a socialist modernity. These rituals objectify subjects in a way that does not individuate them but causes them to be subsumed within a mass identity, the ‘people as one’, from whom the party becomes the solely authorized voice. (pp. 105–06)

Hence, according to Anagnost, the ideal social body gains power and visibility only through the transformation of its elements into classified coded positions within its symbolic system of signs, and the visualisation of that process.

Discussion points

- Relate the Daoist concept of the body described by Lévi to the concept of the social body as presented by Anagnost.
- Is it possible to relate the Communist utopian symbolic system of signs as described by Anagnost to the symbolic system of the immortal Daoist body, which can be realized only through the visualization and transformation of its elements from death principles to purified divine images?
- How far are Western discourses on the body capable of describing and analyzing these Chinese systems of human and social bodies?

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Session 11

Gender

Set Texts

West

- KW 'sex'; NKW 'gender', 'feminism'; KC 'gender', 'feminism'.
- Butler, Judith. 'Bodily Inscriptions, Performative Subversions', in: id., *Gender Trouble*, London: Routledge, 1990, pp. 128–41.
- Connell, Raewyn William. 'The Question of Gender', in: id., *Gender*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002, pp. 1–11.

Alternative:

- Spivak, Gayatri C. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in: Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988, pp. 271–313. Repr. in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (eds), *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993/4, pp. 66–111. See also the short summary of the article in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin (eds), *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, London: Routledge, 1995, pp. 24–28. Compare the Chinese translation in *Chung-Wai Literary Monthly* 4.6 [20] (1995): 94–123.

China

- Barlow, Tani E. 'Theorizing Women: *Funü, Guojia, Jiating* [Chinese Women, Chinese State, Chinese Family]', in: *Genders* 10 (1991): 132–60. Repr. in: I. Grewal and C. Kaplan (eds), *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1994, pp. 173–96. Repr. also in: A. Zito and T.E. Barlow (eds), *Body, Subject & Power in China*, Chicago, 1996, pp. 253–89. Repr. also in: Tani Barlow, *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2004, Ch. 2: 'Theorizing Women', pp. 37–63.

Placing the keyword 'gender' in its historical context this session investigates the differences in terminology and possibilities of a transferability of historically conditioned gender discourses in China and the West.

The concept of gender is still very often commonly understood as one half of a sex/gender binary, a relationship echoed in the vastly different approaches to the subject taken by Williams and Curthoys in *Keywords* and *New Keywords*. What can be established through a reading of both texts, however, is a picture of the historical development of the term, the complexity of defining the term without recourse to the binary concepts it attempts to encompass and arguably erase, and the increasing currency it holds in the humanities. While Williams demonstrates that there are several potential uses of the word 'sex' and its cognates, it is clear that they are all related, in some way, to a physical or scientific discourse surrounding the apparent biological differences between men and women. As Williams makes clear towards the end of this entry there was, and remains, a degree of slippage between this use of 'sex' to mean the differing categories of male and female, predominantly defined in biological terms, and the more flexible term, 'gender'.

Reading Curthoys' entry suggests the reason for Williams' inclusion of sex rather than gender would be an historical one since she suggests that the second term, beyond its older, grammatical usage did not gain common currency until the '60s, while Pilcher and Whelehan, amongst others, would put the date even later, into the 'early '70s'.

What is clear from both earlier and later estimates is that the increasing use of 'gender' is in some way related to the influence of psychoanalysis and sexuality on second wave feminism, which used 'gender' to refer to the social roles of men and women, while 'sex' was still used to refer to the inherent and unchangeable biological differences. While the sex/gender binary remained intact, an emphasis on the constructed nature of the second half of the binary had obvious political implications. If it was acknowledged that male and female roles had been constructed in a particular way, then it opened up the possibility of constructing them in a different, more equitable fashion.

Many of the key texts of second wave feminism continued to rely on this binary definition of 'gender', as political gains could be made on both sides of this divide. There was the potential for empowerment through a reification of maternity and other exclusively feminine biological processes (numerous critiques of sexual violence or cultural notions of feminine beauty demonstrated how much of a battleground the female body had become and, arguably, remains), while an acknowledgment of the constructed nature of gender 'roles' offered hope for greater flexibility in those areas of gender relations deemed separate from biology. This said, it is important not to underestimate the theoretical complexity and continuing influence of much of the

classic second wave texts, while simultaneously acknowledging the usefulness of the sex/gender binary to some of feminism's political goals.

As the more politically motivated aspirations of second wave feminism combined with the more philosophical work of feminist psychoanalysis and poststructuralist thinking, the sense of 'gender' as a term which signified all the remaining differences between men and women that could not be contained within the biological emphasis of the term 'sex' appeared to undertheorize the complexities of the social construction of gendered subjectivity. Increasingly it was argued that gender could not be considered independently of factors such as class and race – as if gender roles were somehow both socially constructed *and* inherent and unchangeable – but was instead at least partially created through its interaction with other subject positions.

Building on the work of Michel Foucault, Julia Kristeva, Jacques Lacan, Luce Irigaray, and most commonly associated with Judith Butler, the poststructuralist analysis of gender suggested that it was not only gender that was socially constructed but that it could also be argued that biological sex was discursively constructed too. The popularity of Butler's work in particular simultaneously questioned the sex/gender binary and conflated both terms under the banner of gender in terms of popular discourse.

Butler's notion of gender as 'performative', theorizing gender as a 'doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed', suggested that the intrinsic-ness of gender could be deconstructed to the point at which the very existence of the cultural organizing categories of men and women could be questioned, without neglecting the importance and impact of these social constructions on the subjectivity of gendered individuals or the bodily acts through which these 'performances' are, more often than not, expressed. In the accompanying material for this session we can see several different ways in which drag functions, which may help us to understand some of the features of Butler's performative theory of gender. I have argued in the accompanying essay that the performance of 'straight camp' in rock music demonstrates how the use of camp and drag can be considered in a wider context as both questioning the gender roles it purports to exhibit and simultaneously reinforcing those roles. Unlike Butler's reading of Esther Newton's argument that drag demonstrates a paradoxical display of the disparity of essence with external appearance that 'contradict one another and so displace the entire enactment of gender significations from the discourse of truth and falsity' (p. 137), the use of 'straight camp' could lend itself to a more conventional reading of drag as both parody and usurpation of a feminine identity.

