

The Concept of the Sinophone

SHU-MEI SHIH

THE SPECTACULAR RISE OF CHINA AS A SUPERPOWER PERHAPS ONLY NOW COMPELS US TO RECALIBRATE EXISTING DISCOURSES OF EMPIRE

and postcoloniality, but China has been an empire in the modern sense since the mid-eighteenth century, when it conquered vast lands north and west of “China proper.”¹ This history has been largely hidden from view because of two unacknowledged obsessions: the fetishization of Western empires over other empires and the prevailing discourse of Chinese victimhood at the hands of Western empires. The rise of China would not have caught so many by surprise if our vision had not been persistently clouded by our privileging of the oceanic (i.e., Western) mode of colonial expansion, which paradoxically centered the West as the most deserving object of critical attention and intellectual labor. It also would not have been a surprise if we had looked back at the Manchu conquests of inner Asia, which present-day China largely inherited and consolidated in a continuous colonial project. Postcolonial theory as we know it, particularly its critiques of orientalism, may prove irrelevant or even complicit when we consider how the positions of Chinese intellectuals critical of Western imperialism and orientalism easily slip into an unreflective nationalism, whose flip side may be a new imperialism. The Chinese discourse of victimhood suffered at the hands of Western empires, often bordering on victimology, has effectively displaced this unreflective nationalism, even though that victim experience had a limited scope and duration in the imperial history of the Manchu empire and its successors, the Republic of China and the People’s Republic of China. The entity we know today as China has inherited or recolonized the vast majority of the territories conquered by the Manchu, such as Tibet, Xinjiang (literally, “new dominion”), and Inner Mongolia, not to mention Manchuria, more than doubling “China proper.” Now when China proclaims its supreme concern for “territorial integrity” from a putatively postcolonial standpoint against earlier Western imperialist aggressions, it is simultaneously making imperial claims on the territories annexed from the Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Mongolians.

SHU-MEI SHIH is professor of comparative literature, Asian languages and cultures, and Asian American studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her most recent works include *The Creolization of Theory* (Duke UP, 2011) and *Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader* (Columbia UP, forthcoming), both as a coeditor.

We need to bring to light the long-standing but marginalized critical tradition that critiques the hegemony and homogeneity of “Chineseness” now more than ever.² Writers and artists on the multifarious margins in China and outside have critiqued China-centrism and the hegemonic call of Chineseness, considered as colonial impositions or arbiters of identity. This critical tradition has been subject to ideological censorship in China, but, surprisingly, it has confronted a worse fate outside China: invisibility and insignificance, despite its powerful articulations. Lingering leftist romanticism about socialist China in the United States along with the political and economic need of the hypercapitalist state to appease China has dealt this tradition a soft blow: ignoring it has made it irrelevant.

Across ethnic minority communities in China, which are non-Han and hence not deemed authentically Chinese and for which the so-called Chinese language—the language of the Han, Hanyu—is a colonialist imposition, being “Chinese” is often merely a designation of nationality on one’s passport, not an index to one’s culture, ethnicity, or language. Ethnic minority cultural workers—there are fifty-five officially recognized minorities in China—have positioned themselves on the margins of Chineseness for a long time, as long as their communities have been incorporated into China. There are many internal colonies in China, some euphemistically called autonomous areas, whose boundaries are arbitrary and whose autonomy is largely in name only. The withering of local cultures, languages, and religious practices is there for all to witness, as in recent unrest in Tibet and Xinjiang. In southwestern China, entire ethnic villages today have been designated tourist villages, where the local inhabitants dress up as authentic natives and their homes are open for the pleasure of tourists. There can be no more extreme commodification of everyday life than when a person’s ethnic self and

everyday activities, such as eating, walking, drinking, and washing, constitute work that brings in tourist dollars.

Sinophone writers and artists around the world, in Southeast Asia, Australia, Taiwan, the Americas, Europe, and elsewhere, have sought to resist the suturing call of Chineseness from China. This has gone hand in hand with their search for local identities, which are also often at odds with locally dominant nationalist, colonialist, or racialist paradigms. On the one hand, the assignation of such racial identities as “Chinaman,” “chino,” and “heathen chinee” has prevented immigrants from China and their descendants from becoming fully accepted in their adopted lands. Yellow-peril racism in the Western hemisphere has thereby risked pushing immigrants from China and their descendants into the embrace of China. On the other hand, the Chinese state has effectively and continuously disseminated the ideological category of the 海外華僑 (“overseas Chinese”) who shall always remain loyal to China, exploiting racist injuries to their feelings or other forms of alienation that can be easily transfigured into long-distance nationalism for the benefit of China. It is no accident that the Chinese state refers to the overseas Chinese with the same term that the French state applies to its departments and territories “overseas” (*outre-mer*): China sees the overseas Chinese as subjects who must be loyal to the motherland just as the French state lays claim to its overseas departments and territories.

