the changing profession

The Asian Turns

ERIC HAYOT

Everybody Loves a Crisis

THE STORY OF WHAT'S WHAT IN ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES IS LIKE THE STORY OF THE PROFESSION AT LARGE: NO ONE THINKS IN A VACUUM.

But the current drift in literary scholarship toward questions of transnationalism and globalization arrives at shores long explored by scholars who work on Asian America and the Pacific. Much of this familiarity has to do with the material history of their subjects, the ways in which questions of diaspora and integration, relations between the flows of people and the flows of things, and the narratives of international politics and imperialist violence constitute the ground of Asian America and indeed of the concept of the Pacific as an ocean, a sea of islands, a limit to westward expansion, and the lubricated surface of a certain transcultural history. The critical insights that unfold from the labor of Asian Americanist thought, like those gained through the study of African America and the Caribbean, do not add ethnographic detail to some larger and fundamentally established picture of the history of the United States or global modernity: they change the picture. They reframe it.

Each of the two terms that structure the field, *Asian* and *American*, is already an imperfect apprehension of the continent to which it refers. Of late these terms have circled around an ever-more "unwieldy set of points of 'origin' trackable to different Asian states," as David Palumbo-Liu notes, not to mention an equally unwieldy set of points of "destination" trackable to differently constituted frameworks of "America" (5). The geopolitical and economic shifts taking place in and around the Pacific, combined with significant changes in the demographics and social patterns of Asian immigrants to the United States, have destabilized some of the founding premises of the field. Changes have emerged both through the fractioning of Asian American into various ethnic and national groups and from the development of a non-Asian critique of Asian American studies that argues, as does J. Kehaulani Kauanui, that the Pacific Islanders

ERIC HAYOT, associate professor of comparative literature and director of Asian studies at the Pennsylvania State University, University Park, is the author, most recently, of *The Hypothetical Mandarin: Sympathy, Modernity, and Chinese Pain* (Oxford UP, 2009).

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https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2009.124.3.906 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of Hawai'i, the Marshalls, Guam, or Samoa engage an imperial history whose relations to economy, primitivity, and the idea of civilization have nothing to do with the continental gnomon called Asia and need to be thought (and studied) beyond it (133).[1]

In the face of these challenges, Susan Koshy concluded her enormously influential 1996 essay "The Fiction of Asian American Literature" with an injunction to think of Asian American studies as a catachresis, a term with "no literal referent" whose every appearance forges anew the ground of its situational coherence (342). In such a conception, *Asian American studies* would name at any given moment the constellated field of a particular project, a particular purpose. Its minimal coherence would derive from its appearance in a chain of analyses with which it shared a name but no necessary feature of its method, practitioners, or subjects.

Koshy's critique of the field relied on a recognition of the ways in which recent flows of violence, migration, and culture had altered the geographic, ethnic, and class makeup of the groups of people in whose name Asian American studies organized itself in the 1970s and 1980s. The same year Koshy's essay appeared, Lisa Lowe's *Immigrant Acts* established the theoretical framework through which (and sometimes against which) the next decade's work emerged. Lowe reconciled poststructuralism's critique of the subject with the ethnic studies model that had previously organized the field by making the histories of Asian American subjects material analogues for the theoretical forms of deconstructive resistance. The nearly transcendental oppositionality attributed to the Asian American subject came to serve as a dialectical recompense for the loss of the stable subject; or rather, the subject's stability was defined, paradoxically, as that which resists by being unstable, and that lack of stability was attributed to the challenge Asian Americans posed to conventional forms of United States nationalism, racism, wholeness, and the like.[2] This critical maneuver reached a kind of apotheosis in 2003, when Kandice Chuh wrote that the "fivefold increase between 1970 and 1990 in the population of persons of Asian descent living in the United States has meant dramatic alterations to 'Asian America' along multiple identificatory axes, including nativity and citizenship," arguing that the resulting demographic and social complexities required "conceiving Asian American Studies as a *subjectless discourse*," that is, as a field devoted to the study of social or political holes or absences where an Asian American might "be" (7, 9). A year later a similarly deconstructive armature seemed to provide the title for Mae Ngai's award-winning *Impossible Subjects*, though that book's work on the history of subjectlessness in which Asian Americans and other immigrants to the United States have labored and lived shows, ironically, how consistently the immigrant's impossibility has been codified in law.[3]