Cate Blanchett's performance as Jude Quinn (representing Bob Dylan) in *I'm Not There* and Rufus Wainwright's recreation of a famous Judy Garland concert (performed only partially in feminine attire) offer more complex examples. Cate Blanchett's performance must be understood as a dramatic performance as well a gender performance. The casting of Blanchett (by director Todd Haynes, whose work

is well known for dealing with issues of gender and sexuality) questions the relationship between the actor's gender and that of the character portrayed and also the relationship between a performative notion of Dylan as celebrity and as a man (inevitably including a gendered notion of Dylan).

Does the casting of Blanchett signify the culmination of the film's wider project, a subjective biopic of Dylan told through the interlocking stories of multiple characters each, in turn, signifying a facet of his personality which questions the notion of the representation, or existence, of Dylan as a coherent subject? Can this questioning of subjectivity be expanded to suggest that Blanchett's performance exhibits the performative nature of gender itself or can it be written off as a 'stunt' which gained both the film and Blanchett wide acclaim for their ability to transcend her 'natural' gender, emphasising her 'original' gender identity through her ability to portray the character *despite* the gap between her gender identity as an actress and that of the character?

Rufus Wainwright's recreation of a legendary Judy Garland concert offers a similar level of complexity. Does Wainwright's performance constitute a drag performance if he is not dressed in women's clothes or does his performance *of* Judy Garland without performing *as* Judy Garland, as Michael Bronski suggests, turn 'Garland into a gay man', thus exposing the potentially arbitrary nature of the relationships between sex, gender, and also sexuality?

All of these examples force us to question these relationships and the possibilities a performative notion of gender offers for a greater understanding of the complexities of gendered subjectivity. While an essential feature of drag is the disparity between the perceived biological sex of the performer and the gender of the role they are performing, it is possible to identify both the potential to support and to subvert traditional gender roles depending on the context in which the performance takes place. What attracts gender theorists, like Butler, to the practice is that it makes explicit, to some degree, the process of construction which takes place in the formation of identity, a process which inevitably destabilizes the idea of a coherent notion of biological sex and shifts the analysis onto a discursively produced notion of gender.

The increasing dominance of 'gender' as the favoured term for the discussion of the social construction and organisation of the categories of men and women followed the example of Butler, amongst many others, in both placing the emphasis on this process of construction (including the construction of biological differences still commonly discussed under the banner of 'sex') and opened up the field to the analysis of a increasing number of subject positions, identities and even objects, which it was shown could be rightly considered gendered. Excellent work on masculinity and sexuality (of which Queer Theory is an exciting and rapidly expanding offshoot) began to appear under the banner of Gender Studies. While some feminists convincingly argue that the emphasis on the constructed nature of gender weakens the political impetus behind much feminist theory, the explosion of work in the field demon-

strates the many more find gender to be a more realistic and nuanced way of theorising a series of subject positions which are inextricably interwoven, than a focus on the more narrowly defined term 'sex'. As R.W. Connell suggests, 'Gender is, above all, a matter of social relations within which individuals and groups act.' Even a brief acknowledgment of the way in which the term 'gender' has gained currency between the publication of *Keywords* and *New Keywords* demonstrates how much closer we have come to focusing on the relations that define our lived experience of gender rather than the differences.

Before any discussion on Butler's or Spivak's text starts, a classification of the field of gender studies should be envisioned by the whole class. Butler's or Spivak's article should be discussed in relation to its content and also to its form.

Discussion points

- Identify different categories, fields and types of feminism.
- Distinguish 'women's movements' from 'feminist movements'.
- How might feminist groups be defined or define themselves through their reactive relation to political systems?
- Adjectives such as 'radical', 'esoteric', 'Marxist', 'magical', 'psychoanalytical', 'autonomous', 'gynocentric', 'individual', 'black', 'eco', 'deconstructive' etc. are used in combination with the term 'feminism'. Discuss the distinguishing attributes of these various strands of feminism.
- Why and how, through such grammatical constructions, is a unity of the field constructed?
- Discuss the particular forms of textual representations chosen by Butler and Spivak to put forward their arguments and explain why they have made these choices.
- Describe the position within gender studies taken by Butler and Spivak. Discuss in relation Barlow, who represents a different approach.
- What effect does Butler's theory of performativity and gender have on the sex/gender binary?
- What role does the body play in the construction of gender?
- What is the difference between performance and performativity?
- In what different ways does drag function in the accompanying material and how does this relate to both performativity and performance?

Following Spivak's quite difficult text, several ways into the Chinese field could be taken. China itself can be regarded as an object of investigation following questions such as:

Discussion points

- Can the Otherness of China be explained in Spivak's terms, i.e. is China part of a subaltern Other?
- Thinking of China not as object but as agent poses the general question of the S/subject in China: how is it (the S/subject) constructed, by whom and by which means? How is Otherness perceived, described, narrated and constructed in China?
- Who are the 'subalterns' in China?
- Who speaks and defines these groups in China?
- How is gender construction related to these Chinese traditions of conceptualization?
- How does Barlow apply Spivak's constructive approach?

Megan M. Ferry writes in her review of Barlow's book:

Borrowing from Spivak, Barlow insists that woman is a 'concept-metaphor without an adequate referent', a term that has been inaccurately or inappropriately named. For Barlow, this catachresis operates not only among the historical thinkers she examines in the book but also among contemporary sinologists who aim to inscribe woman into the annals of history. She challenges her readers to reconsider assumptions about how to approach writing a history of women. By deconstructing, if you will, the various terms for woman in Chinese, *funi*, *nüxing*, *furen* in Chapter 2, 'Theorizing Women', Barlow argues that there is no concrete historical referent behind these terms. What exists are terms that serve political agendas and that prescribe what a woman ought to be in a given historical context while maintaining distinctions between the sexes. What makes women's difference, she notes, is modern scientific reasoning – with its colonialist and imperialist structures intact – rather than Confucian social norms inherited from the past.⁹⁵

This approach should be discussed in the light of Spivak's article.

⁹⁵ Cf. Megan M. Ferry, Review of Tani Barlow, *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism* MCLC online at: <http://mclc.osu.edu/rc/pubs/reviews/ferry2.htm> (24.06.08).