Sinophone studies—conceived as the study of Sinitic-language cultures on the margins of geopolitical nation-states and their hegemonic productions—locates its objects of attention at the conjuncture of China’s internal colonialism and Sinophone communities everywhere immigrants from China have settled. Sinophone studies disrupts the chain of equivalence established, since the rise of nation-states, among language, culture, ethnicity, and nationality and explores the pro-

tean, kaleidoscopic, creative, and overlapping margins of China and Chineseness, America and Americanness, Malaysia and Malaysianness, Taiwan and Taiwanness, and so on, by a consideration of specific, local Sinophone texts, cultures, and practices produced in and from these margins. Sinophone Tibetan literature and Sinophone American literature are two examples in an expansive consideration of Sinophone studies in literature. If the critical operation of Sinophone studies involves a trenchant critique of China-centrism, it equally involves a critique of Eurocentrism and other centrism, such as Malay-centrism in Malaysia. It is, in short, always a multidirectional critique.

In the past few years, scholars have used the term *Sinophone* for largely denotative purposes to mean “Chinese-speaking” or “written in Chinese.” Sau-ling Wong used it to designate Chinese American literature written in “Chinese” as opposed to English (“Yellow”); historians of the Manchu empire such as Pamela Kyle Crossley, Evelyn S. Rawski, and Jonathan Lipman described “Chinese-speaking” Hui Muslims in China as Sinophone Muslims as opposed to Uyghur Muslims, who speak Turkic languages; Patricia Schiaffini-Vedani and Lara Maconi distinguished between Tibetan writers who write in the Tibetan script and “Chinese-language,” or Sinophone, Tibetan writers. Even though the main purpose of these scholars’ use of the term is denotative, their underlying intent is to clarify contrast by naming; in highlighting a Sinophone Chinese American literature, Wong exposes the anglophone bias of scholars and shows that American literature is multilingual; Crossley, Rawski, and Lipman emphasize that Muslims in China have divergent languages, histories, and experiences; Schiaffini-Vedani and Maconi suggest the predicament of Tibetan writers who write in the “language of the colonizer” (Schiaffini-Vedani 89) and whose identity is bound up with linguistic difference. Building on these denotative meanings,

which describe both ethnic minority cultures in China and cultures of settlement and immigration outside China,³ this paper blows open the concept of the Sinophone to explore its historical content, its linguistic multiplicity, and its theoretical potentialities.

Historical Processes

Three interrelated historical processes have produced Sinophone communities: continental colonialism, settler colonialism, and immigration.

Continental Colonialism

Unlike the colonies of modern European empires, largely established overseas, China’s colonies are internal, products of what I call “continental colonialism.” In the last fifteen years or so, American historians of China have led the way in documenting, analyzing, and theorizing the history and nature of the Manchu Qing dynasty (1644–1911) as an inner Asian empire in a historiography called the “new Qing history.” Their meticulous research on Qing military conquest and colonial administration over vast areas in the west and the north has proved that the Qing was an inner Asian empire since around the mid-eighteenth century, similar to Western empires and with important consequences for how we view present-day China from a longer historical perspective.⁴ The failure to recognize the Qing as a colonial empire or to see China today as the successor or executor of empire is due to two misreadings of history.

The first misreading results from an uncritical acceptance of the nationalist historiography of modern China as victim, an idea propagated by the Chinese state. In this historiography, Chinese history since the Qing is nothing but a series of opium wars, unequal treaties, Western imperial acts of aggression, and China’s relentless search for sovereignty under duress. The Qing’s territorial expansion since the eighteenth century is relegated

to an old, insignificant chapter of history. Modern history therefore begins in the mid-nineteenth century with the opium wars, not the eighteenth century, when the Qing conquered and meticulously administered vast areas of inner Asia using such methods as military and economic subjugation, religious assimilation, gendered pedagogy, and effective management of multilingualism, multiculturalism, and ethnic pluralism (Waley-Cohen). The fact that the Qing was ruled by the Manchu, not the Han, is a useful historical detail that can suggest that the Han did not dirty their hands in the conquest. But when claiming the conquered areas in the name of “territorial integrity,” Han Chinese historians then used the sinicization thesis to authenticate the claims: the Manchu were so sinicized that they practically became Han; hence, modern, Han-dominant China is the legitimate heir to those territories. Drawing from interpretations whatever served Han claims best when the need arose (each claim suffused with the resentment of the victim), nationalist historians relegated Qing conquest to the dustbin of history.