The contemporary moment in Asian American studies can therefore be understood as one in which the field, having worked through a poststructuralist critique of its foundations, reconstitutes itself and its subject as the crisis through which it has emerged. The transfer between subjective and objective genitive in this history of crisis—the field's crisis becoming, if you will, the identity crisis of the field—is the mark of what the editors of *Transnational Asian American Literature* called Asian American studies' "metacritical phase" (Lim et al. 8) and what Kent Ono has described as "a certain kind of maturation of thought" (4). Perhaps, but one also needs to recognize in that maturation the shadow of an institutionally systemic reaction. By the middle of the millennium's first decade, the epistemological forms of uncertainty and undecidability have become the necessary costume of any defensible position in the humanities, and "crisis" the reified possibility of field-justifying discourse. That

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Asian American studies has come to think of itself in such formal terms—as a crisis, a catachresis, as the subject of a barred joining (like Palumbo-Liu's Asian/American), or as a fiction—makes sense when one considers that those forms are the same ones that poststructuralism has trained scholars in the humanities to discover, privilege, and address.

The Transnational Turn

In Asian American studies, these crises and fictions have come to surround questions of nation and ethnicity, of belonging and difference, of translatability and incommensurability, of nativity and foreignness, of the political as a transethnic category and the ethnic as a transpolitical one, and of the economic and military transactions governing the Pacific as a geographic or oceanographic field. Each of these ramifies differently depending on whether the textual or geographic scope of analysis addresses itself to, say, the Vincent Chin murder, the political career of Alberto Fujimori, Mao Tse-tung's 1963 statement of support for the civil rights movement, Kamehameha I's encounters with James Cook, the paranoia associated with forms of "coolie" labor, or the postwar history of the haiku—to name but a few of the sites of Asian American encounter.

The range of these examples indicates the ways in which Asian American studies is stepping beyond what Colleen Lye calls the "dualistic conceptualization of American and Asian American cultures, American and Asian American politics, American and Asian American subjects" that has trapped the field in orientalism critique ("Introduction" 6). The move through and beyond Edward Said has had the salutary effect of pointing scholarship outside the borders of the nation and toward a recognition of how phantasmatic and realpolitik Asias disrupt the ideological and linguistic purities of United States identity formation. Recent work by such scholars as Victor Bascara, Christina Klein, Karen J. Leong, Sheng-mei Ma, Josephine Park, and Mari Yoshihara has added to our understanding of "Asian American literature as a continuing dialogue with . . . transpacific relations" (Park 19). As many of these scholars show, this dialogue has not historically confined itself to ethnic experience, since one of its crucial functions has been to frame for the American national imaginary a double vision of capitalism's future and modernity's past. Indeed, what we have thought of as ethnicity is also, as Lye shows in *America's Asia*, a social form closely connected to a powerful imaginary of the world market, in which a dream of infinite Asian consumption stabilizes the future of production in the United States.[4]

Given the degree to which this work rethinks ethnicity as at least partly an effect of international relations, it opens the door to work in comparative ethnic studies, a field whose imagining of ethnicity as a force operating inside a global cultural and economic system is adumbrated in the recent work that brings together African America and Asia. Bill Mullen's *Afro-Orientalism*, which "foregrounds the relationship between peoples of African and Asian descent as a dialectical synecdoche of Western capitalist modernity," finds its archive in writings by African Americans on Asia and work by Asian Americans in panethnic, pancultural political activism (xvii). Mullen's work, which appears in a field that includes Vijay Prashad and Claire Jean Kim, points to the ferment of this bright new discourse, in whose glare we are just beginning to discern the outlines of a "Black Pacific."[5]

Together the postorientalist and Afro-Asian movements gesture toward the profession's latest *bête blanche*, transnationalism, whose turn in literary studies has the odd distinction of having largely been theorized before having been practiced. This prematureness has been characteristic not only of Asian American studies but also of American and British literary criticism, where, despite the injunctions of postcolonial theory