Discussion points

- Is the Confucian tradition, from which Barlow takes her examples, the only or the dominant basis for gender construction in China?
- Do other religious traditions influence gender construction in China?
- Do Chinese female martial arts heroines and women of high social standing fit into Barlow's analysis?

Some of Barlow's historical accounts, which appear much too stereotyped by a Western view, need to be differentiated here. Since Barlow takes a linguistic approach this can be taken as a basis to discuss different Chinese translation terms for modern Western concepts of women, and if possible more Chinese feminist notions should be added into the discussion. In which way are science, biology and politics related to each another in a Chinese Marxist discourse and which discursive place does gender take in that discourse?

Under the previous statist protocol, *funü* allowed for the social production of woman in politics but disallowed any psychology of gender difference. The even older, initial May Fourth literary inscription of *nüxing* made woman the other of man, but proved insufficiently stable to resist statist inscriptions of *funü*. The recuperation of *nüxing*'s heterosexual male/female binary does open up difference as 'femininity', and thus it does provide the potential for feminist resistance (pp. 62–63).

In Barlow's view, is any equivalent of a (Western) feminist approach discernible in China before the '80s?

Material*Gender and Performance:*

Straight Camp and the Homo-social World of Hard Rock:
<http://forum.llc.ed.ac.uk/issue4/burton.html> (22.05.09)

The Rolling Stones, 'Sympathy for the Devil':
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXPYgEgyXOE>

Bob Dylan and Judy Garland: Together Again (Crossdressed) by Michael Bronski:
<http://www.zcommunications.org/zmag/viewArticle/16288> (22.05.09)

Cate Blanchett as Bob Dylan/Jude Quinn:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LzsgRSkf_Kg (22.05.09)

Rufus Wainwright sings Judy Garland: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UNp8ppYFMI>
 (22.05.09)

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Inflection 3

We proceed to the third shift, from opposing two different cultures such as China and 'the West', to opposing different cultures within 'the West'. The whole Keywords approach is inspired by the discovery that people of the same linguistic and national community 'just don't speak the same language', as Williams noted when he returned from his military service to academia in 1945⁹⁶ – because they belong to different classes, milieus or generations. Our last four sessions will, therefore, provide the opportunity to discover an analogous relationship of difference which we have critically reflected upon in previous sessions, not only within different classes and generations but also within academic discourses led by members of the same class and generation. We now proceed further with our critical exercises and reflections on the applicability of cultural studies theories to different contexts in the realm of European discourse. We have chosen terms – 'text', 'representation', 'art' and 'reality' – which relate to the embodiment of cultural objects, touching upon the diversity of cultural forms of expression and the many different theories explaining the relationship between mode of expression and what is expressed.

⁹⁶ Cf. Raymond Williams, *Keywords*, NY: Oxford UP, 1985, p. 11.



Xu Bing "China", designed for the Asia Link project, Edinburgh

Session 12:

Text

Set Texts

- KW ‘-’; NKW ‘text’, KC ‘text’.
- Ricoeur, Paul. ‘The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text’, in: id., *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*, edited, translated and introduced by John B. Thompson, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, Ch. 8, pp. 197–221.
- Adorno, Theodor W. ‘Culture Industry’, in: Max Horkheimer and T. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, tr. Cummings, London: Verso, 1979, pp. 120–67. Repr. NY: Continuum, 1997. Repr. partly in: Lyn Spillman (ed.), *Cultural Sociology*, Blackwell, 2001, p. 39. Repr. also partly in: Craig Calhoun et al. (eds), *Classical Sociological Theory*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 2007, p. 144. URLs: <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/adorno/1944/culture-industry.htm>, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/2283059/Culture-Industry>, <http://home.uchicago.edu/%7Eyavitzn/excerpt.pdf>, (all 22.05.09). Other translation: ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noer, transl. Edmund Jephcott, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002, pp. 94–136.

Although absent in Williams’ *Keywords*, the concept of ‘text’ has been at the centre of all major methodological and theoretical debates and has been part of all paradigm shifts in the humanities in general, especially in cultural studies. These debates and shifts have led to an explosion of new text definitions and models, each reflecting a fresh approach towards the main object of analysis: the text. Semiological (Lotman, Barthes, Derrida), structuralist (Saussure, Jakobson, Todorov), philological and media-theoretical (Hoy, McGann), hermeneutical (Bakhtin, Ricoeur) or general cultural studies (Assmann, Geertz) models of texts have been developed, mostly in the 20th century, which are reflected in Bennett’s *New Keywords* and, in brief, in Edgar and Sedgwick’s *Key Concepts in Cultural Theory*.

Discussion points

- Why is there no entry on 'text' in Williams' *Keywords*?
- What are the distinctive features of the areas of cultural studies from which different approaches towards 'text' have arisen?

Ricoeur's theory of 'text' takes a position – between structuralist decoding and hermeneutical understanding, between a grammatical and a psychological approach – which is unique in the range of text theories: he incorporates the poststructuralist notion of an open logic of the text, while at the same time taking into account the pragmatics of the communication context, as in hermeneutical theories. This combination leads to a dialectical process of meaning construction through understanding (making sense) and explaining (validating), so formulating a model of a modernized hermeneutics.

Discussion points

- Make a diagrammatic representation of the main arguments proposed by Ricoeur.
- What is the relationship made by Ricoeur between language, discourse and text?
- Compare the definitions of 'discourse' given by Ricoeur and by Foucault.
- Outline Ricoeur's four main oppositional features of discourse and language, and the four corresponding features for text as a discourse fixed through writing.
- Explain these points in relation to social action.
- How does Ricoeur distinguish the movement from understanding to explaining, as opposed to the movement from explaining to understanding.
- Discuss the innovative aspects of Ricoeur's theory in a historical perspective. What was strikingly new in his approach? On what grounds is Ricoeur's text model criticized by contemporary cultural studies theorists?

Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* was written in a very different historical situation and follows a different political programme from Ricoeur's theory. Adorno's chapter on 'Culture Industry' criticizes, from a Marxist perspective, the function of culture in late capitalism as economics-guided mass consumerism.