The second misreading has to do with the geography of Qing expansion. The models of modern empires have been European and oceanic, whereas Qing expansion was non-European and occurred largely on the continental land mass. “European” attributes connoting superiority, rationality, and enlightenment, which Europe had reputedly spread through its colonial enterprises, could not be applied to non-Western powers; hence, Qing expansionism could not have been a colonial empire in the modern sense. A case that illustrates this well is Hegel’s ingenious linking of Europeanness with the sea: “The European state is truly European only in so far as it has links to the sea.” Europe’s maritime principle is the means for European dominance, whereas Asia, for which “the sea is without significance,” was limited by its land-locked status (*Lectures* 196). The

maritime principle—the embracing of “flux, danger, and destruction”—brings to fulfillment the European drive to “found” colonies and is therefore the basis of European colonialism. Lacking an “outlet” for “life to step beyond itself,” the Asiatic by definition could not found colonies and become empires (*Philosophy* 247–49).

China, of course, had a long maritime history before the modern period (e.g., Levathes; So; Wang and Ng; Pomeranz and Topik), but the crucial issue here is the misreading of colonial expansion as necessarily oceanic and never continental, banishing Chinese empire to the category of premodern or dynastic empires. Boldly expansionist, the continental colonialism of the Qing more than doubled the territory of “China proper,” and this superenlarged territorial boundary was consolidated by the People’s Republic of China (established in 1949), with the exception of Outer Mongolia. While during the Republican period (1911–49) Tibet and Xinjiang seemed only symbolically connected to China, the People’s Republic of China recolonized them and brought them under direct Chinese administration. The Qing was a self-consciously multilingual empire, whose official languages were Manchu, Hanyu, Mongolian, Tibetan, and sometimes Arabic and Uyghur. The linguistic colonization of Tibet and Xinjiang was initiated only with the proclamation of the People’s Republic. The reduction of bilingual education in these areas today, prompting recent protests, indexes the intensification of linguistic colonization.

The recognition of reconsolidated Chinese empire brings attention to the diversity of ethnicities and languages within its borders. Hence, the new Qing history, with its interest in interethnic relations in the empire, has practically engendered an ethnic turn in Chinese historical studies. Sinophone minority literature in China is situated at the intersections between ethnicities and languages. Mongols, Manchu, Tibetans, and many other

ethnic peoples in China today often speak more than one language. They are Sinophone to the extent that they speak and write in the standard language of the Han, which they willingly acquire or have imposed on them. The historical minorities such as those in the southwestern border areas also are multilingual communities that resist or adapt to Han Chinese assimilation to different degrees. Sinophone studies foregrounds this continuous history of the continental empire from the Qing to the present.

Settler Colonialism

The places where many immigrants from China settled and became either the majority population (as in Taiwan and Singapore) or a large minority population (as in Malaysia), around whom Sinophone communities formed, can be considered settler colonies in a specific sense. These settler colonies roughly parallel those of the British in North America, Australia, and New Zealand. The British settlers of these lands are not diasporic subjects of their home empires but colonizers of indigenous peoples. To frame their history in terms of diaspora is a displacement and disavowal of colonial violence and its attendant cultural genocide. Settler colonialism was the dark underside of the so-called diaspora of imperial subjects. Diaspora as history (dispersal of peoples) and diaspora as value (a way of looking at and being in the world) are contradictory and need to be decoupled when it comes to settler colonialism.

The point here is that the notion of a “Chinese diaspora” is equally a form of displacement, on two counts. First, it masks the present condition of colonialism. In Taiwan the indigenous Austronesian peoples have lived under serial colonialism (the colonists are the Han Chinese who settled there since the seventeenth century, becoming the present-day Taiwanese and Hakkas; the Dutch; the Japanese; and the Han Chinese

again in the second wave of settlement in the late 1940s) continuously for several centuries—they have never been postcolonial. The framework of “Chinese diaspora” also masks past conditions of something similar to settler colonialism in Southeast Asia, where some Han Chinese settlers established independent satraps on the lands of the indigenous peoples before the arrival of European colonizers and where many Han immigrants were later employed by the French, the Dutch, and the British as tax farmers and plantation managers, producing a layered middleman society, or middleman settler colonialism (Shih, “Theory”).