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and its successors, the prestige of English and its transnational power have insulated traditional fields against the need (or responsibility) to learn other places and other languages.[6] The transnationalist vanguards are located in those fields that began two decades ago to move past their traditional national and linguistic boundaries. A look at the positive disruptions created by the arrival of the francophone (and the growing number of scholars who have Arabic, Wolof, or Haitian *kreyòl*, among other languages) or at the multilingual hemispheric orientations of Latin American studies illustrates some of the many ways that scholars might, as David Eng suggests, "force Asian American Studies beyond the borders of the domestic" (212).[7]

Eng means "beyond the borders" in all possible senses: a fully transnationalized Asian American studies would require its scholars to speak the languages and know the histories of those parts of Asia—or even, if we accept a limit that already marks the United States–centrism of the field, of *East* Asia and the Pacific Islands—from the inside. Few graduate programs give students the time or money they would need to do such a thing, but that money should be found, because monolingualism is getting in the way of knowledge. The attention that Martin F. Manalansan IV gives to the particular language of the Filipino gay men whose lives are the subject of his *Global Divas*[8] offers one stellar example of how scholarly analysis benefits from multilingualism. Manalansan shows how situational *parole* might actively disengage from a transformation into *langue* and how such a disengagement remains untheorizable except as the dialectical partner of a particularized—located, lived, enacted—cultural practice. Yunte Huang, in *Transpacific Displacement* and *Transpacific Imaginations*, counts the ways in which the friction among languages marks the surfaces of the literary and shows us a history of the Pacific conceived as both "a terrain of geopolitical struggle and an instance of epistemological battle" (*Transpacific Imaginations* 4–5).[9]

But we cannot simply wait for more scholars to bear within their single bodies the knowledge required for a bilingual or multilingual scholarship, especially when we do not fund or encourage language learning beyond the undergraduate level.[10] The work of scholarship proceeds collectively: I may not know much about the Tagalog patois of Filipinos in New York, but Manalansan is willing to teach me. Likewise for all the other social fields and languages I do not know, which can in secondary forms force ideologically normative monolingualism or mononationalism to justify itself as an intellectual tactic. Though such lessons cannot substitute, in the long run, for the kinds of transformations that happen when one is on the inside of a language situation, they allow the discipline to move forward on the feet of its variously particular strengths.

How do things look from the other side of the Pacific or from those spaces that tend to disappear, like Hawai'i, when not assigned specifically to the United States national frame? At least in the Chinese context, which I know best, it is not a question of dislocating the national framework to demonstrate the interpenetration of language, culture, or economies—imperialism and free trade have made that clear enough. Instead, the problem, as Shu-mei Shih has argued, has to do with refusing to allow the forms of global domination that structured anti-imperialist resistance and nation formation to cover over the forms of local or regional domination that still obtain. The Chinese-speaking world is neither Chinese-speaking nor a world in any simple sense (discuss!), not only by virtue of its having been constructed by a number of imperial expansions (largely westward) and labor and trade diasporas (usually southward and eastward) but also because the word *Chinese* lumps together an astonishing diversity of local language forms, forms whose categorization as

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dialects gives nationalist consolidation its substance. The languages of Taiwan, smothered by the retreating Mandarin speakers of the Kuomintang in 1949, have only in the past two decades reemerged into prominence as viable sites of literary or musical production; while Singlish, originally a pidgin, has become a creole, thanks to the birth in Singapore of a generation of speakers for whom it functions as one of several native tongues, despite the government's best efforts to stamp it out.[11]

Hence the recent interest, in contemporary Chinese studies, in the neologism *sinophone*, a term whose meanings were, at the conference Globalizing Modern Chinese Literature at Harvard in late 2007, very much in contention. Shih models the term's intellectual scope on the range established by *francophone*, intending it to include "a network of places of cultural production *outside* of China and *on the margins* of China and Chineseness, where a historical process of heterogenizing and localizing of continental Chinese culture has been taking place for several centuries" (4; my emphasis). Shih thus excludes from the sinophone much of the cultural output produced in the People's Republic, allowing the category to name a counterhegemonic mode rather than a linguistic field of production. Whether the reification of continental China (or, for that matter, of notions of resistance or subalternity) on which such a choice depends will prove in the long run to be politically or heuristically useful, or whether the term will "[lose] its critical edge in this exclusionary approach to China and the Chinese diaspora," as Sheldon Lu writes in his review of Shih, remains to be seen (though my money is on the latter).[12]