Discussion points

- Adorno does not talk about text directly and so how do we infer what his understanding of text is?
- Bearing in mind Adorno's way of relating content and form in our set text, identify examples of relationship of content and form in various text genres such as poetry, dialogue, discursive essay etc.
- Expand on the relationship between content and form required in academic texts i.e. structure of argument, absence of ambiguity, references etc.

Paralleling the practice of the previous sessions of applying Western theory to Chinese contexts, now evaluate the applicability of Ricoeur's theory to Adorno's 'Culture Industry'.

Discussion points

- How do these two very different texts explain each other?
- Analyse Adorno's writing style and how he formulates his arguments (as far as may be judged from English translation).
- Discuss the openness of Adorno's text in terms of Ricoeur's text theory.
- How well do Ricoeur's definitions of understanding and explaining apply to Adorno's text?
- Do Adorno and Ricoeur have the same understanding of what a text should be?
- In his *Notes to Literature* (publ. 1958) Adorno has expanded on his philosophy of the openness of text-meaning and has demanded active reading as a philosophical principle and cultural value. How do you think Ricoeur would respond to these ideas?
- Within the great topical frame 'Dialectic of Enlightenment', how do the chapters in Horkheimer and Adorno's book relate to each other? And how do parts within chapters relate to each other?
- How does Adorno express his philosophy and analysis through his style of writing?
- How do we interpret the fragmentary and suggestive style, which for understanding requires active reading and a certain degree of empathy derived from similar experience?
- How does this affect Adorno's language? A list of oppositional binary concepts should be compiled out of the text.
- How does Adorno's style affect the translatability of his work?

Adorno is highly admired by German intellectuals, less so by the English-speaking intellectual community. One of the major issues of reading Adorno in English is the problem of translation.

For those who have the linguistic ability to make the comparison, now take the opening sentences of ‘Culture Industry’:

Die soziologische Meinung, daß der Verlust des Halts in der objektiven Religion, die Auflösung der letzten vorkapitalistischen Residuen, die technische und soziale Differenzierung und das Spezialistentum in kulturelles Chaos übergegangen sei, wird alltäglich Lügen gestraft. Kultur heute schlägt alles mit Ähnlichkeit. Film, Radio, Magazine machen ein System aus. Jede Sparte ist einstimmig in sich und alle zusammen. Die ästhetischen Manifestationen noch der politischen Gegensätze verkünden gleichermaßen das Lob des stählernen Rhythmus.⁹⁷

The following two English versions provide concrete examples of the difficulty of translating Adorno’s German:

The sociological theory that the loss of the support of objectively established religion, the dissolution of the last remnants of pre-capitalism, together with technological and social differentiation or specialisation, have led to cultural chaos is disproved every day; for culture now impresses the same stamp on everything. Films, radio and magazines make up a system which is uniform as a whole and in every part. Even the aesthetic activities of political opposites are one in their enthusiastic obedience to the rhythm of the iron system.⁹⁸

The sociological view that the loss of support from objective religion and the disintegration of the last precapitalist residues, in conjunction with technical and social differentiation and specialization, have given rise to cultural chaos is refuted by daily experience. Culture today is infecting everything with sameness. Film, radio, and magazines form a system. Each branch of culture is unanimous within itself and all are

⁹⁷ Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, ‘Kulturindustrie. Aufklärung als Massenbetrug’, in: Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente*, (orig. New York: Social Studies Ass, 1944, Frankfurt: Fischer, 1969) Frankfurt: Fischer, 1984, pp. 108–50, p. 108. URL: <http://www.braungardt.com/Philosophy/Adorno/DA.htm>, (22.05.09).

⁹⁸ Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, ‘Culture Industry’, in: Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, transl. Cummings, London: Verso, 1979, pp. 120–67, p. 120.

unanimous together. Even the aesthetic manifestations of political opposites proclaim the same inflexible rhythm.⁹⁹

Discussion points

- What happens to Adorno's text once the linguistic conceptual frame of the English language is applied to it?
- Given the characteristics of Adorno's text described above, discuss how his work is vulnerable to loss of meaning in English translation.
- Bearing in mind the problems of translating Adorno adequately, consider whether translation should involve imparting important aspects of linguistic style and form which in the original are germane to content.
- Compare the problematic aspects of translating Adorno to the challenges involved in applying Western keywords in the Chinese context as discussed in previous sessions.

Further reading

- Adorno, Theodor W. 'Scientific Experience of an European Scholar in America', in: Donald Fleming, Bernard Bailyn (eds), *The Intellectual Migration. Europe and America, 1930–1960*, Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1969, pp. 338–70.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. 'The Problem of the Text in Linguistics, Philology, and the Human Sciences: An Experiment in Philosophical Analysis', in: Vern W. McGee (transl.), Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (eds), *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, University of Texas Press Slavic Series 8. 1979 (Russian), Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986, pp. 103–31 (English).
- Barthes, Roland. 'From Work to Text', (tr. J.V. Harari), in: id., *Textual Strategies*, Cornell UP 1979 (first pub. 1971). See also: <http://evans-experientialism.freewebspace.com/barthes05.htm> and <http://homepage.newschool.edu/%7Eequigleyt/vcs/barthes-wt.html> (22.05.09)
- Cerquiglini, Bernard. *In Praise of the Variant: A Critical History of Philology*. (First publ. Paris, 1989, tr. Betsy Wing), Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.
- Geertz, Clifford. 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture', in: id., *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, New York: Basic Books, 1973, pp. 3–30.
- Kammer, Stephan and Roger Lüdeke (eds). *Texte zur Theorie des Textes*. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2005.
- Landow, George P. *Hypertext: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992.

⁹⁹ Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, 'The Culture Industry', in: Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noer, transl. Edmund Jephcott, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002, pp. 94–136, p. 94.

Lotman, Jurij (Yuri) M. *The Structure of the Artistic Text*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1977.

McGann, Jerome J. *The Textual Condition*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991.

Session 13

Art

Set Texts

- KW 'art'; NKW 'art', KC 'artworld'.
- Adorno, T.W. 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception', in: Simon During (ed.), *The Cultural Studies Reader*, London: Routledge, 2007, pp. 29–43.
- Benjamin, Walter. *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, in: Evans and Hall (eds), *Visual Culture: The Reader*, Sage Publications, 1999, pp. 72–79.