Second, diaspora as value implies loyalty to and longing for the ancestral “home,” which bind the diasporic to the so-called homeland. It ties the Han in Taiwan and Southeast Asia to the Chinese “homeland” even after centuries and presumes their cultural dependence, if not political dependence, on China. This diaspora framework has also perpetuated the category of the “overseas Chinese,” who respond to the call of a Chineseness so narrowly defined that it becomes quantifiable: one can be more Chinese or less Chinese (Wang Gungwu). But the fact of the matter is that a significant percentage of Han Taiwanese, though settler colonizers, do not consider themselves Chinese despite the ideology of “territorial integrity” promulgated on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. China bombastically claims that Taiwan is its own, and Taiwan fearfully rejects this claim. The Han settlers who started arriving in Malaya—geographically encompassing today’s Malaysia and Singapore—in the seventh century and whose migration there peaked in the nineteenth century also consider themselves not overseas Chinese but locals. Sinophone writers and critics there launched several major debates and campaigns throughout the twentieth century to resist the call of Chineseness and the Chinese state’s resinicization pressures. I have therefore argued that diaspora

has an expiration date; one cannot say one is diasporic after three hundred years, and everyone should be given a chance to become a local (*Visuality* and “Against Diaspora”).

In the first sense critical of diaspora as value in settler colonialism, then, indigeneity is foregrounded to expose the narcissism of those settler subjects who try to pass as diasporic subjects. In Sinophone indigenous literature from Taiwan, writing in two languages takes on a particular twist since most of the indigenous languages do not have written scripts. This literature often enacts a clash of sounds rather than a clash of scripts, as the writers try to register their anticolonial intent by importing indigenous sounds into the dominant script. In the second sense critical of diaspora as value, the emphasis is on localization in opposition both to the Chinese state’s calling of its “overseas” subjects into its fold and to the postcolonial state’s systematic refusal of its minorities’ claims on the nation, as in the case of Chinese Malaysians in Malaysia. The combined force of China’s pressure and the local nation’s refusal is a classic example of what Ling-chi Wang has called, in reference to Chinese Americans, the “structure of dual domination.” Sinophone Malaysian writers have been writing under this dual domination for well over a hundred years, traversing the trajectory from settlers to middlemen to locals.

(Im)Migration

In countries where immigrants from China are a minority, such as most countries in the Western hemisphere, we find minority Sinophone communities. As the Han have migrated over centuries (as coolies, laborers, students, or capitalists) and become an ethnized and racialized minority, their maintenance and creolization of their various Sinitic languages and cultures—predominantly Cantonese and Minnan (Teochew, Hokkien, etc.) in earlier periods and Mandarin today—constitute the basis for the study of Sinitic-

language cultures outside China. The United States, Britain, Germany, Australia, Canada, and so on, in which old immigrants localize even as new immigrants replenish Sinophone culture, have seen Sinophone culture to either vanish or thrive.⁵ In Southeast Asia, despite a history of settler colonialism, Chinese Southeast Asians have been increasingly minoritized since the region’s independence from European colonialism. Their political and cultural power is not commensurate with their economic power (accumulated since the colonial times), and they are, like their counterparts in the Western world, regularly subjected to state-sponsored ethnocentrism.

With the (im)migration thesis, Sinophone studies belongs to the category of ethnic minority studies or linguistic minority studies across the world, announcing the possibility of what can be called comparative minority studies either in one nation or across nations. What insights emerge when we compare Sinophone American and hispanophone American literature or when we compare Sinophone American with Sinophone French or Sinophone German literature? This comparative ethnic studies perspective focalizes for us the divergent or convergent processes of racialization and minoritization across ethnicities and places, and it foregrounds the horizontal axes of minority-to-minority relationality rather than the Manichaeism of the majority-to-minority binary (Lionnet and Shih).

The resonances between Sinophone studies and ethnic studies help emphasize the nondiasporic, local nature of Sinophone culture in a given nation-state as an integral component of that nation-state’s multicultural and multilinguality. They allow us to recognize that Sinophone American culture is American culture and that Sinitic languages spoken in the United States are American languages. They also allow us to understand that Sinophone culture, even in its strongest expression of nostalgia or longing for a mythical China or the actual one, is place-

based and is of the place where it is produced. Nostalgia for China in Sinophone American culture is nostalgia produced from the experience of living in the United States and hence is local, a form of American nostalgia.