All this discussion is worthwhile because it suggests that the transnational turn, whatever it is, does not simply have to be about the United States' recognition that the rest of the world has something to teach it. Indeed, if that is all it is, the danger, for the turn to China in particular, is that this move outward will simply function as a further index of self-absorption, reflecting a renewed American interest in the People's Republic's economic and military strength and the threat it poses to the United States' control of global energy stocks.[13] Attending to how languages and literatures operate in a transnational or globalizing field of the production of cultural value should demonstrate how those fields also interpenetrate and destabilize, for good or for ill, situations that have nothing to do with the United States, not simply continue to reify what Kuan-Hsing Chen has called the United States' ongoing role as the "imaginary figure of modernity" (179). The danger of the new movement toward global American studies is that the final turn of its analysis becomes a revelation about the nature of the United States, or Americanness, so that the rest of the world becomes interesting only when it says something about us.[14] Surely this is a fairly limited form of transnational anything and a pretty weak encounter with globality or otherness.

From this perspective the encounter between Asian American studies and East Asian studies, those long-standing institutional antagonists, allows us to see the ways in which a threatened breakup into a multiplicity of disparate dialects,[15] national or subnational locations, and ethnic matrices in the fields themselves can be read, finally, as the becoming that reconstitutes the fields, each to each, from their encounter. Neither returns from this meeting unchanged; the vertiginous dialectic that emerges there forms the stuff of scholarship.

Faced with vertigo, the temptation is always to reduce, to delimit, to declare that the proper object of the field is genetically East Asian, or anglophone, or the product of some other single nation, language, or geographic location. But the "aesthetics of the diverse," to borrow a term from the French poet Victor Segalen, is nearest to itself in its arrangement of relations that we recognize as form: what enacts complexity, holds it in suspension, without reducing or simplifying it.[16]

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Lye imagines "trying to investigate race and nation through the relationship between aesthetic and social modalities of form," a practice designed—perhaps surprisingly, given the history of "form"—to produce a "deeper historicization" of the field ("Introduction" 7, 9). For me one model of this kind of criticism appears in Daniel Y. Kim's *Writing Manhood in Black and Yellow*, an exhaustive study of the work of Frank Chin and Ralph Ellison. Its insights come through remarkably close readings of the original texts, readings that do not pretend to find in the texts' aesthetics some dimension of apolitical being but locate their political and theoretical interventions within the frame of their material history and cultural habitus. Kim's readings hold in precarious balance the relation between example and exemplarity, allowing their objects to function simultaneously in relation to larger fields of meaning and to a remainder that escapes literary criticism's performative convention. Their attentiveness and slowness are therefore in and of themselves important acts of scholarship, acknowledging the critic's responsibility to learn from the text and the text's lovely, peculiar power to be something more than an epiphenomenon, to construct—as might a field—from its collection of fracture and fraction, finally, the singularities that become it.

Atom, Cloud, Haiku

What would such a collection look like, and how might we begin to approach its complexity, its literariness, its purchase on the historical imagination? What follows attempts to open, however briefly, a space that enacts the field whose outlines I have described above. The relation between the field and my description of it is something like the relation between a sphere and a torus, the latter not, as we might once have guessed, a holed version of the former, but another modality of it.

In the preface to the first volume of his magisterial survey of the history of the haiku, whose coverage extends from the works of the great Edo-period genius Matsuo Bashō (1644–94) to the poets of the 1910s, R. H. Blyth addresses himself briefly to the forty-odd years of poetic output beyond his stopping point. Should someone go to the trouble of collecting the best haiku of those decades? he asks. Probably not: "very little would be lost if all the haiku of modern times were tacitly forgotten." Not for reasons internal to the poetic development of the haiku as form but because of the changing times: "the world, of which Japan is a part and a microcosm, has set for itself goals totally different from those of Bashō. His Way of Haiku can hardly be said to exist now, for almost nobody walks on it" (vi).[17]

From the perspective of his disappointment Blyth is able to contemplate with composure the destruction of the entire human race. The abandonment of Bashō's way, he writes, "is a monument to the stupidity, vulgarity, sentimentality, and unpoeticality of human beings. It makes us view their possible total destruction with equanimity" (vi). The preface concludes with Blyth's printed name, a place name (Oiso), and a date: 25 June 1963.[18]