This session will look at how the concept of 'art' developed throughout the 20th century. We will discuss some prominent debates concerning the meaning and value of art, and relate these to the contemporary landscape of art. We will look specifically at the role the industrial revolution and later technological developments have played in our understanding of what constitutes art.

The session will look in depth at a number of prominent and influential movements in art, and discuss why these happened when they did, what their meaning and influence has been, and how they challenge established notions of 'creativity', 'the artist', and art itself.

'Art' is both a relatively straightforward and simultaneously complicated term. 'But is it art?' and 'Art is in the eye of the beholder' are familiar questions. Over the course of the 20th century, the notion of art changed dramatically, which is reflected in the older and newer *Keywords*. Whereas Williams is concerned mainly with the difference between the *fine arts* and the *useful arts*, the revised *Keywords*, to a greater extent, expresses the difficulty of actually defining art. European society at the turn of the 19th century was a site of rapid industrial and technological growth. Media techniques such as the emerging fields of advertising and propaganda were disseminating the same ideas to large populations, mass transportation meant that people were able to move around on a much greater scale and come into contact with more and more people, and mass production on a large scale meant that people were increasingly

consuming the same products. New technologies were also introducing radical changes in artistic technique and the understanding of art's nature and function. In his extremely influential text *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, the German philosopher Walter Benjamin argued that new technologies such as photography and cinema had destroyed what he called the 'aura' of the artwork. By 'aura', he meant the trait of authenticity and uniqueness that constituted the artwork's distance from everyday life, the notion that art was something that required contemplation and immersion on the part of the spectator. Technology meant that art could be reproduced and consumed by the masses, which Benjamin saw as a democratising feature. Benjamin envisioned a time when art was no longer reserved for the elite, but could be enjoyed, discussed and interpreted by anyone.

In opposition to Benjamin's optimistic view of the politically liberating qualities of mass art was Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's argument that mass culture functions as a factory, pacifying the masses and feeding them what they think they want. Influenced by Marxism, Adorno and Horkheimer saw the emerging popular arts as an elitist means to keep the people 'happy', passive, and consuming, all for the purpose of keeping the capitalist wheels rolling.

These debates as to the function and meaning of art took place alongside a rapid development of what constituted art itself. On a basic level, technology challenged the most established role of art, that of a mimetic representation of the world. The invention of photography apparatus was crucial in this respect. Whereas before, the task of painting had been to depict the world, from portraiture to landscapes, now there was a machine that could do the job much better and more accurately than any artist. Painters thus had to reconsider their role and the purpose of their art. They began experimenting with formal techniques such as perspective, colour and shape, questioning the idea of the artist as creative genius and challenging established ideas about the purpose art held in society. Over a relatively brief time, the idea and realm of art changed profoundly.

Discussion points

- What makes something a work of art?
- Can a work of art be created by several individuals, or must there always be one 'creative genius'?
- What is the relationship between machines, technology, and art?

As in the previous session, we find two extremely different approaches and evaluations of art in its contemporary context, although Adorno and Benjamin belonged to

the same linguistic and academic community. The fundamental differences between these two authors should be critically discussed.

Discussion points

- Adorno has been criticized for being too negative in his approach. Is it possible to formulate its constructive aspects?
- Taking Adorno not only as an art critic and scholar of musical theory but also as a philosopher, discuss whether the concept of truth plays any role in his understanding of art?
- Reconstruct the respective utopian vision of Adorno and Benjamin.

Finally the two positions of Adorno and Benjamin should be related to our own contemporary understanding of art production. Given new modes of mass media and entertainment such as the internet and digital art, the discussion that follows should draw out how the theories under consideration apply to the contemporary context.

Discussion points

- Which of the two analyses applies best to our own contemporary situation?
- Is Adorno's view out-of-date, or conversely does it apply even more sharply to today's culture industry?
- In Benjamin's terms, can we use 'reproduction' in reference to digital artworks?
- Further considering digital artwork, what constitutes an original? Is there an 'aura', or how could an aura be constructed?
- How do we interpret performance arts in Benjamin's terms?
- When we think about music – is the original artwork musical notation? What, then, is the music?
- If the musical notation is considered to be the original work of art, does it therefore follow that musical performance can be thought of as technical reproduction?
- As a group, discuss whether you share a common understanding of the contemporary situation. Is there a consensus on whether or not Adorno and Benjamin's theories on cultural production can be usefully applied to present-day political and economic circumstances, digital technologies and mass media? Ask yourselves whether they are still adequate analytical tools. Or have they been rendered anachronistic and redundant in contemporary contexts, and do these contexts require fresh critical theories?

If the group discussion yields no consensus or commonly held interpretation of the situation of which we have as much information and experience as possible – our own situation – what does that suggest regarding the application to China of decades-old Western theory (Williams, Foucault and other important Cultural Studies texts)? The question arises: Which China?

Visual Material

Stills/Images from various artists/movements:

Cubism

Dada

Futurism

Expressionism

Bauhaus

Popart

YBAs (Young British Artists)

Further reading

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. London: Pimlico, 1999.

Burger, Peter. *Theory of the Avant-Garde*. University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

Huyssen, Andreas. *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture and Post-Modernism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Video

YouTube video: Walter Benjamin (art412): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F53l0m-mpsk>
(22.05.09)

Session 14

Representation

Set Texts

- *KW* 'representative'; *NKW* 'representation', *KC* 'representation'.
- Barthes, Roland. 'Myth Today', in: Evans, Jessica and Stuart Hall (eds), *Visual Culture: A Reader*, London: SAGE Publications, 1999, pp. 51–58.
- Hall, Stuart. 'The Work of Representation', in: id. (ed.), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, London: SAGE Publication, 1997, pp. 51–63.

This session discusses the main theoretical approaches to the complex keyword 'representation' and the basic problems related to theories of representation and their respective applications.

At its most basic level, and providing the most obvious link between the many uses of the word and its cognates identified in *Keywords* and *New Keywords*, 'representation' concerns the process of one thing standing in for another.