Languages of the Sinophone

Sinophone culture is produced variously in many registers, and the linguistic register often epitomizes the other implied differences, so a rudimentary knowledge of the diversity of the Sinitic languages is required. In earnest and necessarily retrospective constructions of the so-called national languages of most nations in the twentieth century, a chain of equivalence is unfortunately established between nationality and language, when in fact virtually all nations are multilingual. In China not only are Tibeto-Burman languages numerous (almost four hundred, also spoken across South Asia and Southeast Asia), but also the Sinitic languages, the presumed other half of the Sino-Tibetan language family, include at least eight major language groups and many subgroups. Language-nationalization campaigns, which entailed making one language the standard and all the others dialects, sought to unify the cacophonous linguistic field in modern China. The so-called Chinese dialects can be considered languages (Mair), but the potential political fallout from offending the Chinese state has prevented linguists from making this statement or from implying that there may be no logical reason to yoke Tibeto-Burman and Sinitic languages together in one language family. This last statement is tantamount to advocating political separatism. But the mutual incomprehensibility among Sinitic languages is often greater than that among Romance or other Indo-European languages, and the familial resemblance between Sinitic and Tibeto-Burman languages is yet to be proved.

When we say a person speaks good Chinese, we usually mean that he or she speaks

good Mandarin, but many Sinitic languages are spoken in China, not to mention the wide variety of non-Sinitic languages spoken by ethnic minorities there. If we say that all the other Sinitic and the non-Sinitic languages are not Chinese, we agree to a one-to-one equivalence between language and nationality and to the extension of this equivalence to ethnicity. It is not surprising that in China people use the terms “common language” (普通話) and “language of the Han” (漢語) interchangeably, naturalizing Han-centrism with an implied awareness that other languages and ethnicities exist but will not be considered standard or normative. This implied awareness makes the Han-centrism more blatant. If “Chinese” should be a designation of nationality, not language or ethnicity, then we can say that all languages spoken in China are Chinese languages and that any standardization is a hegemonic process.

The word “Chinese,” then, has been misused to equate language with nationality and ethnicity, and official monolingualism has disregarded and suppressed linguistic heterogeneity. The concept of the Sinophone, in contrast, evinces multilinguality not only in sound but also in script. The predominant Sinitic language of nineteenth-century immigrants to the United States was Cantonese, and they called themselves not “Chinese” (中國人) but the “Tang people” (唐人); they called their ghetto “Tang people’s street” (唐人街), not Chinatown. They became “Chinese” or “Chinamen” only by racialized assignation, which also homogenized other kinds of people from China and their languages. When the racial state designated these early immigrants as speaking Chinese, it did not realize that it was referring to Cantonese, not Mandarin. Sinophone American literature, such as the forty-six-syllable songs (四十六字歌) from early-twentieth-century San Francisco, was sounded and written in Cantonese. Sinophone Hong Kong literature has negotiated between Cantonese and Mandarin interspersed with

invented Cantonese scripts for a long time; mainstream Sinophone Taiwan literature is the site of negotiation between Hoklo and Mandarin; Sinophone Malaysian writers and filmmakers bring into play Cantonese, Hokkien, Teochew, Mandarin, and others in script and sound.⁶ Hence, the Sinophone is not only of multiple sounds (polyphonic) but also of multiple orthographies (polyscriptic). Furthermore, the concept of the Sinophone registers not only the multiplicity of Sinitic languages but also how they undergo localization and creolization in relation to non-Sinitic languages in a given locality. Sinophone Hui writers often use or evoke Arabic, even though the Hui are considered the most assimilated Muslim minority in China. In Sinophone Malaysian literature, writers mix Sinitic languages with Malay, English, and sometimes even Tamil. Similarly, Sinophone American literature, a literary tradition in existence for more than one hundred years, always has as its implicit or explicit interlocutor the language of the majority: English.

Monolingualism of the national language shares with nationalism the three paradoxes that Benedict Anderson has attributed to the latter: it is supposed to be modern, but it retroactively creates a genealogy of antiquity to justify itself and is thus atavistic; it is supposed to be universal, but its concrete manifestations are particular; it has political power but is poor and incoherent as a philosophy (5). Monolingualism of the national language is, in short, deterministic, atavistic, and philosophically weak, foreclosing present and future potentialities. In contrast, linguistic communities are open and changing communities where memberships fluctuate, languages mutate or even disappear, and dynamics among languages and their usages constantly transform each language. I appreciate Étienne Balibar's point on the "strange plasticity" of the linguistic community as a "community *in the present*," which produces "the feeling that it has always existed, but lays

down no destiny for the successive generations" (98–99). A linguistic present and future without destiny are where the languages of the Sinophone lie.