The "possible total destruction" of the species to which Blyth referred in 1963 emerged from a life lived in the Asian intimacy of the nuclear age. From 1946 through the signing of the first Partial Test Ban Treaty in August 1963 (some six weeks after the date in Blyth's preface), as American children clambered under their school desks and the two Germanys dreamed nightmares of a nuclear-supported tank war in battlefield Europe, the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and France detonated hundreds of atomic explosions in politically unimportant regions of Asia and the Pacific, including the Marshall and Polynesian Islands, western Australia, and the USSR's Semipalatinsk test site in northeast Kazakhstan, 250 miles from the Chinese border. Blyth's preface to *History of Haiku* appears in the shadow of those

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explosions, whose "ecclesiastical curves" shadowed in turn the destruction wrought at Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Cooper).

Blyth was, as Park has noted, an immense influence on postwar American poetry. His *Zen and English Literature*, in which Blyth found buried in the archive of English literature more evidence of the "original and essential unity" he admired in the haiku, "became an object of intense study for the Zen adherents of the Beat movement," in whose hands American Zen "took on the texture it retains today: vacillating between noun and adjective, it presents an apotheosis of nothingness that is capacious enough to take in everything" (Park 63). Beat poetry also, Daniel Tiffany shows, contributed to the postwar "cultural politics of radiation," whose effect on the poetic object resembled, right down to its vibrations, the effect of Zen: "the prospect of an atomic blast causes every object to oscillate not only between divergent identities, or between presence and absence, but also, as W. H. Auden conceives it, between object and image, real and unreal" (240, 219). These oscillations, vacillations, so like the electric frazzle of the atomic sphere, capture in the movement between presence and absence, being and nothingness, something also of what postwar America thought of when it thought of Japan.

This pairing, and with it Blyth's awareness of the possibility of genocide, directs our attention to how by 1963 the international meaning of the haiku was bound to the geoculture of the atom bomb. For Blyth, the connection was political; the "way of haiku" he attributed to Bashō, which valued silence, contemplation, and a communal relation to nature, had little to do with the violent developmental imperatives of the postwar. Blyth was not the first or last Westerner to find in Asian poetry a refuge from technologized modernity; but from the perspective of his preface the entire field of postwar American poetics and the international success of the haiku as a form (so frequently taught in schools, the subject of collections comic [*Haiku for Jews*, etc.] and serious) can be seen as an alternative apprehension of the atomic age, even of the atom itself. Whether this apprehension occurred merely as a result of a geographic coincidence or whether it derived, at least in the 1950s, from a belief that Japan, having withstood the brunt of an undisavowable experiment in the self-abnegation of the species, might also be the site of that experiment's redemptive transformation into beauty—a sort of hair of the dog for the existential ills of the cold war—need not detain us here. It is possible that the connection operated along the lines of a felt material affinity between atom and haiku, in which the latter's smallness and singularity, its ability to collapse space and time, leaving "nothing between us and the moment" (van den Heuvel xxix), figured the incomprehensible, conflagrating core of the former, whose "single blast in a single moment," combined with the long-term effects of radiation damage to landscapes and living beings, gave the atomic "now" such a devastating purchase on the diachronic (Treat 6). Whatever the reasons, for which this brief survey intends only to indicate the lines of possible advance, in both its substantive and its cultural modalities, the haiku, in 1963 and in the world of English-language poetics, resembled the atom, and the atom the haiku.[19] Seen from the other side of the Pacific (though still in the English language), this resemblance clarifies why the species' abandonment of the way of Bashō in favor of the way of Oppenheimer at Alamagordo might be conceived as a zero-sum proposition: from the desuetude of the one, as Blyth saw it, came the inhabitation of the other.

Fast-forward three decades: on 13 February 1996, Cai Guo-qiang detonates a handheld explosive on the grounds of the nuclear test site in Nevada in the western United States. The small puff of smoke that emerges from his hand, seen in a photograph of the

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2009.124.3.906 Published online by Cambridge University Press

event, resembles a mushroom cloud. Similar photographs taken at various locations around the United States—at the site of Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*, of Michael Heizer's *Double Negative*, and of Manhattan seen from Liberty Island—form part of a larger project that culminates in an interactive installation featuring servings of lingzhi mushroom tea and a mural-sized gunpowder drawing presenting a simultaneous view, from outer space, of the more than two thousand nuclear tests conducted on the surface of the planet.