In *New Keywords*, Freedman identifies three interrelated and overlapping senses in which this 'standing in for' are most commonly theorized:

1. In *political* terms, representation commonly refers to the function of 'speaking for' undertaken by the appropriate representative, in which an elected official or member of the legal profession will stand in for their client throughout the democratic or legislative process, making arguments or decisions on their behalf.
2. In the *cognitive* sense, most commonly used in psychology, representation refers to a hypothetical internal cognitive symbol which stands in for an external reality.
3. In the *symbolic* sense, representation commonly refers to the signs and systems which people use to stand for, and consequently comprehend, the world around them.

It is this third sense which has become the most important, and the most widely theorized, in the field of literary, media and cultural studies.

Focusing on this symbolic sense, Stuart Hall identifies language as central to the process of representation, suggesting that, 'Representation is the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. It is the link between concepts and language which enables us to *refer* to either the "real" world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events' (p. 17). Here Hall is using the term 'language' to include 'Any sound, word, image or object which functions as a sign, and is organized with other signs into a system which is capable of carrying and expressing meaning' (p. 19); his use of the word 'system' here is key both to the way in which representation has been theorized as a process in itself and to suggesting methods by which specific representations can be analysed.

Of the 'two systems' of representation that Hall identifies, namely the conceptual map which consists of our mental representations of real world objects and the system of signs 'arranged and organized into various languages' which stand in for these concepts, it is the system of signs that has prompted the most research in the field of cultural studies.

Drawing on *semiotics* and *structuralist* analysis, much work on representation has focused on the systematic elements of language and the effect that these have on the flexibility of representations. By analysing any of the various language forms identified by Hall as a system of signs, signifiers and signifieds with theoretically arbitrary relationships between the three, semiotics creates a method for analysing the way in which meaning is produced in culture. Once the relationship between the signified object (Hall and Freedman both use the example of trees) with the signs we use to stand in for this signified (in written and spoken language the word 'TREE') has been identified, we have begun to analyse one of the most common forms of representation in our culture: the standing in of words for concepts. This structural linguistic approach, pioneered by Ferdinand de Saussure, has been built upon by semioticians, most notably in the work of Roland Barthes, to allow analysis of the meaning produced by all cultural objects involved in various processes of representation. Barthes' work on the *denotative* and *connotative* levels of meaning in culture demonstrated that images, activities and objects can also produce cultural meaning on a number of levels. Clothes, for example, have a physical function but can also produce social, ideological or cultural meanings (uniforms, an obvious and deliberate example, can stand for power, authority or expertise).

In more recent years work on representation has shifted away from the somewhat confining methods of semiotic analysis and its focus on language systems, and has, following the influential work of Michel Foucault, turned its attention to the wider concept of discourse. While Foucault's concern with systems of knowledge and

power and how they effected cultural representation took language and text into account, as had the semioticians, his concept of discourse also considered the wider cultural and historical context as essential to the production of meaning. In a Foucauldian analysis a uniform (the white coat worn by doctors, for example) would not connote power or authority on its own but would do so as one part of a wider discourse which takes in the historical, cultural, scientific and political contexts of the medical profession in which it is worn.

Both of these complementary approaches reject an *imitative* reading of representation – which would suggest that language and discourse reflect accurately that which they stand in for – in favour of a *constructionist* approach, which implies that the meaning of what is being represented is constructed in and through language and discourse. Consequently, questions of power and identity have become central to the study of representations in cultural studies as theorists have attempted to analyse the dissemination of value-laden representations and the effect they have in shaping the reality they purport to stand in for.

In a constructionist analysis of the representation of gender, for example, it is not simply a matter of analysing how men or women are represented in discourse and how well this reflects an external reality of men and women which exists outside of these representations, rather it is an analysis of the way in which representations of men or women help to produce the meaning of these identities. It is here we can identify ‘the degree of possible overlap between *representative* and *representation* in their political and artistic senses’ that Williams ponders in the original *Keywords*. If representation is, at the most basic level, the ‘standing in’ of one thing for another, it begs the question of whether greater power to produce meaning resides with the represented or the representation. As the media has become an ever more potent cultural force, the process and politics of representation have been placed at the centre of cultural studies and continues to inspire some of the most interesting and important work in the field.

In the accompanying material we have several examples of how the Olympic Games have been used to represent different nations throughout their modern history. Representation functions in various ways, and at various levels, in all of these examples and a combination of both the semiotic and the discursive approach can help us to understand these complex processes.

A semiotic reading of the film of the 1936 Berlin Olympics would concentrate on the way in which it uses the Olympics to signify the strength and impressiveness of Nazi Germany. The pomp and circumstance of the opening ceremony, the neo-classical architecture of the stadium, the national teams shown giving the Nazi salute to Adolf Hitler and the enthusiastic crowd’s constant clapping and cheering all signify a myth of strength and popularity and of a unity between Nazi Germany and the rest of the world. A discursive reading of the film, however, would include a reading of the text itself as a representational practice in its own right. Questions about the

authorship of the text (the director Leni Riefenstahl was closely allied to the Nazi regime) and the meaning and history of the Olympics as a representational practice would be added to a reading of what the film itself signifies, in order to open up a discussion of the power and politics of the film. As an example of propaganda film-making, it could be argued that this text provides us with a relatively pure example of the way in which representation is used to construct the reality it purports to represent. An American documentary of the same games would doubtless focus on the multiple triumphs of the black athlete Jesse Jackson rather than on the impressive opening ceremony and other similar displays of Nazi power. Which of these would be closer to the 'truth' of the Berlin Olympics of 1936, or whether they would both serve to question the idea of such a 'truth', could be considered the central question in the study of representation.

A similar combination of semiotic and discursive approaches to the practice of representation may help us to untangle the preceding examples of the news stories surrounding the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics of 2008 and the release of the logo for the London 2012 games. While the decision taken to fake parts of the Beijing ceremony and the unveiling of the controversial 2012 logo are obviously attempts to represent the host cities and nations in a certain way, the way in which they are discussed in the news reports (see accompanying material) is also an example of representational practice. A combination of both approaches to representation discussed here may help us to unpick the complexities of the multiple, interlinked representational practices (including design, performance, reportage, documentary among many others) surrounding the Olympics, as an example of the way in which the world around us is both shown and shaped by the practice of representation.