Conclusion: What Is Sinophone Literature?

The Sinophone encompasses Sinitic-language communities and their expressions (cultural, political, social, etc.) on the margins of nations and nationalness in the internal colonies and other minority communities in China as well as outside it, with the exception of settler colonies where the Sinophone is the dominant vis-à-vis their indigenous populations.

I move, finally, from the denotative to the connotative implications of the concept by asking the question, what is Sinophone literature? in a conscious echo of the title of Jean-Paul Sartre's 1948 essay "What Is Literature?" If we bracket, for the moment, the necessary critique of the presumption of universality that underlies Sartre's big question, explored through examples mostly from French literature, with limited references to American literature, his question is worth asking again today, when diaspora has become a prevalent value and the question of literature as situated practice is more and more urgent. Sartre proposes a "situated" literature where writing is an "act" occurring in a specific historical moment as against abstract literature that, alienated from its age, aims instead for eternal glory; hence, to write is to write for one's age, a "finite time" with a specific "duration" (133–36). Sartre ironically calls the quest for eternity in literature "a last remnant of Christian belief in immortality" (239) and instead emphasizes the importance of literature as situated action, which aims for "concrete universality" rather than "abstract universality":

The term "concrete universality" must be understood . . . as the sum total of men living in a given society. If the writer's public could ever be extended to the point of embracing

this total, the result would not be that he would necessarily have to limit the reverberations of his work to the present time, but rather he would oppose to the abstract eternity of glory, which is an impossible and hollow dream of the absolute, a concrete and finite duration which he would determine by the very choice of his subjects, and which, far from uprooting him from history, would define his situation in social time. (136)

Being rooted in history, situated in one's "social time," with a "finite duration," and addressing the public in that finite time in a given society are fundamental to striving for the concrete universal.

Taking Sartre seriously, I view Sinophone literature as a situated literature in a given time and place but would emphasize what is missing in Sartre's universalistic paradigm: geopolitical situatedness, a place-based practice. Each Sinophone work articulates its chronotope into being, a specific time-place conjunction that is the context of the public it addresses. In this model, writers of Sinophone literature exhibit "commitment to the place where one resides" and "situate themselves historically," as Sau-ling Wong once wrote in discussing Asian American literature ("Denationalization" 19–20). Commitment and situatedness constitute the "worldliness" of Sinophone literature in the Saidian sense, where worldliness is not ever-expanding rootlessness or pathological narcissism or a simple synonym for the global. Instead, they make possible the Sartrean "ethics and art of the finite" (245). In this way, the Sinophone can be considered a way of looking at the world, a theory, perhaps even an epistemology. The Sinophone as method and theory is derived from the situatedness of its history and practice in time and place. It announces the expiration date of diaspora wherever diaspora is taken as value; it eschews monolingualism, ethnocentrism, and colonialism; it evinces the existential openness and porousness of linguistic communities; and it aims for the con-

crete universal. The Sinophone's resistance to the hegemonic call of Chineseness does not simply demand that we recalibrate postcolonial theory in our era of empires, it also compels us to reconceptualize the fields, objects, and methods of our scholarly inquiries.

NOTES

1. Present-day China is increasingly seen as a new empire in the United States. Every new Chinese exploit is related in detail in newspapers and other media, often with alarm. The title of a 2010 documentary, *China: The Rebirth of an Empire*, captures this widely shared perception. China bashing aside, China has definitely become a superpower, if not an empire. See also Rey Chow on China as empire vis-à-vis Hong Kong in *Ethics after Idealism* and my work on China as empire vis-à-vis Taiwan (*Visuality*).
2. For contemporary critiques of Chineseness, see Ang; Chow, "On Chineseness"; and Chun.
3. David Der-wei Wang, Kim Tong Tee, and many others have also used the term to foreground Sinophone culture and literature outside China (Tsu and Wang).
4. For a succinct overview of new Qing history, see Joanna Waley-Cohen's review essay. Also see Peter Perdue's comprehensive book.
5. On the vanishing of the Sinophone, see the introduction and conclusion to my book, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations across the Pacific* (1–39, 183–92).
6. Jing Tsu's recent book offers many examples of the sound and script variations of the Sinophone.

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