The ironies of Cai's *The Century with Mushroom Clouds* operate at least partly through the combination of substance and location: the mushrooms in the clouds and the tea; the gunpowder (one of China's "four contributions" to modernity); Manhattan (and its Project); the Nevada desert, site of the first atomic explosions; the Chinese artist who found his first audiences in Japan before becoming an international superstar whose 2008 retrospective occupied the entire interior space of the Guggenheim Museum and who took, later that year, a major role in designing the opening and closing ceremonies of the Beijing Olympics (themselves tributes to the relation between global power and the spirit of internationalism).

Like all of Cai's oeuvre, which looms fatefully between the two explosive events of 6 August 1945 and 11 September 2001 and dawns, ultimately, beyond them, the gunpowder project is a way. But its path is neither Bashō's nor Oppenheimer's, as Cai's somewhat suspicious, somewhat daring decision to stage the Olympic ceremonies suggests.[20] Another Asian America: handheld and local, these explosions stage history as the bomb's metonym, not its allegory. This difference from Blyth, and indeed from the atomic poetics of his influence on the Beats, rests in the relation the art presumes between itself and its subject. Instead of conceiving the aesthetic



Cai Guo-qiang, *The Century with Mushroom Clouds: Project for the Twentieth Century*, 1996. Gunpowder and cardboard tubes. Realized at the nuclear test site, NV (shown here); at Michael Heizer's *Double Negative*, Mormon Mesa, Overton, NV; at Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*, Salt Lake, UT; and at various sites looking toward Manhattan, NY. Photo by Hiro Ihara; courtesy of Cai Studio.

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2009.124.3.906 Published online by Cambridge University Press

gesture as the terrified, holistic repetition of history's trauma, Cai's smoke clouds imagine that history transformed, made malleable, actionable, and retrievable by human hands, opening the door to a relation to history that is doomed neither to silence nor to a loquacious, imitative terror.[21] For a Chinese artist to attempt this transformation, given the histories, is not uncomplicated. Nonetheless the work makes visible the possibility, perhaps unachieved, of a difference through which the total destruction of the species and the redemptive imaginaries that have attempted to be responsible to it relax their grip on the ontologies of the present.

Notes

1. Here the Philippines are another important site of exception and possibility (see Isaac; Bascara). Much recent work has attempted to disrupt the equation of America with the United States. On the Japanese in Latin America, see Masterson and Funada-Classen. On hemispheric trends in Asian American studies, see Lee, "Orientalisms." On the coolie trade to Cuba, see Yun; Hu-DeHart. On the history of the idea of Asia, see Spivak 209–38.

2. Viet Nguyen's critique of how Asian American studies has read racial identity as a mode of resistance to capitalism—that is, of how ethnicity is presumed to be a form of resistance (rather than a form of entrepreneurial access, which it occasionally is)—has been an especially influential countermodel to Lowe's. For other work that responds explicitly or implicitly to Lowe, see T. Chen; Bow; Eng; Kang; and Hong.

3. This simultaneous presence and nonpresence was also theorized by Caroline Chung Simpson. On Asia as a site of intense capitalistic and commercial desire and as a threat to United States national and cultural integrity, see Lee, *At America's Gates*; on transnational identity formation, see Azuma; on the American West, see Lye, *America's Asia*; on Asiatic horizons of sociological knowledge, see Yu; and on the postwar, see Shibusawa.

4. This last ideological farce is relived as tragedy once a generation (see Eperjesi).

5. The phrase is Gary Okihiro's and appears in his afterword to *AfroAsian Encounters* (313). For a bibliography of work in this field, see Raphael-Hernandez and Steen, Introduction 13n1; for a recent discussion, see Lye, "Afro-Asian"; see also Jung.

6. Subfields like medieval studies, where the transnational, multilingual character of the period is so dense that monolingualism is impossible, have not been so insulated.