Discussion points

- Is it possible to judge the validity of a representation through its relation to a reality that exists outside of representation?
- How can a semiotic reading of representation help us to understand the construction of racial, national or gendered identities?
- How would a semiotic and a discursive reading of one of the above texts differ?
- How are the various nations represented in the accompanying material and how is this related to sport and the Olympics as a representational practice?

Material

Representing the Nation at the Olympics:

1936 Berlin Olympics Opening Ceremony:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sj5UximeuoU> (22.05.09)

Olympics: Child singer revealed as fake:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2008/aug/12/olympics2008.china1> (22.05.09)

Opening ceremony fireworks computer generated:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/othersports/olympics/2534499/Beijing-Olympic-2008-opening-ceremony-giant-firework-footprints-faked.html> (22.05.09)

London 2012 logo released:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/other_sports/olympics_2012/6718243.stm (22.05.09)

Further Reading

Dyer, Richard. *The Matter of Images: Essays on Representations*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Hall, Stuart (ed.). *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1997.

Mitchell, W.T.J. 'Representation', in: Lentricchia, Frank and Thomas Mclaughlin (eds), *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, London: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Owens, Craig. *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power and Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

Video

YouTube video: 'Representation and the Media' featuring Stuart Hall:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTzMsPqssOY> (22.05.09)

Session 15

Reality

Set Texts

- *KW* ‘realism’; *NKW* ‘--’, *KC* ‘realism’
- Baudrillard, Jean. ‘Simulacra and Simulations’, in: Mark Poster (ed.), *Jean Baudrillard, Selected Writings*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988, Ch. 7, pp. 166–84.
- Poster, Mark. ‘Postmodern Virtualities’, in: Mike Featherstone and Roger Burrows (eds), *Cyberspace/ Cyberbodies/ Cyberpunk*, London: SAGE Publications, 1995, pp. 79–95.

This session will discuss various forms of realism and media representations of reality, and question how our contemporary culture can be seen in relation to Baudrillard’s notion of the simulacra. We will look at the development throughout human history of various techniques for representing reality, as well as for creating illusions of reality, and discuss the meaning of these and the differences between them.

The session will also consider in depth the argument that contemporary culture suffers from a ‘crisis of reality’, and discuss whether there is merit to the claim that new media technologies have brought forth paradigmatic cultural changes to our understanding of what is real.

Reality, although at first glance seemingly self-evident, is one of the most problematic and contested terms in the humanities. In the original philosophical sense it is treated through the ontological problem posed by Plato, questioning how we can assert the absolute and objective existence of universals.

Williams, in his original *Keywords*, traces the development of the term from questions of reality to questions of realism, where this ontological issue has been superseded by a question of the relationship between appearance and reality, namely realism. Realism refers to the various styles and techniques a specific form or medium uses to convey the sense that what is being represented is real. There are many forms of realism. For instance, in film studies, an opposition can be drawn between ‘transparent’ realism and the attempt to infer realism through foregrounding the technical

means through by which images have been captured. The theorist André Bazin, a proponent of transparent realism, argued that the camera should provide nothing but a ‘window on reality’ and that its aesthetic lay in its ability to give an objective rendering of the world. For Bazin this was a political act; the camera has the ability to reveal ‘true’ reality. His theories were at odds with stylistic norms of ‘Hollywood realism’, in which editing, montage and sound effects were and are used to create a seamless illusion of an internally consistent world. Both Bazinian objectivity and Hollywood realism nevertheless rely upon the viewer to ‘forget’ that what is being viewed is mediated through a camera. In opposition to this is the documentary style, in which grainy images, shaky hand-held camerawork and low-quality sound infer the impression of reality, that a camera just happened to be present when an occurrence took place. This is a technique that is often found in non-fiction, such as television news reporting. Using a documentary style in fiction thus relies upon the viewer’s pre-established understanding of the style as representing something ‘real’. A recent movement to utilize this aesthetic is the celebrated Dogme 95 group, originating in Denmark, and famous for films such as Lars von Trier’s *The Idiots* and Thomas Vinterberg’s *Festen (The Celebration)*.

The question concerning realism was considered important in the post-war decades, but became less prominent as other academic concerns gained ground. The revised *Keywords* does not contain an entry on either ‘reality’ or ‘realism’, telling of a field in which the study of representation and discourse had become more prominent than original concerns around questions of objective existence and ontology. However, in more recent scholarship, the question of reality has re-emerged, especially in relation to new and pervasive media technologies. Specifically the theorist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard has become (in)famous for his notion of hyperreality, arguing that in our advanced media society, the boundaries between reality and representation have become so blurred that there is no reality outside of representation itself.

Discussion points

- What is the difference between reality and realism?
- Is it possible to truly create a representation of reality? What might be some of the consequences of such a representation?
- How have new media technologies, such as virtual reality, the internet, computer and video games, changed our idea and understanding of reality?

Visual Material

Stills/ images from various pre-20th century illusion/ immersion technologies;

The Pompeii frescoes

Baroque ceiling panoramas.

Excerpts from Truffaut's *Les 400 Coups* (French New Wave) and Vinterberg's *Festen*.

Virtual Reality and telepresence: *the CAVE, the Telegarden*.

The Uncanny Valley: *Emily* (Image Metrics).

Further Reading

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Jerslev, Anna. *Realism and 'Reality' in Film and Media*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2002.

Virilio, Paul. *Open Sky*. London/NY: Verso, 1997.