7. On the transnational in Asian American studies, see Chuh and Shimakawa; Zhou and Najmi; Chan; and Lim et al. See also the special issue of the *Journal of Asian American Studies* edited by Peffer, Lee, and Shibusawa. As Erika Lee has noted, the tendency in transnational Asian American work to look across the Pacific can be complemented by hemispheric approaches that attend to the "*inter-American* dynamics of Asian migration" and think of the history of "Asianness" (as a racial, ethnic, or continental concept) as operating beyond the bipolarity of East and West ("Orientalisms" 235).

8. The book's title is a bilingual pun. Made by one of Manalansan's interviewees, the pun stems from the substitution of *v* for *b* in the standard Tagalog *'di ba*, meaning "isn't it?" So rearranged, the title means, "Global, isn't it?" (vii).

9. On the Pacific as a historical space, a cartographic imaginary, and a field of cultural and intellectual production, see Wilson and Dirlik; DeLoughrey; Dirlik; and Hereniko and Wilson.

10. For a proposal on how we might do so, see Arac.

11. Examples of such efforts are the Speak Mandarin campaign, initiated in 1978, and the more recent Speak Good English movement, whose Web site encourages its viewers to substitute phrases like "I'm sorry but we do not allow customers to try these on for hygiene reasons" for the Singlish alternative, "Cannot try. Dirty how?" ("Items"). This lesson, which appears in the section "Phrases for Work," exposes the class anxieties that structure the relation between Singlish and "good" English, a remediation of the paternalism of a colonial English-language textbook for a local context that should recall how rarely languages appear as themselves—that is, as operands in a purely communicative pragmatism. On the poetics of Singlish, see Ho.

12. A more expansive approach to the sinophone would keep scholars from reifying a relation to the People's Republic as necessarily resistant, a mistake that would repeat, it seems to me, the mistake whereby the ethnic subject was forced into that same position in the American context (see Chow). Lu writes that he and Emilie Yeh coined the term "Sinophone film" in 2005 (Rev. n2); see also Lu, "Dialect." To this discussion one might add the question of the conceptual history of the suffix *-phone*; on *sinograph* as a specific alternative, see Bachner; Hayot, Saussy, and Yao.

13. An example, despite the importance of the work, is Andre Gunder Frank's rewriting of the economic history of modernity as a history of the Chinese economy, which threatens to replace the Enlightenment's Eurocentric picture with a sinocentric one. On Frank, see Arrighi; Pomeranz.

14. For theorizations and examples of the possibilities of an American studies for which the United States does not function as the final site of scholarly return, see Dimock; Dimock and Buell.

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2009.124.3.906 Published online by Cambridge University Press

15. These dialects are not exclusive to Chinese or to any one language. Consider the contemporary Japanese poets Ryoko Sekiguchi and Kiriu Minashita: the former translates herself into both Japanese and French in order to produce "an artificial bilingualism only possible within the field of writing," a matter "no longer of depth but of stretching the surface of the text" (Minashita, Park, Sekiguchi, and Arai 71–72); the latter plays with the scriptorial possibilities of Japanese to produce intense internal vibrations of meaning and reference.

16. On Segalen, see Billings and Bush.

17. To think of Bashō as inventing a "way of haiku" is a bit strange, since Bashō would not have known the term, referring to the 5-7-5 poems he wrote as *hokku*, which were part of larger, linked poems. The term *haiku* was first used to describe stand-alone *hokku* in the late nineteenth century, by Masaoka Shiki.

18. Blyth spent World War II in custody in Kobe, though he had applied for Japanese citizenship in the late 1930s. After the war, he served as a translator on General MacArthur's staff, cowrote the Shōwa emperor's 1946 declaration of nondivinity, taught at Gakushuin University, and published extensively on Japanese poetry, culture, and philosophy. He died in Japan in 1964.

19. This structure has not very much to do with the poetry produced by Japanese poets in the postwar period. See Treat; Vance-Watkins and Aratani; Minear, Hara, Ōta, and Tōge; Perloff.

20. Cai's decision directs our attention to the strange unevenness of contemporary Chinese art, whose relation to the state is always double, since the success of any given artist counts as evidence of China's growing international prominence, as long as the potentially destabilizing critical edge of the work itself remains excluded from the conversation. On the cultural politics of post-socialist China, see Zhang.

21. Another contemporary project in this vein, though its eyes are on Iraq, is Collectivo Haiku's *Haiku Not Bombs*.

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