Video

Various YouTube videos involving Jean Baudrillard

Postface

At the end we find a fundamental dissimilarity of keywords of cultural studies. The keywords do not appear as a set of terms reflecting a unified perspective or even slightly similar questions. The great diversity of the 15 central keywords explored in the course becomes visible in the broad range of problems caused by the applications of these keywords to the Chinese fields. Some applications of Western keywords prove difficult because they are applied to Chinese cultural phenomena which appear similar but are embedded in an entirely different set of analytical terms, intellectual discourses and interests which have developed out of other historical conditions and experiences. Others do not work in the Chinese context because they reflect a Western geographical setting that can not be taken over to China. In other cases keywords express specific historical experiences or socio-political conditions that do not correspond to Chinese history and socio-political structure. Some keywords in their application fail to gather and reveal subtle yet fundamental differences in seemingly similar cultural formations and miss important characteristics due to their precipitant identifications. Others again are based on philosophical or religious notions which do not exist in China. Keywords responding to these primary notions lack a cultural basis of meaningful application in China. Accordingly, cultural studies theories aiming at deconstructing these primary notions make no sense in the Chinese context nor do the keywords which they employ because they have no analytical value. Some keywords seem to suit the Chinese cultural context even better than the Western, yet, they are often redundant since the Chinese language provides a much more differentiated terminology for the particular Chinese formation of this similar phenomenon and simply doesn't need these terms. Even cultural studies theories on seemingly universal keywords such as 'body' and 'gender' start off from such strong cultural assumptions that they are hardly applicable even to modern Chinese understandings of these 'universals'. The fact that most of the cultural studies keywords are now translated into Chinese and are used as central terms in contemporary intellectual debates does not prove that they are applicable to the Chinese context, it just proves that the translated terms fulfil a particular function in the debates which has to be proven in each case. The last four sessions show that some keyword-notions even among Western cultures and dialects – and in fact even within the same cultural and linguistic community – prove to be hardly compatible. The same applies to the Chinese discourses which make use of cultural studies keywords. The situation of a highly diverse and complicated theoretical discourse employing keywords with very distinct meanings, being translated into another set of cultural assumptions, linguistic notions, socio-political conditions, historical experiences, intellectual interests and institutions leads to an

even greater diversity of notions for these keywords. This situation is so extremely complex that no cultural studies theory has been developed to date which is able to cover all the multilayered facets of this quite chaotic process. We can though be sure that we should be very careful when applying keywords of Western cultural studies to the Chinese field and should on the other hand not easily identify Chinese translations of these words with the meanings we would give to them in our context. Yet however, it is exactly these difficulties which animate the transcultural discussion with our Chinese colleagues and make it so exciting and enriching.

Essay topics

1. Discuss the Chinese term '*wenhua*' against the background of different historical, cultural and methodological approaches to the concept of 'culture'.
2. Present and differentiate Chinese approaches to cultural studies. How might Chinese Cultural Studies emerge as an alternative to Western Cultural Studies?
3. What role does Marxism play in Western and in Chinese Cultural Studies?
4. Analyze the shift from a sinocentric perspective to a perspective of Re-Orientalism and Occidentalism.
5. Use Homi Bhabha's 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse' and Rebecca E. Karl's 'Recognizing Colonialism: The Philippines and Revolution' to discuss the concept of postcolonialism and hybridity in China. (Further Reading: Barlow, 'Colonialism's Career in Postwar China Studies' and Zhang Kuan, 'The Predicament of Postcolonial Criticism in Contemporary China'.)
6. Discuss the concept of 'public sphere' in the Chinese context using Benedict Anderson's 'Introduction' and 'The Origins of National Consciousness', and Frederic Wakeman's 'The Civil Society and Public Sphere Debate: Western Reflections on Chinese Political Culture'.
7. Analyze the relationship of socio-political and individual body in China using Thomas Ots' article 'The Silenced Body – The Expressive Leib: On the Dialectic of Mind and Life in Chinese Carthatic Healing' together with those of Anagnost and Lévi.
8. Are there different discourses of the visual in the West and in China? Start from Rampley ('Visual Culture and the Meanings of Culture'), Mitchell ('Showing, Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture') and Landsberger ('Role Modelling in Mainland China During the Four Modernizations' Era: The Visual Dimension').
9. Try to apply structuralist theories to Chinese tradition, taking into account Chinese traditional theories on the structure of the cosmos, of nature, and of Chinese writing such as Chow Tse-Tsung, 'Ancient Chinese Views on Literature, the Tao, and Their Relationship'.
10. Critically analyze the main arguments of the claim that we find the idea of deconstruction in the Chinese tradition, especially in *Zhuangzi* and Chan-Buddhism (Wang Youxuan, *Buddhism and Deconstruction*), and that the European idea of deconstruction was heavily inspired by Eastern thought (Haun Saussy., 'Outside the Parenthesis').

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Videos

- 1936 Berlin Olympics Opening Ceremony:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sj5UximeuoU> (22.05.09)
 Bob Dylan and Judy Garland: Together Again (Crossdressed) by Michael Bronski:
<http://www.zcommunications.org/zmag/viewArticle/16288>
 Cate Blanchett as Bob Dylan/Jude Quinn:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LzsgRSkf_Kg (22.05.09)
 London 2012 logo released:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/other_sports/olympics_2012/6718243.stm (22.05.09)
 Olympics: Child singer revealed as fake:
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2008/aug/12/olympics2008.china1> (22.05.09)
 Opening ceremony fireworks computer generated:
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/othersports/olympics/2534499/Beijing-Olympic-2008-opening-ceremony-giant-firework-footprints-faked.html> (22.05.09)
 Rufus Wainwright sings Judy Garland: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UNp8ppYFMI> (22.05.09)
 Straight Camp and the Homo-social World of Hard Rock:
<http://forum.llc.ed.ac.uk/issue4/burton.html> (22.05.09)
 The Rolling Stones, Sympathy For The Devil:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXPYgEgyXOE> (22.05.09)
 Various YouTube videos involving Jean Baudrillard
 YouTube video: 'Representation and the Media' featuring Stuart Hall:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTzMsPqssOY> (22.05.09)
 YouTube video: Walter Benjamin (art412): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5310m-mpsk> (22.05.09)

This publication reflects from within the perspective of Western cultural studies upon the following inherent problems. Western cultural studies claim to be universal but nevertheless have developed their theories almost exclusively with Western source material and concerns. Yet, even within the Western academic discourse, a multiplicity of strands have emerged within the discipline and the significant divergence between national cultural studies therefore shows no unified body of cultural studies. With its enormous impact on Western academia cultural studies are now being adapted to non-Western academic traditions, generating an even greater diversity of cultural studies approaches. While acknowledging that multiplicity is inherent to the nature of cultural studies, it is our contention that Chinese cultural studies cannot easily be subsumed under the umbrella of Western cultural studies. The „Keywords Re-Oriented“ course critically reflects upon Western theoretical approaches towards culture through an examination of the application of Western analytical keywords to the non-Western culture of China, testing theories and notions of culture generated in the West in their application to the Chinese field.



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